Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Gospel of John Volume 1

Chapters 1–6



PAUL C. JONG



“What do you seek?” (John 1:38)

The first words of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John were this question.

Those who sought signs, those who sought food, and those who only wished their circumstances would improve came to the Lord. But the Lord came to them first in order to give them something deeper than what they sought—the remission of sins and eternal life.

God, who made us, came in the body of a man, had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received that judgment with the blood of the Cross, and rose again three days later. The Lord wants to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to you who open this book today.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

<u>You must believe now.</u>

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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Gospel of John

Volume 1

Chapters 1–6

PAUL C. JONG



Hephzibah Publishing House
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We offer a prayer of thanks to the Lord for giving us the Word of salvation and blessing us with the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit.

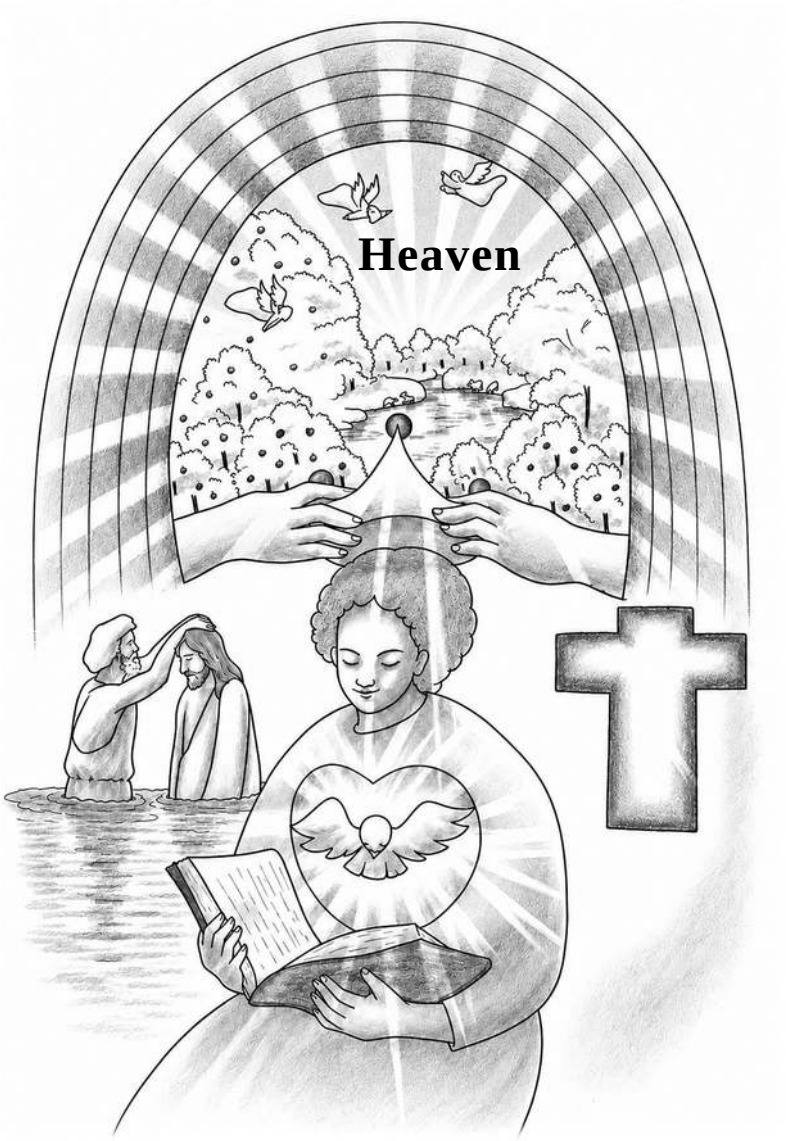
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

I hope and pray that this book will help many souls be born again, and I would like to express my sincere gratitude once again to everyone who worked hard with me.

I sincerely hope that the Lord will allow the gospel of being born again by water and the Spirit to be spread throughout the world through those who believe in Jesus.

PAUL C. JONG

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Preface

"What do you seek?"

The first words of Jesus recorded in the Gospel of John are a question. To the two disciples who had heard the testimony of John the Baptist and followed after Him, the Lord turned and asked, *"What do you seek?" (John 1:38)*. And at the end of the six chapters this book deals with, the Lord, seeing the crowd leaving, asks the twelve disciples again, *"Do you also want to go away?" (John 6:67)*. Between these two questions, many people came to the Lord, each seeking something. Some sought signs, some sought something to eat, and some sought only that their own circumstances would improve. But the Lord came to seek them in order to give them something deeper than what they sought, namely the remission of sins and eternal life.

The One who made me had my sins transferred to Him

The Gospel of John begins its account with the One who existed before all things were made. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1)*. That Word, who made all things, became flesh and came among us. It is not that we went up to seek God; God, who made us, first put on a human body and came to seek us. He is the Son, equal with the Father, and the Creator who came walking on the sea and said, *"It is I; do not be afraid" (John 6:20)*. Because the One who had my sins passed on to Him is the

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very God who made me, what He did could become not merely the sacrifice of one righteous man but the salvation that removes the sin of all mankind.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"

Then how did God remove the sin of the world? When John the Baptist saw Jesus coming toward him, he cried out like this: *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. John could testify like this because he was the very one who had passed that sin on to Jesus.

The law of atonement that God established is as follows: *"Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him" (Leviticus 1:4)*. When a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering, his sins were passed on to the offering, and the offering that had the sins passed on to it shed its blood and died. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River, He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament had sins passed on to it through the laying on of hands, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John. Included in them are all the sins we commit from the time we are born until we leave this world. Therefore, we must not try to wash away our sins one by one by begging every day, but believe in this work the Lord accomplished once and for all.

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"Destroy this temple"

In chapter 2, the Lord said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19)*. This was a word pointing to the temple of His body. That body was a body that had already borne the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John. There is no reason for One who has no sin to be hung on the tree of the curse. That Jesus was hung on the Cross means that He received in our place, with the blood of the Cross, the judgment for that sin which had been passed on to Him at the Jordan River. The bronze serpent in chapter 3 says the same thing. *"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up" (John 3:14)*. The baptism He received from John and His death on the Cross are not two separate events but one salvation, in which He had our sins passed on to Him and brought that judgment to an end.

And the Lord rose again from death in three days, just as He had said. The resurrection shows that the One who had our sins passed on to Him and was judged is in His very nature God. That is why the sin that had been passed on to Him was the sin of the whole world, and the blood He shed became the eternal price of sin. Into the heart of the one who believes in this work, the Holy Spirit comes and seals him as a child of God. *"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:8).*

The water that flows through every chapter

As we read these six chapters in order, we meet water in every chapter. In chapter 1 there is the water of the Jordan River; in chapter 2, the stone waterpots of Cana; in chapter 3, being

born again of water and the Spirit; in chapter 4, Jacob's well; and in chapter 5, the pool of Bethesda. Each kind of water that people relied on had its limits, but all the water the Lord gives leads to the work He accomplished at the Jordan River.

At the wedding feast of Cana, the Lord said, *"Fill the waterpots with water" (John 2:7)*, and the servants filled them up to the brim. Filling them was the servants' part, but it was the Lord who changed the water into wine. In the same way, the Lord changed us, who were to be judged, into children of God. Just as the waterpots were filled up to the brim, the heart is not filled if one accepts only one part of the word of the gospel. If one holds on to the Cross alone and does not know the baptism He received from John, sin remains in his heart however long he may have believed.

Then how can the sin in the heart be removed? To Nicodemus, who came to Him at night, the Lord said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. Here the water is the baptism through which Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him from John at the Jordan River. Because this baptism, by which He bore the sin of the world, had to take place before the judgment of the Cross, here too the Lord spoke of water first. By believing in our hearts in the baptism through which He had the sin of the world transferred to Him from John once and for all, and in the blood of the Cross, sin can be completely removed, and by believing this we become born-again people. Being born again is not something that comes about through learning, religious life, or tearful prayers; it is accomplished when we believe in what God has done. That God "so" loved the world also means not that He showed love only in words, but that He actually solved the problem of our sins through this work.

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At Jacob's well, the Lord said, *"Whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14)*, and He said to the woman, *"Go, call your husband, and come here" (John 4:16)*. It was a word telling her to bring her sins. Even the sin the woman was ashamed of and kept hidden, the Lord had already had passed on to Him at the Jordan River. That fountain springs up not from our feelings but from the word that tells us of that salvation.

The sick man at the pool of Bethesda lamented, *"I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up" (John 5:7)*. That only the one who meets the conditions is healed is the method of man-made religion. The water of the pool never healed him even once in thirty-eight years, but when the Lord told him to rise, he rose at once. So it is with the remission of sins we have received. *"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14)*. Whoever hears the voice of this gospel and believes has already passed from death into life.

What it means to eat the flesh and drink the blood

Chapter 6 is a chapter that begins with five barley loaves and two fish, and in which the word about bread deepens step by step. To the crowd who had eaten the bread and were filled, the Lord said, *"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life" (John 6:27)*, and finally He said this: *"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53)*.

To eat the flesh of Jesus is to believe the fact that, through the baptism He received from John, my sins were passed on to

the body of Jesus, who came in the flesh; and to drink the blood of the Lord is to believe that Jesus received in our place, with the blood of the Cross, all that judgment, the wages of sin. If that work at the Jordan River had not taken place, our sins would have remained as they were even if the Lord had died a thousand or ten thousand times on the Cross. That is why the flesh and the blood go together as a pair. A faith that drinks only the blood without knowing the baptism He received from John is like wetting only one's throat with a single cup of drink while the stomach is still hungry. In the one who has eaten both the flesh and the blood, there is life, that is, the Holy Spirit.

This food is not something eaten only once. Even after we have received the remission of sins, whenever our faults are exposed, to ruminate on the word, "The Lord had this sin, too, passed on to Him at the Jordan River," is the true food we eat every day. Salvation is not something received little by little, in portions, through prayers of repentance. Salvation, that is, the remission of sins, is accomplished once and for all.

The life of a witness who has met the Lord

Chapter 6 begins where five thousand people were gathered and ends where only the twelve disciples remained. The Lord did not change His word in order to hold on to those who were leaving. When He asked the remaining disciples whether they also wanted to go away, Peter answered, *"Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68)*. It was a confession of faith that, since it is the Lord who washed away our sin and gave us eternal life, to whom else could we go?

The Gospel of John makes clear like this why this Gospel was written: *"But these are written that you may believe that*

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Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name" (John 20:31). I compiled these sermons, too, for that one purpose. Those of you who still have sin remaining in your hearts, I hope you will not hide yourselves but come before the Lord just as you are. The Lord already had your sins, too, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received all that judgment with the blood of the Cross, and rose again from death. Those of you who already believe in this gospel, I hope you will live as witnesses who preach the Lord you have met, just as the Samaritan woman left her waterpot behind and said, *"Come, see" (John 4:29)*. The Lord also asks those who open this book today: What do you seek? Do you also want to go away? Faced with that question, I hope you will remain, together with Peter, beside the Lord, who has the words of eternal life. ✉

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CHAPTER

1

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The love of God, who came to seek us

< John 1:1–18 >

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God. And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth. John bore witness of Him and cried out, saying, ‘This was He of whom I said, “He who comes after me is preferred before me, for He was before me.”’ And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came

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through Jesus Christ. No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

Until we know for certain how God deals with us, we are apt to guess at His heart by looking at our own circumstances. When things go well, we feel loved by God, and when hardship strikes, it seems as if God is keeping away from us. This is all the more so when our own shortcomings are exposed. Even though we say we believe in God, we want first to hide ourselves rather than go before Him. But God did not leave us to our guesswork. He Himself revealed what kind of God He is and how much He loves us.

As the Apostle John testifies of Jesus, he makes it clear that He is God, who came to seek us. It is not that we found the way to reach God. God came to us first. The One who made us came in a human body, bore our sins, and gave those who believe in Him the right to become children of God. Through this word today, I hope you will engrave on your hearts who the Lord is who came to seek us, and how great the love is that we have received from Him.

The One who came to us is God, who made all things

Let us read verses 1 through 3.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

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In introducing Jesus, John begins from the beginning. In that very beginning, when God said, *"Let there be light" (Genesis 1:3)* and there was light, the Word was there. That Word was with God, and He was God. By this Word God made the heavens and the earth and everything in them. John testifies that this Word is none other than Jesus Christ. He who was born of Mary is God, who had been with the Father even before He was born as a man.

The ground we stand and live on, and our very lives, were made by His hands. We are not self-existent beings but created beings made by Him. Yet this Creator came to the world He Himself had made. He came to save created beings who could only perish because of sin and to make them His own children. God, who made us, became the Savior who delivers us from sin. The One who bore my sins is the very God who made me.

Verse 4 says that in Him was life, and that this life was the light of men. Everything that has life, from a single blade of grass to man, came from Him. Yet the soul of man, fallen into sin, was in a darkness where no light could enter. The Lord, who at the first creation shone light upon the darkness and brought life into being, has now come into the world as the true Light, as verse 9 says, and shines light into the heart of each person. The Lord of life came to seek those who had lost life. How great a grace this is!

But verses 10 and 11 tell of something unexpected. The world was made through Him, yet that world failed to recognize the One who had made it. Even His own people refused to receive Him when He came to His own. Although He came as the Savior to the world He Himself had made, few people paid Him any attention. Those who claimed to be waiting for God turned away from God when He actually came to them. As verse 5 says, the light shone, but the darkness did not comprehend it.

Then how did we come to know Jesus? It was not that we found Him first; the Lord came to seek us and met us. Yet even after being saved, people think only about how their circumstances might improve, and so they easily forget the fact that the Lord came to seek them. The Lord knows all our circumstances. But He also knows what we need first of all. It is the life of being saved from sin and living forever with God. The Lord came to give us that life.

He came in a human body and bore our sins

Let us read verse 14.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth."

The Word became flesh. God, who made all things, put on a human body like ours. After man sinned, God promised that He would come as the Seed of the woman and bring salvation, and according to that promise He was born on this earth through the body of Mary. That is why John testifies that He was full of grace and truth. Grace is a gift given freely, and truth is what is true. God fulfilled the word He had promised exactly as it was, without departing from it in the slightest.

The purpose for which He came in the flesh was to remove our sins. When Jesus turned thirty, He received baptism from John at the Jordan River. Just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament had sins passed on to it through the laying on of hands, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John. At that time the Lord had not only the sins we had already committed but also the sins we would commit throughout our lifetime all passed on

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to Him. Then, bearing the sin of the world, He went to the Cross. There is a reason for the suffering the Lord received. Because He bore our sins, He received the judgment of those sins in our place.

The Prophet Isaiah testified of the suffering the Lord would receive like this.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

The Lord was wounded because of our transgressions, and He was bruised because of our iniquities. The Cross is not a place to feel sorry for His pain and then pass by. It is the place where He, who had my sins passed on to Him at the Jordan River, received the punishment for those sins in my place. In the same chapter, Isaiah says that He kept His mouth shut like a sheep silent before its shearers. The Lord quietly bore all of that for us.

The Lord shed His blood and died, was buried, and rose again from death three days later. He overcame the power of sin and death and became the living Savior. Whoever believes in his heart in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, which He fulfilled through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection, is washed of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again as a child of God. In this way the grace of the Word coming in the flesh became real salvation for us.

If we want to know whether God loves us, we need only look at this work the Lord has done. If He were One who abandoned us whenever sin was exposed in us, who could be saved? The Lord came knowing all our sins. He did not wait for us to become clean on our own, but He Himself washed away all our sins. Because of that love, we can stand before God.

At the same time, God is One who surely judges sin. That judgment was actually carried out. God judges sin but loves the sinner, and so He had His own Son receive that judgment in our place. He saved us not by trickery or by force, but by the way of righteousness. That is why, in Jesus Christ, we see both the holiness of God and His love toward us. The One who is full of grace and truth is none other than Jesus Christ.

The right of children given to those who believe in His name

God first sent John the Baptist so that people would recognize this Savior and believe in Him. The John who appears in verses 6 through 8 is not the Apostle John who wrote this Gospel, but John the Baptist who testified of Jesus—the last prophet of the Old Testament and the one who baptized Jesus as the representative of mankind. Yet instead of putting himself forward as the light, he pointed to who the true Light was, as the witness sent by God. He turned the eyes of those who had been following him toward Jesus.

Verse 29 of the same chapter shows how clear his testimony was.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

"The next day" is the day after John the Baptist baptized Jesus. Because John the Baptist had passed the sin of the world on to Jesus when he baptized Him at the Jordan River, the next day he could cry out, pointing to Him, *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. Jesus is not One who remains merely a teacher who taught people how to live rightly; He is the Savior who bears and takes away the sin of the

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world. Therefore, believing just as John the Baptist testified is the right faith.

In verse 15 as well, John the Baptist cries out that He who comes after him was before him. He was born six months before Jesus. Even so, the reason he said that He was before him was that he knew He was God, who has existed from the very beginning. John the Baptist knew exactly who He was whom he had baptized, and he testified of Him.

What grace is given to those who accept this testimony? Let us read verses 12 and 13.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

The Lord gave the right to become children of God to those who receive Him, that is, to those who believe in His name. The name *"Jesus"* means Savior. To believe in His name is to accept, according to the word, how He has saved me, just as His name says. If someone says he believes in Jesus but does not know what happened when He received baptism from John, he has not yet received that word.

Since the Lord had my sins transferred to Him at the Jordan River and received that judgment on the Cross, I receive the remission of sins by believing in that work. Faith is not a matter of filling up an insufficient salvation with my own zeal, but simply of accepting by faith the salvation the Lord has completed. Because He rose again from death, I too receive the life to live with Him beyond death. And God gives the Holy Spirit into the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins in this way, so that they call God Father. This is the right of children that verse 12 speaks of.

Verse 13 makes clear where the children of God are born from. They are not born of blood. Neither being a descendant of Abraham, nor having been born to believing parents and having attended church from childhood, can by itself make a person a child of God. Nor are they born of the will of the flesh. Neither the emotion of tears flowing as one thinks of Jesus, nor the experience of seeing something in a dream or feeling something in one's body, can take the place of being born again.

Nor are they born of the will of man. One cannot be born of God with a faith that picks out only what one likes from the word God has given and decides according to one's own will, saying, "Do I really have to believe even in the baptism Jesus received from John? Believing in the Cross alone should be enough." The one who believes, exactly as the written word says, in the salvation that God promised through His word and came and fulfilled according to that promise, is the one born of God. Our salvation is, from beginning to end, a work God did alone.

That is why even a person who has nothing to boast of can receive this grace. No one is left out of the Lord's salvation because there was no one in his family who believed before him, or because his past is shameful. For it is a promise given to those who believe in His name. Your past cannot come before the Lord's promise. God accepts those who believe in His name as His own children.

Let us who already believe in this gospel also not forget our own standing. Even after we are saved, our shortcomings keep being exposed. But because Jesus already had even the sins we would commit throughout our lifetime passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, there is no sin in our hearts even when our shortcomings are exposed. Admit your wrongs, but do not go so far as to doubt, because of those wrongs, the salvation the Lord has fulfilled. Those who believe in this grace

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do not hide their wrongs and try to protect their own righteousness; they go before the Father and are taught again by the word. They stand up again with the faith that God takes care of His own children.

Those who have received grace live by what they have received

Let us read verses 16 and 17.

"And of His fullness we have all received, and grace for grace. For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ."

We are people who receive from the Lord's fullness. *"Grace for grace" (John 1:16)* means gift upon gift, the greatest gift. It is already a great grace that created beings made from dust have received the remission of sins, but on top of that, God made us His own children, His own family. He let us call God Father, and He even gave us the hope of living forever in the kingdom of God. If we count them one by one, there is not a single one that we obtained by our own strength.

Verse 17 places the law and grace side by side. The law is the law of God given through Moses. The law teaches us that we are sinners, but it cannot remove that sin. It is just as the laws of the world only point out sin but cannot deliver the sinner from sin. Everyone who stands before the law comes to know that he is a sinner who cannot keep all of that law.

But within that law there was also the law of sacrifice. That law, by which a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it and the offering died in his place, was God's promise that one should believe in the Lamb of God who was to come and receive the remission of sins.

That promise was actually fulfilled through the baptism Jesus received from John and His death on the Cross. That is why John says that grace and truth came through Jesus Christ. This is a word that makes clear from whom our salvation came.

If we forget this grace, our life of faith once again becomes a matter of proving our own ability. We feel we will be recognized only if we do better than others, and that God will accept us only if we offer something more. Then, when we run into our own limits, we become discouraged. But the grace by which God made us His children was given before any achievement of ours. We serve the Lord as those who are already loved.

Dear fellow believers, quietly count what you have received from God. You may have many things to deal with right now, and your body may be worn out. But have the remission of sins and the standing as children that the Lord gave you disappeared because of that? Has the promise of eternal life vanished? Those who have received grace upon grace have nothing to fear on this earth. Live each day asking the Father, who is full of power, for what you need.

Those who know the grace they have received from the Lord also change in how they treat other people. Those who have met God turn from living only for themselves and live for others. To those who do not know the gospel, they preach the word of salvation, and to those in hardship, they give whatever help they can. Nor do they pressure or shame those whose faith grows slowly. For faith grows not by a person’s resolve, but by hearing the word. Let us remember that we, too, are people who have long been taught by the Lord, and let us wait for them, listening to the word together.

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Remember the Father's love revealed through Jesus

Let us read verse 18.

"No one has seen God at any time. The only begotten Son, who is in the bosom of the Father, He has declared Him."

After the word that no one has seen God, there follows the word that the only begotten God has declared Him. Because God is Spirit, we cannot see Him with our eyes. But the only begotten God, who was in the bosom of the Father, came in a human body. And by receiving baptism from John, being nailed to the Cross, and rising again from death, He showed what kind of God the Father is. We know God through the work He accomplished.

What kind of God is the God revealed through that work? He is One who hates sin but loves the sinner and delivers him from sin. Though He is mighty, He did not flaunt that power to extract service for Himself; rather, He served us and received in our place the suffering we were to receive. So whenever we go before God, there is no need to guess at His heart all over again from the beginning. We need only believe the love He has already shown through Jesus.

If there is anyone who is still striving to be recognized by God through his own efforts, accept the salvation the Lord has fulfilled. Believe in Jesus Christ, who had all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the punishment for them on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Lord gives the right to become children of God to those who believe in His name. Receive into your hearts God, who came Himself to seek you in order to save you.

We who believe in this gospel remember every day the grace we have received. Even when the circumstances of the world seem to have taken away every reason to give thanks, the fact

remains unchanged that God, who made us, came to seek us and met us, washed away our sins, and made us live as children of the Father. As befits those who have received that love, let us rely on the Lord and serve so that others, too, may meet this God whom we have met. We give thanks and worship to God, who came to seek us by sending the only begotten God who is in the bosom of the Father, and who revealed Himself in love. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The voice in the wilderness that leads to the Lord

< John 1:19–28 >

"Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.' And they asked him, 'What then? Are you Elijah?' He said, 'I am not.' 'Are you the Prophet?' And he answered, 'No.' Then they said to him, 'Who are you, that we may give an answer to those who sent us? What do you say about yourself?' He said: 'I am "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the LORD,'" as the prophet Isaiah said.' Now those who were sent were from the Pharisees. And they asked him, saying, 'Why then do you baptize if you are not the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?' John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.' These things were done in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John was baptizing."

The people who came from Jerusalem asked John the Baptist who he was. The priests and Levites came to him and asked, and asked again. They asked whether he was the Christ, whether he was Elijah, whether he was the Prophet. Having seen John the

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Baptist baptizing people, they demanded an answer as to by what right he was doing this at all. But John's answer was different from the words of someone trying to make himself look great. He made it clear that he was not the Christ, and introduced himself as the voice crying out to make straight the way of the Lord.

For John the Baptist, there was One whom people absolutely had to know, more than who he himself was. It was Jesus Christ, who was coming after him. The people's questions kept being directed at John, but John's testimony was directed toward Jesus. This word teaches us who the one preaching the gospel is and what he must preach. We who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit are also witnesses who lead people to the Savior. Through John's testimony, let us look together at what work the Lord has entrusted to us.

A witness who does not exalt himself but reveals the Savior

Let us read verses 19 and 20.

"Now this is the testimony of John, when the Jews sent priests and Levites from Jerusalem to ask him, 'Who are you?' He confessed, and did not deny, but confessed, 'I am not the Christ.'"

In a land where the voice of a servant of God crying out had long been silent, a man appeared who cried out in the wilderness for people to repent and turned them back to God. The priests and Levites, who held the authority over the sacrifices and the temple, could not sit still. So they sent people to press him with questions. There and then, John the Baptist spoke openly

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without hiding anything: he was not the Christ. Whatever people thought of him, he did not take the name of the Savior as his own.

When people's attention gathers on us, our hearts are easily shaken. At first it was a work begun in order to preach the Lord, but before we know it, we come to care about how much people recognize us. When our labor goes unrecognized, we may even feel hurt. But it is not our name or our labor that saves people. The Savior is Jesus Christ alone. The righteous are not those who put themselves forward in this world, but those who testify of Jesus.

John answered no both to the question of whether he was Elijah and to the question of whether he was the Prophet. Yet Jesus said of John the Baptist, *"He is Elijah who is to come" (Matthew 11:14)*. Then why did he say no? If he had put himself forward as Elijah before people who had come to find fault with him, needless disputes and quarrels would have arisen, and both his life and the work entrusted to him would have been put in danger. So instead of arguing over what name should be attached to him, he made his mission clear through the word of Isaiah. Without getting entangled in quarrels, he still said everything that needed to be said.

Elijah was a servant who showed the people of Israel that the LORD is the true God and brought the people back to God. John the Baptist did that work too. John the Baptist baptized Jesus and thereby passed the sin of mankind on to Jesus, and through that work the way was opened for people to believe in Jesus and return to God. He only did not put forward the name Elijah; he carried out all the work that Elijah was to do.

Not exalting oneself is different from taking lightly the work one has been entrusted with. Even while saying that he was not the Christ, John the Baptist did not lay down his mission in the least. It is the same with us. We do not preach the gospel because

our lives are without any shortcoming. Because Jesus has saved us perfectly, we preach what He has done. Even though we are weak, the salvation the Lord has accomplished is perfect. To lead people to believe not in the excellence of the one preaching but in the Lord who washed away their sins—that is the joy of a witness.

The testimony of the gospel that makes straight the way of the Lord

When the people asked again who he was, John answered with the word. *"He said: 'I am "The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Make straight the way of the LORD,'" as the prophet Isaiah said'" (John 1:23).*

Following the word of the prophet Isaiah, John said that he was the voice of one crying in the wilderness. Ahead of the Lord's coming, the prophet Isaiah proclaimed this: *"The voice of one crying in the wilderness: 'Prepare the way of the LORD; Make straight in the desert A highway for our God'" (Isaiah 40:3).*

John's work was to prepare the way for the Lord's coming. Isaiah goes on to say that every valley will be raised up, every mountain made low, and the uneven places made level. It is the work of leveling the way so that all people alike—whether high or low, whether seemingly righteous or full of sin—can receive the remission of sins before the Lord. John the Baptist paved this way by crying out to people to turn back to God.

The opposite of a straight way is a crooked way. What makes the way to the Lord crooked? It is teaching that makes meeting God difficult. If people are taught that they can receive the remission of sins only by clinging to the Cross alone and

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pleading every day whenever they sin, by fasting and praying long, and by giving many offerings and doing much service, then those who hear it fail to see the salvation the Lord has accomplished and only look for merits they do not have. This is because such teaching turns the gift of salvation that God gave freely into something that must be bought with human deeds.

Preaching only the blood of the Cross while leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John also makes the way crooked. That is a half gospel. A person who does not know that Jesus had his sins passed on to Him is grateful for the Cross, yet the sin remaining in his conscience does not go away. For the one who is discouraged, saying his sins are great, and for the one who clings to his own righteousness and does not admit his sins, what is needed in the end is the whole gospel that clearly tells what the Savior has done.

We cannot wash away our sins by ourselves. Regretting past wrongs does not make the sins already committed disappear, nor can a resolution to do better from now on take the judgment for past sins in our place. That is why the Lord came. Because God loved us, He Himself came clothed in a human body, had all our sins passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, was judged and died on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death to become our Savior. Between the way of trying to wash away sins one by one by pleading every day and this way that the Lord accomplished once and for all, which way is the straight one?

This is not to say that prayer, service, and ministering are all wrong. It is to say that they can never be the price that removes sin. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the salvation the Lord accomplished, and then, in gratitude for the great love we have received, we become able to pray and serve. We do righteousness because we believe. A witness who makes

straight the way of the Lord does not demand more merits from people. He makes clear through the word how the Lord bore that person's sins.

The One who is among you, yet whom you do not know

Those who had been sent from the Pharisees asked again. They pressed John the Baptist, asking why he baptized while saying that he was neither the Christ, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet. To this question, John the Baptist did not explain how great a man he was. He pointed to the Lord who was among them. Let us read verses 26 and 27.

"John answered them, saying, 'I baptize with water, but there stands One among you whom you do not know. It is He who, coming after me, is preferred before me, whose sandal strap I am not worthy to loose.'"

There was One among them, but they did not recognize Him. Even with the office of priest or Levite, even with the knowledge to judge religious matters, they could still fail to know the Savior. Questioning by what right John the Baptist baptized is not the same as knowing who Jesus is. John the Baptist turned the attention people had placed on him toward Jesus.

John said that he was not worthy even to loose His sandal strap. He did not place himself on the same level as Jesus. Jesus is the King of kings who came to save sinners, and John was a servant sent before Him. A servant does not become greater than his master just because the work entrusted to him is great. One who knows who the Lord is can testify of Him boldly without exalting himself.

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Then by what right did John the Baptist baptize? John the Baptist was born to Zacharias, a priest of the division of Abijah, and Elizabeth, a descendant of Aaron. In the Old Testament, God had the high priest lay his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering on behalf of the people, and through that laying on of hands He had the sin of the people passed on to the offering. John the Baptist was the man God sent as the last high priest representing mankind, to baptize Jesus and thereby pass the sin of the world on to Him.

So the baptism John the Baptist gave had two meanings: the baptism of repentance that turned the people who had served idols back to God, and the baptism that passed all the sins of the world on to Jesus. That Jesus, who had no sin, received baptism from John was not in order to repent of any sin of His own. It was in order to bear all the sin of mankind. The Gospel of Matthew records that event as follows.

"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:13–15).

John the Baptist tried to prevent Him, saying that he himself rather needed to receive baptism from Jesus. But Jesus said that it was fitting to fulfill all righteousness in this way. That all righteousness is the right work of Jesus having the sins of all the people of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and so making all people sinless. Just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament had sin passed on to it through the laying on of hands, John the Baptist laid both his hands on Jesus' head and baptized Him.

The very next day, John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and cried out, *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. How could Jesus take away the sin of the world? Because He had the sin of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. The sin of the world means all the sins that people commit from the time mankind came into being until the day this world ends. Our shameful sins, and the sins we have repeated out of weakness, are also in it. Bearing that sin, the Lord went to the Cross, paid the price of sin by shedding His blood and dying, and rose again from death in three days. Whoever believes in this gospel has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

The Jordan River and the Cross are connected in this way. That Jesus had our sins passed on to Him came through the baptism He received from John, and His being nailed to the Cross and dying was His receiving the judgment for those sins. Therefore our faith does not rely on any ceremony we have gone through in church. The baptism that a believer receives is a confession of faith that says, "I believe that Jesus received baptism from John and saved me from all my sins."

Verse 28 states that these things took place in Bethabara beyond the Jordan, where John the Baptist was baptizing. Before the people's questions, John the Baptist testified of the Savior who had actually come. He did not make up a good religion out of his own thinking and recommend it; he pointed to the One whom God had sent and who was already standing among them. Today we too hear through the word and believe the work of salvation God has accomplished. The Lord has already given us all the grounds for salvation that we need.

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We who have been saved also have a gospel to testify of

John the Baptist revealed Jesus to the people who had gathered around him. This was his mission. The reason God has left us, who have received the remission of sins, on this earth is also so that we may testify of this gospel just as John the Baptist did. We are not people who accomplish a new salvation. We are people who testify of the salvation the Lord accomplished once and for all. In that sense, we who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit are the little John the Baptists of this age.

Preaching the gospel does not consist in shouting loudly in the streets. It consists in preaching the word clearly so that the one who hears can know and believe in Jesus. We can listen to why that person is unable to be sure of the remission of sins, and explain to him what the Lord has done. If he is clinging to his own merits, we can make clear that salvation is grace; if he is discouraged because of his sins, we can preach that those sins, too, are included in the sin of the world that was passed on to the Lord at the Jordan River.

This work is not done by words alone. There is also the work of preparing writings that contain the gospel, helping them to be conveyed in other languages, and delivering those writings to people who will read the word. There is also the service of laboring so that such work continues and of providing what is needed so that it can be accomplished together. Some preach the word directly, and others support the work so that that word is spread. Though the tasks differ, the purpose of making known to people the salvation the Lord has accomplished is the same.

We do not do this work in order to leave our own names behind. When a person comes to know Jesus and receives the remission of sins, the One who saved that person is the Lord. We

were merely used in testifying of that gracious work. So a true witness does not bind people to himself, but teaches them to believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished and in the word. When we know this, we can also value the labor of others and gladly take on work that goes unnoticed.

Whenever we see our own shortcomings, it is easy to step back, thinking we are not qualified to preach the gospel. But were we saved because we were perfect? We became righteous because the Lord bore all our sins. While we correct our shortcomings as we are taught by the word, we can boldly preach what the Lord has done. It is to preach to others, too, the very gospel that gave me the remission of sins.

John the Baptist did not dress himself up with the names people demanded. He made his mission clear as the voice crying out to make straight the way of the Lord, and he exalted the One coming after him. That voice let people know who the Savior is. The Lord wants this gospel to be spread through us today as well.

Therefore, let us look back at the center of the words we preach. Are we demanding that people pile up more merits, or are we helping them to believe in the salvation Jesus has accomplished? Are we hoping that people will recognize us, or are we hoping that they will come to know the Lord? We are not the Savior, but we can testify of the Savior. We have the grace He has bestowed on us, and we have the word of truth that we must preach. Treasuring this work the Lord has entrusted to us, let us live preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit as the voice in the wilderness pointing to *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29).* ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Who is Jesus?

< John 1:1–13 >

“In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made. In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light. That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.”

Who was Jesus?

• Jesus is God. He is the God of creation.

“And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins” (Matthew 1:21).

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• Jesus is the Savior who saved mankind from sin.

"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12).

The birth of Jesus

• For whom was the birth of Jesus?

It was a birth for sinners.

It was a birth for the lowly.

It was a birth to heal those who are sick in both spirit and body.

It was a birth for all created beings.

It was a birth to give us the kingdom of heaven.

It was a birth to bless those who believe.

It was a birth to give blessings to those who believe.

It was a birth to overcome the enemy.

It was a birth to judge the sin of the world.

It was a birth to confirm the love of God.

It was a birth for Jesus to become the Savior.

• In what way did He come?

He came through the Holy Spirit, borrowing the body of a virgin.

Reason: To save man from sin, the Savior had to come as a man.

• In what form did He come?

He came in a lowly form.

He came in a form that had nothing to be desired.

He came by borrowing the body of a virgin named Mary, who was betrothed to a man named Joseph in the nation of Israel.

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He came to this earth clothed in the form of a man in order to fulfill His own word of prophecy and not to exalt man.

• What He did when He came into this world

He became the light in the dark world.

Through the baptism He received from His servant John, He had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him and washed it away.

He became a bridge between God and man and did the work of a mediator.

He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood to give life to those who believe.

He made it possible to go to the kingdom of heaven by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. And He made it so that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of sins, obtain everlasting life, and escape the fire of hell.

We have looked at the word of John chapter 1. This world was truly dark and gloomy and without light, sunk in pitch-black darkness. Jesus came into this world. Why did He come? He came to shine light into this world. We praised that Jesus.

Jesus was not born in December. Jesus was born in the season when green grass sprouted abundantly in the fields of Israel and shepherds were grazing their flocks. In fact, December 25 was not the day of Christ's birth.

It is said that the reason we celebrate Christmas on December 25, in the cold of winter, is that Christians of old, as a counter-strategy, set the same day as the pagans' festival as Christmas, and this has continued to the present day. So although we do not know which day of the year is the true day of Christ's birth, Jesus, the Son of God, was born on this earth on one day of the year to save all mankind from sin. What matters is not the exact date, but commemorating that Jesus was born on this earth to remit

our sins. Because the whole world has set December 25 as the day of Jesus' birth and celebrates it, we too honor the birth of Jesus on this day, giving thanks and praise.

• Then why did Jesus come into this world?

Jesus came into this world to shine light into the dark world and rescue sinners from sin. Because the whole world was sunk in sin, Jesus Himself came to shine light into this world and remit sin.

When was it that Jesus came into this world? It was a time when all the people of this world had been deceived by the devil, when sin abounded in their hearts and they were crushed under sin, when they did not know the way to obtain everlasting life, and when there was no guide. That was when Jesus came. God the Father sent His Son Jesus into this world to save all these people of the world from all the sins of the world.

So Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death on the third day, thereby removing all sins. The name Jesus is the name of the Savior, and it means that *"He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. Jesus came into this world and was born. Jesus came in order to have all the sins in people's hearts transferred to Him entirely through the baptism He received from John and to remove them.

Was Jesus God?

Yes. Jesus was God. Jesus is the very One who made the whole universe by His word, that is, God. As it is written, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3)*, Jesus, who came to save

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sinners, was the God who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning. *"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3)*, and when He further said, "Let there be the sun," "Let there be grass," "Let there be fruit trees," "Let there be water in the seas," "Let there be a firmament in the heavens," they all came into being. Jesus was the God who in the beginning made all the plants, man, and everything. *"All things were made through Him" (John 1:3)*. He was God Himself in essence.

He came to save all the sinners of the world from all sins. Jesus came to this earth to shine the true Light on each of us sinners, so that we might receive the remission of sins.

"That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world. He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:9–12).

The One who came to remove the sin of all sinners, inherited from Adam, the forefather of mankind, and to shine the true Light into this world and drive out the darkness, was Jesus.

Why did people not receive Jesus into their hearts?

• Because Jesus came as a lowly human being.

• Because people did not abandon their own thoughts.

• Because people did not know that they were sinners.

• Because they did not know that they would go to hell because they were sinners.

• Because people did not know why they had to believe in Jesus or how they had to believe to be saved.

- **Because people were ignorant.**
- **Because people did not seek the Savior who is God.**
- **Because people did not respond to the calling of Jesus.**
- **Because people did not know Jesus, who is the truth.**

Jesus came, but the people of Israel did not receive Him. *"He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11).* Jesus was born in a stable in Bethlehem, a small country village in the nation called Israel on this earth. That Jesus was born in a stable means that He came to save those who are not treated well in this world and live in truly lowly circumstances, those who are tormented by sin, those who want to go to the kingdom of heaven, and those who want to receive God's grace. He came as the lowest of all and was laid in a manger for animals in order to serve them.

But when Jesus came, the people of Israel did not recognize Him. They did not recognize that Jesus was the Son of God, that He was the Creator God who had made them and made all things in the whole universe, and that He was the Savior who would save them from all sins. That is why the people of Israel did not receive Jesus.

When Jesus turned thirty years old, He did the work of removing the sin of mankind: He received baptism from John at the Jordan River. The baptism Jesus received from John was to have the sin in the hearts of all the sinners of this world, and all the trespasses, sins, and evils committed wrongly in deed, transferred to Him and to wash them away. And Jesus bore that sin, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death on the third day.

At that time, Jesus commanded John like this: *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).*

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This word meant this: By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had to have all the sins transferred to Him—the sins of the people who had lived in the past, the sins of the people living now, and the sins of all the people who would be born as long as this earth exists. In order to have even the sins that people commit out of weakness as they live transferred to Him, He had to receive baptism from John without fail. That is why Jesus commanded John to obey.

Thus Jesus received baptism from John. And bearing the sin of the world that had been transferred to Him through that baptism, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death on the third day.

What kind of baptism was this baptism that Jesus received from John? It was a baptism through which sin was passed on, just as sin was passed on when hands were laid on the sacrificial offering in the Old Testament. God had prophesied and promised that Jesus would have sin transferred to Him through baptism in this way, and He fulfilled it exactly so.

So in the Old Testament era, when people had sin, they received the remission of sins by laying their hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass their sins on to it, killing that animal in their place, cutting it into pieces before God, placing its flesh and fat on the altar of burnt offering, and burning them with fire. The baptism Jesus received from John is the same as the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, and it was the work by which He had the sins and evils of all the people of this world transferred to Him. The baptism Jesus received from John was for Him to have all that sin transferred to Him, like a lamb. That is why Jesus said to John the Baptist, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*.

Is Jesus the true Savior of the sinners of the world?

- **Yes. He is truly the Savior.**
- **He is the Lord who shone the true Light.**
- **He is the God of power.**
- **He is the God of mercy.**
- **Jesus is the true Savior God who has power.**

Dear fellow believers, Jesus came into this world and shone light into our human hearts, which were dark because of our sins. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him, and He was judged on the Cross in our place. The Lord, truly as our Savior, removed all the sin of the world. The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit became the true Light in these dark hearts and brought the beautiful and blessed news. Jesus became our Savior through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus removed your sins. This joyful news of the remission of sins shone light into dark hearts and made them bright. He removed all the sins in our hearts so that they would become clean hearts without a single sin.

Did Jesus wash away the sins we commit from birth until death?

It is an all too clear truth that Jesus came into this world and remitted the sins that mankind commits from birth until death. Everyone commits sin from birth until death. Whether they sin in their hearts or sin in their deeds, whether they sin out of weakness or sin deliberately, they sin as routinely as they eat their meals. Jesus removed all those sins of the world through the baptism He received from John and the Cross, and so made

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it possible for the people living in this world to believe in their hearts and receive the remission of sins. Jesus saved us from sin and made us righteous people without a single sin.

The God who created the heavens and the earth of this world—why did Jesus, the Son of that God, come to this earth? He was born on a certain day two thousand years ago to become the Savior of mankind. That one day has been designated as Christmas, and every year when Christmas comes, the whole world celebrates it.

Why did Jesus come upon this earth?

Why did Jesus come? He came to remove the sins of you and me and send us to the kingdom of heaven. He came to send you and me—who cannot help but sin, who were brought forth in iniquity, who were conceived in sin, and who could not but go to hell—to the kingdom of heaven, and to clothe us with the blessing and grace of making us children of God.

Jesus was the true Light. In this world there was no savior other than Jesus. No one could save man from sin. The only One who could save man from his weaknesses, trespasses, and sins, and from the judgment for sin, was Jesus alone.

The Book of Isaiah records what happened when God looked down from heaven above like this: *"He saw that there was no man, And wondered that there was no intercessor; Therefore His own arm brought salvation for Him" (Isaiah 59:16)*. God thought that He Himself would have to come to this earth and do the work of salvation. So, in order to tear down the wall of sin that stood between us and God the Father and to remove this sin completely, the Savior of mankind came as the mediator between God and us, as the Savior. Through the baptism He

received from John, He had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him; by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood, He removed the judgment for all the sin of mankind; and by dying and rising again, He gave those who believe in Him the blessing of becoming children of God.

Our hearts are glad because our Lord has come. Our Lord came and, through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, had all our sins transferred to Him; He received all the judgment for our sins on the Cross; and He took away the sin of the world and made us sinless.

Believe that Jesus is your Savior. Jesus came to this earth to save me from sin, received baptism from John and had all my sins transferred to Him, was judged on the Cross, rose again on the third day after He died and gave us new life, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God, having become the Savior of you and me. If only you believe this fact in your hearts, every one of you becomes a child of God and enters the kingdom of heaven.

No matter how devoid of their own righteousness people may be, no matter how lacking and weak, no matter how many sins they have committed, if only they know and accept in their hearts the fact that Jesus had all their sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and fulfilled all righteousness—if only they receive Jesus into their hearts—they are saved.

We go to the kingdom of heaven not by money, not by knowledge, not by good looks, but by faith. By believing in our hearts we become righteous. By believing in our hearts we become children of God. By believing in our hearts we receive the blessing of God.

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That is why in this whole world there is no true Savior but Jesus, He alone. The very name Jesus means that *"He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*.

By whom were you and I made? It was none other than Jesus, who came into this world—that very God—who formed the first man Adam out of the dust and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils, making Adam blink his eyes. And because He felt sorry seeing Adam living alone, He put Adam to sleep and took one of his ribs and made a person. Who was that? It was Eve.

It is said that when a man and a woman marry and live together, they are a complete person. A person cannot stand properly alone; two people can stand upright when they support each other. That is why a man and a woman become complete when they marry and live together. Dear fellow believers, that a man and a woman marry, bear children in one home, and live happily under one roof is a mystery that God has ordained for us human beings.

What He ordained like this shows that it is complete for Jesus to take us as His bride and live together with us forever. Jesus wanted to make us sinless, complete righteous people through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and to live together with us forever in the kingdom of heaven. That is why God made man and woman in this world and had them marry, so that they would bear children and live beautifully and happily.

Dear fellow believers, what can we do to go to the kingdom of heaven? Can we go to the kingdom of heaven by living a good life? No. The reason Jesus loved little children was that their hearts were honest. You too are loved only when you get out of hypocrisy and abomination before God and are honest. Let me ask again. Listen with it truly engraved on your hearts, and answer. Dear fellow believers, can we be born into this world

and never sin even once? No, we cannot. No one can help but sin.

But can a person who has sinned even once go to the kingdom of heaven, or not? He cannot. Then is there anyone in this world who is qualified to go to the kingdom of heaven even without Jesus, or not? There is not. Then how can we go to the kingdom of heaven? We go to the kingdom of heaven by believing in Jesus and believing in the word of the water and the Spirit.

"For He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21). The One who made us, and who became a man and came to this earth to remove our sins when we had fallen into sin, is none other than Jesus. That Jesus had all the sins of all the people of this world, without leaving out the sin of a single person, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John.

Just as in the Old Testament sin was passed on by laying hands on a lamb, John, the representative of mankind, laid his hands on the head of Jesus. Jesus commanded John, *"Permit it to be so now" (Matthew 3:15)*. It was a command to lay hands on Him and pass on sin.

Dear fellow believers, placing hands on the head is the laying on of hands. The laying on of hands means 'to pass on.' Jesus received the laying on of hands from John, the representative of mankind.

This is the core. Even if you know nothing about the Bible, you can be saved if you know the core key to salvation that the Bible speaks of. I am preaching it to you now. Therefore, if you believe this word in your hearts now, you are saved. If you believe in your hearts that Jesus came to this earth and brought salvation through the water and the Spirit, you become children of God. Even if you have never given a single offering in your whole life, even if you have never done a single good deed in

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your whole life, you go to the kingdom of heaven by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

And to those who believe this truth in their hearts, God has given a blessing. He has given the blessing of becoming children of God. *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12)*. I hope you will accept in your hearts the truth that is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

I have no merit, I deserve to die, I deserve to be judged and go to hell, and all of us human beings deserve the same, but God loved us and gave His only begotten Son. That only begotten Son, Jesus, came to this earth, had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, shed His blood on the Cross and received all the judgment for our sins, and rose again from death on the third day. I hope you will believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit in your hearts and receive the blessing of becoming children of God.

What is it to truly receive Him?

The Bible says, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12)*. To those who have believed and received the fact that Jesus is their Savior and has removed all their sins, God has given the right to become children of God. Do you receive Him, too?

One can receive Him when one knows about Him. When someone knocks on the door from outside, don't you ask, "Who is it?" before opening the door? When the person says, "It's so-and-so," and it is someone you know, you open the door wide

and welcome him, saying, "What brings you here? It's good to see you. Please come in." This is receiving.

Even though we have never met Jesus, Jesus had all the sins of you and me transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. This I can vouch for before God. Even though I cannot stand as guarantor for other debts, I can guarantee that Jesus had your sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and that Jesus was judged on the Cross. Your going to the kingdom of heaven, becoming sinless, becoming righteous, becoming children of God, obtaining everlasting life, and receiving the blessings of heaven all come about through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Before God, I testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus had all your sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. In fact, I can guarantee the fact that not only your sins but even the sins of your descendants, even the sins of your ancestors, even the sins of the people from Adam to those who will be born on the day this earth ends—Jesus came once and for all, paid for them all once and for all, and made them all sinless.

Dear fellow believers, believe in the word of the water and the Spirit. Dear fellow believers, the word 'heart' is a tremendously beautiful word. When we receive the Lord into our hearts, that beauty blossoms fully and gives off its fragrance. I believe the fact that Jesus is my Savior. And I am a child of God without sin. There is nothing great about me. Yet the reason I can speak so boldly like this and sometimes even act as if I were great is all because of the grace of Jesus, the gift of Jesus.

In any case, I hope that all of you will become children of God today. If only you know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you become children of God. So let us, who are the offspring of evildoers, believe in the gospel of the water and

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the Spirit—that Jesus Christ, the God who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, had all sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again—and, receiving the Lord into our hearts by faith, let us preach this beautiful gospel to the whole world.

Those who believe in Jesus must know the Bible and believe. If they believe without knowing the right answer, they end up ruined. Dear fellow believers, there are so many strange churches these days. A church is a place that leads people out of sin, makes them sinless, and enables them to live a life with Jesus, yet there are many churches that are run like worldly businesses.

I am not like that before God. God accepts what comes from those who serve with a willing heart; He does not want what is done by compulsion or done hypocritically for show.

One thing is clear: God wants to give to us. God wants to give; He does not want to receive from us. Look at how He gave us salvation. Not only did He make us sinless, but He also makes us children of God and lets us receive blessings. Do not forget that He is the God who wants to give whatever is blessed.

Dear fellow believers, God has given us the blessing of salvation. We must know this. I can clearly guarantee it before God.

Jesus had all your sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. And Jesus received all the judgment on the Cross for the sins you have committed throughout your lives. And He rose from the tomb on the third day after He died. Now He has gone to the right hand of the throne of God, the place where He originally was. Dear fellow believers, our God is alive even now.

God is alive, and even now He is watching to see whether there is anyone who believes in Him. And He makes those who

have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins His children, and keeps them as the apple of His eye. People who do not know the truth often mistake what has come about of blood, of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man for what is born *"not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:13)*. They boast that their fathers are elders and pastors, and, having neither heard nor seen the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they misunderstand, thinking they have been saved by the blood of the Cross alone; but one cannot go to the kingdom of heaven that way.

Some say, "Father, when you go to the kingdom of heaven, please take me with you," and some say, "Honey, when you go to the kingdom of heaven, I'll hold on to your leg and go with you, so leave one leg dangling down." But faith is a personal matter.

Dear fellow believers, *"That was the true Light which gives light to every man coming into the world" (John 1:9)*. Each person just has to receive Him. Jesus came as the Savior of each and every one of us. Dear fellow believers, anyone, even if he knows nothing, receives the remission of all sins by believing the fact that Jesus had his sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and fulfilled all righteousness. It is because of believing that one receives remission. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe. And I hope you will believe the word Jesus spoke as He died on the Cross, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*.

We cannot see Jesus with our physical eyes. But we can believe in Him with our hearts. Before we were born again, there was clearly pitch-black darkness in our hearts. But we came to know the fact that the One who shone the genuine true Light into our hearts was Jesus, and having received the light of the gospel

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of the water and the Spirit, we have become a bright light. We should also remember the fact that we do not live forever in this world.

The Bible says, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. Dear fellow believers, it is a fixed law that a person is born and goes through birth, aging, sickness, and death. If one is strong, one lives to eighty; if stronger, to a hundred; if stronger still, to a hundred and twenty; but one day one dies once. Dear fellow believers, it does not end when we die; after that there is the judgment, and we are divided between the kingdom of heaven and hell. I hope that while you are alive on this earth, you will believe in Jesus and receive Him into your hearts and be blessed. I hope you will receive the blessing of salvation. Then God will truly change your homes and your hearts.

Dear fellow believers, are there any of you who say, "Not me. I can't. I'm not the kind of person to believe in Jesus. Why? Because I was born with a disposition to sin from birth, someone like me shouldn't believe in Jesus"? Do not worry. If only you believe in your hearts the fact that Jesus had all your sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and the fact that He received the judgment of blood on the Cross—if only you receive Him—that Jesus enters your hearts and changes you into righteous people. I hope you will entrust all your sins to Jesus. I hope you will also entrust before God the weaknesses and the evil heart that you cannot do anything about yourselves. If only we entrust them to the Lord, our Lord, as the God of great power, has nothing He cannot do.

All of us, while we live in this world, should live prepared to go to the kingdom of heaven at any time. And I hope you will know the fact that when we believe in Jesus, it does not end with our own generation, but the grace of God comes upon your

children as well. When we believe in the word of the water and the Spirit of Jesus, God becomes the shepherd for generation after generation of our descendants and keeps them. And He protects their hearts so that the evil one cannot touch them. I give thanks that Jesus has become my Savior, and that He has become your Savior as well. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Do you know the work of God's two servants?

< John 1:30–36 >

"This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water. And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.' Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!'"

John the Baptist, the servant of God

Today we have looked at the word of John chapter 1. The servants of God who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit all know that Jesus is the Son of God and also the Savior of sinners. Likewise, those who truly and rightly know and believe in God can know that John the Baptist is a servant of God.

Long ago, in the Old Testament age, there were those who were set apart to serve God. A representative figure among such

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people is Samson. These were people who lived set apart by God even before they were born into this world.

Likewise, John, who baptized Jesus, was also one who was born on this earth after being revealed by God even before he was conceived in the womb of his mother Elizabeth. That is why, before Elizabeth conceived John the Baptist, the angel testified to Zacharias that he *"shall drink neither wine nor strong drink. He will also be filled with the Holy Spirit, even from his mother's womb" (Luke 1:15)*. Thus John the Baptist was one who was specially set apart by God.

Even when John the Baptist grew up and testified that Jesus is the Son of God, he was one who had received the revelation of God that, when he baptized, if he saw the Spirit descending upon a person, he should know that this person was the very Son of God. Before John the Baptist grew up and laid his hands on the head of Jesus to baptize Him, John the Baptist was one who had received the revelation of the Holy Spirit that, when he baptized people, whoever the Spirit came upon, that person was the very Son of God. *"I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, 'Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit.' And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God" (John 1:33–34)*. That is why John, who baptized Jesus, could testify of Jesus, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. Thus John the Baptist was the one who was to testify that Jesus, who would receive baptism from John, die on the Cross, and rise again, is the Son of God and also the Savior of mankind.

John the Baptist testified of Jesus, saying, "That man is the very Son of God and the Lamb of God spoken of in the Old Testament. The Son of God came to this earth as a man and had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through

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the baptism He received from me." And he testified to people that Jesus Christ, who has become the eternal Savior to those who believe in Jesus as the Savior, that very One, is the Savior of mankind. Just as John the Baptist, who baptized Jesus, recognized Jesus as the Son of God by the revelation of God, so those who know God have been enabled to know that John the Baptist is the servant of God and the last representative high priest of the Old Testament (Matthew 11:11). In other words, those who believe in the Son of God have come to know that John the Baptist is the very servant of God whom God sent as the representative of mankind.

John the Baptist is the servant of God who passed on the sin of this world to Jesus. If someone does not know this, that person is not someone who believes in the word of God, nor is he someone who properly knows the Savior. Those of us who seek to be saved from all sins according to the word of the Scriptures are those who come to know and also believe the fact that John the Baptist baptized Jesus and passed on the sin of the world to Jesus once and for all, and who are thereby saved from all sins. John the Baptist testified that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior, saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. "He is the very Savior of mankind. He is the Savior who, through the baptism He has just received from me, has had all the sins of this world transferred to Him and washed away the sin of mankind. Whoever believes in this truth of salvation is saved from all sins. Jesus Christ is our Savior." Because John preached this truth of true salvation, people came to meet the Savior properly and were also able to believe properly. If all of us truly are those who believe in the word of God, we cannot help but believe the fact that John the Baptist is the servant of God whom God sent.

When Jesus came to this earth, John the Baptist testified of Jesus that there were not so many who knew that He is the Son of God and also the Savior of mankind. In particular, there were even fewer who connected the truth that John testified, saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*, with John the Baptist and thought about it and believed it. Until John, who baptized Jesus, spoke the word we read today, there was no one but John the Baptist who knew that Jesus is the Son of God and also the Savior of mankind, the true Savior who had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and who would receive the judgment of sin on the Cross.

For example, just as Mary, the mother of Jesus in the flesh, came to know the fact that the One conceived in her womb was the very Savior because an angel appeared and revealed it to her through the word of God, saying, *"Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you" (Luke 1:28)*, so John the Baptist also came to know by the Holy Spirit.

Likewise, though John the Baptist was born into this world, he did not know on his own that Jesus is the Son of God. For him, too, it was because the Spirit of God, who is holy, testified of Jesus Christ and taught him that the One upon whom the Spirit came like a dove is the Son of God, the Savior.

John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus and passed on the sin of this world to Jesus once and for all. John the Baptist testified to those who believe in Jesus as the Savior of mankind. He made it known that Jesus is God, the Son of God, and the Savior of mankind, and also that He received baptism, bore the sin of mankind, and went to the Cross.

The testimony of John the Baptist was to testify who had the sin of mankind transferred to Him and washed it away. His testimony existed in order to make known that Jesus had all the

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sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. He fulfilled the work of administering baptism on the head of Jesus.

At just that time, John the Baptist was baptizing people at the Jordan River, and then Jesus came to him to receive baptism. Jesus said to him, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Jesus Christ had the sin of all people transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again in three days.

When John baptized Jesus, the Holy Spirit came down from heaven and testified that this One was the Son of God. Had it not been so, even John, who baptized Jesus, could not have known whether Jesus was the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through this baptism, died on the Cross and rose again in three days. When Jesus received baptism from John and came up again out of the water, John saw the Spirit coming down like a dove and heard a voice speaking from heaven. *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*. That is why John the Baptist, from then on, testified to people that Jesus Christ is the Son of God. Thus, if John the Baptist had not baptized Jesus, no one could have passed on the sin of this world to Jesus. If there had been no testimony of John the Baptist in this world, no one on this earth would have known that Jesus received baptism, bore the sin of the world, and went to the Cross.

All of us have come to know that He is the true Savior because John the Baptist gave Jesus the baptism that fulfills the righteousness of God and because of his testimony. Because God the Father had John the Baptist pass on the sin of the world to Jesus, and because Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, the will of

God the Father was fulfilled, and so all of us were able to be saved by faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus was revealed to this world by countless prophets and by John the Baptist. That is why today you and I have come to truly believe in Jesus Christ, who came by water and the Spirit, as the Savior of mankind. The one who revealed to this world that the Savior of mankind is Jesus was John the Baptist, the servant of God in the New Testament age. The disciples of Jesus also testify to all people that Jesus is the Savior. Like John the Baptist, they testify, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*.

Everyone must be delivered from all sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit of which John the Baptist testified

Through the baptism of John the Baptist and his testimony, we have come to know that Jesus is our Savior and have gained the faith that saves. That is why today you and I, whoever we are, were able to have true faith that Jesus is the Savior of mankind by receiving the testimony of the baptism. Because Jesus had the sin of this world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and then, bearing all the sins of this world, was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of all sins, we have become those who can truly believe. Moreover, Jesus has made it so that those who know and believe Him as the Savior who saved them from all the sins of this world—whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus—obtain the evidence and assurance of having received the remission of sins.

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Whoever, through the testimony of John the Baptist, believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received—that is, that Jesus is God and the Son of God, that He washed away all that person's sins completely through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, that He was judged on the Cross and completely finished the judgment for all that person's sins, and that He rose again in three days—has been born again. You and I must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe that the Lord has removed our sins.

Through the Son of God, God has completely saved from sin those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, however heinous and however lacking they may be, and made them sinless. That truth is the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Whoever believes in the water and the blood of Jesus becomes sinless. If people believe in Jesus as the Savior, they become sinless, and if they do not believe in Jesus Christ, who came by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they become those who have sin. If a person believes in Jesus as the Savior—Jesus, of whom John the Baptist testified, that is, the One of whom it is said, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ –ASV" (1 John 5:6)*—he becomes sinless. No matter how violent, how lacking, how weak, or how full of mistakes a person may be, whoever believes in Jesus as his own Savior and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is saved from all sins and becomes righteous.

People become those who have sin because they do not believe that Jesus is the Savior who saved them from sin. But by believing in Jesus, who came to us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as one's own Savior, all one's sins come to be no more. If we are those who believe in Jesus Christ as our own Savior, this means we must believe that Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism

He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and washed it all away, that He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and that He rose again. We must know this truth.

John the Baptist, the servant whom God Himself sent as the representative of mankind

Jesus received baptism at the Jordan River. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him" (Matthew 3:13).* Jesus came to the Jordan River in order to receive baptism from John, bear the sin of the world, die on the Cross, and rise again. And He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15).*

John the Baptist is the servant whom God sent, and Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, the representative of mankind, and washed away the sin of all people. Therefore, the reason Jesus sought to receive baptism from John the Baptist was to have the sin of the world transferred to Him, to bear that sin and die on the Cross, and to rise again. John the Baptist declined to baptize Jesus, but obeying the command of Jesus, he baptized Jesus and passed on all the sin of this world to Him. Thus John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and baptized Him, and Jesus had the sin of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and could be hung on the Cross and die. Therefore, Jesus received baptism from John, was fully immersed in the water, and came up again. This was the same as the word of promise in the Old Testament. The baptism Jesus received from John in the New Testament fulfilled the prophecy of that promise, in which, in the yearly sacrifice of the Old Testament, the high priest laid his hands on

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the sacrificial lamb in order to remove the sin of the people, passed on the sin of the people, and killed that lamb. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him and washed it away completely.

Because John the Baptist knew Jesus, he spoke when Jesus passed before him. *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. "People, look at that man. That man is the very Lamb of God. That man is the Savior of mankind who takes away the sin of the world. He is the Savior of sinners. He is the Savior of all people." In this way John testified to people of the substance of salvation. John the Baptist recognized Jesus and so was able to testify like that.

Jesus truly was the Lamb of God who took away the sin of the world. When John the Baptist baptized Jesus, Jesus was the Lamb of God who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And He lived His three years of public ministry bearing the sin of the world, and then died on the Cross.

"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins in the world transferred to Him once and for all, was judged once and for all by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again, saving mankind once and for all. So the point is, where is sin? Since Jesus received baptism and shed His blood as the price of that sin, can there be sin in this world? If you do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, sin will simply remain, but if you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you have received the remission of sins by believing in the washing of sin.

Why? Because if one has even the faith that believes the fact that Jesus received baptism from John, bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross, and rose again, one is saved from all sins.

Because salvation is not something one accomplishes oneself but something the Savior Himself accomplishes for us, even if one has just a little faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one has been saved from sin. So there is no one who rightly knows and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and in Jesus and yet does not receive the remission of sins. All who rightly know and believe in Jesus, who came by water and the Spirit, have received the remission of sins. Since Jesus received baptism and took away the sin of the world, the sin of this world cannot exist.

It is because people do not recognize Jesus, do not know that Jesus became the sacrificial offering of redemption, and do not believe, that the sin of the world remains in them; but if one believes in Jesus, how can the sin of the world remain in him when Jesus has taken away the sin of the world? It cannot. If one believes in the sacrifice of atonement of Jesus in his heart, he has no sin, and if one does not believe, he has sin.

For a person to be born again, he must recognize the two anointed servants and believe in their work

By believing in Jesus as the Savior one is saved from sin, and by not believing one comes to receive the judgment of sin. No matter how lacking, how evil, how weak, how wicked, how violent, how fierce, how petty, or how servile a person may be, if he believes in Jesus, he has no sin. If one believes with the faith that rightly knows and believes the gospel of Jesus, he becomes sinless. That is why it is important to know Jesus through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Then how should we know Jesus? *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. We, too, can know as

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Peter knew and confess like this: “You are the Christ, the King of kings, the God of creation, and, being God, also the Son of the living God. And at the same time You are the High Priest, a prophet, and a king. You are my God and my King, the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven who removed all my sins once and for all, and the true prophet who rightly taught me that.” All who have received the remission of sins will make this confession of faith.

After John the Baptist was martyred, people wondered about Jesus. Jesus raised the dead, healed the sick, exercised authority, and performed the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, and there were many who thought this strange.

King Herod thought, “John the Baptist must have come back to life,” and because he himself had killed him, he was afraid of him. Some said, “No. He may be Elijah. Elijah went up to heaven alive without tasting death, so he may have come down again. Because He is Elijah, He can do such things,” and others said, “No. Looking at that man, He is very warmhearted. That man may be Jeremiah. Looking at that man, when He is cold He is extremely cold, but at other times He knows people all too well. So He may be Jeremiah.”

People knew Jesus in their own way, in various respects and in various ways. But Jesus asked His disciples, *“Who do you say that I am?” (Matthew 16:15)*. Then Peter answered, *“You are the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matthew 16:16)*. In this short answer there was true faith. How concisely the fisherman Peter spoke the exact core! It was truly a great faith.

Dear fellow believers, a person who actually believes in Jesus as his own Savior can state the core clearly and decisively. He can speak the core part of the gospel, saying, “Jesus has remitted all my sins like this, with the water and the blood.” Then Jesus said, *“Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh*

and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17). This means that God the Father made him know it.

Here, John the Baptist, too, could know who Jesus was because God the Holy Spirit taught him. It is the same with us. When we preach the word of God, who teaches us? When you accepted this gospel, who truly taught it in your hearts? The Holy Spirit taught you, saying, "It is right, it is right, that He came by water and blood and saved you from sin." God the Holy Spirit made us realize and know this word.

Do you know and believe in the baptism Jesus received?

Many people, when they believe in Jesus, believe with their emotions. This is because they do not have the knowledge to know Jesus rightly. This is a common thing; some people believe for ten years without knowing who Jesus is. If you ask them, "Who is Jesus?" they say, "I do believe in Jesus, but I don't know." What did they believe during the ten years they believed in Jesus? They believed the emotions of their own hearts.

Peter, while believing in Jesus, knew exactly who Jesus was. *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. These words mean, "You are my God, You are my Savior, and You are a prophet to me. Yet You are still the Son of God." Peter knew and believed like this, but many people still believe without knowing Jesus. Now all who believe in Jesus must know Jesus and believe. And they must also know John the Baptist. They must also know the many servants of God who appear in the Old Testament. Only when one knows can one do anything; how can one believe in God without knowing? The claim that

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one is saved as long as one believes, even if one believes without knowing, does not hold before God. That is merely human thinking. Also, even if one believes in Jesus fully, if one does not acknowledge the divinity of Jesus, that He is God Himself in essence, that too is a vain faith.

Because Jesus is not merely a man but God, He did for us the work of receiving baptism from John, dying on the Cross, and rising again. That is the work by which God saved sinners from sin. Through that work, we have become sinless by faith. If Jesus had been just an ordinary man, not only could we not be saved, but Jesus would merely be recognized as one of the outstanding people. But if one believes Jesus to be one of those whom the world calls sages, one cannot be saved. For Jesus is God.

Because all human beings have fallen into sin, only God could become the Savior of mankind. Because Jesus was not a man in essence but God, the work He did—coming to this earth, receiving baptism from John, dying on the Cross, and rising again—takes effect on you and me, on those who believe. Those who believe in Jesus are saved by faith and are born again by faith. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

A person who believes in Jesus but has not been born again still has the sin of the world simply remaining in him. John the Baptist testified of Jesus, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*, but to him this word was just a word, and sin remained as it was in his heart. This is because, by not believing this word, he does not know Jesus rightly, and so the sin of the world still remains in him. Because he has the sin of the world, though he believes in Jesus, he cannot say that he has no sin; and because he commits sin as he goes on living, he still becomes a sinner and cannot say that he is righteous. In other words, because he did not know Jesus and did

not believe in Jesus, he still becomes a sinner, and without becoming righteous, the sin of the world remains in him as it is.

If one has rightly known and believed in John the Baptist and Jesus, one is righteous however lacking one may be, and can boldly say before anyone that one is righteous. Why? One says one is righteous because one believes. One has no sin because one believes. How do we human beings get born again? Jesus said that we must be born again of water and the Spirit. It speaks of being born again of water and the Spirit—that is, by believing that Jesus is God, the Son of God, the Savior who saved us sinners, and a prophet—by believing that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism, shed His blood on the Cross, and saved us.

Being born again is being born again of water and the Spirit. The water speaks of the baptism Jesus received from John, and the Spirit points to the fact that Jesus is God. Jesus, while being God, is the Savior who, as God Himself, came as a man, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His own blood on the Cross, and made us who believe in our hearts sinless. We have been born again by believing in the baptism Jesus received as the offering of the sacrifice of atonement and in His blood. Our salvation is this: believing that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is God, that all my sins were passed on to Him through the baptism Jesus received from John, and believing in the blood of the Cross—this becomes believing in the Holy Spirit. For Jesus is God and the Savior.

The reason we must believe in the divinity of Jesus, that Jesus is God, is that it is the truth that God came as Jesus the Savior, had sin transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John and washed it away, shed the blood within His own body on the Cross, and rose again, thereby

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saving those who believe this in their hearts. This faith is the faith that makes a person born again.

The true meaning of 'water' in a person's being born again?

In the Bible, the water points to the baptism Jesus received, and the blood speaks of the salvation in which Jesus died on the Cross. Jesus said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5),* and He said that whoever is born again of water and the Spirit can call God Father. He made whoever believes in the baptism Jesus received and that Jesus is the Son of God born again. Whoever believes that Jesus received baptism for us and washed away all our sins is born again. A person becomes sinless by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And Jesus spoke the core: that whoever believes that He, Jesus, is God, that He is that person's Savior, and that God has become that person's Savior becomes one of the people of God.

Now, you and I, the born-again righteous, can state the motive and foundation of our faith like this: "We have been saved by the water and the blood." So to say that one has believed in Jesus and been born again means that. We believe that one becomes righteous only by being born again of water and the Spirit.

To be born again of water and the Spirit means, first, believing that Jesus had all sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and washed away our sins completely. The one who believes the fact that all his sins were passed on to the head of Jesus through John the Baptist is the very one who has received the remission of sins completely. And,

by believing that Jesus is God the Holy Spirit, by believing that He who had all that person's sins transferred to Him and was judged on the Cross—that Jesus who saved that person with the water and the blood—was God, it means believing that Jesus, who came by baptism and blood to save human beings from sin, is not a man but God Himself.

Jesus said in John chapter 3 that only by being born again of water and the Spirit can one enter and see the kingdom of God. So we have been born again of water and the Spirit. When asked how a person is born again, being born again is believing that Jesus, while being God, came to this earth in the form of a man, received baptism from John, was judged on the Cross, rose again, and saved us from all sins.

Those who believe that God has thus saved everyone from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit have been born again. They have now been born anew. We, human beings who were to die because of our sins, passed all those sins on to Jesus by faith in His baptism and blood, so that when Jesus received baptism our sins were passed on, and when He died on the Cross we also died once, and when Jesus rose again we also rose with Him. So this kind of faith is the faith that saves from sin.

But those who do not believe that Jesus is God and the Son of God, those who do not believe that Jesus saved them with the water and the blood, cannot be born again because their sins have not been washed away. Among those who believe in Jesus as the Savior, one has become born again of water and the Spirit by believing in the water and the blood, while another has become one who is not born again because he does not believe that He who washed away all his sins with the water and the blood is God Himself and that God saved him in this way. All people have become sinners by not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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A person, once born a sinner, ends up dying a sinner to the end. He has become a sinner because he does not believe in his heart the truth of salvation—that Jesus, his Savior, is the Son of God and also God, and that God came to this earth clothed in human flesh, received baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again three days after His death, thereby making that person perfectly righteous and making him one of God's people. That is why we must receive the remission of sins and be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Faith that believes in Jesus as the Savior is not the kind of superstitious faith that just says, "I believe in Jesus as the Savior." Right faith is believing while also having the knowledge of the word of God, which is the truth. That is real faith. To put it simply with an analogy, faith can be described like this. When we are riding a train, we go whether we are riding in the middle or riding at the very end. And whether we are riding in the very front car, right behind the engineer, or sitting right next to the engineer, we still go just the same. But how does that train actually go? A mechanism that can move the train is installed, and because the engineer operates the machine at the front, the rest is carried along by all the engines at the front. So when we board a train, whichever car we are riding in, we go all the way to the destination. We must not think that the train we are riding goes by itself. A locomotive without an engine is not a locomotive but a lump of scrap metal.

Likewise, faith must not be without a clear core. Faith is believing in the power of the core—the baptism Jesus received, the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. A faith that believes unconditionally without knowing exactly that Jesus saved that person with the water and the blood is not true faith. Then if it is not believing, what is it? It is like flailing one's arms alone in

the middle of the night when no one is watching. Believing in Jesus without knowing the water and the Spirit is like believing in a demon. It is like making a demon oneself and bowing down to it.

Dear fellow believers, if we are to be born again of water and the Spirit, we must know Jesus and we must know John the Baptist. If John the Baptist had not known Jesus, he could not have testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. If John the Baptist had not had sure faith, how could he have testified to the people of Israel that He is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world? If one does not know for certain, one cannot testify. And to testify, there must be a witness. There must be what God has taught, that is, the revelation of the word of God.

If one believes in the true God and Jesus through the baptism and the blood, one is born again, and if one does not believe the truth, one cannot be born again. To be born again, one must know and believe. When one rightly knows and believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is the very faith of being born again. One must know that Jesus, who is God, as the High Priest of heaven, had all the sin of the world, the sin of mankind, transferred onto His body once and for all through the baptism He received from John. And He was judged once and for all on the Cross. And one must know that He rose again three days after His death. One must also know that He is alive and seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus promised that He will come again to take those who believe. Only when one knows and believes is one born again. One is born again when one knows and then believes what one knows. So one is born again only by believing in the water and the Spirit. Believing blindly without knowing does not make one born again.

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As for whom Jesus takes to the kingdom of heaven, He takes only those who have been born again of water and the Spirit. Then who are those born again of water and the Spirit? Those who know that Jesus is God and the Son of God, that when Jesus received baptism all their sins and all the sins of the world were passed on to Him, and that He thus washed them all away, who know that He shed His blood and was judged on the Cross, and who know and believe that He rose again—they are the ones who fit this law of faith that Jesus spoke of, being born again of water and the Spirit.

There was a prophet named Habakkuk, and while speaking of wicked people who were proud and not upright, he said, *"But the just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4)*. This word says that even such a person, if he believes, becomes righteous, and that he who has become righteous lives by faith.

If one believes in Jesus, who is God—in His being God, in His having had all sin transferred to Him and washed it away when He received baptism from John, in His being judged on the Cross, in His rising again in three days, in His being at the right hand of God, and in His coming again in the future to become the Judge—one is born again and becomes righteous. If one just believes like that, the Holy Spirit, being in one's heart, agrees and seals one's heart, saying, "You are born again. You are My people." Thus one has become sinless by faith. The saved righteous have no sin, however lacking they may be. They have no sin by faith, and they actually have no sin. Even if they commit sin, they have none. They really have no sin. Do you have sin? It is gone.

Not knowing and not believing that Jesus is the Savior who saved us with the water and the blood is a wrong faith. Those who believe in the true baptism Jesus received from John and in the blood of the Cross have no sin. By knowing Jesus, and by

believing what they know, they have no sin. It is important for us to rightly know and believe in the LORD.

John knew Jesus well and believed in Him. And he testified of Jesus, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. John testified that there is no sin in the world. He testifies that those who believe have no sin, and that those who do not believe have the sin of the world. Through today's word, we can see that the difference between being born again and not being born again is decided by whether one knows Jesus and believes or believes without knowing. For us, first knowing the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, knowing the truth, and believing is true faith. The conclusion is that knowing and believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, His true death, and His resurrection is true faith and the way to truly be born again from sin. I give thanks to the Lord who has given us this gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The Lamb of God who bore all our sins

< John 1:29–34 >

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! This is He of whom I said, "After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me." I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water.' And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.'"

There are people who, even while hearing the word that Jesus took away the sin of the world, think that their own sins still remain with them. They acknowledge that Jesus is the Savior, but when they recall the sins they have committed in their lives, they cannot readily accept it in their hearts. They speak of salvation to others, while they themselves live without the assurance of the remission of sins. Why is that? It is because they see the sins that show up in themselves as greater than Jesus, who bore the sin of the world. Even though the Lord has taken

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away sin, if a person does not know that fact, then as far as he is concerned, sin is still there.

Peace does not come from denying the fact that we have sinned. Nor is the problem of sin before God solved by forgetting our wrongs or by soothing our hearts with more good deeds. What we need is a Savior who actually had our sins passed on to Him and received the judgment of those sins for us. In today's passage, John the Baptist points to that very One. Crying out for people to behold Jesus, he testifies what He bore and who He is.

This testimony is not merely a good reputation about Jesus. It is the testimony that John the Baptist, who was sent by God and gave baptism to Jesus, gives according to the evidence God showed him. If we ask and answer this short passage phrase by phrase, all of salvation is contained in it. When we follow the word just as it says and believe in this way, we come to know how our own sins were washed away, and we are freed from the fear of sin and judgment.

The Lord, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John

Let us first read verse 29.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

This word is not long. But ask and answer for yourselves. What did Jesus take away? The sin of the world. How did that sin move over to Jesus? Where did He go, bearing that sin? And why is He called the Lamb of God? If we follow these questions one by one, the gospel comes clearly into view.

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If Jesus had come only to teach how to live a good life, John could not have testified like this. Jesus came not only to give sinners the teaching they need, but also to take upon Himself the burden of sin that sinners cannot bear. The Jesus to whom John the Baptist pointed the people with the cry "*Behold!"* was already bearing the sin of the world.

When did that sin move over to Jesus? It was when Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River. At that moment, when He received it in order to fulfill all righteousness, Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him once and for all. John the Baptist was not relating a story he had heard from someone else. Because John the Baptist himself gave baptism to Jesus and passed the sin of the world on to Him, he pointed to Him and testified that He is the One who takes away the sin of the world. It is a testimony given directly by the very man who passed the sin on—what is there in it that cannot be believed?

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, God established the laying on of hands that passes sins on. Let us look at the passage where, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest Aaron puts the sins of the people on the head of the live goat.

"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man" (Leviticus 16:21).

Aaron laid both his hands on the head of the goat and put all the sins of the children of Israel on its head. It was not that a sinner removed his sins as he pleased; rather, God had the sins transferred to the sacrificial offering according to the law He had established. In the same way, when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, He had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all. At the Jordan

River stood together John the Baptist, the high priest of the earth, and Jesus, the High Priest of heaven who came as the sacrificial offering for mankind. What the sacrifices of the Old Testament looked forward to was actually fulfilled at that time.

Then why is Jesus called the Lamb of God? It is not that Jesus had sin and was washed of it. It is because the Son of God, in order to become our sacrificial offering, received baptism from John and had the sin of mankind passed on to Him. Just as in the Old Testament the sacrificial offering that received the laying on of hands was put to death in place of the people, so the Lamb of God, who took the sin upon Himself, also had to go to die while bearing that sin.

The judgment of sin that the Lamb of God received

Where did Jesus, who had the sin passed on to Him, go bearing that sin? He went to the Cross. This name, the Lamb of God, holds within it the work of the Lord, who was sacrificed in our place. Because the sinless Lord took our sins upon Himself, He Himself also received the judgment of sin that we should have received.

Therefore, when we look at the Cross, let us not stop at the thought that a righteous Man suffered unjustly. The One who hung on the Cross is Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him at the Jordan River. The blood the Lord shed is the blood of His receiving the judgment of that sin. It was not a death unrelated to our sins; it was the Son of God, who had taken our sins upon Himself, dying in our place.

The Lord had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins by shedding

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His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death. The word He spoke on the Cross, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, means that nothing more was left for Him to accomplish. We believe in this salvation and receive the remission of sins. What the Lord has accomplished for me comes before how much I have labored for the Lord.

Then what is the sin of the world? Answer this question for yourselves as well. Everything visible in this world is the world, and so everything from the time I was in my mother's womb, through being born, growing up, and growing old, until I leave this world, is all the world. The sin inherited from our parents, the sin committed a few years ago that still weighs on the heart, the sin we thought nothing of, the sin we are committing now, and even the sin we will commit in the future out of weakness—all of it is the sin of the world. The sins committed knowingly and the sins committed unknowingly are both included in it.

Yet there are people who take this word differently. They say that Jesus took away the original sin we were born with, but that the sins we commit daily must be washed each time with prayers of repentance, and that only when we become holy around the time of death do our sins disappear. This is a faith that tries to remove sin little by little, as if paying off the price of goods in installments. But the Bible does not say that He took away original sin only. It says that He took away the sin of the world. If we have a conscience, we will know this: the sins we commit are far more than the sins we confess in prayer.

If the Lord had taken away only part of our sins and left the rest for us to resolve, we could never have reached salvation in the end. But the Lamb of God bore all the sin of the world. Before this word, do not set your own sins apart and leave them as sins the Lord was unable to resolve. Do not make the salvation

the Lord accomplished small on the grounds that your shortcomings are great.

Hebrews testifies as follows of the efficacy of the sacrifice the Lord accomplished.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

The atonement Jesus accomplished is not something that has to be started over every time we discover a sin. The Lord accomplished it with one offering. The assurance of the remission of sins does not come from judging that there is nothing to fault in my life; it comes from believing in the Lord, who had all my sins passed on to Him and was judged. If the Lord says He has taken them away, then He has taken them away. What could we sinners possibly have to say about that?

That does not mean we sin on purpose. Those who have this faith do not take sin lightly, for they know that the Son of God shed His blood because of their sins. When their wrongs are pointed out, they acknowledge them before the word and set them right. Only, they do not shift the basis of the remission of sins to their own regret or changed conduct. The heart that resented others, the hurts received and the hurts inflicted, and even the residue left at the bottom of the heart—these too are the sin of the world that the Lord has already taken away. Only when we settle this by faith does the heart become light, and only then can we run forward.

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The One who bore our sins is the Son of God, who existed before

Let us read verses 30 and 31.

"This is He of whom I said, 'After me comes a Man who is preferred before me, for He was before me.' I did not know Him; but that He should be revealed to Israel, therefore I came baptizing with water."

John says that Jesus, who comes after him, is the One who was before him. Jesus began His work after John, but He is not One whose existence began later than John's. Though He came to this earth in a human body, He is God, who has existed from eternity. Only when we know who it is that came to bear our sins can we know the worth of the salvation the Lord accomplished.

It is not that one man from among sinners like us stepped forward to take on the burdens of other sinners as well. God, who made all things, came clothed in a human body and had the sin of sinners passed on to Him. If Jesus had been no more than an outstanding man among men, we could not have been saved. Because the One who is God received baptism from John and died on the Cross, that work became a work God Himself did, and we became sinless.

In verse 31, John the Baptist says that he too did not know Him, but that he came baptizing with water so that He should be revealed to Israel. If John the Baptist had not given baptism to Jesus, who could have passed the sin of the world on to Jesus? Neither Moses, nor Elijah, nor Daniel did that work. Without the baptism and testimony of John the Baptist, even though Jesus came to this earth and went away, no one would have known that He is the One who had the sin of the world passed on to Him and bore it to the Cross.

We too must not define Jesus to fit our own thinking. If we look to Him only as the One who makes our circumstances better, our faith will also be shaken when circumstances become hard. If we regard Him only as a teacher who gave excellent teachings, the problem of sin still remains our own to deal with. The Jesus whom God revealed through John the Baptist is the Son of God, who bore all our sins. Here is the grace of the Lord that we must know first.

The Savior to whom the testimony of the Spirit points

Let us read verses 32 through 34.

"And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God.'"

John the Baptist had already received God's revelation before this happened. He who sent John the Baptist to baptize with water had told him beforehand that the One upon whom he saw the Spirit descending and remaining was the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. And when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and came up out of the water, John saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove and remaining upon Him. It was fulfilled exactly as God had said.

To testify, one must know for certain. If John the Baptist had been guessing on his own, wondering whether it was this man or that man, he could not have testified so clearly. Because it was fulfilled just as the Holy Spirit had said beforehand, the Holy

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Spirit became John's witness, and John could testify boldly. His interest was not in boasting of the marvelous sight he had seen. It was in making known who Jesus, to whom that sign pointed, is.

It is not that Jesus became the Son of God only at the moment the Holy Spirit came upon Him. John had already testified that He was the One who was before him. The sign of the Spirit descending and remaining confirmed that the Son of God, who has existed from eternity, had come to us. God made known who the Lamb who bore the sin of the world is, and who it is that gives us the Holy Spirit.

That is why John says that he has testified that He is the Son of God. Jesus is the Son of God, and He is God Himself. Even if I believe that Jesus received baptism from John, had my sins passed on to Him, and died on the Cross in my place, if I do not acknowledge that He is God in His very nature, that faith is a vain faith. True faith is to know and believe who Jesus is and how He saved me.

John the Baptist gave baptism with water, but Jesus is the One who baptizes with the Holy Spirit. Jesus gives sinners the remission of sins and causes them to be born again with the life of God. One does not obtain the Holy Spirit by making one's heart fervent through one's own strength or by producing some special phenomenon. When we believe, according to the word, in the Lord who saved us through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and seals us, saying, "You are My people."

Therefore, do not seek the Holy Spirit by Himself, apart from the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies of the truth of the salvation Jesus accomplished. The Apostle John also speaks together of Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood, and of the testimony of the Spirit.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).

The water refers to the baptism Jesus received from John, and the blood refers to the judgment that the Lord, who bore the sin of the world, received on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is the truth. Those who believe in this gospel believe that when Jesus received baptism from John, He had their sins passed on to Him; that when He died on the Cross, they also died with Him; and that when He rose again, they also rose with Him. This is the faith by which one is born again. We do not hold on to just one part of what the Lord did; we believe in the whole of the salvation He accomplished by water and blood.

Dear fellow believers, just because my heart feels heavy at times does not mean that the sins the Lord took away have come back to me. Nor is salvation true only if joyful feelings last a long time. We have the word of the witness God sent and the unchanging work Jesus accomplished. Do not measure the Lord's salvation by wavering feelings; teach your own heart with the word of the Lord. The Lamb of God bore the sin of the world, and all my sins are included in it.

A heart that treasures the grace of the remission of sins

Today's passage does not vaguely urge us to become religious people. It shows us Jesus, who bore our sins. John the Baptist did not have people look at himself but pointed to Jesus,

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and the sign of the Spirit also revealed that Jesus is the Son of God. The One we are to rely on is clear. It is the Lord, who bore the sin of the world and saved us.

What news is more joyful than the news that we have no sin? There is no word more precious than this word: that sin was clearly there, but the Lord took it away and it is gone. Yet if we forget this grace, even while living a life of faith we keep trying to find our worth elsewhere. We keep reckoning how much we have done and how people treat us, and when our labors are many and our circumstances grow hard, we become discouraged like people who have received nothing from God. At such times, let us think again. The Son of God took my sins upon Himself and delivered me from judgment.

When we keep the grace of the remission of sins in our hearts, the reason we serve the Lord also becomes clear. We do not labor in order to remove our sins; we serve out of gratitude to the Lord, who removed our sins. We do not help people in order to earn the qualification for salvation; because the grace we received freely is precious, we treasure other souls as well. When we set our hearts on that faith by which we have received the remission of sins, we can undertake any work of the Lord whatsoever.

If there is anyone who is still striving to resolve his own sins by himself, accept the testimony of John the Baptist. The Lord had the sin of the world passed on to Him, leaving nothing behind. Bearing even the sins of your whole lifetime, He was judged on the Cross and rose again from death. Believe in this salvation with your heart and receive the remission of sins. Do not pass over what the Lord has already accomplished because of your own shortcomings.

Let us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also not regard this grace as merely a familiar story. The reason

we can come before God today calling Him Father is that the Lamb of God bore our sins. Keep in your hearts at all times the faith that the Lord has removed our sins. I hope that you will always look to that Lamb of God, whom John the Baptist pointed out, saying, “Behold!” and live with your hearts set on the faith by which you have received the remission of sins. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Those who met the Savior and became the Lord's disciples

< John 1:35–42 >

"Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb of God!' The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus. Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, 'What do you seek?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi' (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), 'where are You staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour). One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ). And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)."

Dear fellow believers, when we say that we believe in Jesus, what is it that we know and believe? Knowing the name Jesus is different from knowing and believing how He saved me from sin. Many people have attended church for a long time and are familiar with the names of the people in the Bible, yet they cannot actually explain when and how their own sins were

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passed on to Jesus. If we say that we believe in the Savior but do not know the salvation He accomplished, sin still remains in our hearts.

So let me set one question for you: "Write down when and how your sins were passed on to Jesus." Would you write that it was when He was crucified on the Cross? Would you write that it was when you first prayed that you would believe in Jesus, or when you offered a prayer of repentance? The answer the Bible gives is this: when John the Baptist, whom God sent as a descendant of Aaron, baptized Jesus, who had turned thirty, in the Jordan River, all the sin of mankind was passed on to Him. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had my past sins and even the sins I have not yet committed passed on to Him. The person who can write this is the one who has met the Savior by faith.

In today's passage, there appear the people who heard this very testimony and came to follow Jesus. The two disciples who were with John the Baptist followed Jesus, and one of them, Andrew, went to find his brother Simon, told him that he had met the Messiah, and brought him to Jesus. It is a picture of the testimony one person heard being handed on to another person. Through this word today, let us look back at which Jesus we are believing in.

Following Jesus after hearing the testimony about the Lamb

Let us read verses 35 through 37.

"Again, the next day, John stood with two of his disciples. And looking at Jesus as He walked, he said, 'Behold the Lamb

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of God!' The two disciples heard him speak, and they followed Jesus."

John the Baptist had earlier testified that Jesus was *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. And again the next day, while standing with two of his disciples, he saw Jesus walking and cried out once more, *"Behold the Lamb of God!" (John 1:36)*. Over two days, he gave the same testimony twice. The reason John the Baptist could testify repeatedly like this was that he had baptized Jesus with his own hands and passed the sin of the world on to Him, and so he knew that fact more clearly than anyone.

The words "the Lamb of God" mean, in other words, the sacrificial lamb. In the law of sacrifice of the Old Testament, the sin of the people of Israel was passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands by the high priest, and that offering died in the place of the people. In the same way, the Son of God, who came clothed in human flesh, had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. This is the content of the gospel that John the Baptist pointed to when he said, *"Behold,"* and the true gospel begins from here.

But what happens if we leave out this testimony and hold on to the Cross of Jesus alone? The very first thing Jesus did as He began His public ministry was to receive baptism from John and have the sin of mankind passed on to Him. If we do not know this and believe only in the fact that He died on the Cross, our faith ends up becoming a religion. If sin were washed away by the blood of the Cross alone, we would fall into the thought that blood would have to be shed again every time we sin, and doubt would keep lingering in our consciences. The death on the Cross

was the result of Jesus having received baptism from John and having the sin of the world passed on to Him.

Hearing these words of their teacher, the two disciples followed Jesus immediately. They were not people who happened to hear the words by chance on the road; they were disciples of John the Baptist. Because they believed together with their teacher what he believed, they were able to go to Jesus when they heard the word he testified. Seen in this light, the first person to believe in Jesus and testify of Him was John the Baptist. John the Baptist met Jesus, baptized Him, believed, and testified.

An ordinary person would have held on to a disciple he had kept with him for a long time if that disciple said he would follow someone else. But John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus. A true disciple does not keep people bound to himself, but leads them to follow Jesus Christ. When we too listen to the word, look not at who speaks well, but examine whether that word tells us how Jesus had our sins passed on to Him and washed them away. When someone who believed before us testifies to us, we too can believe in and follow the Lord just as that person did.

Those who came and remained with the Lord

Let us read verses 38 and 39.

"Then Jesus turned, and seeing them following, said to them, 'What do you seek?' They said to Him, 'Rabbi' (which is to say, when translated, Teacher), 'where are You staying?' He said to them, 'Come and see.' They came and saw where He was staying, and remained with Him that day (now it was about the tenth hour)."

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Jesus turned to look at the two who were following Him and asked them what they sought. This question is given in the same way to us who follow the Lord today. It is asking, “What do you seek while following Me?” Do you seek the things of the earth, or do you seek the kingdom of God? If we follow the Lord in order to gain a high position, a fine house, or work that stands out before others, that is not following the Lord but using the Lord for ourselves.

What we need most urgently is to be saved from sin. Even if the problems of this world are somewhat resolved, we cannot come boldly before God unless we have had our sins washed away. Receiving the remission of sins by believing in the Lamb whom John the Baptist testified of comes first. And even after receiving the remission of sins, seeking to be with the Lord where He is—this is the heart of a disciple.

When the two asked where the Teacher was staying, Jesus told them to come and see. They went and saw where the Lord was staying, and remained with Him that day. The Bible does not say whether that place was a splendid house. Later, Jesus said that He did not even have a place to lay His head. The reason the disciples stayed there was not that the house was nice, but that Jesus was there. Having been with the Lord, they knew, “This is where we should be.” Wherever the Lord is, whether in a barren field or in a rugged valley, there is true freedom and peace. From that day on, they became disciples who followed Jesus.

Today we cannot go to the house where Jesus stayed, as the two disciples did. But we meet the Lord through the word. It means that when we hear of the baptism the Lord received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His rising again from death, we accept in our hearts that it was for us. Meeting the Lord does

not require seeing some mysterious sight with our eyes. The Apostle Paul speaks as follows about how faith comes about.

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

Therefore, do not take hearing the word lightly. Do not pass over a familiar verse as something you already know; accept in your heart what the Lord has accomplished for you. If the Lord says that He has had all your sins passed on to Him, yet you insist that you must still be a sinner, you are putting your own judgment ahead of the Lord's salvation. As we keep hearing the word, we come to know more deeply the role of John the Baptist and the meaning of the baptism Jesus received, and our faith grows as well. But the ground of that faith is not how long we have learned; it is the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

The confession of Andrew, who met the Messiah

Let us read verses 40 and 41.

"One of the two who heard John speak, and followed Him, was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. He first found his own brother Simon, and said to him, 'We have found the Messiah' (which is translated, the Christ)."

One of the two was Andrew, Simon Peter's brother. Later, Peter became a great apostle, but he came to Jesus because he was led by Andrew. And Andrew came to Jesus after hearing the testimony of John the Baptist. In this way, faith was handed on from one person to another.

Andrew went to find Simon and told him that they had met the Messiah. The Bible explains that Messiah, translated, is the Christ. The Christ is the Savior who is King, Prophet, and High Priest. Jesus is the King of kings who made all things; He is the

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Prophet who teaches us how our sins are remitted; and He is the heavenly High Priest who offered the sacrifice of atonement before God, making His own body the sacrificial lamb. Andrew did not introduce Jesus as merely a teacher he found appealing. He testified that he had met the Savior whom God had promised.

It was not because Andrew had some special learning that he could say this. It was because he believed, just as it was, the word John the Baptist had testified. The faith of the teacher was handed on to the disciple just as it was. In this age too, faith is handed on in that way. We too meet the Savior when, through the testimony of John the Baptist, we know and believe that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. We meet Him by faith. When we know and believe like this, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts, makes us know that there is no sin in our hearts, and gives us the strength to testify of that gospel. If perhaps you have not yet met the Lord in this way, I hope that you will meet Him at this very hour.

What about our confession? Is it as clear as Andrew's? With nothing more than the words that it is good to believe in Jesus, we cannot preach what salvation the Lord has accomplished. Only when we ourselves have met Him first can we preach Him. We preach what we ourselves know and believe; we cannot preach what we do not know. The person who knows and believes the fact, "Jesus had my sins passed on to Him when He received baptism from John, He was judged on the Cross because of those sins, and He rose again from death and saved me," is the one who can testify of the Lord who gave him the remission of sins.

Faith in Christ leads us to come before God. When we had sin, we feared God and tried to avoid Him, but we who believe that the Lord has washed away our sins call God our Father. Our

having become the Lord's disciples, too, is not the result of having perfected our own character; it is because we heard and believed the word of salvation and received the grace of God. One who knows this grace gives thanks even when hearing the same gospel again, because that gospel is the word that rescued me from sin.

Andrew, who brought his brother, and the Lord, who knows Simon

Let us read verse 42.

"And he brought him to Jesus. Now when Jesus looked at him, He said, 'You are Simon the son of Jonah. You shall be called Cephas' (which is translated, A Stone)."

Andrew did not merely tell Simon that he had met the Messiah and stop there. He brought Simon to Jesus. It is not that Andrew became Simon's savior. He led his brother to the Savior. This is how the gospel is preached from one person to another. When we tell of the Jesus Christ we ourselves have met, those who hear it can meet Jesus Christ in the same way.

As soon as Jesus saw Simon, He said that he was Simon the son of Jonah. He knew fully who his father was and who he was. And He said that he would be called Cephas. Cephas means Peter, that is, a rock. Because Jesus is the Creator, the moment He looks at a person He knows even his future. He already knew that Simon would become a man of faith, and so He gave him a new name.

Then what kind of faith was Peter's faith? Later, Peter confessed as follows.

"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good

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conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).

Peter's faith was the faith that believes that all our sins were passed on through the baptism Jesus received from John. So even when we do wrong after believing in the Lord and our conscience is uneasy, our conscience is made clean as we take to heart once more the word that even that sin has already been passed on to Jesus. Without being bound by our shortcomings, we can run toward God with a good conscience. The faith Jesus called a rock is exactly this kind of faith, and the Church is the gathering of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the Lord who came by water and blood.

Simon did not come to Jesus after making himself into an excellent disciple. He came through his brother's guidance, and the Lord accepted him. Our hope also lies here. The fact that the Lord knows us is more secure than our thinking that we know the Lord well. Therefore, do not look at your own shortcomings and regard yourself as someone who cannot follow the Lord. When we come to the Lord who saved me and hear and learn the word, the Lord builds us up as people of faith.

When we deal with other people as well, let us not decide in advance, judging only by how they are now, that they are people who cannot believe the gospel. Andrew's task was not to decide Simon's future, but to make known the Savior he had met and to bring Simon to Jesus. We too can preach the gospel to those near us, hand them books that contain the gospel, and look into the word together with them, explaining the parts they do not understand. Because the One who saves people is the Lord, we can do this labor gladly.

In today's passage, John the Baptist testified of the Lamb of God; the two disciples heard his words and followed Jesus; Andrew confessed that he had met the Messiah and brought his

brother; and Jesus knew Simon and gave him a new name. We too came to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit by hearing the word someone preached to us. Through the testimony of John the Baptist, we came to know the fact that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him, and by believing in the Lord who received the judgment for those sins, we received the remission of sins. We are not people who struggle to resolve our own sins; we are people who believe in and follow Jesus, who resolved our sins. Having met this Savior through the word, we are people who, like Andrew, can say even today, *"We have found the Messiah" (John 1:41).* ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who knows us and calls us to the hope of heaven

< John 1:43–51 >

“The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, ‘Follow Me.’ Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, ‘We have found Him of whom Moses in the law, and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.’ And Nathanael said to him, ‘Can anything good come out of Nazareth?’ Philip said to him, ‘Come and see.’ Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, ‘Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!’ Nathanael said to Him, ‘How do You know me?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.’ Nathanael answered and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Because I said to you, “I saw you under the fig tree,” do you believe? You will see greater things than these.’ And He said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.’”

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John chapter 1 is connected as one continuous thread. God the Word, who made all things, came in the body of a man, and John the Baptist, whom God sent, baptized Him and passed the sin of the world on to Him. John the Baptist testified that the Lord, who bore that sin, went to the Cross, died, and rose again to save us, and those who heard that testimony came to Jesus one by one. Today's passage is the story of Philip and Nathanael meeting the Lord at the end of that thread.

There are times when we have already judged someone in our hearts before we meet them. Hearing where they came from and who introduced them, we sometimes decide that there is no need even to meet them. Nathanael, too, at first thought of the Nazareth he knew and took Jesus lightly. But he discovered that Jesus had already known him before he recognized Jesus, and he confessed the Lord to be the Son of God and the King of Israel.

Jesus did not end His words there. Saying that he would see greater things, He said that he would see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. The Lord, who knows what is inside us, tells us whom we must believe in and where we must place our hope as we live. Following this word, let us look at who the Lord who called us is.

The faith that meets and follows the promised Savior

Let us read verses 43 through 45.

"The following day Jesus wanted to go to Galilee, and He found Philip and said to him, 'Follow Me.' Now Philip was from Bethsaida, the city of Andrew and Peter. Philip found Nathanael and said to him, 'We have found Him of whom Moses in the law,

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and also the prophets, wrote—Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph.'"

As soon as Jesus met Philip, He told him to follow Him. There was no long explanation or persuasion. Jesus is the God who commands. But that command is not a burden but a blessing. If the Lord had not told us to follow Him after He met us, what would we, who have received the remission of sins, have lived doing? One who follows the Lord does not stop at knowing that this word is right, but obeys that command by faith and actually follows.

Philip was from Bethsaida, the same town as Andrew and Peter. Through the testimony of John the Baptist, Andrew came to the Lord; through Andrew, Peter came; and now, through Philip, Nathanael comes. In this way God works through the ties between one person and another—parents and children, husbands and wives, friends and neighbors. Among us, too, there must be those who came to hear the gospel through the guidance of family or friends. That is not a coincidence but the grace of God, who led us to the Lord.

Philip went to find Nathanael and told him that he had met the One of whom Moses wrote in the law and of whom the prophets also wrote. He did not simply tell him to believe in Jesus. He testified that he had met the Savior promised in the Scriptures. This is how the gospel is preached. If we only vaguely tell a person who seeks God to believe, that person will be disappointed. But if we talk with him step by step through the word of the Scriptures, that person, too, will say that he will go and see for himself. That Moses wrote in the law refers to the word from Genesis to Deuteronomy. The Old Testament is the promise God made long ago, and the New Testament is the word of His actually fulfilling that promise. Philip preached that promise and its fulfillment, connecting them together.

What was that promise recorded in the Old Testament? In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass on his sins, and the offering died in his place. That law of sacrifice was a promise pointing to the fact that the Savior who was to come would have our sins passed on to Him and die in our place. According to that promise, Jesus came and had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and bearing that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and He rose again from death. The One Philip met is precisely this Savior, who came to fulfill this promise.

Philip's faith was the same as the faith of John the Baptist. Philip also recognized the One of whom John the Baptist testified, saying, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29),* as the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. The work of the gospel was accomplished by Jesus Christ, and the testimony of that gospel came through John the Baptist. If we do not accept the testimony of John the Baptist, we cannot rightly meet Jesus, and when we believe that testimony, we too can say exactly whom we have met, like Philip.

Philip introduced Jesus as Jesus of Nazareth, the son of Joseph. These were words pointing to Him by the family and the town that people knew. But He is the Son of God, who was born as a man by borrowing the body of a virgin. That He who lived among us as a man and was known to people as the son of a carpenter is precisely the Savior whom God promised—this was Philip's testimony.

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Come to the Lord beyond your preconceptions

Let us read verse 46.

"And Nathanael said to him, 'Can anything good come out of Nazareth?' Philip said to him, 'Come and see.'"

When Nathanael heard the word Nazareth, he asked what good thing could come out of that small town. Rather than the testimony that the One whom God had promised had come, the thought he himself had about that town came out first. Nathanael was a man who sought God, but this thought became a stumbling block to him.

We, too, have stumbling blocks like this. We think, what could there be to see in that small gathering, in that small church? We first weigh how well known in the world the one who preaches is, and whether it is the same as what I have long learned. But such things cannot determine whether the salvation Jesus accomplished is true. Only when we see what the Scriptures say and how the Lord washed away our sins are truth and falsehood distinguished.

Philip did not argue over Nazareth. He told him to come and see. Just as Jesus had told the two disciples to come and see, Philip, who had become a disciple, likewise told him to come and see. It is not something known by arguing in theory. When we come before Jesus and see, and examine the word together with someone who has met the Lord, we come to know exactly who Jesus is. Hearing Philip's confident words, Nathanael, too, got up, saying that he would go and see.

Today we, too, need to come before the word. Set aside for a moment what you think you already know, and listen to what the Lord has done. Even if you have looked at yourself sinning your whole life and thought that you could not be saved, confirm through the word that the Lord had the sins of that very lifetime

passed on to Him at the Jordan River. If you say that you know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet in your heart still try to wash away your sins with your own deeds, you are still relying on your own thoughts more than on the Lord's salvation.

We who preach the gospel also need Philip's attitude. Let us not try only to win the argument because the other person does not accept it from the start. Let us listen to what he misunderstands, and help him to examine together in the Scriptures what the Lord has accomplished. Our purpose is not simply to crush a person's pride, but for that person to rightly know and believe in the Savior and receive the remission of sins.

The Son of God who knows our innermost hearts

Let us read verses 47 through 49.

"Jesus saw Nathanael coming toward Him, and said of him, 'Behold, an Israelite indeed, in whom is no deceit!' Nathanael said to Him, 'How do You know me?' Jesus answered and said to him, 'Before Philip called you, when you were under the fig tree, I saw you.' Nathanael answered and said to Him, 'Rabbi, You are the Son of God! You are the King of Israel!'"

Seeing Nathanael walking toward Him, Jesus said that he was an Israelite indeed, in whom there was no deceit. It was even before Nathanael had introduced himself. When the astonished Nathanael asked how He knew him, the Lord said that He had seen him when he was under the fig tree, before Philip called him.

That he was under the fig tree means that Nathanael was a man who had been waiting not for a kingdom of this earth but for the kingdom of God to come. He did not wish to live forever on this earth, but longed for the Messiah whom God had

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promised and for that kingdom. The Lord recognized such a heart of his first. Today, too, somewhere on this earth there are souls like Nathanael who are not satisfied by their present religion and so seek and wait for the true God. God seeks out such people and meets them. The word that there was no deceit in him means that he was a man who did not try to deceive God but waited for God sincerely.

Having no deceit does not mean having no sin. Where is there a person who is not deceitful? To be without deceit before God is the honesty of laying bare just as it is what is in one's heart. If you say that you have believed all the word and yet sin remains in your heart, honestly admit that fact before God. And find in the Scriptures the grounds on which that sin has been removed. The Scriptures say that though our sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow. Those grounds lie in the baptism Jesus received from John. When you see that your sins were passed on there, you come to believe that there is now no sin in your heart. One who has thus found the grounds in the Scriptures and believed can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others as well.

Just as the Lord knew Nathanael, He knows us today as well. Even if someone appears before people to be a person of good faith, if there is anyone who has not yet received the remission of sins, the Lord knows even the sin in that heart. Therefore, do not think that you can deceive God. Also, for us who have been saved, this is a great comfort. Even when others do not understand my circumstances, even when my faith is weak, the Lord knows. He who knows us is precisely the Savior who had our sins passed on to Him.

Nathanael confessed Jesus to be the Son of God and the King of Israel. The man who had asked what good thing could come out of Nazareth now withdrew his own judgment. Just as the son

of a man is a man, the Son of God is none other than God. Though He put on the body of a man for thirty-three years, He is the Creator who made the universe, the High Priest of heaven who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and removed them, and the King of the kingdom of God.

The hope of heaven opened through the Son of Man

Let us read verses 50 and 51.

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Because I said to you, "I saw you under the fig tree," do you believe? You will see greater things than these.' And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'"

Jesus asked whether he believed because He had recognized him, and said that he would see greater things than these. And He said that he would see heaven open and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man. The Lord moved Nathanael's eyes from the matter under the fig tree to the matters of heaven.

This word calls to mind the scene Jacob saw in his dream.

"Then he dreamed, and behold, a ladder was set up on the earth, and its top reached to heaven; and there the angels of God were ascending and descending on it" (Genesis 28:12).

When Jacob awoke from his sleep, he said that the place was the house of God and the gate of heaven. But Jesus says that the angels of God will ascend and descend upon the Son of Man. Now the place where heaven and earth meet is Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came in the body of a man. Later, on the Mount

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of Transfiguration, the disciples saw Moses and Elijah appear and talk with the Lord. Jesus is not a teacher who knows only the things of the earth, but the King of kings, who commands the angels of heaven and all things under heaven.

That King of heaven came as a man in order to save us from sin and bring us to God. A sinner cannot make a way to reach heaven on his own. No matter how many good deeds he piles up, the sins he has already committed do not disappear. Because Jesus, whom God sent, had our sins passed on to Him and received that judgment, we can stand before God. That is why the Lord later said this to His disciples.

"Jesus said to him, 'I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me'" (John 14:6).

The One who brings us to God is Jesus. Experiencing strange phenomena is not the way to heaven. The Lord has removed all the sins—the sins of the people who were born in the past, the sins of us who live now, and the sins of the people who will be born in the future. Whoever believes in this gospel receives the remission of sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. And when this gospel has been spread to the whole world, the Lord will come again to take those who believe. This is God's plan for us.

One who hopes for the kingdom of God does not measure the Lord's grace by his present circumstances. Even if our livelihood improves, the gospel that removed the sin from our hearts remains the same, and even if we become poor, that gospel is still the gospel that saved us. Like Nathanael, we wait not for the things of this earth but for the kingdom the Lord will establish.

Then what should we set as the goal of our lives? Will we pursue the wealth, peace, and comfort of the flesh, or will we pursue the things of the Spirit? One who waits for the kingdom

of God does, until that day, the work of preaching the gospel to those who do not yet know the remission of sins, so that the people of God increase. He does not rejoice at having received the remission of sins and stop there, but now pursues the Spirit. Both those who preach the word directly and those who help so that the word is preached carry out this work together. This labor is not the price of salvation, but the work of a saved disciple serving the Lord.

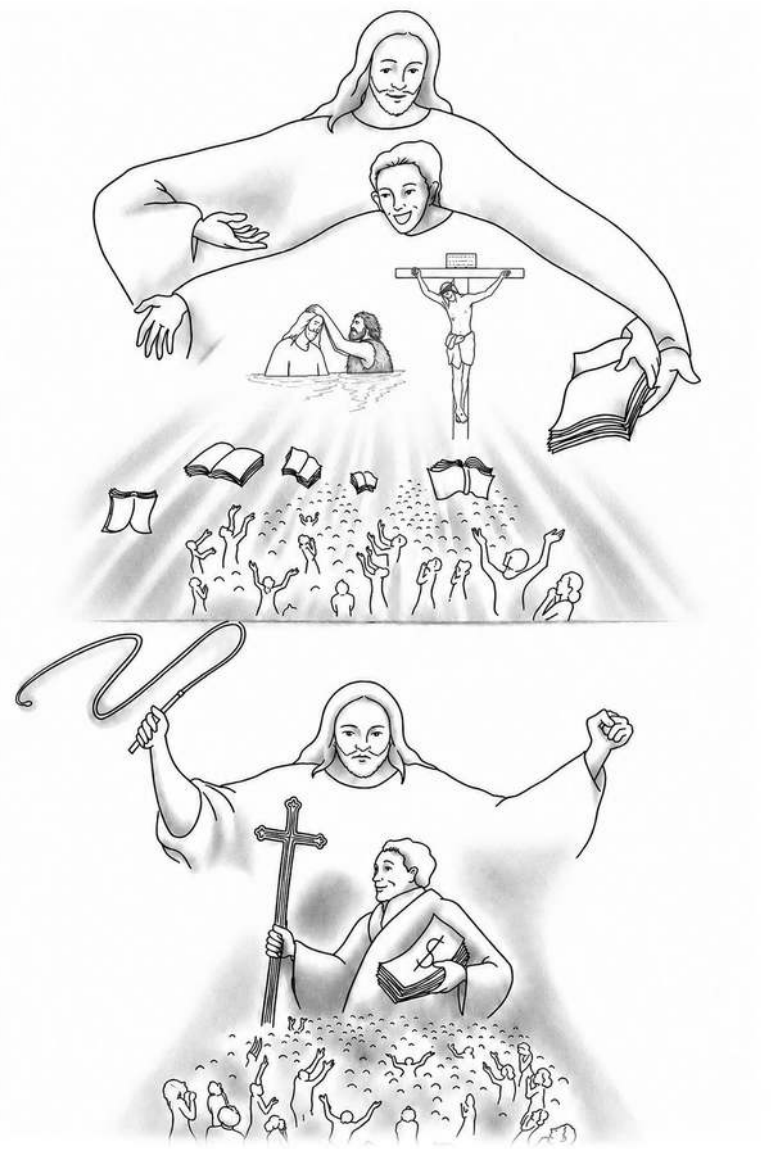
The Lord who called Philip also met Nathanael, and today He has called us too and given us the remission of sins. When we look back at how we came to hear the gospel, we come to realize how precious a grace the person who preached the word to us and the opportunity to hear it were. In this age, too, disciples are needed who have faith like that of Philip and Nathanael, faith like that of Andrew and Peter. The Son of God, who knows us and met us, tells us today as well to follow Him. Looking toward the day when heaven opens, I hope that we will pursue the things of the Spirit rather than the comfort of the flesh and walk the path of the disciple that the Lord has entrusted to us. ✉

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CHAPTER

2

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You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The word of the Lord that gives new life and joy

< John 2:1–11 >

"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.' Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!' This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."

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A feast is a place where joy is shared. There are a bridegroom and a bride, there are people who have come to celebrate, and there is food shared together. But at the wedding feast in today's passage, something came to be lacking. The wine ran short. The guests kept coming, but the wine to be set on the feast table had run out, and so the feast that had begun joyfully ran into serious trouble.

The Apostle John records that this took place *"On the third day" (John 2:1)*. In chapter 1, John wrote following the days one after another. There was the day on which John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified that He was *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*; the next day two disciples followed Jesus; and the day after that Philip and Nathanael were called. The place the Lord went with the disciples gathered in this way was the wedding feast at Cana.

In our lives, too, there are days when the wine runs out. Even after believing in Jesus and receiving salvation, as we go on living we meet times when what we have hits bottom and our own strength is exhausted. That is why we need the word and the help of the Lord not only when we first believe in Him, but also while we go on living.

At the wedding feast in Cana, Jesus turned water into wine. Where human preparation had run out, the Lord gave something new. The Apostle John records this event as the first sign by which Jesus manifested His glory. This word does not end with the news that the problem of the feast was solved; it lets us see who it was that turned the water into wine, and brings us to believe in Him. Let us meet in this word the Lord, who gives new life and takes care of our lack.

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We have a Lord to whom we can go with our lack

Let us read verses 3 through 5.

"And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.' His mother said to the servants, 'Whatever He says to you, do it.'"

When the wine ran short, the mother of Jesus told Him about it. This one phrase, *"They have no wine" (John 2:3)*, is a word that laid their lack before the Lord just as it was. The prayers we offer are like this as well. If our faith is lacking, we tell the Lord it is lacking; if there is hardship in our lives, we tell Him it is hard; if we are short of the strength to carry out the work entrusted to us, we tell Him we are short of it. There is no need to pretend to be a well-equipped person even before the Lord.

But Jesus' answer was unexpected. He called His mother *"Woman"* and asked what it had to do with Him. It sounds strange to our ears, but in that land these words were not words that belittled a mother. Even though Mary gave birth to Jesus and raised Him, Jesus is the Son of God who came in a human body and the Creator who made all things. Since these were words the Creator spoke to a person He Himself had made, there is nothing strange about them. The power and authority of salvation belong to Jesus, and the Lord works according to the will of God, not according to human requests.

The words *"My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4)* must also be heard within that meaning. At this time Jesus had already received baptism from John at the Jordan River and had the sin of the world passed on to Him. But the time when He would bear that sin and be hung on the Cross had not yet come. After that, the Lord preached the word and showed through signs that He

Himself was God, and when the time came, He died on the Cross and rose again from death and saved us. What He did at Cana was the first of those signs.

Mary did not step back on hearing that answer. Nor did she step forward saying she would solve it herself. She said to the servants, *"Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5)*, and led them before the word of Jesus. Mary, who had accepted the word brought by the angel and conceived Jesus, knew that the son she had given birth to was the Son of God who would save mankind from sin. That is why she told them to do as He instructed, without objecting. These are words that show clearly who it is that we must rely on and follow.

However, telling the Lord is different from fixing our own method in advance and pestering Him to do just that. The time when the Lord works in our lives is when we believe His word and follow it just as it is. At the feast in Cana, too, what the people needed was wine, but the first thing Jesus said to the servants was to fill the waterpots with water. Even when no way can be seen by our own judgment, to hear and follow the word of the Lord, who knows us and guides us in goodness—that is the faith that goes to the Lord.

Our deepest lack is revealed in the problem of sin. The needs of life can be met for a while, but the sins already committed cannot be removed by human strength. Even if we resolve not to sin, we find sin again, and even if we regret our past wrongs, that regret cannot take the place of the price of sin. If someone says he believes in Jesus but sin remains in his heart, that person is like a guest who, though invited to the wedding feast, sits where the wine has run out. What we need is not help that fixes our outward appearance a little, but the salvation that washes away sin and gives new life.

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The word of God tells us clearly about our situation and the gift the Lord gives.

"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23).

The result of sin is death, but the gift God gives is eternal life in Jesus Christ. Eternal life is received only from the Lord's hand. Even the sin that would not go away no matter how hard we tried is washed as white as snow when we bring that problem to the Lord. A person who admits his own limits does not stay in despair but goes to the Lord, who gives salvation. We have a Lord to whom we can tell our lack and from whom we can receive grace.

The Lord works in the heart that accepts the word

Let us read verses 6 through 8.

"Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, 'Fill the waterpots with water.' And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, 'Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.' And they took it."

There were six stone waterpots there, set according to the manner of purification of the Jews. They were waterpots that held the water used for washing. Jesus said to fill those waterpots with water, and the servants filled them up to the brim. Then, when He said to draw some out and take it to the master of the feast, they took it just as He said. The passage shows, in order, the word of the Lord and the servants acting according to that word.

In a feast house thrown into commotion because the wine had run out, the word to fill the waterpots with plain water is a command hard to understand by human common sense. The word to draw that water out and take it to the master of the feast is even more so. Had they put their own thoughts first, the servants would not have been able to take a single step at the word to draw it out and take it. But they did not stop after pouring a few bucketfuls; they filled every waterpot up to the brim, and they drew it out and took it just as they were told.

The servants' filling and carrying the water was labor they actually did. But what turned that water into wine was the power of Jesus. Filling according to the word was the servants' part, and turning the water into wine was what the Lord would do.

The stone waterpots that had held water for washing became waterpots holding good wine when they were filled according to the word of the Lord. Looking at these waterpots, we look back at our own hearts. What are we filling our hearts with? Worries enter the heart quickly and people's evaluations linger long, yet there are times when we hear the very word of God and let it slip by. We nod for a moment when we hear the word, but when an actual problem arises we cling again only to our own thoughts. Then, though we say we believe in the Lord, our hearts are always confined within the limits of our own strength.

Therefore, let us fill our hearts with the word of God. This is not stopping at remembering much of the wording of the Bible, but accepting the word the Lord has spoken as the truth given to us. If we have heard the word that Jesus bore our sins in our place, we believe it just as it is; if we have heard the word that the Lord takes care of us, we ask Him for help; and if there is a work the Lord has entrusted to us, we do it relying on the word. When the word accepted into our hearts leads our judgment and

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our steps, something like water becoming wine happens within us as well.

Mary helped the servants to follow the word of the Lord. Today as well, those who have believed the gospel first preach the word and exhort others to remember the promises of God when faith is weak. When a person who has first believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins preaches that they should believe in this way, the one who believes that word just as it is receives the remission of sins in the same way. What we accept at this time is not the person's position, but the word of the Lord that he preaches. The One Mary pointed to was Jesus, and the word the servants followed was also the word of Jesus.

The power of salvation that gives new life to sinners

When Jesus spoke and the servants did just as He said, the water became wine. It is not that the water gradually changed by itself and became wine. The Lord changed it. A sinner's receiving new life is like this as well. A sinner does not become a righteous person by the strength of gradually correcting his own deeds; he receives new life by believing in the salvation Jesus has fulfilled.

Later, Jesus spoke to Nicodemus about being born again. *"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5).*

To enter the kingdom of God, one must be born again of water and the Spirit. Here the water refers to the baptism Jesus received from John. One cannot become a child of God merely

by being born in the flesh and living. We, who would die because of sin, must receive the new life the Lord gives, and the Lord Himself has fulfilled that way.

The Son of God came to this earth in a human body, borrowing the body of Mary. And by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, He had even the sins we commit throughout our lifetime all passed on to Him, just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament had the sins of the people passed on to it through the laying on of hands. Bearing that sin, the Lord was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so He received the judgment we were to receive, and He rose again from death.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth by which God has saved us in this way. It is believing together that the Lord had our sins passed on to Him through the water and that He received the judgment of those sins through the blood. When we believe, Jesus does not receive baptism from John again or hang on the Cross again. The Lord already took away all our sins before we were even born. We hear of that fulfilled salvation through the word, accept it into our hearts, and receive the remission of sins. On the person whose heart has become free of sin the Holy Spirit comes, and that person obtains new life.

Just as the servants at Cana filled the waterpots up to the brim, the heart does not become full if only one part of the word of the gospel is accepted. When all of these are accepted—that Jesus came in a human body, that He had our sins passed on to Him at the Jordan River, that He died on the Cross, and that He rose again from death—a sinner is changed into a righteous person, just as water was changed into wine. If someone clings only to the Cross and does not know the baptism Jesus received from

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John, then even if he believes in Jesus for a long time, sin remains in his heart and he cannot obtain true satisfaction.

The one who believes in this salvation does not say that his sins have disappeared because he did well. He confesses that his sins have been washed away because the Lord took away all his sins. Even when he finds his own shortcomings, he does not consider that those shortcomings remain outside the Lord's salvation. For all his sins are included in the sin of the world that was passed on to the Lord at the Jordan River. That is why we go boldly before God with the faith that believes this gospel.

New life is not something we produce by our own efforts. Good deeds and service are what a person who has received grace by believing in the salvation the Lord fulfilled goes on to do out of thanksgiving; but if we make only those the price of the remission of sins, we come to rely on our own strength again, setting aside the salvation that has been completely fulfilled.

The salvation the Lord has given us does not stop at freeing us from the fear of sin. The Lord makes us His own people. The Apostle Paul spoke like this about presenting believers to Christ.

"For I am jealous for you with godly jealousy. For I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present you as a chaste virgin to Christ" (2 Corinthians 11:2).

We who have had our sins washed by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have become the bride of Christ. At the feast in Cana, too, there were an actual bridegroom and bride. But what this word tells us today is the story of the Lord, who is the Bridegroom, and of us, who belong to Him. The Lord did not receive us leaving our filthy sins as they were; He made us clean through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and made us His bride. This is the joy of the new life the Lord has given.

The joy known by those who followed the word of the Lord

Let us read verses 9 and 10.

"When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, 'Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!'"

The master of the feast tasted the good wine but did not know where it came from. But the servants who had drawn the water knew. They knew that what they had poured with their own hands was plain water, and they also knew that the word of Jesus had turned that water into wine. Concerning the same wine, the master of the feast knew its taste, while the servants who had acted according to the word knew the One who had given it.

Believing the gospel is like this as well. The person who has believed and accepted, just as it is, the word that the Lord has already washed away his sins knows that sin has disappeared from his heart. It is a fact known by one who has experienced it by believing the word. After that, too, there is the joy of coming to know the Lord's help while believing the word, praying, and following. It is telling the Lord the things we were worried about, and tasting the grace the Lord bestows even in the midst of lack. It is hard to know this joy by only watching from afar the life of following the Lord.

It is the same when we serve the gospel. When we explain the gospel of the remission of sins to someone who does not yet know the word well, and we see him come to realize and believe in the salvation Jesus has fulfilled, joy arises in our hearts. We cannot remove that person's sins. We only preach what the Lord

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has done. Yet that word gives that person faith and leads him to accept the Lord's salvation. Then we come to know all the more that there is power in the word.

The master of the feast called the bridegroom and praised him, and the servants' names appear nowhere in the passage. Even so, the servants had the joy of knowing the One who had done that work. Let us, too, not think little of the worth of our service just because it is not seen by people's eyes.

The words of the master of the feast show how the world's feasts proceed. Everyone sets out the good wine first, and after the guests have drunk well, the inferior. The joy the world gives is also best at first and fades as time goes by. But at the feast the Lord provided, the good wine remained until the end. The life of believing in and following the Lord is like this. The joy of first receiving the remission of sins is great, but the more we fill our hearts with the word and follow the Lord, the deeper grace becomes, and at the last we receive the kingdom the Lord has prepared.

A person who believes only in the blood of the Cross without fully knowing the gospel says that the more he believes, the more his joy diminishes. Because sin remains in his heart, he loses strength and things grow harder as the years go by. But the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, even while going through hardships, learns the richness of the Lord more and more as he fills his heart with the word and follows it.

The glory of Jesus that the sign points to

Let us read verse 11.

"This beginning of signs Jesus did in Cana of Galilee, and manifested His glory; and His disciples believed in Him."

The Apostle John recorded the conclusion of this event clearly. Jesus manifested His glory, and the disciples believed in Him. More important than the fact that good wine came to be was that they came to know who Jesus, who did this work, was. There is no one in the world who can do such a thing. The One who turned water into wine is God, who made all things by His word, and the Savior who gives new life to sinners. The disciples had followed Jesus after hearing the testimony of John the Baptist, but on seeing this sign they believed that He was truly God.

The greatest glory the Lord manifested is the work of making sinners righteous. That He had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment in our place on the Cross, and saved us completely from sin and judgment—this is the glory of God and the righteousness of God. What greater sign could there be than the work of making a sinner like me into a person without a single sin?

Just as the sign at Cana led the disciples to faith in Jesus, this word today turns our eyes toward the Lord, who saved us and takes care of us even now, rather than toward what might be added to our lives. We still have lack. But there is no reason to look only at that lack and be discouraged. To the person who believes in the salvation the Lord has fulfilled, asks the Lord for what he needs, and does the work entrusted to him today according to the word he has heard, the word of the Lord gives faith and strength.

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We are not people who changed ourselves and became children of God. Because Jesus washed away our sins with the water and the blood, we are people who have received new life by believing in that gospel. The Lord, who turned water into wine, changed us, who were to be judged, into children of God.

Whenever you feel lack, tell the Lord your situation as Mary did, and follow the word of the Lord just as it is, as the servants did. The Lord makes the latter days of the person who believes the word and lives this way better than the first. Believe in the Lord, who kept the good wine until the end, and fill the waterpots of your hearts full with His word. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

In every life, the Lord is absolutely necessary

< John 2:1–10 >

“On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, ‘They have no wine.’ Jesus said to her, ‘Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come.’ His mother said to the servants, ‘Whatever He says to you, do it.’ Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece. Jesus said to them, ‘Fill the waterpots with water.’ And they filled them up to the brim. And He said to them, ‘Draw some out now, and take it to the master of the feast.’ And they took it. When the master of the feast had tasted the water that was made wine, and did not know where it came from (but the servants who had drawn the water knew), the master of the feast called the bridegroom. And he said to him, ‘Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!’”

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The wine ran out at the wedding feast in Cana

The word we read today goes like this: *"On the third day there was a wedding in Cana of Galilee, and the mother of Jesus was there. Now both Jesus and His disciples were invited to the wedding. And when they ran out of wine, the mother of Jesus said to Him, 'They have no wine'" (John 2:1–3).* So, having been invited to the wedding feast, Jesus, His mother, and also His disciples went to the house of the wedding, and it says that the wine ran short. This is a scene where, because the wine ran short, an incident now arose and the work of God was revealed. This word tells us that, because the wine ran short, Jesus' mother asked Jesus, and Jesus made wine out of water and brightened that wedding feast. And so the master of the feast, who was in overall charge of the feast, called the bridegroom and praised him, saying, *"Every man at the beginning sets out the good wine, and when the guests have well drunk, then the inferior. You have kept the good wine until now!" (John 2:10).*

As I read this word, I confirm once again that in life the Lord is absolutely necessary—that in every life the Lord is absolutely necessary. Because the wine had run out, people spoke to Mary. So Mary spoke to Jesus. But Jesus said, *"Woman, what does your concern have to do with Me? My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4).* Yet His mother said to the servants, *"Whatever He says to you, do it" (John 2:5),* and the servants did so.

What we can learn when we look at the word here is that there are many times when people live well without Jesus, live well even without Jesus helping them, and live without really needing Jesus. But the fact that Jesus said, *"My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4),* shows that these people were still living with some pleasure of their own. Even without Jesus, there is much pleasure in this world and life is livable, and so they live well

even without necessarily asking Jesus for anything, even without Jesus helping them. That is one thing we can discern, and the other is that Jesus helps when the time comes. We can see that the Lord speaks to those who really need Jesus and helps them.

People get along well even without Jesus; when Jesus is not absolutely necessary to them, they live their lives well enough in their own way. But as we go on living, just as the wine ran out, all the pleasures of life also run dry and life becomes painful, and so when we really need the Absolute One, when we need a Savior, if at that time we seek the Savior, ask for help, and believe, then the Lord helps. He is a God who helps. These are the things we come to see. In the end, Jesus did help these people. That is what our Lord has said to us human beings.

The blessing of God, in which the latter is better than the former

It says, *"Now there were set there six waterpots of stone, according to the manner of purification of the Jews, containing twenty or thirty gallons apiece" (John 2:6)*. As for what the custom of the Jews was, when a guest came to their house, they would draw water and wash his feet. They would draw water and bring it, and bring water for washing the face, and so on; and He told them to bring water and pour it into those waterpots, and when the servants brought it and poured it in, it really became wine. Then He told them to draw some out and take it to the guests, so they took it, and the guests all made a commotion, exclaiming in unison, "Why, where did such good wine come from?" Usually, good food comes out first, then good wine is brought out, and when the feast is about to break up, watered-down wine also comes out and the food gets somewhat worse;

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but at this wedding feast, it says, only better things came out in abundance. And so he praised him.

There are several things we can think about here, and they are these: when we human beings are born on this earth, we live pleasantly and well like this on the material things of this world, dealing with the matters of food, clothing, and shelter in our own way, through the blessing God basically gave, ordinarily gave, to our flesh. Then, when that runs dry, we now come to seek God, and then God gives new joy again. And that new joy is greater. As for the joy, the blessing, that God has given us, the latter is greater than the former. Though we are living like this even now receiving God's grace, the grace we will receive later is far greater than the grace we have received so far. This is because we will live with the Lord in the kingdom of heaven, and created beings will be changed into divine beings and live enjoying glory like divine beings. So we can know that that glory, that blessing, is greater. When you and I think about these things, it may not feel very real to us.

Jesus is the One who is absolutely necessary in your life and mine, the One we must believe in, and by believing we must receive His help. Yet there are many areas where we hardly think about, and cannot even feel, the fact that Jesus is absolutely necessary and that the blessing Jesus gives us will be greater later than it is now. For example, we are born into this world and are living in it, and usually, until we turn thirty, as long as our bodies are healthy, we will somehow get by. We have our own joys and our own desire to achieve; but when that runs dry and we are about to be out on the street, when we have run some venture and failed—when we have failed in health or in business or in things like these—who will help us then? At that time we seek Jesus.

Just as Jesus said, *"My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4),* if there is someone who seeks Jesus when the time has come, and he then believes the word Jesus spoke and does accordingly, then, just as Jesus worked at the house of the wedding feast, the Lord gives him a better joy, a greater blessing—not the kind of joy he enjoyed in his own way as he lived up to now, but something other than that. But the point is this: among human beings, those who have not met the Lord, once everything they have has truly run out, can do nothing but sit down right there and wait only for the day of their death, and can only live a life of curse.

Those who have a shepherd and those who do not

Take a look at what difference there is between a person who has a shepherd and a person who has no shepherd. The shepherd I am speaking of here does not mean a church guide. It means Jesus Christ, who is the great Chief Shepherd of the sheepfold. A person who is born, comes to know Jesus, has everything he has run dry and loses it all, and so believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given, knows and believes in Jesus as his Savior, receives salvation from Him, and has Jesus Christ as his shepherd—because the shepherd helps him when he meets difficulties, the Lord helps him at every crisis as he lives out his life, and so he has come to live well.

But a person who has not made the Lord his shepherd, once everything he has has run out and he reaches the bottom, has nothing left. A person who has truly made the Lord his shepherd receives help and lives well, but one who has not simply vanishes. He vanishes miserably from this earth. Some attempt suicide, some live their whole lives crushed, and some live lamenting their lot, despairing, even becoming mentally ill. How

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great the difference is between those who have met the Lord and those who have not!

I know of someone who took his own life. It keeps coming back to my mind. Why did he take his own life? When he was young he lived reasonably well, but as he grew older, and as an economic crisis struck and illness came upon his body, he had reached the bottom of his life and had nothing left, and since he did not want to be a burden to others, his last years were too painful and too humiliating. And so he took his own life. Why did he not reach out his hand, but take his own life instead? He could have reached out as much as he wanted, but he probably did so because his pride was strong. He probably took his own life because dying was better than living. I tried to understand, and I thought about it. Looking at the outcome, if, when everything he had was exhausted and he had nothing left and was now ruined both in soul and body, he had sought the Lord and met the Lord, the Lord would have helped him. And I think he would have enjoyed more joy than the joy he had enjoyed until then, received blessings, had his future secured, and so lived well instead of taking his own life.

So I think about human life. Everyone, like the man who took his own life, is born and takes everything he has—what God basically gave him, what his physical parents basically gave him—and uses it up, rehashes it, rehashes it several times over, keeps using it up and squeezing it dry; and when it runs dry, all would be well if he met the Lord then, but is it not that a person who does not meet the Lord ends up that way in the end?

What difference is there between a life that has met the Lord and a life that has not met the Lord? The difference between a person who has a shepherd and a person who has no shepherd is that great. The difference between a person who has a shepherd in his life and a person who has no Lord in his heart is that great.

Dear fellow believers, this is life. Today's word is saying this. There was a wedding feast, and the wine ran out at the house of the wedding. But when that house of the wedding brought its pitiful situation to Jesus and asked Him, Jesus solved that problem. And the guests spoke up. The latter wine was better than the first wine. Is this not what our life is like?

What I mean is, do we not live in this world at first on what we basically received through God and through our physical parents, and then someday run dry? Someday it runs dry. However much wealth a person may have inherited, when his health runs dry, when disaster strikes, or when he falls victim to fraud, in all sorts of ways what he has eventually runs out, just as the wine ran out at the house of the wedding.

A person who lives a life of faith with a faith that can ask the Lord can also get through the next problem with the Lord's help and live well, but one who does not becomes miserable. He is miserable in this life, and he becomes miserable in the life to come as well. That is what our life is like. That is why we human beings need to believe in the Lord in our hearts. That you and I now believe in the Lord in our hearts, believe in Him as our Savior, live a life of faith, serve in a supporting role like a calyx, preach the gospel, and live together with the Lord like this is a tremendous happiness. We are doing exceedingly well. That is why we must meet the Lord. We must seek the Lord. You must seek Him before everything you have runs dry.

The Lord who worked through water

Let us think about one more thing here. With what did the Lord work to solve the problem of this house of the wedding and give joy? Water. Water. The Lord's power is one thing, but He

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worked through water and worked through His word, and so gave blessing to that house. Draw water and pour it into the waterpots. This is the custom. In our country there is no such thing as drawing water and bringing it to guests. In our country we set a lavish table, serve rice wine along with it, and sometimes even call in singers. That is the custom for welcoming an important guest in our country. But in the nation of Israel, food is food, but every house has a place where water is brought and stored. Those are the waterpots. There were six waterpots. So, since it is a region where water is always scarce, they always kept them filled with water, and with that water, when a guest came, they would give it as water to wash his feet, use it for washing the face, and use it for drinking water; but the water in the waterpots had all run out. Because so many guests came, the water had all run out. Draw water and pour it in. And draw it out and take it to them. When they drew it out and took it, it had become new wine. It had become better wine. What this tells us is that we must meet the Lord—we must meet Jesus Christ, who came to us by water and the Spirit. Jesus is the One who had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again three days later, and so saved us. And He is the One who is absolutely indispensable in our lives. He is the One we must surely have. He is the One we must have without fail. Is that not so? He is the One we must have. Only when we have Jesus with us can we live receiving better blessings day by day, receiving them forever. And we are those who have received such blessings.

Draw water and pour it in. And draw it out and take it to them. It says it became wine. The Lord spoke like this. This is the difference, among people, between those who believe in the Lord who came by water and the Spirit and those who do not

believe. When one who did not believe comes to believe in Him in his heart as the Savior after everything of his own has run out, he receives, through Jesus Christ who has become our Chief Shepherd, a greater joy and a greater blessing than the joy he had gained while living his life up to now. God wants to send down such blessings on all of us human beings. We must know that this word in John chapter 2 is now telling us that Jesus is absolutely necessary in our lives, and is telling us that Jesus is the Lord who has not only given us salvation but also gives us greater blessings and greater joy, takes responsibility for everything of ours, and secures our future. And we must believe it.

What kind of One is the Jesus we believe in? What is He to each one of us? He is the One who is absolutely necessary. A person who lives by the faith that believes in his heart in Jesus Christ, who came by water and the Spirit, has hope. More hope and more blessings than the joy and blessings he has enjoyed until now are stored up through the Lord. This is exactly what our living a life of faith is.

Those who have hope and those who do not

Dear fellow believers, there are a great many people in this world who have taken their own lives because they did not meet the Lord. It is said that the suicide rate among the young people of our country is among the highest in the world. Many young people are crushed by debt, and not only among those in their twenties and thirties but even among teenagers, a great many take their own lives. Why is that? Dear fellow believers, those who believe in the Lord and those who do not are as far apart as two extremes. Those who believe like this have hope, and those

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who do not believe have no hope. They die because they have no hope. But is it over when one takes his own life? Is that the end of it once he is buried in the ground? The Bible says, *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. It is not the end. There is this kind of difference between those who have met the Lord and those who have not. Someone I know took his own life, and as I thought it over, I thought, "That could happen." You and I, too, might do that if things got hard, but what is the difference? Why did he have no choice but to do that? It is because he had no hope. If he had had hope, he would not have done that. Do you know how fearful a thing it is to have no hope? Having no hope is, in a word, death. Having hope is that great a thing.

The Lord is absolutely necessary even for those who have been saved

Those who believe in the Lord are doing well to believe. But anyone who does not believe in the Lord who came by water and the Spirit as his own Savior runs dry at any time. And he loses everything, squanders it all, and comes to have nothing. All of us human beings must believe. We must believe in the Lord. Those who believe are doing well to believe, and they can never depart from this faith. This is what the word is telling us. We simply believed in the Lord who came by water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and obtained eternal life. We simply take it for granted, and since it is an individual's salvation, we think only that those who believe obtain salvation and those who do not believe do not. But it is not merely a matter of the difference between having been saved and not having been saved; the important thing is to think it over, reckon it up, know,

and believe whether the Lord is the One who is absolutely necessary to you and me, or not.

What, then, will we choose? Will we believe? Or will we not believe? We must think over whether Jesus is necessary or not necessary, whether what you and I have will last forever, or whether we are those who will run dry and really need to receive help from the Lord—and we must believe. It is surely so. I hope you will believe without fail, and I hope those who believe will keep their faith; do not say, "I have been saved, so that is enough now." Even after we have been saved, do we not run dry like this? Our faith also runs dry; we have only the one thing, that we have been saved, and as for all the rest, because we have no faith, there are only human means and methods and nothing else. And later on, as we go along, we run dry, and the strength of the flesh also runs dry. We must receive a fresh supply again, and who helps us then? Does not the Lord help us?

Does not the Lord work through the Church of God, and when you worship, does not God speak within your hearts through His word, and speak to you through the Holy Spirit, and guide you through the servants of God and the brothers and sisters? We truly need the Lord. The Lord is absolutely necessary even for those who have been saved. This is what I am telling you. I need the Lord, and you need the Lord. A person who does not believe because he has no need of the Lord always ends up with nothing left. He loses everything he has—his wealth, health, strength, people, everything. He has no power at all. It must not be that we are simply saved and then live out our days in vain and pass away; we must reckon it up from time to time and think it over. I cannot tell you how fortunate we are. It is so very good. Because the Lord has met us, the Lord has become our Savior and removed our sins, and our Lord is the One who gives us more blessings than the blessings we have

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received so far, we come to give even more thanks to the Lord.


Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Faith that follows the Lord even in the steps of daily life

< John 2:12 >

“After this He went down to Capernaum, He, His mother, His brothers, and His disciples; and they did not stay there many days.”

Today’s word is a single verse. It is a record that Jesus went down to Capernaum with His mother, His brothers, and His disciples, and that He did not stay there many days. Neither the amazing event of water becoming wine nor any long words exchanged with people are in this one verse. Only that He went on the way together with them and that He stayed for a while is written here.

But even in this short record there is a word we must hear. Just before this, the glory of the Lord was revealed at the wedding feast in Cana, and the disciples believed in Him. The passage carries on to the next step with the words *“After this.”* The disciples who had seen the sign went down to Capernaum with Jesus. A life of believing in the Lord does not end at the moment of seeing an amazing thing; it continues on to the next step of walking together with that Lord.

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We, too, have had a day when we came to realize grace deeply. On the day we first accepted into our hearts the word that Jesus had all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, thanks overflowed in the joy that our sins were gone. Yet after that day, too, there is a day we must live, there are people we must meet, and there is work entrusted to us. Let us think together, before this one verse, about how we are to live the life that comes after receiving the remission of sins.

Steps that continue together with the Lord who performed the sign

Jesus, who turned water into wine at Cana, and Jesus, who went down to Capernaum, are the same One. Even though the place changes, who the Lord is does not change. The disciples were not people who remembered only the power revealed at the feast; they were people who went on the way together with the Lord who had revealed that power.

As we live a life of faith, there are days when our hearts are fervent and days when they are not. On some days thanks overflow as we hear the word, and on other days we pass by busily, pressed by the things we have to do. On days when we are moved little, we may even feel as though we have grown distant from the Lord. But the ground of faith does not lie in the same feeling arising every day; it lies in Jesus, who saved us.

The gospel we believe leads us to that Jesus. The Lord is the Son of God, who came in a human body. He received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and had all our sins passed on to Him; bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross; and He rose again from death. We have

received the remission of sins by believing in this salvation the Lord has fulfilled.

This fact is the truth on days when we rejoice greatly, and it is the truth on days when our hearts are weary and our life is busy. Does Jesus remove our sins anew today, or did He already remove them long ago? The Lord already bore even the sins we would commit throughout our lifetime through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death. So our remission of sins does not rise and fall according to our mood. The reason we can come boldly before God today as well is that this Lord has saved us.

Therefore, even after we have been saved, let us always keep this gospel in our hearts. It is not something to push aside as a story we have already heard while going around looking only for new emotions. We were people who could only be cursed before God, but the Son of God was sacrificed for us, and by believing in that sacrifice we have obtained salvation. This is something we must never forget. Remembering the Lord who washed away our sins, giving thanks, and living each day according to His word, and relying even now on the Lord who bestowed grace on us—this is the walk of faith.

The passage does not tell us what conversation the disciples had in Capernaum. It only clearly records the fact that they went down together with Jesus. What we need, too, is not so much to create a special story every day as to believe in the Lord who saved us and to live according to His word. Just as the faith that saw the Lord's glory at Cana continued on to the next step, our faith, too, continues on to today's step.

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From being near to believing in the heart

In the passage, Jesus' mother, His brothers, and His disciples appear together. Jesus was not One who went about alone, cut off from people. He was in real life, which He shared with His family and His disciples. Even in this short record we see the fact that the Son of God came as a man and lived among us.

Yet not all who went the same way had the same faith. Later, the Gospel of John records of Jesus' brothers, *"For even His brothers did not believe in Him" (John 7:5)*. Even though they had grown up in the same house and gone about together with Him, they did not understand what Jesus was doing and what He said, nor did they believe. Being near in the flesh and believing in the Lord in the heart are different things.

This fact is important for us as well. Growing up under believing parents does not automatically bring the remission of sins. The fact that one has attended church for a long time or has been close to those who preach the gospel does not take the place of one's own faith, either. A place where one can hear the word is a precious opportunity. But receiving that word into the heart and believing in Jesus, who washed away one's sins, as one's own Savior is each person's own part.

Let us read John chapter 1, verses 12 and 13.

"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God."

Children of God do not come about by blood. God gives the right to become children to those who receive the Lord and believe in His name. So before we put forward whom we are close to, let us look back at whether we know and believe how Jesus has saved us.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a word that tells us vaguely to like Jesus. It tells us clearly how Jesus had our sins passed on to Him and who received the judgment of those sins. The Lord had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. His shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rising again was the result of having had that sin passed on to Him. Had He not had the sin passed on to Him, there would have been no reason for Him to shed His blood, nor any reason for Him to rise again. Whoever believes in this salvation receives the remission of sins in his heart and becomes a child of God.

Living together with a believing family and learning the word together at church are also precious. For in those places we hear the gospel and receive help for our faith. So let us not skip over the gospel with those who are closest to us, thinking they already know it all; let us share the word with them to see whether they know the Lord who washed away their sins. What those close to us need most is also the Lord's salvation.

The Lord's work that continues even through a short stay

Jesus did not stay many days in Capernaum. The very next verse records that, as the Passover of the Jews was near, the Lord went up to Jerusalem. Capernaum appears again later in the Gospel of John. In chapter 4 it appears as the place where the nobleman's son lay sick, and in chapter 6 as the place where the synagogue was in which the Lord taught about the bread of life. But this time He stayed only for a while, and the Lord's steps soon continued on to Jerusalem.

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At Cana the Lord said, *"My hour has not yet come" (John 2:4)*. It means that although He had already received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, the time for Him to bear that sin and be hung on the Cross had not yet come. His steps going up to Jerusalem by way of Capernaum were a road heading toward that time. Later, John records of the day the Lord was handed over for crucifixion, *"Now it was the Preparation Day of the Passover" (John 19:14)*. The Lord is not One who astonished people once and then finished His work; He is the One who, in order to save us, gave up His own body in the end as the sacrificial offering.

When we think of the Lord who saved us, our hearts, which had been counting only the help we received, take one step further. We were people who were to be condemned for sin before God, but the Lord paid the price of our sins in our place and gave up His life. The remission of sins we enjoy is the grace of the sacrifice the Lord paid. If God had repaid us according to what we had done, we would already have perished for the sins of a single week alone. Not forgetting this grace is the root of a life of faith.

Even on days when we see nothing in particular to be thankful for, this salvation remains as it is. It is not that we can give thanks only after all the problems of life have been solved. Because there is the Lord who washed away all our sins, we can give thanks today as well. When we remember the grace of salvation, our hearts, which had looked only at our own circumstances, turn toward the Lord, and we come to think about what would please the One who gave us life.

The fact that the Lord has saved us also renews the purpose for which we live. At first we are glad simply that our sins are gone. Then, after a little while, we come to think of others besides ourselves. The heart that lived only for its own comfort

turns around, and we come to know and follow the will of the Lord who saved us and to serve the gospel so that others, too, may receive this salvation. This is the way those who have received grace live in thanksgiving.

It is not that salvation is kept only if we do much work for the Lord. Salvation was fulfilled by the Lord, and we received it by faith. Because we have received that grace, we can serve the Lord. Just as a good tree bears good fruit, the righteous bear the fruit of serving the gospel. For the righteous, that work is something they cannot help doing. For just as one must eat to live, the work of God becomes the food of the soul. What moves us is faith in, and thanksgiving to, Jesus, who became our sacrificial offering.

We serve God even in ordinary life

When we speak of a spiritual life, it is easy to think that we must do many special things. But the heart that serves God is revealed even in the small things of daily life. There is no one who lives without eating, clothing himself, and resting. Everyone also has the desire to eat good things and to live comfortably. Those who live by the Spirit, even in the midst of such a life, follow God in their hearts and put God first. A life of faith begins with drawing a clear line in our hearts as to what we will live for.

The Apostle Paul exhorts us like this, bringing up even the most ordinary matters of our life: *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31).*

Even eating and drinking are connected with the glory of God. A life that serves God is not a life that does away with the

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life of the flesh. It is keeping God in our hearts in the midst of that life of eating meals, working, caring for our family, and spending time with people. It is doing faithfully the work entrusted to us at our workplace, looking after the hardships of fellow believers, and finding and serving in the work we are to take on for the gospel. If something brings glory to God, we do it gladly; if it does not bring glory, we lay it down even though we could do it.

The reason we can live like this is that the Holy Spirit dwells within us, who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who have believed in their hearts that Jesus bore all their sins at the Jordan River and received the judgment in their place have the Holy Spirit with them, even though the weakness of the flesh remains. The Holy Spirit lets us know what pleases God when we read and hear the word, when we sing hymns, and in the midst of our daily life, and He stirs our hearts toward the work of God.

There are also times when we feel that the faith and strength the Lord has given us are not great. But putting God before oneself and serving Him even with little ability and little faith—that is living for the glory of God. As we go forward serving the Lord in this way, even little faith grows into great faith. Those who at first were served, once they have grown a little, now come to care for others.

Caring for brothers and sisters who have only recently received the remission of sins may look like serving people, but in reality it is serving God. Some preach the word, and others labor so that the word may be preached. Valuing one another's labor, we serve the Lord together.

If in our life of faith we think only of what we ourselves will receive, we come to compare ourselves with others. We come to check how much we are recognized and how much more we

have gained than others. But when we think of the salvation the Lord has bestowed on us, we come to look at what we can share. It becomes a joy that, because we are people who have received grace from the Lord, we, too, can serve others.

We, too, have shortcomings and weaknesses. There are times when we make mistakes while serving the Lord, and times when our hearts lean only toward ourselves. At such times we look back at ourselves before the word and rely on the Lord again. A life that follows the Lord is a life of believing in the Lord who saved us in our insufficiency, learning His word, and turning our hearts back to the Lord.

The disciples who had seen the Lord's glory at Cana walked together with the Lord after this as well. The road down to Capernaum was a journey with nothing special about it, but on that road, too, the Lord was with them. In our ordinary days as well, the Lord who saved us is with us.

Let us remember Jesus, who bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and was judged in our place, and rose again from death. Let us not stop at hearing the word from close by, but accept that salvation by our own faith. We who have received the remission of sins can give thanks for the grace we have received and serve God even in ordinary life. On days when we have seen a great sign, and on days when we quietly do the work entrusted to us, like the road down to Capernaum, I hope that we will keep in our hearts the Lord who saved us and live for the glory of God. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who knew the hearts of men and fulfilled the Father's will

< John 2:23–25 >

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did. But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

When we hear the news that many people believed in the name of Jesus, we are glad. If people gathered to the Lord after seeing the signs, we may also think that they will now be a great help to the Lord. But right after this, the Apostle John records something unexpected. Jesus did not commit Himself to those people. The people saw what Jesus had done, but Jesus was looking at what was inside those people.

These three short verses hold together both who the Lord is and what we must rely on as we live. The Lord was not led along and moved by people's response. He is the Son of God, who, knowing everything inside us, fulfilled to the end the work of salvation the Father had entrusted to Him. Let us examine our faith before this Lord.

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The eyes that watched the signs must turn to the Savior

Let us read verse 23 again.

"Now when He was in Jerusalem at the Passover, during the feast, many believed in His name when they saw the signs which He did" (John 2:23).

Many people who had come up to Jerusalem at the Passover saw the signs Jesus did. Since they had seen with their eyes things that man cannot do, they believed in His name and followed Him, wondering whether this One might be the Savior and the Son of God.

But the eyes that see signs and the eyes that recognize the One who did the signs are not the same. Later in the Gospel of John, the Lord rebuked the crowd that had eaten the loaves and followed Him, saying, *"You seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled" (John 6:26)*. That crowd knew that Jesus had great power, but they did not recognize that He was the Son of God who came down from heaven, the Creator who made all things, and the Savior who would save them from sin. They saw the power, but they did not see the Master of that power.

We, too, are easily moved when we see amazing things. When a problem that would not be solved is resolved, we rejoice, and when things go as we expected, we praise God. Then, when things do not go as we wish, we even close the heart that had been turned toward God. Where was our heart turned at that time? If we had put off the question of what God delights in and were only watching what God does for us, then we ourselves are still the master of our life of faith.

The Lord knows what we need, and He also hears the prayers in which we tell Him our difficulties. But the purpose for which

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the Lord came to this earth is far deeper than our momentary satisfaction. He came to save us, who were under sin, and to make us live with God. If we have seen the Lord's power through signs, let us now turn our eyes to what the One who has that power has accomplished for us. The feeling of joy for a moment passes away, but the salvation Jesus has accomplished holds our faith firm to the end.

We cannot dress ourselves up before the Lord, who knows what is inside us

Let us read verses 24 and 25.

"But Jesus did not commit Himself to them, because He knew all men, and had no need that anyone should testify of man, for He knew what was in man."

The Apostle John reveals why Jesus did not commit Himself to the people. It was because He Himself knew all men. He is not One who comes to know only when someone tells Him about people's circumstances. Beyond the words and deeds that appear on the outside, He sees even what is inside a person. Even when He had cleansed the temple just before this, the Lord knew full well that in the hearts of those who demanded that He show them a sign there was the intention to kill Him. That is why, whatever they demanded, He was not shaken, and He spoke of His own death and resurrection.

People judge others by looking at their outward appearance. While admiring words that make someone's faith look good, they do not know what that heart is actually seeking, and they sometimes pass right by the sincere heart of a person who is clumsy with words and does not stand out. People look at the outward man, but Jesus looks at the center of the heart. The

Lord's eyes do not change because someone rates us highly, nor does the Lord miss our hearts because someone looks down on us.

Then what is there inside man that the Lord sees? In another place the Lord spoke like this.

"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21–23).

The sin that defiles a man is inside the man and then comes out. People regard only what has been put into action as sin, but Jesus says that even the evil thoughts harbored in the heart are sin. Before this Lord, no one can fabricate his own righteousness. Keeping up a good impression before people does not make the greed in the heart clean, and even sins not revealed to others are all laid bare before God.

Then how can we go before this Lord? It is by admitting that there is no righteousness inside us and believing in the remission of sins the Lord gives. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not teach a way to dress ourselves up to look admirable. It tells us how Jesus, who sees right through what is inside man, has removed the sin inside.

Jesus did not see only the few sins we committed outwardly. He saw the evil thoughts that come out of the heart and all the sins we would commit throughout our lifetime. And in order to remove those sins, He received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and had all the sin of the world passed on to Him. Our sins, too, are included in it. Bearing that sin, the Lord was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so He received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and He rose again from death three days later.

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The scope of that sin does not change because we have come to know ourselves a little better today. At the time when we did not even properly know what was inside us, Jesus had already had all of that sin passed on to Him at the Jordan River. So even on the day we newly discover the filthy heart inside us, the place to return to is the salvation the Lord has accomplished. There is no reason to hide our sins and insist that we are decent people. We stand up again with faith in the Lord, who had even that sin passed on to Him and was judged on the Cross.

In chapter 3, right after this, the Lord spoke like this to Nicodemus, who came to Him at night.

"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5).

Here, the water is the baptism Jesus received from John. When we believe in this salvation, in which the Lord had our sins passed on to Him in that way, was judged on the Cross, and rose again from death, we receive the remission of sins and are born again as children of God. Being born again is a new birth that God gives, and it is different from washing away sins through a ceremony performed in a church. To those who believe in this salvation, God gives the Holy Spirit and makes them live with new life.

How thankful we are that the One who knows what is inside us is our Savior! It was not that He accepted us because He did not know; He saved us knowing everything, and so we go boldly before God by faith.

Jesus, who followed the Father's will rather than people's support

Many people believed in the name of Jesus, but Jesus did not commit Himself to them. People's interest and support could not decide the path the Lord would walk. Jesus did not rely on the many people who had not been born again; He relied on God the Father alone. He did the work of God, followed only the Father's command, and finished all the work the Father had entrusted to Him. Even when people flocked to Him, He was not carried away, and He lived serenely before the Father. This is the image of Jesus Christ, who lived by the Spirit. And after He had saved us completely, He went up to heaven and sat down at the right hand of God.

Just before this, the Lord spoke of His death and resurrection, pointing to His own body as the temple. Even at the time when many people were gathering after seeing the signs, the Lord's heart was set toward that path. What the Lord looked to was not a life of gaining people's popularity and living comfortably. It was the work of receiving the judgment of sin according to the Father's will and delivering us from sin and judgment.

If our salvation had depended on people's response, how uneasy we would have been! A person's heart wavers according to his own circumstances and interests. Someone who follows fervently today treats some other matter as more precious tomorrow. The Lord did not leave the work of salvation in the hands of such people's hearts. He Himself bore our sins, and He Himself gave up His life. That is why our salvation does not waver.

We, too, are disciples who follow this Jesus. Yet as we go through life, there are so many times when we want to rely on people. We come to want only to live cozily and peacefully,

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mingling among people and leaning on one another. When someone recognizes us, we are encouraged, and when no one recognizes us, even the heart that meant to serve God grows cold. This is the mind of the flesh. The one who lives by the Spirit desires only that God recognize him, and he lives by faith in the word of God.

This does not mean, however, that we should cut off fellowship with those who believe together with us. We share the word with one another and give and receive help. Only, even within that fellowship, the One who holds our faith firm is God. If we seek from people the complete satisfaction that only God can give, our disappointment grows. When we rely on God and serve one another, we can walk together in faith even with brothers and sisters who fall short.

Also, it is a problem if, just because the Lord knew what is inside man, we think that we, too, know everything inside others. The only One who fully knows the heart is the Lord alone. We first examine what is inside ourselves before the word, and we treat others with the grace we have received from the Lord.

Those who have received the remission of sins seek the life God delights in

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have already received great grace. The Lord saved us, who had neither the ability to wash away our sins nor any way at all to escape judgment. So now, rather than calculating what more we might gain in order to become comfortable, let us set our hearts on how we will serve God, who has made us alive.

Just as the Holy Spirit was in the flesh of Jesus, the Holy Spirit is also in us who have received the remission of sins. That

is why we, too, can live by the Spirit like the Lord. The Holy Spirit who is in us stirs up in our hearts a holy desire for the work of God.

Through a person who lives by the Spirit, other souls come to live. If we live following the flesh, the soul beside us dies, but if we live by the Spirit, that soul receives the remission of sins and gains new life. The labor of preaching the word to those who do not yet know the gospel and of caring for brothers and sisters who have only recently received the remission of sins often does not receive people's applause. Even so, the Lord, who knows what is inside man, knows all of that labor and that heart.

We are still weak. There is in us the desire to seek the comfort of the flesh, and there is also the desire for others to recognize us. When we realize that our own greed is taking the lead, let us not insist that the greed is right, but turn our hearts around by the word. Knowing what God delights in and obeying it—that is the life lived by the Spirit. A life of faith is not a theory known in the head but a life actually lived.

It is not that we earn the remission of sins by the labor of serving in that way. We serve out of thanksgiving because we believe in the salvation the Lord has already accomplished. If we count our labor as the price of salvation, we come to boast of ourselves or to be bound by our own shortcomings. The grace the Lord bestows on us is far greater than what we offer to the Lord.

Let us live before the Lord, who knows what is inside us. The Lord is not One who recognizes our faith only after hearing people's praise, nor is He One who is deceived by the image we dress up with words. He is the Lord who knows our hearts even now and holds us firm to the end.

Even at the time when many people believed in Him, Jesus did not commit Himself to men but fulfilled the Father's will.

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Let us, too, not leave our faith in the hands of our reputation among people, but rely on God, who has made us righteous through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To live out the rest of our lives before the Lord, who knew everything inside man and yet did not forsake us, counting it enough that God recognizes us—this is the path of faith we are to walk. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus, who opened the way of salvation with His own body

< John 2:13–22 >

"Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business. When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!' Then His disciples remembered that it was written, 'Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.' So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body. Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

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When we call Jesus to mind, we think of Him as One who is gentle and longsuffering. Yet in today's passage, Jesus made a whip of cords, drove out the sheep and the oxen, and overturned the tables of the money changers. Among the scenes of Jesus recorded in the Gospels, there are few in which He acted this forcefully. What was it that the Lord could not leave alone?

With the Passover approaching, the temple in Jerusalem was crowded with people buying and selling sacrificial offerings. Seeing this, Jesus said not to make the Father's house a house of merchandise. Then the people demanded a sign, asking by what authority He was doing these things, and the Lord answered that if they destroyed this temple, He would raise it up in three days. The people were thinking of a building made of stone, but the Lord was pointing to the temple of His body.

So this word does not stop at the event of His driving out the merchants. Jesus, who rebuked the defiling of the Father's house, was saying that He Himself would give His own body and open the way for sinners to come to God. Following these two scenes, let us meet the Lord who has saved us.

The true sacrificial lamb who came before those who kept the Passover

Let us read verses 13 and 14.

"Now the Passover of the Jews was at hand, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. And He found in the temple those who sold oxen and sheep and doves, and the money changers doing business."

The Passover was the greatest feast for Israel. It is the feast that remembers the day God delivered them from slavery in Egypt. On the night when all the firstborn of Egypt were killed,

God had the people of Israel kill a lamb and put its blood on the two doorposts and the lintel. And He promised as follows.

"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13).

Passover means to pass over. Death should have entered that house, but God saw the blood and passed over without bringing down judgment. Israel lived not because they were stronger than the Egyptians. It was because, as God had ordained, a lamb died in their place and its blood was on the door. Therefore the people who kept the Passover could not boast of their own ability. It was a day to give thanks to God, who had delivered them from death, and to remember that grace.

Yet at that feast, the temple had become a market where sacrificial offerings were bought and sold. People who came from far away bought their offerings there and offered them. Until Jesus came, people in the temple laid their hands on the head of an unblemished animal to pass their sins on to it, killed that animal, and put its blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. The offering died because of the sins that had been passed on to it. That sacrifice was a promise pointing to the true sacrificial lamb who was to come, yet the place where that promise should have been remembered was full of the noise of buying and selling.

Into that temple Jesus came. Before the people who were remembering the lamb of the Passover stood the Lamb of God, to whom all those offerings had pointed. The Apostle Paul says as follows.

"Therefore purge out the old leaven, that you may be a new lump, since you truly are unleavened. For indeed Christ, our Passover, was sacrificed for us" (1 Corinthians 5:7).

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Jesus is the Passover lamb who was sacrificed for us. We, too, were people who had to be judged because of sin. The sins we have already committed do not disappear because we have lived a little more decently than others, nor do we escape judgment because we have lived a religious life for a long time. We needed a sacrificial lamb who would bear our sins in our place and die for us.

So the Son of God came in a human body. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River and had all our sins transferred to Him. Just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament had sins passed on to it through the laying on of hands and died, Jesus, bearing those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again from death. Passover means that judgment passes over, and the baptism Jesus received from John means that He had our sins passed on to Him. Because Jesus has already borne our sins, the judgment of God passes over us.

In Egypt, death passed over at the sight of the blood put on the doorposts. Today, the place where that blood must be put is our hearts. When we believe in our hearts in this salvation that Jesus fulfilled with the water and the blood, sin is washed from our hearts and judgment passes over us. Therefore we, too, have a Passover. It is the day the Lord saved us. We have been accepted before God not because of our labor but because of the Lord, who was sacrificed in our place, and so every work of serving God begins from this thanksgiving.

Do not make the Father's house a house of merchandise

Let us read verses 15 and 16.

"When He had made a whip of cords, He drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and the oxen, and poured out the changers' money and overturned the tables. And He said to those who sold doves, 'Take these things away! Do not make My Father's house a house of merchandise!'"

Jesus made a whip of cords and drove out the sheep and the oxen, poured out the money, and overturned the tables. To those who sold doves, He said to take those things away. The gentle and kind Lord did this not because His feelings were hurt. He would no longer tolerate the seeking of fleshly gain in the Father's house. God is longsuffering, but when He sets things right, He shows no leniency. That day, no one in the temple could stand in the Lord's way.

Jesus called the temple *"My Father's house" (John 2:16)*. In another Gospel, He said of this house, *"My house shall be called a house of prayer" (Matthew 21:13)*. The Father's house is the place where children come to the Father and pray. But God does not seek those who call on Him while sin remains as it is in their hearts. So the first thing to do in the Father's house is to ask whether the one who comes in has received the remission of sins, and if he has not, to preach the gospel to him. Only those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and had the sins of their hearts washed away can call God Father and pray.

Before this word, we also look back on our own life of faith. If the purpose of believing in Jesus lies only in prospering more and rising higher in the world, that is turning the salvation the Lord fulfilled into a means of satisfying one's own greed. The

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heart that says, “I will serve this much, so make me rich,” treats God as a trading partner. If one wants fleshly gain, one can simply go into business. A life of faith is for serving God.

This does not mean, however, that we should not ask the Lord for what we need. Because we are weak, we ask the Lord for help and give thanks for the grace by which He cares for us. Only, our labor does not become a right to demand anything of God. Faith is relying on the Lord who saved us, and service is what we offer in thanks for that grace.

For those who preach the word, this rebuke is even weightier. If one looks at a person and first calculates what one can get from him, it is no different from doing business in the name of God. To look first at whether that soul has received the remission of sins, and to let him know how Jesus washed away his sins, is the work of serving the Father’s house. However great the outward prosperity may be, if the gospel that gives life to sinners is not in it, it is like those tables the Lord overturned.

The Lord’s zeal goes as far as giving up His own body

Let us read verse 17.

“Then His disciples remembered that it was written, ‘Zeal for Your house has eaten Me up.’”

Seeing what Jesus did, the disciples recalled the word of the Scripture. This is the word that says zeal for the house of the Lord would consume Him. If He had been concerned about saving face before people, it was something He could not have done. When a respectable person overturns tables, his honor is tarnished and he draws people’s criticism. But the Lord did not

consider what would become of Him. The zeal of His love for the Father consumed the Lord.

Jesus did not make it His aim to win people's favor. He was not One who, seeing something wrong, kept silent for fear of losing popularity. And that zeal finally led Him as far as giving up His own life. The Lord was not One who demanded that sinners hand something over in order to fill Himself; He was One who gave up His own body to give sinners life.

Let us think deeply about this difference. A religion that uses people gathers what belongs to others and exalts itself. Our Savior gave Himself to give us life. Jesus did not come to us in order to get something from us. It was in order to save us, who were to be judged for sin.

The same zeal arises in those who believe in this Lord as well. As the heart that loves God and loves souls grows, they gladly do things that people of the world cannot understand. This is because one soul's receiving the remission of sins becomes more precious than their own reputation. Yet even as we serve like this, we are not the Savior but those who preach the salvation Jesus fulfilled. When we remember the fact that the Lord gave Himself and gave us life, thanksgiving and humility also dwell in our service.

The salvation fulfilled through the death and resurrection of the body that was the temple

Let us read verses 18 through 21.

"So the Jews answered and said to Him, 'What sign do You show to us, since You do these things?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up.' Then the Jews said, 'It has taken forty-six years to build this

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temple, and will You raise it up in three days?' But He was speaking of the temple of His body."

The Jews asked Jesus what sign He would show. Since He had disrupted the sacrifices of the temple, in their eyes it was a crime deserving death. Even so, they knew that this man was no ordinary person. So they were telling Him to prove by a sign by what authority He was doing these things.

Jesus could have shown an amazing miracle right there. But the answer the Lord gave was *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19)*. He was saying, "Do you seek to kill Me for this? Go ahead and kill Me; in three days I will rise again." Just as the sign of the Passover was the blood of the lamb put on the door, the sign the Lord gave was also His own death and resurrection.

The people asked back how He would build in three days a temple that had taken forty-six years to build. Though both used the same word, temple, they were thinking of the building before their eyes, while the Lord was speaking of the temple of His body. Because they could not understand spiritually, they were talking about different things. So that the reader would not miss this meaning, the Apostle John himself makes it plain that Jesus was pointing to His own body.

The reason Jesus told them to destroy His body was that His body was a body that had already borne the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John. Now He had to receive the judgment of that sin with His own body. The reason the sinless Lord died was that He had taken our sins upon Himself, and the blood He shed on the Cross is the blood of salvation by which He was judged in our place for our sins. And the Lord rose from death in three days, just as He had said. Because we could be saved only if the Lord received the

judgment, with this word the Lord was speaking of the completion of our salvation.

Therefore, the ground on which we come to God does not lie in the size of a building or the form of worship. The animal sacrifices repeated year after year could not remove sin completely, but Jesus offered His own body, the temple, once and for all. By faith in Jesus, who saved us through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross and rose again from death, we receive the remission of sins and call God Father. Those who have received this salvation do not strive, as if paying a price, to remove their own sins; they live giving thanks to the Lord who saved them.

Lastly, let us read verse 22.

"Therefore, when He had risen from the dead, His disciples remembered that He had said this to them; and they believed the Scripture and the word which Jesus had said."

Even the disciples did not fully understand its meaning on the day they heard this word. Even while they went about with Jesus, there were many times when they lived by the thoughts of the flesh, even quarreling over who was the greatest. Then, only after the Lord rose again from death, they remembered, "The Lord was not speaking of the temple but of His own body," and they believed the Scripture and the word of Jesus. And when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they boldly preached the gospel, and those who received that word were added, as many as three thousand in one day.

Today we, too, stand before this word. If we hold on only to visible buildings and outward appearances, we miss the Lord's will. When we believe what the Lord said and how He fulfilled it according to His word, the Holy Spirit who is in us makes us understand that word. To live by the faith that the Lord is alive—that is the life of living by the Spirit.

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Jesus gave up His own body, the temple, to be destroyed and raised it up again in three days, and so He opened the way for sinners to come to the Father. Now we enter the Father's house not with a heart for doing business but with a thankful heart. Let us believe in the Lord, who had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and was judged in our place on the Cross, and let us come to God, calling Him Father with sinless hearts. ✉

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CHAPTER

3

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Those who have been born again of water and the Spirit and obtained eternal life

< John 3:1–15 >

“There was a man of the Pharisees named Nicodemus, a ruler of the Jews. This man came to Jesus by night and said to Him, ‘Rabbi, we know that You are a teacher come from God; for no one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.’ Nicodemus said to Him, ‘How can a man be born when he is old? Can he enter a second time into his mother’s womb and be born?’ Jesus answered, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not marvel that I said to you, “You must be born again.” The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it, but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit.’ Nicodemus answered and said to Him, ‘How can these things be?’ Jesus answered and said to him, ‘Are you the teacher of Israel, and do not know these things? Most assuredly, I say to you, We

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speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven. And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life.'"

Nicodemus was a Pharisee and a ruler of the Jews. He was a man who taught the law, so much so that Jesus called him *"the teacher of Israel" (John 3:10)*. Such a man came to Jesus by night.

Nicodemus had seen the signs Jesus was doing. So he said that these were things no one could do unless God was with him, and he exalted Jesus to the full, saying, *"We know that You are a teacher come from God" (John 3:2)*. But instead of responding to that praise, Jesus spoke at once about being born again. Nicodemus had said that he "knew," but the Lord said that unless one is born again, he cannot even see the kingdom of God. Recognizing Jesus as a great person after seeing signs, and being born again and seeing the kingdom of God, are two different things.

When people have lived a religious life for a long time, they think they have drawn closer to the kingdom of God. They consider that they have also become qualified to be saved, in proportion to how much they know, how much they are respected by many people, and how much they have labored for God. Nicodemus was exactly such a person. But there was a problem that even his position and knowledge could not solve,

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namely, the problem of sin. The word the Lord gave him was that he must be born again of water and the Spirit.

This word is just as necessary for us today. How does a sinner get born again and obtain eternal life? The Lord made that way clear through the word that one must be born of water and the Spirit, and the word that the Son of Man must be lifted up in order to give us life. Following this word, let us look at the life God has given us.

To enter the kingdom of God, one must be born again

Let us read verse 3.

"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God.'"

To be born again means to be born twice. It is for a person who was born once from his mother's womb to believe in the gospel God has given, receive the remission of sins, and be born once more as a child of God. A person is born once and dies once, and after that there is judgment. If one is born once and dies without having received the remission of sins, there is no way to escape that judgment. That is why a person must have a second birth.

The Lord said that a person who has not been born again "cannot see" the kingdom of God. A person who has sin in his heart cannot truly recognize God, nor Jesus, who came from God. Even Nicodemus' calling Jesus *"a teacher come from God" (John 3:2)* remained at the level of a guess he had made from seeing signs.

Nicodemus took the words that one must be born again literally. So he asked in return how a man could be born when he is old, and whether he could enter a second time into his mother's womb and be born. He thought of being born only as physical birth. Just as it is impossible for a person with an aged body to go back into his mother's womb, so it is impossible for a person to be born a second time by his own strength. The second birth comes only through Jesus.

We, too, like Nicodemus, often think of the salvation God gives in our own way. We expect that if we never miss a worship service, give many offerings, go up a mountain to pray and fast, and serve more zealously than others, then someday God will cause us to be born again. We also think that if we remember every one of our sins and repent with tears, those tears will wash away our sins.

But human labor cannot make a sinner be born anew. The sins already committed remain as they are even if one piles up good deeds, and the resolve never to sin again is powerless before past sins. Some people regard quitting smoking and drinking and becoming gentler in character as being born again, but that is only a slight change in one's way of life. Being born again is for a person who was under sin to receive the remission of sins and become a righteous person, and to obtain new life as a child of God. Even though his outward appearance stays the same, his inner man is born again, and he becomes a person who calls God Father.

That is why, before the word of being born again, the first thing we must lay down is our resolve to try harder. Only the person who admits that he has no way to escape from sin by his own strength, and that if he stands before God as he is, he can only be judged, seeks the Savior. What Nicodemus needed, too,

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was not knowledge that exalted him, but the word of the Lord that gives life.

When we believe in the salvation Jesus fulfilled, we are born again of water and the Spirit

Let us read verses 5 and 6.

"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.'"

To Nicodemus, who asked how one could be born again, Jesus made that way clear as *"water and the Spirit."* This word is a word that Jesus, the Master of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, spoke Himself. That which is born of the flesh is flesh. With the life received from one's parents and with human thoughts or feelings, one cannot become a child of God. The one who believes according to the word of God and is born of the Spirit is the one who belongs to the spirit.

Then what is the water? Here the water is the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River. Water washes away what is dirty. It is that very water that washed away the sins we committed with our hearts, thoughts, and deeds. The reason Jesus, who had no sin, received baptism from John the Baptist was to have the sin of the world passed on to His body. Just as in the Old Testament a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it, so when John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, laid his hands on Jesus and baptized Him, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him.

There is also a reason the Lord mentioned *"water"* first. It is because, before He received the judgment of sin on the Cross, there first had to be the work of bearing the sin of the world upon His body. When John the Baptist declined to baptize Him, Jesus spoke to him as follows.

"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"—this was fulfilled. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sin of the world passed on to Him. The sins we commit from the time we are born until we leave this world are also included in it. Even the sins committed with our thoughts and hearts, and the sins committed with our words and deeds, the Lord bore. Even though we cannot count all our own sins, the Lord knew all those sins and took them upon Himself.

Jesus, who bore that sin, was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died. The Lord received in our place the judgment of sin that we were to receive. And He was buried, rose again from death three days later, and became our eternal Savior who overcame the power of sin and death. This salvation is, from beginning to end, a work God Himself accomplished.

Then why did the Lord not say "water and blood" but *"water and the Spirit"*? The Holy Spirit is God. It means that all of this—that the Father sent the Son in a human body, and that the Son bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and fulfilled salvation through the Cross and the resurrection—is a work that God did. And the Holy Spirit comes upon the heart of the one who believes in this work and seals him as a child of God. Because it is a heart whose sins have been washed away, the Spirit of the holy God can dwell there.

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To believe in this gospel is to accept the salvation the Lord has fulfilled as my very own salvation. It is to believe in my heart that God, loving me who could only go to hell, came as a man, bore even my sin at the Jordan River, and was judged in my place on the Cross. The gospel I had known as someone else's story becomes my very own story.

We must also distinguish between the baptism we receive at church and the baptism Jesus received from John. The rite itself of having water poured on the body or being immersed in water does not remove sin. The One who bore sin is Jesus, and we receive the remission of sins by believing in the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The rite a believer receives at church is a confession that he believes in that salvation.

Some people divide receiving the remission of sins and being born again into two different stages. But regeneration means being made new, being born again means being born anew, and salvation means that a person who had sin has become a person who has nothing to do with sin. Only the words differ; it is one and the same thing. Being born again is that a sinner, by believing in the gospel, has become a righteous person and a child of God. So there is no need to wait for one more special experience in order to be born again.

The unseen work of the Holy Spirit can be known through the word

Let us read verses 7 and 8.

"Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows where it wishes, and you hear the sound of it,

but cannot tell where it comes from and where it goes. So is everyone who is born of the Spirit."

The Lord told him not to marvel at the words that he must be born again, and spoke using the wind as an example. The wind cannot be seen with the eyes, nor grasped with the hands. But since its sound is heard and the branches of the trees sway, it is clear that the wind has blown. The person who has been born again of water and the Spirit also has such clear marks. The sin that was in his heart has been washed away, and he knows through the word how God caused him to be born again.

Here *"you"* refers to Nicodemus. Nicodemus, who had not been born again, could not recognize a person born of the Spirit, like a person who does not know where the wind comes from and where it goes. Yet there are people who cite this word and say that being born again is something that happens without anyone knowing, so only God knows whether they themselves have been born again. The Lord had just made it clear, right before this, that one must be born of water and the Spirit. The one who did not know was Nicodemus, and the person who has believed that word and been born again knows how he was born anew. Just as the One who moves the wind is God, so God knows the work by which He caused us to be born again, and He has let us know it through the word.

We cannot catch hold of the Holy Spirit with our eyes and show Him. But we know through the word by what God saved us. Jesus had our sins transferred to Him at the Jordan River and paid the price of those sins in full through the judgment of the Cross. The Holy Spirit works through this written word; He makes us believe that word and holds our hearts fast with that word. Some people try to confirm being born again by dreams or visions, or by a feeling of warmth in the chest, but the evidence of being born again is in the word.

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Among those who have heard the gospel for the first time and believed, there are some who believe that all their sins have been washed away, yet hesitate because they do not know that this is called being born again. What is needed at such a time is to learn the word accurately. If a person has come to know and accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, that person has already been born twice. When he comes to know what he has received from the Lord, he comes to confess with clear faith the grace he has already received.

Even after being born again, there are times when the body is weary and the heart is discouraged, and one's own weaknesses are exposed. There is no reason to judge being born again all over again each time, according to the mood of that day. Our salvation stands firm on the righteousness Jesus fulfilled. Whenever our shortcomings are exposed, we confess, "Lord, You bore this too at the Jordan River back then," and we admit our wrongs before the word, turn back, and follow the Lord. We must look separately at the new life received in the heart through the Holy Spirit and the weak flesh, which by its very nature cannot help sinning.

We must accept the testimony of the Lord, who came from heaven

In verse 9, Nicodemus asks again, *"How can these things be?"* Jesus asked him in return whether he, the teacher of Israel, did not know these things. Nicodemus was a teacher of the law, a man who had no fault to be found with him, whether in terms of morals or of Biblical knowledge. But a person who has sin in his heart, however much learning he has, is in the dark when faced with the matter of being born again. Even a teacher who

taught others must learn from the Lord before the word of salvation.

So even a person in a high position with much learning, if he does not know the gospel, is a person who must learn from the beginning, like Nicodemus. When we teach them step by step with a heart that pities them, they too come to understand the word of being born again.

Let us read verses 11 through 13.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, We speak what We know and testify what We have seen, and you do not receive Our witness. If I have told you earthly things and you do not believe, how will you believe if I tell you heavenly things? No one has ascended to heaven but He who came down from heaven, that is, the Son of Man who is in heaven."

The way to God is made known by the One who came from heaven. Jesus speaks what He knows and testifies what He has seen. The reason Nicodemus had to believe this word lies in the fact that the One speaking is the Son of God, who knows the truth.

To Nicodemus, who was on this earth, the Lord explained the matter of a person having to be born again by using birth and the wind as examples. He was asking how, when he could not believe even that, he would believe if He told him the heavenly thing of the Son of God coming in a human body, bearing the sin of sinners, dying, and living again. This is a word telling him to first accept the testimony already given to him before asking for a higher explanation.

Today we, too, sometimes show the same attitude before the gospel. Even though the Lord says that He has borne sin completely and entirely, we insist that we feel at ease only if we add something more ourselves. That is a heart that regards Jesus' salvation as insufficient and tries to finish it off with its own

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labor. The faith we need is faith that accepts what the Lord has done just as it is.

It is impossible for a sinner to go up to heaven by himself and bring life. That is why the Son of God came down in a human body. The Lord bore the sin of the world at the Jordan River, died on the Cross, rose again, and ascended to heaven, and thereby opened the door of heaven, and He made it so that whoever believes in Him follows after Him into the kingdom of heaven. Our salvation is a grace that God accomplished by coming down to sinners. The one who knows this grace lays down his own boasting and comes to give thanks to the Lord.

Those who believe in the Son of Man who was lifted up have eternal life

Jesus continued His word by citing an event of the Old Testament that Nicodemus, a teacher of the law, knew well. Let us read verses 14 and 15.

"And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life."

While the people of Israel were going around the land of Edom in the wilderness, they became discouraged because of the way, and they complained against God and Moses. The LORD sent fiery serpents, and many who were bitten died. The people admitted that they had sinned and asked Moses to pray. When Moses prayed, the LORD told him to make a fiery serpent and set it on a pole, and said that everyone who was bitten would live when he looked at it. The Bible records the result as follows.

"So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (Numbers 21:9).

The one way for a bitten person to live was to look at the bronze serpent on the pole. All that those who lived did was to believe the word God had spoken, *"Everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live" (Numbers 21:8)*, and lift up their heads and look. The power to give life was with God, who had made that promise.

The venom of the fiery serpent is like the sin inside man. Satan enticed man in the Garden of Eden and made him fall into sin, and since then all people are born inheriting sin and are dying because of sin. This venom does not come out through human effort.

Jesus connected this event to Himself. He said that just as Moses lifted the serpent up high on a pole, so the Son of Man must be lifted up. The Son of Man refers to Himself, the Son of God who came as the son of man, and being lifted up means being hung on the Cross with His feet lifted off the ground. Why did Jesus, who had no sin, have to be hung high on the Cross? The Bible says that he who hangs on a tree is under a curse.

"Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13).

There is no reason for One who has no sin to be hung on the tree of the curse. The reason Jesus could be hung on the Cross is that He had first had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. Because of that sin He was cursed, and He received the judgment of that sin with His own body. That is why the Lord spoke of the same gospel in two parts: earlier, as *"water and the Spirit,"* and later, as the bronze serpent on the pole. With the water He bore

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our sins, and by being lifted up He received the judgment of those sins.

Therefore, to look at the Cross is to know and believe what sin the Lord was bearing when He was hung there. In that sin He bore at the Jordan River were my sins, and that judgment He received on the Cross was the judgment I was to receive. Shedding tears at the mere sight of His suffering does not wash away the sin of the heart. When we believe together in the water and the blood of which it is said, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ –ASV" (1 John 5:6)*, the sin of our hearts is washed away.

Just as the people bitten by serpents looked at the bronze serpent and lived, so we, who could only die because of sin, live by believing in the Son of Man who was lifted up. The one who believes in that salvation no longer remains under the judgment of sin. He is washed of all his sins, is born again as a child of God, and obtains eternal life.

The Lord said that He intends for whoever believes in Him to have eternal life. Eternal life is living forever. The Lord, who lives forever, has made us His own people so that we may live forever with Him. The One who gives eternal life is the Lord, who rose again from death and is alive even now. Because He is the One who overcame death Himself, He can give that life to us who believe as well. Therefore, the one who believes has already obtained eternal life.

Nicodemus asked, *"How can a man be born when he is old?" (John 3:4)*. But the new life the Lord gives is a matter of being born again by faith, and so it has nothing to do with the aging of the body. Even though the body grows older year by year, the life received by being born again of water and the Spirit is eternal. The Lord, who saved us, will also raise this body again. That is why the one who has obtained eternal life can give thanks

for the grace he has received and spend his remaining days on the work of helping those who do not yet know the gospel to be saved.

Dear fellow believers, the Lord, who told Nicodemus that he must be born again, also opened that way Himself. He said that one must be born of water and the Spirit, and that the Son of Man must be lifted up in order to give us life. And just as He said, He had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death. Whoever believes in this truth is a child of God who has received the remission of sins and been born again through this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If you have not yet accepted this gospel in your heart, look today at the Son of Man who was lifted up on the pole. When we believe in the Lord, who came by water and blood, we receive the remission of sins and obtain new life. And let us who have already believed live today serving the gospel with a youthful heart, as befits those who have obtained the life that lives forever. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

For God so loved the world

< John 3:16–21 >

“For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God.”

There are times when we hear testimonies of salvation. I cannot know everything about the life of the one giving the testimony. But I know well that in this world, while people believe in the Lord, sometimes a husband goes before God first, and sometimes a sister goes first. If such a thing happens to us as well, through this very thing we can rather set our hearts and love God more deeply, and we can even become precious workers of God. Some of the things we go through look bad because we think of them in terms of relationships between people, but if we think of them spiritually, within the world of

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God, they are not necessarily such bad things. “You probably say that because you have never been through it and do not know.” In fact, the faith of those who have received the remission of sins grows stronger when they go through hardship or are lonely. It is also faith to be able to believe in God better and follow Him better when one is in hardship.

But sometimes, by comparing one person with another, we come to forget our faith concerning God, the setting of our hearts, and the blessings of spiritual faith. That is why a person of faith must live within faith, thinking of his relationship with God. All the people living in this world have children and live like this, and they all just live that way. But we who have received the remission of sins are different. Those who have received the remission of sins live for the gospel within their relationship with God, and they rely on and love God alone; between people, there can be no such relationship in which they never make a single mistake and only benefit and love each other 100 percent. The point is that sometimes, as we live, we are tolerant of the other person and let things go because he is so weak; it is not that we give each other 100 percent total love and rely on each other as if we could not live without each other. Relationships between people are not life, the way, and the truth, as Jesus is.

“What about you, that you talk like that? You do not even seem to be very old yet, so how could you know how I feel?” In fact, the time when one has no companion in the flesh is an opportunity to draw near to God and do God’s work better. Therefore, if someone precious in your life has left this world first, you should not sink into sorrow but think that God allowed it. If you had been living until now loving a person and relying on each other, you might have lived to the end without believing in the Lord. Then what happens? It is perdition. This is a matter that concerns all of us.

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The human heart is a truly subtle thing. So there are times when, before I even know it, it has moved off somewhere. Because our flesh is weak, there are many times when we tend to rely too much on the visible world, even though God, though not visible to our eyes, is alive. So sometimes we even abandon God, who truly loves us, and rely on people. God has ordained that once a person is born, he is to go before God once. I have a worry that any one of you might rely too much on such a person, who would not even follow along with you, and, bound to your present circumstances, be shaken in heart by the mere fact that he has gone, and lose what is precious. Dear fellow believers, if you believe in God and have received the remission of sins in your hearts, I ask you not to rely on relationships between people or on circumstances, but to rely on God, rely on faith, and rely on the church, and not to lose your faith but to hold on to it and keep it without fail.

"For God so loved the world"

The word we have read today says, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:16–17)*. God so loved the world. So He gave us His only begotten Son and saved us. God truly loved you and me. He loves us even now, and He will love us forever. God loved us like this and gave us salvation, yet there are so many times when we live without remembering God's love well.

What kind of love is the love with which God loved us? Dear fellow believers, think seriously about God's love for once—

whether God really loved us or did not love us. God is alive even now and loves mankind, and God really did love mankind. And because God actually loves you and me, He actually removed your sins and mine. He Himself came to this earth, received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, died, and rose again, and so removed our sins. That is God's love.

"For God so loved the world" (John 3:16). God truly loved us. We must receive into our hearts, believe, and hold on to this fact that God loved you and me, but the problem is that we cling too much to present realities and are too preoccupied with lusts that are visible to a person's eyes and with what our eyes see.

Though God is not visible to our eyes, God is truly alive, and He truly loved you and me. God really loved us, and He loves us even now. Because God loved us, He gave us the new heaven and the new earth, and He gave us everlasting life so that we can live forever. God truly loves us, truly cares for us, and truly gives us love and blessings that cannot be fully expressed in words, but the problem is that we do not know this well and do not believe it. Whatever the case with us, one thing is clear: God truly loved you and me. So when we look at today's Scripture, it says, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. God gave His only begotten Son to you and me so that we might be saved and obtain everlasting life.

Dear fellow believers, how good it is that we have obtained everlasting life! To be able to live forever without ever dying and to be happy forever—those who have not obtained everlasting life face eternal perdition, but God gave us His Son, had our sins remitted, and gave us everlasting life. Jesus Christ came to this earth, had your sins and mine transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross

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bearing the sin of the world, was nailed to it and died, rose again from death, and is alive even now, and so He has saved us completely. So God made us believe in that Jesus Christ as the Savior, and made us accept God's love and believe it. The point is that He made it so that when we believe in that Jesus Christ, we believe in the Savior, and when we have received the remission of sins, we obtain everlasting life.

God truly loved us. We believed in God's love. So by faith we received God's love, received salvation, and became those who have everlasting life. In today's word, God speaks as follows: that God loved us and so gave us salvation from sin, made us His children, and gave us everlasting life. He says, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world" (John 3:17)*, and He said that rather He made it so that the world could be saved.

God said that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will not be judged, but those who do not believe it have already been judged because they do not believe in Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God. *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18)*. It means that those who believe have become people without sin, but those who do not believe have become people with sin because of that unbelief.

Those who loved darkness rather than light

Also, as for what the Scripture says about those who believe in God's love and those who do not, it says as follows: *"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were*

evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:19–21). So it means that those who give thanks for and believe in the fact that God loves us accept the light, but those who love the world more than God rejected the salvation that is the light God gave us, because they love darkness more.

So who are the evil people before God, and who are the good people who are not evil? It says that those who practice evil hated the light and did not come to the light for fear that their deeds would be exposed, and that those who follow the truth came to the light. The point is that the truly evil person did not believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, who is God, truly loved him and gave him the love that saves him from perdition, yet he did not believe it and loved darkness rather than God's love. That is why that person became an evil person and ended up going to hell because of his own sin.

God bestows His love on all people, and because He truly loved all people, He truly had the Son of God come to this earth and remit all sins. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment and contempt for sin by going to the Cross and dying, and rose again from death; and by doing these things He showed how truly He loves us, removed our sins, and truly gave us salvation and everlasting life. But the point is that, on people's side, they either believed that fact or did not believe it. The one who does not believe that fact is an evil person. God loved you and me and loves us still, but because he does not believe, he has become an evil person.

Although men were born a brood of evildoers from the time of their birth, God gave us His only begotten Son, removed all

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our sins, gave us salvation, gave us everlasting life, and gave us the new heaven and the new earth, clothing us with the blessing and love of being able to live there forever without dying and to be clothed with riches and glory forever; yet the point is that in their hearts people loved darkness more than they loved the light. Because of this, people were unable to come before God and believe; rather, they kept away from God, and not only were they unable to believe in God's love, which is that light, but they rejected God's love, kept away from it, and opposed it. The Scripture records that they did so because they were evil and feared that if they came before God their evil would be exposed.

But there are people who love the light and love the truth. Though their deeds are lacking and weak and full of faults, because they truly believe in God, they came before God by believing that He truly loved them, received salvation, and lived lives of following God by faith. What we must know is that God did not hate one person and love another out of partiality. God loved all people very fairly and all alike.

Between people, the difference is only a single pip

God loved us like that, yet the point is that there are people who do not accept that love. When we look at your deeds and mine before God, if we compare them to a game of dice, there is only a single pip of difference between you and me. When you throw the dice, whether you move up one more square or fail to move up one more square is decided by a difference of a single pip. Is there a great difference? How good a life has someone lived, that he is called a righteous man or a sage? How wise is she, that she is called a wise mother and good wife? Really, how splendid is he, that he is called a prince on a white horse? Even

so, in the relationships between one human being and another, if we weighed it on a scale, how much difference would there be? To borrow the language of the game, when we compare and judge between people, there is no more than a single pip of difference. And yet among ourselves we put on great airs, look down on one another, weigh one another, and judge.

But God did not weigh us all the way humans do; He loved us fairly. God loved us so much that He gave His own Son to us and passed all our sins on to His own Son through the baptism He received from John, had His own Son nailed to the Cross to receive our judgment in our place, and after He had been put to death, had Him rise again from death to complete and fulfill our salvation perfectly, and He gave eternal life to those who believe it. God loved man so much that He bestowed such eternal love and loved him forever. The fair and great God gave us eternal salvation.

Jesus, who endured contempt and mockery for us

Now, think about it for yourselves. Did God truly love you or not? God Himself borrowed a human body and sent His own Son to this earth. Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, who was born on this earth by borrowing the body of the human being Mary, suffered, throughout His thirty-three years of life, pain and contempt that ordinary people could never go through. The point is that being despised by people was an everyday matter for Jesus, and He received such terrible contempt and suffering that He was ignored, pointed at, and even hung on the Cross. God raised up John the Baptist to baptize His own Son, and Jesus Christ bore all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross, was stripped of His

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clothes, was spat upon, was mocked and pointed at by people, and died with nails driven through both hands and both feet. When He hung on the Cross and died, He suffered the shame of having His whole body exposed before a vast crowd. And He was mocked by a vast crowd: "If You are the Son of God, save Yourself. Come down right now. You used to raise the dead and call Yourself the Son of God, but You are nothing special. You used to put on such airs, but now that You are actually hung on the Cross, You cannot do a thing." How people mocked Jesus like this! Did they not hack up phlegm and spit on Him again and again? And before the high priest, one of the officers standing by struck Jesus with his hand—how they despised Him!

Jesus Christ's standing is that of the Creator who made you and me. He is not only the Creator who made you and me, but the One who made all of nature—the universe and all things in it, heaven and earth, the mountains and the waters, the flowers and the stars of the sky; and that Creator truly loved you, and so, in order to save you and me from sin Himself, He came for a time clothed in a human body, had your sins and mine transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and was placed in the position of suffering the punishment for sin—how much humiliation must He have gone through! If it were I, hanging on the Cross bearing the sin of the world while worthless people came and humiliated and mocked me like that, I would have thrown it all off at once and gone after them, and I would not have left them alone. I might even have made a hell that was not just an ordinary hell but one that makes you faint at the mere sight of it, and handed it to them. But He was truly the God of love. Jesus loved you and me so much. Because Jesus truly loved you and me so very much, He endured and bore such contempt, suffering, and mockery to the end. Jesus quietly went through all of it, *"As a sheep before its shearers is silent" (Isaiah*

53:7). And so He saved us. Remember that Jesus, as He died on the Cross, said, *"It is finished" (John 19:30)*. The Lord loved us and finished it all for us.

God loves you and me. Do you believe? I know this love. And I believe. Among all loves, the real love is God's love. It is not something like human friendship, the love between a man and a woman, or the love between parents and children; only that salvation—in which the Creator loved His created beings so much that He came to this earth, received baptism from John, had sins transferred to Him, went to the Cross and received the judgment, and rose again, removing all sins and judgment—is the highest and absolute love. That love which gives eternal life, gives eternal happiness, and gives eternal love is God's love. It is called agape love. How amazing this is! Have you and I received such love, or have we not? Do you believe, or do you not? Believe.

The righteous are not lonely

In fact, there are all kinds of storms in this world, and there are times when someone twists our feelings and compares one person with another, and so our hearts get hurt; but if we believe and think in our hearts that God loved me and loved you, such things are nothing at all. "That is only true for you, Pastor." That is not so. It is when a person goes through hardship that he can know God's deep love and have deeper fellowship with Him. That is why God allows saints and God's servants to go through hardship on this earth. "You say that because you have everything." Dear fellow believers, that is not so. "Don't you have any?" "I do." "Is it the same?" "It is the same." We can be

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the same. If we do not believe that God loved me and loved you and gave that love to us, there is little difference.

Whether someone is at your side or not makes little difference. If anything, when you have no one, you have more, and when you have someone, you have nothing. If you have one, you have only that one, but if you do not have that one, there are many more lined up all around. That is a glimpse of the mysterious world of faith. When we the righteous gather, how joyful it is as we giggle, chatter, laugh, roll around, and play! Who are my brothers and sisters and mother? Truly, the members of the church, the ministers, and the saints are my family, my brothers, my sisters, my coworkers, and the people of the kingdom of God. Such a family is always at the side of the righteous. Just because someone is not at my side does not mean I have nothing; if I look around me, there are many more. Are there more, or are there not? There are.

Since I am a man, I meet with the male ministers and chatter away. We exchange mischievous jokes with each other, too. Among ourselves, we are a family that can say such things as much as we like. And when there is something delicious, we eat it together, giggle, take heart, and serve the gospel in unity—that is all it takes. “I am not lonely, for the Lord who became my friend is with me while I live in this world.” In fact, we are not lonely. But without the church, without brothers and sisters, without coworkers, we are lonely. How lonely that is!

Do the people of the world understand and go along with it when you do righteous work, serve the gospel, pray for the gospel, preach the gospel, look toward the new heaven and the new earth with hope, give thanks for having been saved, and work to bring others to salvation? The people of the world do not understand. Such people are not your family or mine, because their faith is different from ours and their lives are

different. Such people may sometimes seem to comfort and console you, but in fact such people are the ones who make you lonely.

After I was born again, I grew distant even from my relatives. I preached the gospel to my nephew for a long time, too, but my nephew, saying that his faith was different, went around saying that I was a person who believed wrongly, and in the end we cut off contact with each other. When faith is different, people cannot help but become strangers, and in the end they only criticize and oppose, and wound the hearts of the righteous.

Dear fellow believers, but what is wrong with our faith? *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. God loved me and loved you. Obtaining everlasting life by believing in the only begotten Son is the right faith. I believe that. I believe it, and you also believe this fact. The Son of God came to this earth, had your sins and mine transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world, and shed the blood of that cruel suffering. *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Galatians 3:13)*. Jesus bore your sins and mine, received the judgment, rose again three days later, and so saved us. Whoever believes this does not perish but obtains everlasting life, and whoever does not believe this is the one who truly perishes in the end.

So what is wrong with our faith? Did we receive the remission of sins and then go stealing? Did we drink alcohol and beat people up? Did we curse at people? If we are hated by people as we live in this world, we are hated because we believe the truth; and if there is anything lonely and hard as we make our way through this world, we must believe that God allowed such things in order to love you all the more.

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Dear fellow believers, do you think I have no hardships? There was a time when my heart hurt so much that I went out to the seashore and wept a great deal. Because we are human, when we feel too deeply hurt, it wounds the heart, and so we struggle a great deal and we weep. That is simply what a wound of the heart is. But where can we go to have that wound of the heart healed? "God loved you and me. He loves us still. I believe that." It is within this that we can have the wounds of our hearts healed and be restored; who in this world could comfort our hearts?

Truly, life is lonely enough that one wishes someone would walk alongside, and it is a pilgrim's road, like that of a boarder who comes once and then is gone. Boarding at this house, then boarding at that house, and then moving one's lodgings to the grave—that is life. Do you think that because you are still young you will stay that young forever? While you love the Lord and do the Lord's work, the summer retreat comes around; and while you work yourself to the bone to earn money, serve the Lord, pray, and work, the winter retreat comes around; and as one year, two years, three years, ten years pass like this, growing old happens in the blink of an eye. But although the flesh grows old and declines like this, just as the word says, *"Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16),* the inward man is renewed day by day.

By what do we, the righteous who have been born again of water and the Spirit, live? The righteous live by the faith that believes that God loves you and me. Because God loved you and me, you and I can believe in God's love and live happily. Because we believe in God, we can love one another and live without clinging to other things and without having our hearts stolen away by other things. Dear fellow believers, are you

happy because you have a lot of money? Are you happy because you have everything you need? No.

Day by day, within faith, we gain strength in both spirit and body and serve the Lord, and that is happiness. We are not lonely. The saints of our church, the ministers, the workers, the brothers and sisters, and the Sunday school children are all our family. With this many family members, how could we be lonely? When you have a whole line of family to provide for, rather than having time to be lonely, you are busy with the many things you have to do for them, and you are so busy bestowing love on the whole world that you could not be lonely even if you tried. We are not lonely in the least.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16). Do you believe that God loved us like this? It is not that someone is an evil person because he did bad things, or a good person because he did good deeds. The person who believes that God loved you is a good person, and the person who does not believe is an evil person. Those who believe that God loved you and sent His only begotten Son to remove your sins—that Jesus loved you, had your sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and rose again, and that He not only truly loves you, truly saved you, truly made you children of God, and truly gave you new life, but will also truly give you the new heaven and the new earth in the future and make you happy forever—those people are good people.

Because God's love is good, and because His loving us is the most beautiful, great, grand, and good love, the person who believes it is a truly good person and a person who knows true love. But the person who rejects God's love and loves dark sin more than God is a bad person. That is what the word of

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Scripture is saying. The person who loves darkness is a truly bad person.

Hypocrisy that does not come to the light

"For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:20). It means that they do not come to the light for fear that their deeds will be exposed. Dear fellow believers, you know the saying that one should confess one's wrongs and come out into the open, don't you? You and I are a brood of evildoers, born with sin from birth, who cannot help but practice evil. What is there to hide? Our relatives know and our neighbors all know that we are lumps of sin; your children know, your brothers know, and even that pet dog in front of you knows—so what is there to hide? Everyone knows. Man is such that when no one is watching he wants to commit even filthier sins, and when others are watching he tries to appear kind and good. But man's very genes are 100 percent selfish.

They say an English gentleman goes to the toilet to relieve himself even when no one is watching. And so they say that a gentleman is a person who keeps good manners even when truly no one is watching. But one cannot tell just by looking at a person's outward appearance. In the old days there were people who plundered other countries, made other people slaves, and made other peoples their footstools, yet dressed up smartly, greeted people politely, carried a cane, and went about in white shoes and a white hat, behaving like gentlemen. They would have been comfortable enough resting their feet on a stone, yet they made people who had been dragged in as slaves lie face down and used them as their footrests, and they made still others

wash their feet. While making a habit of all kinds of wicked deeds like this, whenever they gathered among themselves they behaved as though they were extremely refined and cultured. The noblewomen of that age would attach something like wire to their skirts to puff them out.

Do you know of the Palace of Versailles in France in the past? It was the finest place for banquets, yet they say there was an unbelievable amount of filth all over the gardens. They say it was because, in trying to make only the outward appearance splendid, they disliked anything dirty that could be seen and so did not properly provide toilets.

And the noblewomen of that age, to make their waists look slender, laced their waists so tightly with their undergarments that I cannot tell you how much effort it took to undo them once. How awkward it must have been if they wanted to go to the toilet at a party! How long would it take to undo all of that? In the midst of that, holding back even their need to go to the toilet, how detestable the smiles they wore in order to be the belle of the ball! They danced the waltz pretending to be beautiful and refined and tossed off their laughter, but it was all hypocrisy. When the party was over and they came home, they would immediately undo all their lingerie—corset, all-in-one, and whatever else—and gasp, "Oh my, I nearly died." Of such hypocrisy, Jesus said, *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27)*. We who wear a kitchen apron in front and yet gather together, knowing one another and knowing God's love as we live—we are the ones who are truly beautiful.

Dear fellow believers, we are people of grave lawlessness. Not only do we live in an age in which lawlessness abounds, but

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we ourselves are such people. If I pretended to be holy and said, "How can we go on committing sins?" would you like that? Shall I, too, put on a show of hypocrisy? "Dear fellow believers, how can you go on committing sins like that?" Who does not know that one must not sin? It is not that we do not know it; it is because we humans are by nature an evil and weak breed that we sin like that. God alone is good, and we are evil. God loves us, and by believing in that love we receive the remission of sins and love God. Although we are lacking, we can love because we believe that God loves us. Because we have been saved by believing that God loved us and saved us, we try to serve the Lord even though we are lacking. "Please go easy on us. If You can, please look kindly on us." We ask God for help and live clothed in His love.

The love that comes from God

Dear fellow believers, this thing called love comes from God. You and I, who have been born again of water and the Spirit, believe in God's love. We have received eternal love from God. Truly, this is the truth that you and I must never forget in our hearts and must believe forever. Believe and hold in your hearts that God loved you and that He loves you even now. Then your hearts will be warm and at ease, and you will not be lonely. Are you lonely? Everyone who accepts and believes in God's love loves the righteous and loves the souls of others. They love within the truth and are not lonely. But the person who does not accept that truth cannot love anyone. He has no ability to love.

I am so very happy. You are too, aren't you? You, too, believe in God's love, don't you? You, too, believe that God loved you, don't you? God loved you and me. How did God love

you and me? God had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment, rose again, and removed our sins so that we are as clean as white snow; and He gave us everlasting life and made the new heaven and the new earth where we can live happily forever, giving us an eternal life to come. That is how God loved us. It is a tremendous thing. Who would love us like this? Would your husband do that for you? Even a husband loves his wife when she listens to him well, but when she does not listen to him, he hates her and sometimes treats her like an enemy.

Dear fellow believers, even the love between husband and wife is possible because they accept God's love and believe in God's love; within that love they can be tolerant of the other's weaknesses and love him; they can wait, and they can help with the other's shortcomings. It is within God's love that that love can be maintained. If people do not believe in God's love, they cannot accept anyone. They cannot even accept their own children. Dear fellow believers, that is why, when a couple goes wrong and ends up divorcing, they take their children straight to an orphanage. They dote on them and smother them with kisses, calling them their very life and their other self, and yet when the situation turns against them, they hand them straight over to an orphanage. Why is that? Because God's love is not in their hearts, the evil nature of man shows itself just as it is.

Dear fellow believers, even if things are hard, circumstances are not what matters; what matters is whether or not you believe in the love with which God loved you. Circumstances change every day. And even if there are hard circumstances, by faith they can be turned into blessed circumstances. But for the person who is bound by circumstances, throws everything away to save only himself, and has no God or anything else, blessing and love and everything else end up dried up.

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There is something that makes you richer the more generously you give it, and leaves you poorer when you hold back too much of it, and that is love. *"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24)*. Just as this word says, we are giving a great deal to people all over the world, and I cannot tell you how rich we are becoming. But if we had earned material things only to keep ourselves alive, given nothing to anyone, and filled only our own mouths, we would not have earned money, we would have become poorer, and we would all have been scattered. We the righteous grasped this word early on.

To have known the Lord, that the Lord loved me and that He loves me still, and that I believe it—that is blessing. I cannot tell you in words how great a blessing it is. It is such peace and such happiness. *"For He Himself is our peace, who has made both one, and has broken down the middle wall of separation" (Ephesians 2:14)*. Dear fellow believers, accept the love of the Lord, who broke down the wall of separation, who broke down the wall of sin. Dear fellow believers, who is the most good person? The person who believes that God loved us is the most good person. Who is the most evil person? The person who does not believe but rejects the fact that God loved us is the most evil person. Who are our brothers and sisters? Who is your family? Dear fellow believers, those who believe are your family. We live in this world, and when the Lord comes in the future, we will go and live in His kingdom. That is why we call one another brothers and sisters. Why brothers and sisters? Because we are one family. Even sinners call one another brothers and sisters because among themselves they are one people. Because we the righteous are truly one people in God, it is right that we call one another brothers and sisters.

Who weeps with you? Jesus weeps with you. Who stands with you? Jesus Christ. This is real. When you are having a hard time, who comforts and helps you? It is Jesus. Even when we go through hardship, our Lord does not leave our side but keeps us, and even when we are in danger, He keeps and protects us at our side. Such is Jesus. I hope you will believe. Do you believe?

I think it would be so very good to live believing in this love and then go. Dear fellow believers, if I become so weak in body that I reach the point where I cannot preach, make the pulpit long sideways and lay me on top of that pulpit. It is said that when the Apostle John, too, grew old and could no longer walk, he was carried by his disciples to the gathering and only repeated the words that they should love one another. I, too, will lie on that pulpit, turn just my head, and in a feeble voice say, *"Beloved, let us love one another, for love is of God; and everyone who loves is born of God and knows God" (1 John 4:7)* and then, "The worship service is over. Let us sing praises."

Truly, whatever circumstances come upon us, it is a fact that God loved us, and God's love is eternal. And we believe in eternity. You must fill your hearts with God's love and meditate on it in your hearts. And you must set your hearts. Only then will true peace, happiness, and blessing be in your hearts.

A life that spreads the love of God

We are not just living like this for no reason. We make books and distribute them all over the world; can you benefit other people with the money you have earned so laboriously? That is not easy even by human righteousness. We do this because the love we have received is truly God's love, because we have truly received God's love. For those all over the world who do not

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know God's love, we are distributing books carrying the word of truth to people who do not know how God loved them and how He removed their sins. The true embodiment of love is you and me. The person who has God's love in his heart bestows true love. Is there love in your hearts, or is there not?

I do not know how it came about that we received such love from God. When we first came to know God, we read this word without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so we did not deeply understand what it meant. But how is it now? "God really did love the world. God loved all people." The person who knows and believes in God's love is a truly good person, a saved person, and a person of God who has obtained everlasting life, while the person who does not believe is truly a vicious breed and an evil person.

There is no one worse than the person who rejects God's love. God gave Himself up to love you and me; can you reject that? For you and me, Jesus was born on this earth clothed in flesh, had sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world, was stripped of His clothes, was nailed, poured out all the blood in His heart, died, and rose again, and so removed all our sins, saved us, gave us new life, and gave us everlasting life; is not the person who rejects that truly an evil person?

Dear fellow believers, those who do not believe must repent and believe without fail. Believing in your heart that God sacrificed Himself to save us is loving God, and it is being saved before God. The person who only knows and does not believe is a person who has not been saved. Only those who believe are the children of God. We all believe. You believe, don't you? I am so very thankful. I cannot tell you how thankful I am. This fact that we are truly in God is so very good. As there is less and less

to expect from the flesh, we come to rely more on the Lord's love and to give thanks. I give thanks before God. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Those who believe in the love that gave the only begotten Son and come to the light

< John 3:16–21 >

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

With what heart does God look upon us? How we answer this question determines our faith and our lives. If a person thinks that God hates him and is only waiting for a chance to judge him, he hides for fear that his sins will be exposed. On the other hand, if he thinks that since God is love, neither sin nor

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judgment matters, he does not treasure the Savior whom God has sent.

Today's passage speaks of both the love of God and the judgment of sin. God loved the world and gave His only begotten Son. Those who believe in that Son have everlasting life, and those who do not believe are already under judgment. The light has come into the world, but there are those who love darkness more, and there are those who follow the truth and come to the light.

Therefore, this word is not a word to hear as a vague comfort about the love of God and then pass by. This word tells us to know how God loved us and how that love removed our sins, and, instead of hiding what we are, to believe in that love and come to the Lord. For Jesus came into the world to give us life.

Out of love, God gave His only begotten Son

Let us read verse 16.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."

The starting point of this word lies in God. It is not that we first did something for Him and so moved God's heart. God loved the world first. That love is the heart of God, and both His making us and His sending His only begotten Son to give life to us who were to perish came from that heart. The love of God is the beginning of our salvation.

Here, the world means every person born into this world, that is, you and me. There are those who look at their own sins and doubt, "Would God love even someone like me?" But God gave His Son in order to give life to those who were to perish because

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of sin. He loved them even though He knew they were a breed that could do nothing but sin all their lives. Believe that this love is the very love directed toward you.

Then what does *"so"* mean—how did He love? The Bible has meaning in every single letter. God did not love in words only, but actually resolved our sins. He sent His one and only Son in a human body, and when that Son turned thirty, He had Him receive baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, so that He had all the sins of the world, even the sins we would commit throughout our lifetime, transferred to Him. Then He had the Son, who bore those sins, nailed to the Cross so that the Son received in their place the judgment that sinners were to receive, and three days later He raised Him from death and established Him as our Savior. This is the love with which He *"so"* loved.

The word *"He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)* also points to this work. God not only sent His Son into the world, but He also passed all our sins on to that Son and delivered Him up in our place. The Apostle Paul also says as follows.

"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).

The perishing spoken of in the word *"should not perish" (John 3:16)* is eternal death, the wages of sin. Whoever has sin remaining in his heart is under that perishing. God gave His Son in order to deliver us from that perishing, and whoever believes in this gospel is washed of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and is born again as a child of God. The Apostle John testifies of the love of God as follows.

"In this the love of God was manifested toward us, that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through Him. In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He

loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:9–10).

The ground of this love lies in the fact that God sent His Son and saved us. Even after receiving the remission of sins, there are times when our life of faith feels dry. Things do not go as we wish, and we are not satisfied with ourselves either, so we come to ask, "Does God really love me?" At such times, do not measure God's heart by your own circumstances. God has already given His only begotten Son, and that Son washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Even when circumstances are hard, what matters is whether we believe in that love. Those who believe in that love open their hearts to God even in hardship, and they endure, wait, and ask for help.

The purpose of sending the Son is to save sinners

Let us read verses 17 and 18.

"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."

The purpose for which God sent His Son lies in having the world be saved through that Son. Jesus is the One who came, taking on the work of the Savior, to surely save us who live in sin. So there is no reason to avoid the Lord just because we have realized our own sins. It was because of those very sins that the Lord came. If He had told us to come after we had become clean on our own, no one would have been able to come forward.

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Seen from God's side, salvation has already been accomplished. God loved all people equally and removed the sins of all people through His Son. But on man's side, people are divided into two kinds: those who believe in and accept the salvation God has accomplished, and those who do not accept it. That is why verse 18 clearly divides those who believe from those who do not believe. Whether one is judged or not depends on faith.

Those who believe in the only begotten Son are not judged. Though we are people who commit sins on this earth because of our shortcomings, it is because Jesus had even those sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment in our place on the Cross, and rose again from death. The Lord has already received all the judgment we were to receive.

On the other hand, the word says that those who do not believe have already been judged. To be judged is to receive a verdict. Those who have sin remaining in their hearts have already received the verdict before God: "You are a sinner." On the last day, that verdict will only be carried out. Though they have no righteousness to resolve their own sins, they do not accept the Savior God has given, and so they remain as they are under that sin and judgment.

Verse 18 says that the reason the one who does not believe is judged is *"because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."* What is that name, that one is judged if he does not believe in it? The angel told Joseph that name as follows.

"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

The name Jesus is a name that has the authority to deliver His people from sin. To believe in that name does not end with calling the name with one's lips; it is to believe who He is and what He has done for me. It is to accept the fact that Jesus, who is God, came as a man, delivered me from sin, rose again, and became the Savior who is alive even now. So if someone says he believes in Jesus but sin still remains in his heart, that person has not yet believed in the authority of this name.

When one believes in this name, the struggle to prove oneself admirable before God comes to an end. I am lacking, but the Lord who saved me is perfect. My deeds cannot be the ground of salvation, but the righteousness the Lord has accomplished makes me clean from all sins. Those who believe in the love of God have this rest.

A heart that loves darkness hides what it is

Let us read verses 19 and 20.

"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed."

Verse 19 makes clear where the judgment of verse 18 comes from. Here is the reason a person remains one who has sin. The light has come into the world. That light is Jesus Christ, and the gospel by which He bore and removed our sins is the light. The Bible says, *"God is light and in Him is no darkness at all" (1 John 1:5)*. When this gospel shines into our hearts, we become people without sin. But not all people welcomed the light. Because their deeds were evil, they loved darkness rather than light.

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What is the evil spoken of here? It is to reject the love of God, who loved to the point of giving His Son. To stand against the salvation God has accomplished, saying "No"—this is the greatest evil. A heart that does not believe in the love of God is an evil deeper than stealing or lying.

Then why do people do so? Verse 20 says that it is for fear that their deeds would be exposed. Light exposes what is hidden. When the light shines, not only what was done with the hands but even what was harbored in the heart is all exposed. Even if we looked like righteous people before others, when we stand before the word, the pride, greed, and hatred in our hearts are exposed. Jesus spoke as follows about where what defiles a man comes from.

"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man'" (Mark 7:20–23).

We were all born with such evil inside us, and God knows it all. Then what is there to hide before God? Yet when our wrongs are pointed out, we first blame other people and our circumstances. We say, "Someone made me angry, the situation was difficult, and everyone else does the same." With such explanations we may win people's understanding, but the evil in our hearts remains as it is. The reason we avoid the light is, in the end, that we are not honest. Even before God, we pretend not to sin and try to hide ourselves.

The heart that loves darkness rather than light is also found in the heart that pushes away the truth in order to protect its own righteousness. A person can reject God's judgment spoken about him, saying, "I am not that evil a person," and cover his own sins

by putting forward his career and position in the life of faith. To one who covers his own sins, the Lord who saved sinners is not keenly needed. The more he avoids the light to hide what he is, the farther he also drifts from the Savior who came to give him life.

The Lord brings our sins to light in order to make us know that we cannot live by our own righteousness and to make us believe in His salvation. If there is something you are ashamed to speak of before people, rather lay it before God and ask Him: "This is the kind of person I am. Did the Lord bear even sins like mine?" To the one who asks this, the word clearly tells him that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, with not a single sin left out. Therefore, when you see your own ugliness before the word, do not hide in the darkness again. Admit what kind of person you were that you needed the Lord's salvation, and believe in Jesus, who loved such a person as you and saved you.

Those who follow the truth reveal the Lord's salvation

Let us read verse 21.

"But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

Truth means that which is true. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)*. One who follows the truth is one who believes all the word of God to be true. He acknowledges that what God has said about our hearts, thoughts, and deeds is true, and that the word that He sent His Son and saved such people as us is also true. He follows the word instead of his own thoughts or his own righteousness. So when the word calls him

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a sinner, he says "Yes," and when it says that the Lord has removed all those sins, he again says "Yes" and believes.

To come to the light means not to hide oneself but to lay oneself open. There is no need to come equipped with anything in order to come before the light. We need only come just as we are. When we, who were darkness itself, acknowledge what we are and come, Jesus, who is the light, removes our sins and makes us light. And He comes to dwell by the Holy Spirit in that heart from which sin has been washed away, and makes us live in the light.

We believe these two things together: I was a person who could not escape from sin by my own strength, and Jesus Christ saved such a person as me. If one only looks at his own sins and stops there, he remains in despair. If one speaks only of salvation while making light of sin, he comes to take lightly why Jesus had to receive baptism from John and die on the Cross. The gospel tells us both the reality of sin and the love of God that removed that sin.

The passage says that the deeds of the one who comes to the light are shown to have been done in God. The one who has come before the light comes to know that all his circumstances were within God's full knowledge. God knew from the beginning that he, born weak as a descendant of Adam, could not help but sin, and He made the plan to send His Son to save such a person as him. That he came to know God through the word, and that he became a child of God by believing that the Son had even his sins transferred to Him at the Jordan River—all of this was accomplished within God's plan. So the more one comes before the light, the less there is to put forward of one's own righteousness, and only the grace God has bestowed becomes clearer.

It is the same with life after believing. Even after receiving the remission of sins, we discover our weakness. Sometimes we realize that words we thought were right yesterday were, when seen before the word today, words spoken only for our own benefit. At such times, the believer does not insist that his wrong was right, but admits it and turns from it, and believes again in the righteousness of the Lord, who has already borne even that sin. Serving the Lord and serving the gospel are also things done before God. This is how a person who has already received grace lives according to the truth.

Those who know what grace they have received also change in how they treat others. They, too, were people who could only have been judged had it not been for the Lord's salvation. Therefore, when they see another's shortcomings, they do not boast of their own righteousness and condemn him rashly. They call a wrong a wrong, but they help him to admit it and turn from it according to the word. For they remember that the gospel they needed is needed by that person as well. Because the Lord, who is love, dwells in us by the Holy Spirit, we can hate sin yet love people.

Dear fellow believers, God sent the light so that we might be saved through His only begotten Son. God so loved the world that He gave His Son, and that Son had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, received all that judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death. Whether to believe or not to believe lies before us. Let us lay down the heart that tries to hide its own sins, and let us acknowledge what God has said about us and also believe the gospel that He has washed away all our sins.

The love that gave up Jesus, the only begotten Son, is the love of God that delivered me from sin and judgment and gave me everlasting life. In us who believe in this love and have come

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before the light, the grace of Jesus, who has perfectly saved such lacking people as us, will be revealed. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Why did God send the Son of God into this world?

< John 3:16–21 >

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

What does it mean for us to say that we believe in the love of God? Today's word speaks concretely about that. God said, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. The question is what kind of faith

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it is to believe in the truth that God the Father and the Son of God, Jesus Christ, have saved us all from the sin of the world.

God said, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved" (John 3:17)*. What God the Father wanted to accomplish for us by sending His Son to this earth was not to bring down the judgment of sin on the people of this world because of all their sins. His purpose was to have the people of this world saved from all their sins so that those who believe would obtain everlasting life. Therefore, we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has given to us all and become people who have no sin.

Because of our faith in that gospel of the water and the Spirit, we were able to be saved from the judgment of sin, and we were also able to be delivered from all our sins. By faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gave us, we have received the remission of sins and become those who will not receive eternal judgment in the future. All people are born with sin in their hearts fundamentally from the moment they are born, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of salvation that the Son of God, Jesus Christ, made for us, we were able to be saved from all our sins. By believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we become those who are always without sin before God. Therefore, whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not remain a sinner but lives forever as a righteous person.

All people who have sin in their hearts, whether they say they believe in Jesus as their Savior or not, receive the judgment of sin because of that sin, and receive the eternal curse as the price of that sin. But those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have no sin in their hearts, and so they can escape the judgment of God forever.

Why do we receive the judgment of sin from God?

God said, *"He who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18)*. We can see that those who do not believe in the name of the only begotten Son of God are those who do not believe that God has removed all our sins once and for all through the gospel of the water and the Spirit He has given us. Therefore, whether one received the judgment of sin or not depended on whether one believed or did not believe in the only begotten Son of God, who came to us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. On this point, God Himself asked the question and gave the answer.

He told us that because people can receive the remission of all their sins by believing in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as the Savior and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they do not have to receive the judgment of sin, while those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have sin in their hearts and therefore receive the judgment for all their sins. In this way, whether we received the salvation God has given or failed to receive it was decided by whether we believed or did not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ gave us. Therefore, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given were able to become the children of God by believing in the genuine truth of salvation.

In fact, among the people in the world who attend church, where would there be anyone who says he does not believe in Jesus as the Savior? They all say that they believe in the Son of God, Jesus Christ, as the Savior. But they do not know that Jesus came as the Savior of all sinners through the truth of the gospel

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of the water and the Spirit. This is precisely the problem with the faith of those who believe in Jesus as the Savior today.

Every year when Christmas comes, people joyfully sing the hymn that says, "Joy, the Savior has come; let all the peoples receive Him." People all over the world praise that Jesus is the Son of God and that He became the true Savior who came to this earth to save us from the sin of the world. But there are many who do not know the fact that Jesus Christ came to this earth as the Savior who saved us, who were sinners, from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In the word, He said, "*He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:18)*. As God has said this, that God judges the sinners who live in this world with sin means that, because those people do not know and do not believe in Jesus Christ, who came through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He cannot but bring down judgment on their sins because of that sin of not believing. Everyone, once he is born into this world and dies once, must stand before the righteous judgment seat of God. Then does this mean that people who have sin will receive the punishment of sin forever because of the sin inside them? Yes, it does. Therefore, depending on whether or not people believe in Jesus Christ, who came through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, some obtain salvation from the punishment of all their sins, while those who have not believed in that truth go into the pit of fire for the sin of not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and suffer the punishment of sin forever. Whether people enter the eternal paradise and live enjoying everlasting life with the Lord or not is decided by whether they believed or did not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the

Lord has given. This is the righteousness of God and the love of God, and it is also the blessing and the judgment of God.

Whether or not we have had the sins of our hearts washed away depends on whether or not we have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Whether we are those who have been saved by God, or have already become those who will receive the judgment of sin from God, is decided according to this. Whether we have been saved or not is judged by whether or not we have had our sins washed away now, and by whether or not we have accepted the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit into our hearts.

Is there sin in your hearts?

There are people who remain sinners who will receive the judgment of sin before God, and there are also people who will not receive the judgment of sin. The Lord spoke about this in John chapter 3. Yet today there are many people who do not properly understand the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the judgment of sin. In the word, the Lord said, *"This is the condemnation" (John 3:19)*. The condemnation God speaks of here means that He declares a person to have sin. Those who have sin before God are those who will be judged because of their sins, and God said, *"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19)*.

He was saying that the reason sin has remained in people's hearts is that they did not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the love of God. Jesus Christ, who became the light of our life, came to this earth through the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but many people did not

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recognize Him and did not accept Him into their hearts, and so their hearts are shut up in sin. Clearly Jesus is the Savior, yet people have become sinners whose sins have not been washed away, just as the word says, *"Men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil" (John 3:19)*.

When we look at the light of the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has given us, it is not that God failed to remove all of your sins and mine; He has already removed them all through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But because people do not believe this fact, they go on living as sinners. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He removed all our sins. Nevertheless, because their deeds are evil, people love their own evil more than the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and go on living sunk in all their sins.

Those who have rejected the gospel of the water and the Spirit have, as a result, chosen for themselves that darkness is better than light. That is not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the love of God. It is as if they are saying inwardly as follows: "The sins I am committing are more attractive than the fact that Jesus has removed my sins. So I refuse to accept Jesus Christ, who came through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as the Savior. I think it is only natural that I am a sinner." Such sinners are showing of their own accord that they do not want to become righteous. People who hold this kind of faith become shut up in their own sins. There is always sin in the hearts of such people. God says that such people are those who have sin, and that they are therefore those who will receive the judgment of sin. It is not that God, on His part, did not remove the sins of all people; it is that because they do not believe in Jesus Christ, who came through the gospel of the

water and the Spirit, as the Savior, they are always living as sinners.

This is what God the Father, on His part, is saying to us

"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)—this means that He made it so that whoever believes obtains salvation from all his sins. The word of John 3:16 is that the Lord loved all the people of the whole world and saved them from all their sins. But among people there are those who, on their part, say, "I would rather have sin than be without sin. I will choose the side of having sin. I like having sin, and I like darkness better than light. Rather than a life that can look up to heaven without a speck of shame, I would rather live buried in the darkness of sin." This is the problem of people.

Because they say that their life of sin is better than the love of salvation by which God saved us from sin, and that Satan, who is darkness, is better than God, who is the light, they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given them. What can be done about this? Because those who say they love sin more than God want of their own accord to be sinners before God, and have of their own accord brought judgment for their own sin upon themselves, God cannot help but bring judgment upon them.

In fact, whether all of us rightly know and believe in Jesus Christ, who came through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as the Savior also depends on your hearts and mine. Whether we will believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or believe only in the blood of Jesus who was hung on the Cross, depends on your choice and mine. In this world there are those who

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believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and there are also those who simply believe that the blood of the Cross alone is salvation. Now, which gospel we will choose to believe in is your choice and mine. It is God's will that a person believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and go to the kingdom of heaven, but whether we receive the remission of sins or fail to receive it now depends on the choice of faith that you and I make. You and I must decide how we will believe in the love of God, not according to our own thoughts, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Deciding which of these two gospels to believe in depends on your choice and mine. That is why you and I must now rightly choose which gospel we will believe in.

Those who truly follow evil hate the light of truth

He said, *"For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:20–21)*. This word speaks of two meanings. First, it says, *"For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed" (John 3:20)*. Did He say that everyone practicing evil loves the light, or that he hates it? He said that he hates it. This means that they hate the light of truth and do not come before the light. It says that the reason they hate the light of truth and do not come to the light is lest their evil deeds should be exposed. Their hearts were captured by darkness, so that they did not even want the light of truth.

As a result, whom did they love more, God or the devil? They loved the devil more than God. That is why they do not come

before the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and do not believe in it either.

God came as the light that saves mankind, and He wanted to save our souls once and for all through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, whoever has accepted the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit has received the remission of all his sins once and for all, while those who have not accepted the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not receive the remission of sins. The reason they fail to accept the light of the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is that they loved darkness more than light. We ought to have loved God and the truth of God more, at least in our hearts, but we did not. This means that in people's hearts there is fundamentally a heart that loves darkness more than the light of truth. Therefore, we must govern our own hearts and submit to the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The darkness and sin in your hearts and mine cannot be overlooked, no matter how much one tries to overlook them. A person who lives in darkness loves darkness more than light because of that heart that loves darkness, and so he does not accept the truth of God's love. Even when we think it over for ourselves, we know well that our own hearts are not right. Even when such thoughts rise up in our hearts, we must cast out what is not right by ourselves and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must forsake darkness and accept deep into our hearts the truth that came through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When that happens, we are saved from sin, but it is not quite as easy as it sounds. Because they wanted of their own accord to live in darkness, lest their deeds be exposed if they came before the light, they are shut up in darkness forever. Such people come to live as sinners before God.

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God has told us to come before the light of truth

The word that says, *"But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:21),* is extremely important. God said, *"He who does the truth comes to the light" (John 3:21),* and He said, *"That his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:21).* Whether we wanted it or not, we were born into this world under certain parents, we are living in these circumstances, and, though we did not want to, we always commit sin because we are weak. All of this is because we were born into this world with sin as descendants of Adam, and so we were born sinners. Nevertheless, we are in God, and God knew all of this. Because all the sins we have committed are sins committed in God, God, already knowing that we would commit such sins, came to this earth to save us and saved us with the water and the blood.

Now we acknowledge that God is right. We must honestly acknowledge before God that we commit sin before God, and we must also acknowledge the love by which God the Father, in order to remove our sins, sent His only Son to us and removed them through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who are in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in this way are those who have already entered into God.

On whom does our becoming righteous depend?

Dear fellow believers, on whom does it depend whether you and I receive the remission of sins or not? Fundamentally, it depends on faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given. Since God has already removed all our sins

through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has said that whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is saved from sin, the responsibility for whether we receive the remission of sins or not has now passed to us. We can see that whether we have received the remission of sins or not depends on you and me, that is, on ourselves.

Now that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has been granted to us, does whether a person receives the remission of sins or not depend on God, or does it depend on you and me? Now it depends on you and me. We must know that whether all mankind receives the remission of their sins or not depends on each one himself. God has already saved us from all our sins. Therefore, on God's part, He has accomplished all that He had to do, and now whether you and I receive salvation or not depends on you and me ourselves.

There was a theologian who said that God had predestined some to be saved and others not to be saved. Many people all over the world revered that theologian, but now that is not so. If what he said were really true, one could think, "Seeing that I believe in Jesus, I have been chosen by Jesus, and seeing that that person does not believe in Jesus, he has not been chosen." But it did not take very long to realize that understanding it that way was wrong.

As He said, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*, God loved all people and saved them all. Therefore, whether we receive salvation or not depends on your own hearts and mine. Do we believe in the love of God or not? Do we believe that God has saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit or not? Do you and I love God more than the devil or not? Do we follow God or not? On this your own salvation depends. In this way, we

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can see that the word of God was a word quite different from what we had known until now.

So, on God's part, He has already saved us from sin. Now, on our part, there must be faith that believes in God's love and salvation. A person who believes that the Lord has saved us through the water and the Spirit, and who believes that God is truth, light, love, and justice, is changed to resemble God, while a person who does not believe and likes the devil better is changed to be like the devil. So all the right to choose rests with you and me.

God said to Adam, *"Of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die" (Genesis 2:17)*. It is written in Genesis that in the Garden of Eden where Adam lived there was the tree of life, and there was also the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. Adam only had to eat the fruit of the tree of life and simply live forever. God also wanted it to be so. But because God wanted to make us His children, He allowed a choice. Adam picked and ate what God had told him not to eat. Although Satan the devil tempted him, it was Adam who made the choice.

That was Adam's choice. In the same way, our destiny changes according to what choice we make. It is the same with the things of this world. One's whole life changes according to what one chooses. What is it that you dislike, and what is it that you like? Choosing means that one's heart goes after what one likes and picks it. Therefore, if what you like is truly right, you will turn out right, and if what you dislike is what is right, you will go wrong. Everything depends on choice. It does not depend on some deed of ours, but on the choice of our hearts.

So, as the year draws to a close, I think it over. God has placed us within the time called eternity, and the one year that we live is nothing special. When this year passes, next year will

come, and when next year passes, the year after will come. The reason we attach meaning to each year is that we do the work of God; apart from that, there is nothing. Today we eat, work, and sleep, and the next day we eat, work, and sleep again—it is a repetition of this kind of life, so what is so special about it? Time passes that way until our lifespan runs out, so what is so special about our lives? God has saved us from eternal sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and believing that in our hearts and receiving the remission of sins can be said to be everything that is meaningful in our lives.

Do your salvation and mine depend on believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Your salvation and mine now depend on your choice and mine. I thought again about how I was saved from all my sins long ago. Long ago, I had sin. I was born on this earth in rather unfavorable circumstances and grew up in the religion my parents believed in. Buddhism—I grew up in that kind of thinking. But as I grew up a little, I came to think that this was not it. So I abandoned all religion and wandered for a while, and then I encountered Christianity. Passing along the street, I received and read a leaflet that someone was handing out while preaching the gospel, and I picked up a Bible containing only a Gospel, what is called a Gospel portion. Whenever I was bored, I read it. In those days there was not much to read.

Anyway, I took up the Gospel portion and read it, and it read so easily that I finished it all in an instant. Beginning with *"The book of the genealogy of Jesus Christ, the Son of David, the Son of Abraham" (Matthew 1:1)*, all of Matthew chapter 1 went by as a story of who begot whom, begetting on and on. And so I

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learned that Jesus had been born. And the conclusion was that Jesus died bearing the sins of evil people. “This One called Jesus is someone great. He is truly a good One.” That was all I knew.

Then one day I found out that an illness had developed in my body. Not wanting to be a burden to others, I intended simply to die and be gone just as I was. But when I was actually about to depart, there was so much sin in my heart. Because I had so much sin, the desire arose in me to try to receive the remission of sins. So I went into an empty chapel where no one was and prayed, “They say You died for me, so I will believe in You; please remove the sins I have committed,” and came out. At that time, in my heart I wanted to put my final affairs in order, but instead a new hope sprang up. Rather than a negative heart, a very positive heart sprang up. A feeling arose that this illness would be cured, and so, one way or another, I came to go to church.

After that, I read the Bible and believed, and kept on doing so for as long as ten years, yet my sin remained just as it was. I had thought that I had been saved from the time I came to know Jesus, but instead my personal sins piled up and I became a real sinner. Just as the word says that through the law we come to know sin, I became a real sinner after I believed in Jesus. “I am one who serves idols. I am one who murders, one who steals, one who commits adultery, and one who bears false witness.” I came to know this, and so I believed in Jesus and became a sinner. So I longed, “When on earth will I ever wash away this sin?” and I was always suffering in my heart.

The Lord met me as I was. The Lord gave me the opportunity to read the word of Matthew chapter 3, and as I read that word of truth, I accepted it into my heart. At that time, the Lord put an end to my questions about the baptism Jesus received from John. I came to know: “Through the baptism He received from John

the Baptist, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. Jesus had my sins, too, transferred to Him through that baptism He received from John. The truth of God was the gospel of the water and the Spirit."

I realized that the reason I still had sin even though Jesus had come as the Savior and I had believed in Jesus as the Savior was that, because I did not know that baptism through which Jesus had my sins passed on to Him, there was sin in the conscience of my heart as well. "Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had my sins transferred to Him. Jesus bore all the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross and died, rose again from death three days later, and became my Savior. And so He became the Savior of all mankind." I believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins in my heart.

Truly, we wanted to live according to God's will and wanted to live rightly, but we could not manage to live rightly, and so it was terribly hard. All who believe in the word of God know that if one has sin before God, he is cursed and goes to hell. We were originally like the children of the devil. But as I read the word of the Lord from Matthew chapter 3, verses 13 through 17, I came to know that the laying on of hands in the Old Testament was precisely the baptism that passes on sin, and that, coming to the New Testament, Jesus had all my sins, all the sin of mankind, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. And I came to know and believe that Jesus took away the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death three days later. Only then did I come to know that this Jesus Christ had become my true Savior. In that way, through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I came to receive the remission of sins.

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Once I had received the remission of sins, I saw that my being born, my growing up in such circumstances, the sins I committed—all of this was within the baptism Jesus Christ received. Now God and I are not separate from each other; I am a being who is in God, and you, too, are beings who are in God. You and I were committing sins that God knew all about, and God, knowing that you and I would commit such sins, removed all our sins. Because God loved you and me, He removed your sins and mine with the water and the blood. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and so brought all judgment to an end, and rose again from death; this means that He loved you and me and saved us in that way.

Even now, the whole of your lives and mine is in God. *"But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:21)*. God made all mankind and sent them into this world, caused all their sins to be exposed, and made them believe that He has saved them through Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, so that they obtain everlasting life and become the people of God. This means that God loved you and me, caused us to be born on this earth, knew all about our committing sin, sent Jesus Christ and saved you and me, and in that way made us the people of God. That is what God has done. That is why He said that, within the word of God, the work He did through the gospel of the water and the Spirit shows our true salvation.

Although you and I were born as descendants of Adam and commit sin in the flesh, now, as you and I live in this world, whom we meet, our meeting the Church of God, and all such things—all of this is entirely in God. Dear fellow believers, are you and I in God, or are we separate from God? We are those who are in God. Buddhist monks, too, are all those who are in

God. Yet they do not believe in Jesus; they beat their wooden gongs and say that Buddha will come and save them. Jesus Christ has saved all mankind. How can anyone believe that a human being saves mankind? There is no Savior but Jesus Christ. It is only Jesus Christ, the Son of God. People must believe in Jesus Christ to receive the remission of sins. I received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Even if we have shortcomings, we must know that all of that, too, is in God, and we must confess it. And although we are living imperfect lives, we must know that God has saved you and me from sin. Yet do you think that when you and I do not commit sin we are in God, and when we commit sin we are not in God? There is nothing that is not in God. Even supposing that the aliens people are so busy searching for did exist, in fact everything is in God. Of course, there are no aliens. I do not mean to talk about that; what I am saying is that I am in God and you are in God. When you and I do well, we are in God, and when we do wrong, we are in God. That God has saved you and me. We cannot escape from God.

Is God not saying this? *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. Dear fellow believers, God so loved the world. God loved you and me. This means that God loved you and me, knew that we are by nature beings who commit sin, and washed away that sin with the salvation of the water and the Spirit. It means that Jesus removed our sins so that we would not be under condemnation. It means that He made us not to be those who have sin. It means that He made us those who are without sin. It means that He made us those who do not receive judgment. God loved us this much.

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That is why you and I must believe that God so loved the world. We must also believe that we are in God.

Are we apart from God? We are all in God. There is a saying that a flea, however high it jumps, is still only a flea. However high a flea may jump—even a hundred times the height of its own body—could it go all around the earth? It cannot even go all around a single small town. A flea is born at the foot of someone's wall and dies without ever covering even one side of that wall.

Dear fellow believers, you must think on a cosmic scale. God knows you and me completely. If there is anything God desires of you and me, it is that you and I love God. I hope that you will cast off the heart that does not love God, the heart that likes darkness and the devil. There comes a time for us when we must choose one of the two, God or the devil; if you were told to choose one of the two, what would you want to choose? Let us call out the name we want to choose and say, "I choose this." "I choose God." We must confess it with our own mouths.

The best thing of all is that God has saved you and me. There is no need even to talk about anything else. That God loved me and saved me—that is everything. And we have received the remission of sins by believing in the love of God. Is it the same with you? And this is also the work to do while we live in this world. We will do the work of preaching that God loved people and removed their sins in this way. We have chosen this work. We need nothing else.

If you have chosen God and received the remission of sins, what will you now choose for the rest of your lives? Will you choose what is right, or will you choose what is not right? That, too, depends on your choice. What kind of work will you choose? People very much dislike black-and-white thinking. But God tells us to choose one of the two, and says there is no middle

ground. Of course you will choose what pleases God, won't you? You may say, "Why ask what is so obvious?" "There would be something to choose if there were three or four options, but it is one of two, so what is so hard about it? One is 100% bad and the other is 100% good, so what is there to choose? Of course it is the side that pleases God." Of course that is right, but I am saying this because there are also people who choose the side the flesh wants. The one speaking tells you the whole answer and then tells you to choose; would he speak that way because he is foolish? It is because there are people who live lives that are not the answer.

It is so good. More than other people's problems, the fact that I myself have received the remission of sins is so good. Even now, I preach nothing other than the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There is nothing else to preach. When other people write, they talk about literary things and the like, but I, whether I live or die, speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For there is no word more important than this. And this is all that God has given us, and this is all that we must serve.

It is said that not long ago a great earthquake struck a certain country and many people lost their lives. It is a truly sad thing. But as I hear that news, I am reminded of the warning that if people reject Jesus to the end, do not believe, and serve other gods, they will in the end suffer judgment.

There is nothing else. The work you do every day, too, is the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must make up our minds firmly: whether we live or die, we must do only this work. Do you want to do something else as well? Apart from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, do you also want to listen to things like the poems that are scattered all over the world? Shall I compose a poem for you? The title is "Emptiness." "The world is empty, and the hearts of people are empty;

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thoughts and hearts, everything is all empty." Put the word "emptiness" into any words at all and it becomes a poem. Truly, a world without Jesus Christ is empty.

Jesus Christ, the Son of God, has removed our sins through the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we must believe in the Son of God as the Savior. I hope that we will all live enjoying and spreading freedom and love within the world of God. Giving thanks that Jesus Christ has saved you and me with His love, I believe in the love of God. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The faith of a witness who shares in the bridegroom's joy

< John 3:22–36 >

"After these things Jesus and His disciples came into the land of Judea, and there He remained with them and baptized. Now John also was baptizing in Aenon near Salim, because there was much water there. And they came and were baptized. For John had not yet been thrown into prison. Then there arose a dispute between some of John's disciples and the Jews about purification. And they came to John and said to him, 'Rabbi, He who was with you beyond the Jordan, to whom you have testified—behold, He is baptizing, and all are coming to Him!' John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent before Him." He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease. He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His

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testimony has certified that God is true. For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. (The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand. He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him –ASV).”

How do you feel when you see the people who used to come to you moving over to someone else? When it seems that the work entrusted to us is growing smaller and someone else’s work is growing larger, we easily compare ourselves with others and feel hurt. Yet when John the Baptist heard that everyone was going to Jesus, he said instead that his joy was full. Hearing the same news, John’s disciples became jealous, but John rejoiced.

The difference lies in the fact that John knew who he was and who Jesus was. John the Baptist was the one who was sent six months ahead of the Lord, who baptized Him and passed the sin of mankind on to Him, and who testified that He was the Lamb of God.

Today’s passage follows the word in which the Lord told Nicodemus that one must be born of water and the Spirit, and that whoever believes in the Son obtains everlasting life. From there, the Scriptures turn our eyes once again to John the Baptist. In this word, we will see how a witness differs from the Savior, and what the person who believes in that Savior obtains.

Those who know the work entrusted to them from heaven keep their place

Verses 22 and 23 show that at this time people were being baptized in two places: the land of Judea, where Jesus was, and Aenon, where John the Baptist was. The Scriptures note of Aenon that *"there was much water there" (John 3:23)*. The baptism John the Baptist gave was a rite in which hands were laid on the head and then the whole body was immersed in water and raised up again, and wherever there was plenty of water, he performed that rite.

John chapter 4, verse 2 makes clear, as follows, what verse 22 records Jesus as having done.

"(though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples)"

Then what was the baptism John the Baptist gave to the people? It was a sign calling them to turn from the way they were going and return to God. While crying out for them to repent, John told them to believe that the Messiah who was to come would take away all their sins, just as the people of the Old Testament had passed their sins on by laying their hands on sheep and goats. The rite the disciples gave at Jesus' side meant that people should believe in Him who had now come and receive the remission of sins.

But for these two rites not to be in vain, there was something that absolutely had to happen: Jesus Himself receiving baptism from John. John the Baptist cried out that the Messiah would come and remove sin. For the faith of those who heard that cry and turned not to be in vain, the Messiah had to actually come and take that sin away.

Just as the high priest of the Old Testament laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering as the representative of the people, when John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind,

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laid his hands on Jesus' head and immersed Him in the water, the Lord had all the sins of the world passed on to Him. The laying on of hands is passing on sin, and baptism is washing, but in the baptism He received from John these two became one and the same act. Our sins were washed away by that act, in which the Lord had our sins transferred to Him and took them away. Having thus borne the sin of the world, the Lord received the judgment of that sin on the Cross and rose again three days later.

Verse 24 adds that this was before John had been thrown into prison. John would soon be imprisoned and lose his life, but before that he finished all the work entrusted to him and handed his place over to Jesus. Verse 25 says that a dispute about purification arose between John's disciples and a Jew. Purification is a rite of washing clean. Since people were receiving a rite of washing with water on both sides, words were exchanged over that rite of washing away sin.

After that, John's disciples came to their teacher. Everyone was going, they said, to the One their teacher had testified of. Watching people leave their teacher's side and go over to the other side, the disciples became jealous. But John's answer was different. Let us read verses 27 and 28.

"John answered and said, 'A man can receive nothing unless it has been given to him from heaven. You yourselves bear me witness, that I said, "I am not the Christ," but, "I have been sent before Him."'"

John's answer, in a word, was "Do not be jealous." A man can receive nothing except what has been given to him from heaven. The mission John received and the people gathering to Jesus were all given by God. From the beginning, John testified that he was not the Christ but a servant sent before Him. He knew that his part was to testify that He was the Son of God and the

Savior of mankind, and to go so far as to testify that one receives the remission of sins by believing in what He has done.

There is freedom in this confession. There is no reason to strive to hold on to a place that is not one's own. Since sending people to Him was the very work John had received, for John, people going to Jesus was the sight of that work being accomplished. And John faithfully fulfilled his part to the end.

We, too, are people entrusted with the same work as John the Baptist. We have been entrusted with one part of God's work and are serving in it. The offices, talents, and opportunities we have were also given from heaven. We have wisdom because God gave us wisdom, and we have ability because He gave us ability; there is nothing we have done because we ourselves were great. So if we try to make a name for ourselves with what we have received, we lose the purpose of serving. The One we must point to, and the Savior people must rely on, is Jesus.

The friend of the bridegroom rejoices when people come to Jesus

Let us read verses 29 and 30.

"He who has the bride is the bridegroom; but the friend of the bridegroom, who stands and hears him, rejoices greatly because of the bridegroom's voice. Therefore this joy of mine is fulfilled. He must increase, but I must decrease."

At a wedding feast, the one who most welcomes the coming of the bride is the bridegroom. But there is someone else who welcomes it as much as the bridegroom: the friend who stands beside the bridegroom and hears his voice. The friend does not covet the bridegroom's place, and he rejoices in the bridegroom

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receiving his bride as if it were his own affair. John the Baptist said that he himself was that very friend.

Then who is the bride? It is we, whom the Lord washed of sin and made His own bride. The Bridegroom does not receive as His bride anyone who has sin. That is why, in order to wash away the sin in our conscience and make us His bride, the Lord raised up John the Baptist and had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. He settled those sins completely on the Cross, rose again, and came to receive His bride.

A bride who does not know one of the things the Bridegroom has done is always pricked in her conscience. If a person believes while leaving out what the Lord did through the baptism He received from John, then even while confessing love for the Lord, in one corner of his heart he still regards himself as a sinner. Such faith is like a one-sided love. On the other hand, when a person knows that the Lord had his sins passed on to Him at that time, his conscience is washed clean.

John the Baptist knew that Jesus would come to him, receive baptism, and bear sin, and he performed that work with his own hands. Now that the Bridegroom had set out to receive His bride, there was nothing more the friend could wish for. John's fullness of joy came from this.

That is why John said that He must become stronger and he himself must become weaker. Jesus was the One who would offer Himself to God as the sacrificial offering and complete the work of saving us from all sins, and John was a man running errands before Him. The person who knows his position in this way is a spiritual person.

Let us also look into our own hearts. When you hear the news that the gospel has been spread through someone else's labor and that someone has received the remission of sins, do you rejoice

together with them? Do you not belittle even the work the Lord has accomplished because your labor has not been recognized? As long as God's will is accomplished well, it is all right even if you are somewhat ignored and the work you do looks shabby. Let us put our own reputation behind us and set God's will before us.

Even if we have been entrusted with work that is not very visible, if through that work the gospel is spread and our brothers and sisters benefit, it is precious service. Even if its fruit is not called ours, if the Lord receives the glory, we can give thanks together. When God's work goes well, we who were used in that work are blessed together with it. The reason we believe in Jesus is to receive the remission of all our sins, become children of God, and go to the kingdom of God, and, as those who have received that grace, to serve God and preach the gospel. The friend of the bridegroom lives with this heart.

We receive as true the word of the Son who came from heaven

John did not put himself forward because he knew who Jesus was. The word that follows makes clear the difference between the Son who came from heaven and the man who is of the earth. Let us read verses 31 through 33.

"He who comes from above is above all; he who is of the earth is earthly and speaks of the earth. He who comes from heaven is above all. And what He has seen and heard, that He testifies; and no one receives His testimony. He who has received His testimony has certified that God is true."

Who is He who comes from above? He is Jesus Christ. Because He is the Creator who made all things, He is above all.

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God, who said, "Let there be light," and made the heavens and the earth, came to this earth for a time, clothed in a human body, in order to save man from sin. Because He is God, He has the power to save us, and our faith in Him is not in vain.

On the other hand, the man who is of the earth speaks of the earth. A person who has not been sent by God, however excellent he may be, conveys his own thoughts. The teaching that even after being saved one must strive daily to become holy little by little comes from such thoughts. Because one cannot become holy by human effort, the Lord came, and we became righteous once and for all by believing in what the Lord has done.

What did He who came from above see and hear? Jesus knew everything the Father wanted. The Father's will was to send the Son in a human body to receive baptism from John the Baptist and bear the sin of mankind. And it was for Him, bearing that sin, to die on the Cross and rise again from death, and so to save all mankind from sin. When He came up out of the water of the Jordan River, the Spirit of God descended on Him like a dove, and there was a voice from heaven, saying, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*.

The Lord did not testify of what He had thus seen and heard by words alone. His birth, the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection—the thirty-three years He lived on this earth—are all the evidence that He has saved us. Yet verse 32 says that no one receives His testimony. Even at that time, few people received this testimony. Even if few receive it, since the Lord testified of what He Himself saw and heard, that testimony is true.

And verse 33 says that there are those who receive that testimony. They certify that God is true. John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. God accomplished that

work just as He had promised in the Old Testament, and because He fulfilled the promise exactly as it was, He is the God of truth. From the mouth of the one who has received this testimony comes this confession: "God is indeed true. He does not lie. He is One who promises and fulfills exactly what He promised."

Faith begins with acknowledging what God has done. We do not measure faith by a tingling in the nose or a burning in the chest. If the Lord says that He bore all my sins in order to save me, then that is what He did. And the one who lays down his stubbornness and accepts that testimony, God also acknowledges, saying, "You are My child."

Let us read verses 34 and 35.

"For He whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God does not give the Spirit by measure. The Father loves the Son, and has given all things into His hand."

The Son whom God sent speaks the words of God. This is because the Father poured out the Spirit on the Son without measure. Since the Spirit knows all things of God thoroughly, the Son knew everything the Father wanted, obeyed accordingly, and saved us. That is why, today as well, those who preach the word do not add their own thoughts, but preach exactly the word the Father spoke through the Son.

Because the Father loves the Son, He has given all things into His hand. Among all those things are you and I as well. God entrusted our souls to the Son so that the Son would save us. A man, however much his heart may long to, cannot love to the end because he lacks the ability, but the Lord who saved us has the power, and so He loves to the end. The risen Lord also said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18)*. Therefore, no one can take away the remission of sins and the everlasting life that He has given.

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The one who believes in the Son has already obtained everlasting life

Let us read verse 36.

"He that believeth on the Son hath eternal life; but he that obeyeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him."

Before this word, let us ask ourselves, "Do I have everlasting life?" The one who has everlasting life is the one who believes in the Son. He is the one who believes in what the Son came to this earth and did. Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of those sins, and rose again from death, and so He delivered us from the destruction of sin. The result of the faith that believes this is everlasting life.

God did not stop at giving the remission of sins; He also gave the eternal kingdom of heaven and everlasting life to those who have received the remission of sins. He made us—whose lives are like a mist that appears for a little while and then vanishes, who are like mayflies—into eternal beings that will never vanish again. That life is a life enjoyed happily forever with God in the kingdom of God, where there is no lack.

The passage also speaks of the one who stands on the opposite side: he who does not obey the Son. Not obeying the Son means rejecting in one's heart what the Son has done. Not accepting even one of the things He has done is also included here. Obeying the Son is far from servile submission. To accept in our hearts the work by which the Lord loved us and saved us, and to acknowledge that God is true—this is what it is to obey the Son.

Such a person shall not see everlasting life, and the wrath of God abides on him. The wrath does not leave but waits on him.

On the day life on this earth ends, for the one who has not believed in the Son, happiness ends and the curse begins. For the one who has believed in the Son, misery ends and happiness begins. If believing in the Son gives everlasting life, what reason could there be not to believe? If there is anyone who has not yet accepted this testimony, believe in the Son while there is opportunity.

Let us who already believe in the gospel also often call to mind the everlasting life given to us. As we do the Lord's work, there are times when we grow weary and frustrated. At such times, when we think of the everlasting life God has given us, our hearts are settled and thanksgiving comes forth. Should those who will live forever live fretting over the affairs of this earth, where they stay only for a little while? We do not work anxiously in order to obtain everlasting life; we serve the Lord in gratitude for the everlasting life we have already received. Those who know what kind of people they are also regard the work of serving the gospel as honorable.

The seventy or eighty years we live on this earth are time given to us to serve the Lord and share this everlasting life with people. Our preaching the gospel is the work of delivering people from death so that they obtain everlasting life. John the Baptist was full of joy when he saw people going to Jesus. This was because he knew to whom they had to go to obtain life.

Jesus, our Bridegroom, is the Son of God who is above all, the One who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and received us as His bride through the Cross and the resurrection. His testimony is true. Like John the Baptist, who rejoiced to hear the bridegroom's voice, let us make the Lord's increase our joy and share the everlasting life the Son has given with those who have not yet received it. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

God gave
His only begotten Son!

< John 3:16–21 >

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God. And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God."

The Creator who gave up His only begotten Son

God is the Creator who made the universe and all things in it, and He is the Mighty One who holds absolute authority. The whole universe and everything in it lives and is run by the grace of God. The sun, the moon, and the stars, animals and plants—everything was made by the providence of God. But man alone

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God made as a being with free will, and He also made him a being of precious worth, able to receive the love of God.

And He placed the universe and all things in it under man's rule. This is a clear example that shows how much God loves us human beings. But what is greater still is that, in order to make such people His own children and His own people and to live with them forever, He gave up Jesus Christ, His only begotten Son, to be put to death for us.

In this world there will never be a father who drives his own son to death for the sake of others. But God gave up His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ. And He made it possible for anyone to become His own child by believing in Jesus Christ. God did not love us in words only; He actually put His love into practice. Without any condition or price, He bestowed His love and grace on us solely in order to save us. We must know that for a human being to receive the love of the Creator is a great grace that nothing can compare with.

God loved us, and we received that love and became children of God. We need to know the heart of God the Father toward us and live our lives of faith. The heart of God the Father toward us is love. God has a heart that loves us. Through this word we can know how long God has loved us.

What kind of heart was it with which God the Father sent His one and only begotten Son? It was none other than a heart of love. When we truly know that love of God toward us, we can live our lives of faith rightly.

The heart of God, who loves us

When I look at the word of the Bible, I think about what the heart of God must have been. And all of us know and believe

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through the word of God that God has a heart that loves us. If there were no heart that loves us in the heart of God, what use would the Lord's salvation be? If He did not love us, what would the things He has done for us have to do with us? It is because He fundamentally has a heart of love that the Lord does everything for us, and we give thanks for that. The very fact alone that there is a heart that loves us in the heart of God lets us experience a deeper love and give thanks.

John chapter 3 tells us that the heart of God is a heart that has loved us. It says that because God fundamentally loves us, He gave up His only begotten Son to this world for us. If He had not loved us, He would not have given Him up. Because God loves us, He gave up His Son and caused that Son to have all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and He had that Son nailed to the Cross and so finished the judgment on our sins and on the sin of the whole world. Also, all these things—that Jesus rose again from death three days later, ascended to heaven, and will come again in the future—came from that heart that loves us.

Because God truly loves us, He was able to send His only Son, was able to transfer our sins to that only Son through the baptism He received from John, was able to have that Son nailed to the Cross, was able to raise Him again, and is able to have Him come again to this earth in the future.

What is the most precious thing to us? The most precious thing to a person is not money, nor honor, nor power. What we need most and what is most precious to us is the love given to us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What matters is whether there is a heart that loves us in the other person's heart, and whether God has a heart that loves us. In the love of God we can endure any hardship and wait for the Lord in hope. In the

Lord we can enjoy rest, gain new strength and peace, and receive the blessing of everlasting life.

Where do all these blessings come from? They come from the heart of God, who loves us. Whenever we are weary or in hardship, whenever we are glad or sad, if we know and believe the love of God toward us, we gain new strength and peace. Because the love of God makes us love one another, we gain from God the driving force to live today and tomorrow.

If there were no heart that loves us in the heart of God, our faith would all die away. Nothing is as important as the love of God. It is because we know and believe that there is fundamentally a heart that loves us in the heart of God that we can follow Him and live day by day. The reason we are living is that love with which God loves us. The one who knows and believes that God loves him right now is a happy person.

The strength to live by faith

The reason God gave us His only begotten Son is to keep us from perishing and to save us, because He has a heart that loves us. He did not only give His only begotten Son; because He fundamentally loves us, He did the work of saving us from all sins. The word enables us to know the heart of God. He did these things because the heart of God loves us.

Because God loves us, He made us on this earth, and He sent His Son in order to save us. And we can know that Jesus Christ sacrificed His own body because He loves us. When we receive and read a letter, we do not merely look at the letters on the page; we also feel the heart of the writer hidden within those letters. In the same way, through the word we can know the heart of the

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Triune God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—who loves us.

The faith that believes in the love of God

The word says, *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved. He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God" (John 3:17–18).*

Those who believe in that love held in the heart of God believe in all the work of Jesus the Savior, whom God sent to deliver us from sin, and so obtain salvation. But those who do not know that God the Father loves us with His heart not only cannot accept Jesus but also do not receive salvation. When we come to believe that God the Father loves us with His heart, we can accept all that Jesus Christ, whom He sent to save us, has done, and receive salvation.

The word also says, *"And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil. For everyone practicing evil hates the light and does not come to the light, lest his deeds should be exposed. But he who does the truth comes to the light, that his deeds may be clearly seen, that they have been done in God" (John 3:19–21).*

God saved us because He fundamentally loves us. Both before we receive salvation and after we have received it, we must believe that the heart of God loves us. We must know that this heart exists. If we do not know that heart, we cannot help but betray the Lord and cannot help but stumble in our faith. God

has a heart that loves all human beings, and especially us who have been saved, and He actually loved us. Do you believe in this special love of God?

Fellowship that knows the heart

If you look only at the letter of this word, *"The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6),* you might think that the Bible has a great many strange words, since at one time it says that something kills and at another time that something gives life. That is how it looks if you look only at the letter, but if we know the heart of God hidden within the letters, we can also know why it says this.

We must know one another's hearts. Among brothers and sisters, too, and between the servants of God and the saints, we must know one another's hearts. If we do not know each other's hearts and know only each other's deeds, we are pleased when someone treats us well, but what about when he is unable to treat us well? We cannot help but think, "He must dislike me; he must hate me." At the very least, we must know the heart of God, and we must know the hearts of the saints and the hearts of the servants of God. When we know one another's hearts, there is true fellowship, we come to love one another, and new hope and new strength arise. And every blessing comes upon us.

One of the great reasons why those who have not been saved from their sins are not saved is that they do not know that there is a heart that loves them in the heart of God. Because they cannot believe it, the door of their hearts does not open. If we believe the fact that the LORD God loves us, we can believe and accept everything that God, who made heaven and earth and all things, tells us to believe. And we can understand it, too.

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Thus it is truly important for us to know the heart of God. God especially loves those who have been born again. Do you believe this fact? Do you know it? God loves people with His heart. If we do not realize this, even though we have received salvation, our faith cannot help but fall into despair. There will be only death—irritating, exasperating, weary, hard, full of complaint, and unbearably tedious.

After we have received salvation, we must recognize and know the love of God more deeply. For when we believe that heart of God, we can be patient and endure all things, and we can wait for all things.

We must believe in one another's hearts. Among born-again brothers and sisters, or between the servants of God and the brothers and sisters, is there truly any hatred? One may hate for a moment, but deep within the heart there is no hatred. There is only a heart that worries and grieves for fear that someone may not receive blessing when he goes down a wrong path; fundamentally there is no heart of hatred. Brothers and sisters, too, fundamentally have no heart that hates the servants of God. Hurt feelings may rise up emotionally, but it is not that there is fundamentally a heart of hatred.

The Bible says, *"God is love" (1 John 4:8)*. And it is written, *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us" (1 John 4:10)*. Because the Holy Spirit has come into us and dwells in us, we hate unrighteousness and sin, but we do not hate people themselves. The saints and the servants of God who have been born again of water and the Spirit clearly have this heart. It is because the love of God is in our hearts.

And what we must clearly know is that there is a heart that loves us in the heart of God. When we know this, we gain strength and find joy in carrying on our lives of faith. But if we leave out the very fact that there is a heart that loves us in the

heart of God and look at things only in a fleshly way, everything will be terribly bothersome and exasperating.

It is because God loves us forever in His heart, and because this is certain, that we rejoice, have hope, and live our lives of faith gladly. If there were no heart that loves us in the heart of God the Father, our faith would not even be faith; it would be an illusion. It would be nothing at all. The reason we can preach the gospel, serve, and follow on before God today is precisely that we know and believe the heart of God, who loves us.

Because of the love of God the Father, we are living now, and we can go on living in the future. And because of the love of God the Father, we will live forever. The reason we have received salvation is that there is a heart that loves us in the heart of God the Father. The reason we have obtained everlasting life is also that God has a heart that loves us.

It is because there is a heart that loves us in the heart of God the Father that this world exists, that the kingdom of heaven exists, that we exist, and that the truth exists. We are living in the love of God the Father. God has loved us through the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood He shed on the Cross, and His resurrection from death, and He has given us the Holy Spirit as a gift. I hope that you will live believing in and giving thanks for this love of God. ✉

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CHAPTER

4

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You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who gives us the fountain of everlasting life within

< John 4:1–21 >

"Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?' For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?'

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Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband," for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.'"

A woman came to a well to draw water. There sat Jesus, wearied from walking the road. The woman had come intending to draw water and go, but Jesus spoke to her of a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. What the woman was looking at was the deep well and a vessel to draw water with; what the Lord wanted to give her was the gift of God that gives life to her soul.

We, too, live busily trying to solve the problems before our eyes. We think that if we fill what is lacking, finish the difficult tasks, and obtain what we hoped for, our hearts will be content. But even after we obtain one thing, another worry arises. There are times when our circumstances have improved but our hearts are still parched. Moreover, sin that has not been resolved before

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God weighs down our hearts no matter what we possess. What we need at such a time is the Savior who knows our inner being and gives life. Today's word shows us who that Lord is, and how we receive and enjoy His gift.

The Savior who first came near to us

The passage begins with what the Pharisees had heard. What they heard was that Jesus was making and baptizing more disciples than John. Yet the Apostle John at once makes it clear, *"Though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples" (John 4:2)*.

Jesus is not One who Himself baptized people, but One who received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. What John the Baptist gave to the people was a baptism calling them to return to God, and what he gave to Jesus was the baptism that passed the sin of mankind on to Jesus. When John, who represented mankind, laid his hands on Jesus' head, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him according to that law by which the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament had sins passed on to it through the laying on of hands.

When that Lord left Judea and departed again to Galilee, the Bible records, *"He needed to go through Samaria" (John 4:4)*. To go to Galilee, He had to pass through Samaria. But when we look at what He did on that road, those steps were steps taken to seek out one woman. Though it was a land the Jews had no dealings with, the Lord, who could not simply pass a sinner by, came to a city called Sychar and went to Jacob's well.

The Lord, who sat by that well, was weary. The Son of God came to this earth in a human body, actually walked the roads, and experienced the weariness of the body. It was midday. Just

as the Lord grew weary walking the road, we who live on this earth also grow weary and thirsty. The Lord is One who knows us as we are.

Then a woman of Samaria came to draw water. The disciples had gone into the city to buy food, and the Lord spoke first and asked her for some water. The Lord's asking for water was not merely to quench His thirst. In order to give that woman the water that would make her never thirst, He began the conversation from the water she had come to draw.

The woman found the request unexpected. For Jews had no dealings with Samaritans. The Jesus the woman first saw was a Jewish man asking her for water. But before her was the Savior, who knew all her circumstances and could give her eternal life. Even the distance that lay between people could not block the Lord's grace.

Let us read verse 10.

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.'"

The Lord made two things known to the woman: the gift of God, and who it is who gives that gift. The gift of God is grace given freely. It is not something a person obtains by striving on earth, but the gift of salvation that only Jesus can give. If the woman had known who it was who was asking her for water, she would instead have asked Him for living water. That living water is the grace of the remission of sins. The Lord did not tell the woman to first become a fine person and then come. He said that if she would only ask, He would give.

The Lord wanted the woman to know *"who it is"* that was asking her for water. Jesus is not One who remains merely a teacher who left behind good teachings. He is the God of salvation, who came in a human body and washed away our sins.

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Many people believe while accepting the word that Jesus removed the sin of the world, yet without knowing how He removed their own sins. To know the Lord rightly is to know how He washed away our sins and to believe in Him as our God and Savior.

So do not draw back from the word because your circumstances are shameful. The Lord knows our true selves rather than the image we put forward before people, and He lets us, such as we are, hear the word of salvation. Because of that grace, we can go to the Lord and ask.

Water that makes one thirst again and the gift that gives everlasting life

The woman still thought of the living water the Lord spoke of as water obtained from the well. She asked where He would get living water when He had nothing to draw with and the well was deep. It was the well that their forefather Jacob had given, from which he and his sons and his livestock had drunk. The woman asked back, *"Are You greater than our father Jacob" (John 4:12)*? The woman did not know it, but the One sitting before her was One greater than Jacob, the Creator who made Jacob.

What the woman relied on was the well handed down from her ancestors. Because it was an old and famous well, she measured Jesus' words by that standard. When a person relies more on the traditions of his ancestors and the history of the place he belongs to than on the word of God, he fails to recognize the living water that the Lord, who is right before his eyes, wants to give. The Lord spoke clearly of the difference between that water and the water He Himself gives.

Let us read verses 13 and 14.

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.'"

Well water is indispensable to the human body. But after one drinks it, one thirsts again. The water drawn today would run out by tomorrow, and the woman had to come out to the well again. Through this fact, which the woman knew well, the Lord taught how different the life He gives is. The water the Lord gives becomes in that person a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

This thirst does not stop at the thirst of the body. People try to fill their hearts with money, success, and recognition, but when they obtain these, they are refreshed only for a moment and soon thirst again. At the root of this is sin. As long as sin remains in the heart, no matter what one obtains, one cannot enjoy true peace before God.

Even inside the church, this thirst can remain just as it is. When people worship, sing praises, and pray, things seem to get a little better, but once they leave the sanctuary, their hearts quickly return to what they were before. They thought the problem of sin would be solved if they prayed more and tried harder, but the more they see their own shortcomings, the more afraid they become again. As long as one leads a life of faith by one's own efforts to keep the law, the heart cannot rest, because the sin of the heart is not completely resolved. For the gift God gives cannot be produced by human labor.

Jesus came precisely to solve this problem of sin. As we saw earlier, the Lord had all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the

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Jordan River. When the Lord said at that time, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15),* it meant that in this way He would have the sin of all people passed on to Him and make us sinless. And by bearing that sin and being hung on the Cross to shed His blood and die, He received once and for all, in our place, the judgment we were to receive. He was buried and rose again from death three days later, and became our eternal Savior.

If people hold on only to the blood of the Cross and do not know that the Lord had sin passed on to Him at the Jordan River, sin still remains in their hearts even though they believe in Jesus. The Bible testifies as follows of how Jesus Christ came.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).

The water is the baptism Jesus received from John, and the blood is the blood He shed on the Cross. The Holy Spirit testifies that the salvation accomplished through this water and blood is true. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit is washed of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. Since the work the Lord accomplished is the basis of salvation, there is no reason to add our merits to it.

This is precisely the living water the Lord gives. The water of everlasting life is water that springs up from the fact that Jesus has completely removed our sins. In the heart of one who believes this fact, the fear of God on account of sin recedes, and a heart of thanksgiving toward the God who saved him springs up.

The Lord called this water *"a fountain of water springing up" (John 4:14)*. Even after we are saved, we are weak, and we stumble and grow weary. Each time, when we think of the Lord who has already taken away all our sins, that word again moistens our conscience and refreshes our hearts. Even on days when the emotion has subsided, the salvation the Lord accomplished remains the same. This fountain springs not from our feelings but from the word of the Lord that tells us of that salvation. The One who made the fountain is the Lord. When we do not cover that word by putting our own thoughts first, but accept it by faith, the water of the fountain springs up within us every day.

The word that exposes our sins and our vain expectations

The woman asked for that water. It was a request that she might no longer thirst, nor come here to draw water. Even when the Lord was speaking of everlasting life, the woman was still thinking of her own life, in which she had to draw water. At that very moment, Jesus told her to call her husband.

Let us read verses 16 through 18.

"Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband," for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.'"

The Lord, who had been speaking of living water, exposed the woman's actual life. Why did He tell the woman who asked for living water to call her husband? Because to drink the water of everlasting life, one must first know one's own sins and come

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before the Lord with those sins. The word *"call your husband" (John 4:16)* was a word meaning, "Bring your sins." The Lord's purpose in uncovering the woman's faults lay in pouring living water into her heart.

The woman answered that she had no husband, and Jesus said that she had spoken well. He even knew that she had had five husbands and that the one she now had was not her husband. The woman did not hide her circumstances but admitted them. The woman had no true husband to whom she could entrust her heart and on whom she could lean. She had not yet met the true Savior.

Before this word, we cannot stand as if we were spectators of someone else's past. Every person lives relying on something as if it were a husband. People hold on to money, thinking they will be satisfied if only they have money, and they hold on to honor, thinking they will be filled if they gain honor. They chase pleasure and power, try leaning on religion, and in the end try believing in themselves. But none of these has removed our sins or given true satisfaction to our hearts.

When the Lord exposes our sins, what we must do is admit them honestly, like this woman. Only one who knows that he is a complete sinner before God asks the Lord for the remission of sins. But sins are not washed away merely by realizing them. The One who washed away sins is Jesus. Even the sins the woman was ashamed of, Jesus had already had passed on to Him at the Jordan River. What a person who knows his sins needs is not deeper despair, but faith in the Lord who bore even those sins. He who took the whole problem of our sins upon Himself and solved it, and who takes responsibility for us to the end, is our true husband.

This word also comes to us who have already received the remission of sins. If we know the gospel of the water and the

Spirit and yet have no satisfaction in our hearts, we should look back and see whether we are keeping another husband in a corner of our hearts. If, even while serving the Lord, we look first at whether others recognize us, and regard what we have not obtained as greater than the salvation we have received, we cannot enjoy the joy the Lord has given. When the heart is already full of things other than Jesus, there is no room for the Lord's word to enter.

So let us cast off the attitude that we will be satisfied only if things go our way. This is not a condition for obtaining the remission of sins. It is a matter of one who has already received salvation as a gift ceasing to try to fill his heart with vain things, and setting his heart on being satisfied with the Lord. Even on days when things do not go well and we feel frustrated and our bodies are weary, when we think of the grace by which He delivered us from sin and made us children of God, we can give thanks again and carry out the work entrusted to us.

The word of the Lord that must be believed before any place

Before Jesus, who knew all about her life, the woman said, *"Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet" (John 4:19)*. At first she had seen Him as a Jewish man asking for water and had even argued back with words, but before the One who had pointed out her sins, the woman withdrew her defiant heart. And she began to treat Him as a man sent by God. The woman's eyes were opening step by step to recognize Jesus.

The woman then asked about the place to worship. Her fathers had worshiped on this mountain, she said, but the Jews said that the place to worship was in Jerusalem. What the woman

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held on to until the end was the worship that had been offered on this mountain since the time of her fathers. Though there was no satisfaction in her heart, she was leaning on the fact that she worshiped there. The woman who had put forward Jacob's well now brought out the mountain of her fathers.

Let us read verse 21.

"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father.'"

The Lord first told her to believe His words. And He cut off even that place she had been leaning on. He said that the hour was coming when she would worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. Before the woman who was asking about the place to worship sat the Savior, who opens the way to go to God.

We, too, easily place the basis of our faith in what is visible to the eye. We feel secure in long-standing traditions, large and splendid sanctuaries, and the fact that we belong to a well-known denomination. But salvation is not in any denomination or any sanctuary. True worship is the worship offered by those who have received the remission of sins. Those who believe in Jesus as their own Savior and have accepted His word into their hearts go to the Father with thanksgiving and praise.

Even when we worship, if we think only of what we can get out of God, our hearts remain thirsty. We rejoice when what we want comes to pass, and when it does not, we forget even His grace. But those who know and worship the God who saved us have a clear reason to give thanks. For God sent His own Son and delivered us from sin.

The word *"believe Me" (John 4:21)* was the answer given to the woman, and it is also the word calling us today. There is no reason to put off believing until we have better conditions, or to

wait to worship until we have dressed up our past to look clean. We need only believe, just as it is, the word of the Lord who knows all about us. He gives the remission of sins and establishes us, who believe in that grace, as those who worship the Father.

To the woman who came to the well to draw water, Jesus spoke of the gift of God. To the woman who knew water that makes one thirst again, He promised the fountain of everlasting life, and exposing her actual life, He told her to believe His words. That Lord, who knows all that is within us and yet gives life, speaks the same word to us today.

Now let us lay down the toil of trying to obtain from the world the life the world cannot give. Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us once and for all. Let us believe in this Lord as our God and Savior. Let us who have already received this grace not have our hearts taken captive by desires that are never filled, but be satisfied with the Lord who has given us, within us, a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and worship the Father with thanksgiving today as well. That fountain does not dry up even when the circumstances of the world change. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Who are those who worship in spirit and truth?

< John 4:1–24 >

"Therefore, when the Lord knew that the Pharisees had heard that Jesus made and baptized more disciples than John (though Jesus Himself did not baptize, but His disciples), He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?' For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?' Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall

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give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband," for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.'"

Worship offered in spirit and truth

What is it to worship in spirit and truth? I will first tell you what it is to worship in spirit and truth, and then go into the word as a whole. The Lord said, "*Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth*" *(John 4:24)*, and this is a word telling us to worship before God with a true heart, together with the Holy Spirit. Worship offered in spirit and truth is as follows. It is the worship offered by a person who believes that the Lord received baptism from John at the Jordan River and thereby had all the sin of mankind, that is, all the sins we humans commit in

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the flesh, transferred to Him through that baptism, who believes that He was nailed to the Cross, received all the judgment for us, and rose again from death, and who has thus received the remission of sins and, as a result, has received the Holy Spirit from God as a gift and worships with the true faith that says, "God is my Lord." Worship offered in the state where there is true faith in the heart and the Holy Spirit dwells there is worship offered in spirit and truth.

We know the word that our Lord spoke to this woman, *"Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth,"* and we believe the meaning of this word. The word "spirit" refers to the Holy Spirit, and the word "truth" refers to the true faith that says, "Jesus is my Savior." Jesus has truly and perfectly removed all the sins that we commit. Worship offered with the true faith that Jesus has become our Savior, through believing that our Lord, who has made it so that not a single sin remains, had all that sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, is worship offered in spirit and truth.

The baptism that fulfills all righteousness

Let us look at Matthew chapter 3. In Matthew chapter 3 there appears the scene in which Jesus bears all sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:13–15).* In this way, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, bore that sin and

died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death three days later, and so fulfilled the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Bible records what happened after that baptism He received from John as follows. *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16–17)*. Here Jesus came to the Jordan River. At the Jordan River, John the Baptist was crying out to the people, calling them a brood of vipers, to repent and return to God. He cried out that the day of God's judgment had drawn near and the ax had been laid to the root of the trees, so that all who did not truly return to God in their hearts would be cut down and thrown into the unquenchable fire. At that time Jesus came to John and told him to baptize Him. Then John the Baptist tried to prevent Him.

There are two kinds of baptism. First, the baptism John was crying out about was the baptism of repentance, calling all people to return to God. The second is the baptism of the remission of sins. This was the baptism that passed the sins committed by all the people of this world on to Jesus Christ. John tried to prevent Him, but Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Yet people argue, "Where in the Bible does it say that sins were passed on through the baptism Jesus received from John?" It is truly dumbfounding. They argue that those words are not written in the Bible word for word. Then let us argue the point too. If they cannot believe that sins were passed on through the baptism Jesus received, then let them bring the word that says sins were not passed on. I will search out the word and show you that sins were passed on.

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Now I will talk for a moment about how sins were passed on. Please think about it objectively. Jesus said to John, "Permit it to be so now. You must fulfill all righteousness through the baptism you give Me." All righteousness means making all sins disappear. Making all people sinless is the righteousness of God. Human righteousness, goodness, and good deeds are like a dirty rag. If you look at a rag, the part that has wiped something is black, and the part that has not is white. Human righteousness means that one side is dirty, while the other side still has some spot that is a little clean because one has done good deeds. That is why the Book of Isaiah says, *"All our righteousnesses are like filthy rags" (Isaiah 64:6)*. This is human righteousness, but however clean a rag may be, one cannot wipe one's face with a rag. One cannot wipe eyeglass lenses with a rag. Likewise, however many good deeds they may do, God cannot make humans born as descendants of Adam His children by that righteousness. It is full of dust and dirty. That is human righteousness.

Then what is the righteousness of God? It is that God Himself came as a man, had all the sins committed by the people of the world, all the sins they commit while failing to live by God's law and breaking it, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and was judged on the Cross in our place, and so saved us. This is the righteousness of God. Jesus said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* This means that through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins we commit from the time we are born into the world until we go to the grave transferred to Him. Let us look at the original language to see that He had sins transferred to Him in this way.

The phrase *"thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"* is, in the original language, 'houtōs (οὕτως) dikaiosynē

(δικαιοσύνη).' Jesus said to John the Baptist, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,"* and this phrase *"thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"* is, in the original language, 'houtōs … dikaiosynē.' The word houtōs means 'in this very way, most fittingly, in no other way than this.' Dikaiosynē means 'most just.' I am not interpreting this spiritually; if you look it up in a Greek dictionary, this is what it says. Greek is one of the most precise languages in the world. So I think that God came to this earth at that time in order to use the Greek that was in use in those days.

And the New Testament was written entirely in Greek. The Old Testament is in Hebrew and Aramaic, and the New Testament was written in Greek. In our language, if we say 'love,' that is the end of it. God's love, parents' love, love between the sexes—all of these together are called love. But Greek is not like that. For example, when expressing God's love, it used 'agapē (ἀγάπη).' It means unconditional love, the point being that the words for love differ from one another. Our language uses just the one word 'love' for everything—parents' love, love between the sexes, love for oneself—but in Greek, God's loving us was called the love of agapē. Love between friends is the love of 'philia (φιλία).'

So the word here, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,"* that is, the fact that Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, is contained in the words 'houtōs … dikaiosynē.' It meant, "The baptism you give Me is the most fitting and the most proper way. It must be no other way than to have all the sin of mankind transferred to Me through this baptism. Therefore you must baptize Me. And through this baptism I must give mankind the most just salvation." Jesus said to John, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness,"* and John allowed Him. When Jesus

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had finished the baptism He received from John and came up from the water, a voice was heard, saying, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*. God the Father testified that His Son had fulfilled the most proper and most fitting salvation through the baptism He received from John, the representative of mankind, that is, that His Son had had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. It means: "The One who has now had the sin of mankind transferred to Him is none other than My Son. And He is the One in whom I am well pleased. Even if He is My Son, if He did not listen to Me and obey, I would not be pleased with Him, but He is the One in whom I am well pleased."

The judgment He received on the Cross

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sins that you and I commit in the flesh, all the sins we commit in our hearts, and all the sins we commit out of weakness, that is, all the sins of the world, transferred to Him through baptism, the most fitting and proper way. That is why, before He died on the Cross, He prayed to God the Father, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39)*. "Through the baptism I received from John, I have had all the sin of mankind transferred to Me. But because I have had sin transferred to Me, I am about to receive in My body all the curse upon man, and it is too dreadful. If it is at all possible, can I not take away the sin of mankind without being hung on the Cross? Must I be nailed to the Cross without fail?" Our Lord agonized in this way.

But the Bible records, *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Galatians 3:13)*. Nailing the most wretched and cursed

human being to a wooden cross and making him shed all his blood and die was the law for putting the most wicked sinner to death, and the Lord went that way in order to fulfill all the words in the Old Testament. It was as if God the Father were saying this: "My Son, did You not have all the sin of mankind transferred to You through the baptism You received from John? Did You not tell John that thus all righteousness is fulfilled? If You have had the sin of mankind transferred to You, the wages of all the sin of mankind is the curse. Please receive that curse in Your body." The Lord resolved to follow the Father's will.

And to the disciples who were asleep He said, *"What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:40–41)*. "Yes, sleep. Rest. I have had the sin of mankind transferred to Me through baptism, and by My being hung on the Cross your salvation will be fully accomplished." Our Lord resolved to follow the Father's will, and a little later He was arrested through Judas. He stood in Pilate's court, was whipped, was mocked, and went carrying the wooden cross on His shoulder. Jesus was so cruelly whipped that His whole body was covered with wounds. Even so, He had to carry on His own back the instrument of execution on which He would die. That was the custom of the time, and it was too hard for Jesus.

At that time Simon of Cyrene was passing by, and the soldiers seized him and forced him to carry Jesus' cross in His place.

Jesus Himself told John that this was the most fitting and most proper way, because people could not be fully saved apart from the baptism given by John the Baptist, and He received baptism from John. And God testified, saying, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*. If we read this in the original text, we can see that through this baptism,

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which Jesus received from John most fittingly and most properly, He accomplished for us a complete and just salvation. It is not that He simply declared that there was no sin when there was sin; rather, He Himself became the sacrificial lamb and bore the sins for us. And bearing those sins, He received the judgment on the Cross and rose again from death three days later.

Just as the sins of the people of Israel were passed on to the sacrificial offering when the high priest laid his hands on it in the Old Testament, the sins of all the people of mankind were passed on to Jesus through John the Baptist, the high priest of mankind and the last prophet of the Old Testament. In that way Jesus had all the sins that humans commit in their hearts and in the flesh transferred to Him and accomplished the most just salvation. That is what the Greek means. So I have also recorded this just as it is in my books. I recorded it in case people should spout off as they please, saying, "Where does it say that sins were passed on through the baptism Jesus received?" Through that baptism He received from John, Jesus accomplished for us the most fitting and most just salvation.

Dear fellow believers, is it not true that Jesus saved us by having our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John? If our sins had not been passed on to Jesus but remained as they were, how could we say that we have received the remission of sins, and how could we call ourselves righteous before God and call God Father? Because our sins were passed on most justly through the baptism Jesus received from John, we can truly believe in Jesus as the Savior. Also, because all our sins have been passed on to Jesus and we have no sin, God the Father can pour out the Spirit of God upon us. That is why He said that we *"must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24)*.

The person who believes that all the sins we commit, from the time we are born with sin from our mother's womb until we die, were passed on to Jesus Christ when Jesus received baptism from John, that is, the person who believes that the sins of his whole lifetime were passed on and believes that Jesus received the judgment on the Cross in place of mankind and rose again, the person who truly believes the word of the Old and New Testaments before God, has received the remission of sins and worships God in spirit and truth. This is worship offered in spirit and truth.

Dear fellow believers, were our sins passed on through the baptism Jesus received from John, or were they not? They were passed on. This is not a mere doctrine. It is the truth. It is believing the written word. It is believing the truth. It is not a denomination. Yet pastors do not know the original language, nor do they look it up, nor are they able to apply it. When what I have preached is translated, in translating the fact that sins were passed on through the baptism Jesus received, which word is applied differs according to what the meaning is. I say the same thing, 'passed on,' every time, but the translator looks at the context before and after and chooses the right English word for the right place. In the same way, a person who knows the original language of the Bible can apply it accurately. If you look at the original language, you know what this means. If you look it up in a dictionary, you can interpret it accurately.

Even if I forget everything else, I do not forget the words 'houtōs … dikaiosynē.' It means that through the baptism He received from John, Jesus gave us a just salvation in the most fitting and most proper way. This is the baptism Jesus received. And through the baptism Jesus received from John, our sins were passed on to Jesus, and we have been saved by believing it. That is why Jesus said, *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him*

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must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24). God receives the worship of the one who has received the remission of sins, received the Holy Spirit in his heart as a gift, become a child of God, and worships with true faith. And it means that God seeks those who offer such worship.

The woman at the well

As Jesus left the region of Judea and went to Galilee, He came to pass through the region of Samaria. Samaria was a region that had been invaded by Gentile nations such as Assyria. So the people of the region of Samaria had their blood much mixed with that of Gentiles. But the Jewish people boasted of their pure bloodline. There are several peoples on earth that boast of a pure bloodline, but as it turns out, there is no people whose blood has not been mixed with other blood. Jesus could get to the region of Galilee only by passing through the region of Samaria. As He was passing through in this way, He came to a town called Sychar, that is, the town where Jacob's well was, and since it says, *"It was about the sixth hour" (John 4:6)*, it was midday. It was the hottest time of the day.

Jesus was so tired that He was sitting by the well, when a Samaritan woman came to draw water under the hot sun, carrying a water jar on her head. Then Jesus asked the Samaritan woman for water. The disciples had gone into the town to buy food and Jesus was alone, and a Samaritan woman, thinking that no one was there, came to draw water and saw a young man sitting there. And that man spoke to her first.

When Jesus asked for water, the woman said, *"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (John 4:9)*. Then He spoke as follows: *"Jesus answered and said*

to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water'" (John 4:10). The woman must have thought to herself as follows. "If You ask me for water, I can give You water, but how can You say You will give me water? You don't even have anything to draw with, do You? Don't talk nonsense."

"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?' Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw'" (John 4:11–15).

This woman had some nerve. Looking at this, a tussle broke out between Jesus and this woman at the well. When He asked for water, the woman said, "What? You, a Jew, are asking me for water?" So Jesus said that if she had known who He was, she would have asked Him and He would have given her living water. The woman again said, "You don't even have anything to draw with, so how can You give it?" Then Jesus said, *"Go, call your husband" (John 4:16)*. She must have been so startled that she could have collapsed on the spot. When the woman blurted out, *"I have no husband" (John 4:17)*, Jesus said, *"You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly" (John 4:17–18)*. The woman was startled inside. "He knows all about my having lived with five husbands, and He even knows that the man I am living with now, the sixth, is

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not my husband?" Now she could not contend with Him. She gave up completely. "You are no ordinary person; You are a prophet. God sent prophets to the people of Israel from time to time, and seeing that You know everything about me, You are a prophet." That is what she said.

The woman's six husbands

This woman heard the word that she had had five husbands, but that the man she was living with now was not her husband either. This woman had lived with six men. When Jesus said that the one she was living with now was not her husband either, she said, "You are a prophet. How do You know everything? What You say is right." It was said that this woman had no true husband, and in the Bible the true husband refers to Jesus Christ. It means that although this woman had lived with six men, none of them was her true husband. This woman's having lived with six men refers to actually living with men, but among the people of this world there are also those who believe money to be their husband, their god. They believe that money is their husband and their god. But money cannot become a real god. Money is here today and gone tomorrow, and rather than protecting a person, it sometimes ruins a person. And when we have a little money, we seek honor. Taking honor as our husband, we say we would even give up our own lives if only we could gain honor.

It was long ago, so I will not name him, but there was a certain theologian who could not believe that Jesus is God. This man was put in prison for believing in Jesus, and in the end he was martyred. Why was that? "I am a theologian. They say they will kill me for believing in Jesus, but if I give up my faith, I will lose my honor as a theologian. So to keep my honor, I must be

martyred." Many theologians have died out of such stubborn pride. The leaders who led the early church after the twelve apostles are called the Church Fathers. Among the Church Fathers, a man like Origen taught that Jesus was lower than God the Father. Even such a man endured harsh torture during persecution and died from its aftereffects. There are many such cases.

During a war, soldiers who had occupied a certain village once ordered a young man who said he did not work on Sunday to sweep the yard, in order to test him. The young man refused, saying, "I cannot sweep it, because today is a holy day." The soldiers threatened him, saying, "What would God do to you for sweeping the yard once? Will you save your life, or will you take a bullet?" But the young man kept saying, "Kill me if you want to kill me. I cannot do it," and in the end he was shot and killed. Then the people of that church exalted him, saying that he had laid down his life to keep the Sabbath and had been truly martyred.

Dear fellow believers, this is dying in vain for the sake of honor. He himself ate and slept even on Sunday, so what would it matter if he swept the yard? The Sabbath is a word telling us to keep the faith that believes that the Lord has removed our sins. It is a word telling us to believe and keep this gospel by which He has removed our sins. The Sabbath should be interpreted spiritually, but he interpreted it literally and acted that way. In fact, if one tries to keep the Sabbath literally, one must cut off the electricity too. It said that the female servants, the male servants, and the livestock were all to rest. There are places that lose lives keeping the Sabbath literally and hold this up as the pride of their denomination, but as it turns out, they all died for the sake of their own honor. That is a vain death. We must not give our lives for such useless and trivial things. If someone tells

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you to sweep the yard on the Sabbath, you can just sweep it. Sweep it once and go into your room and rest.

Regarding honor as their god, some people study with all their might to become pastors. Then, around the time they graduate from seminary, some of them die from overwork. That is all serving honor. Some people stake their lives on honor, and some stake their lives on money, and they serve it as their god.

Those who believe in Catholicism keep reciting, "Mary, full of grace, pray for us," and those who believe in Buddhism recite, "Namu Amitabul Kwan Seum Bosal" (calling on Amitabha Buddha and the Bodhisattva of Compassion). This is religion. Whether they live or die, this is all they do. There are people who serve religion as their god like that. And there are people who serve pleasure as their god. This woman lived with six husbands, and it means that she lived regarding every one of them as her god. But neither money nor honor nor pleasure nor power nor one's own self can become the true God. So when Jesus said, *"The one whom you now have is not your husband" (John 4:18)*, the woman said, "That is right. You know everything."

Do not boast of your denomination

Dear fellow believers, however much we may serve money, pleasure, honor, or anything else as our god, those things cannot become God. Only Jesus Christ, who is the true God, truly becomes the Savior and God of you and me. So this woman said, "That is right. The husband I am living with now is not my husband either," and then said, *"Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet" (John 4:19)*. And she spoke as follows: "You are a Jew and I am a Samaritan. Samaritans worship on this mountain.

From what you Jews say, I hear that one ought to worship in Jerusalem." This is related to the story of King Solomon, and of King Rehoboam and King Jeroboam after Solomon.

Rehoboam was Solomon's son. Because King Solomon did not listen to the word of God, God tore the kingdom apart and gave ten tribes to Jeroboam, Solomon's servant. And to Solomon's son He left only one tribe. So Judah in the south and Israel in the north were divided. In the north they set a feast on the fifteenth day of the eighth month, made golden calves, and served them as God, while in Judah in the south they served the LORD God according to the feast of the seventh month that God had appointed. Yet whether they served the golden calves or whatever they served, they all offered worship in the name of the LORD. This woman brought that issue up again.

"If You are a Jew, in Judea they say there is a separate place for worship." Then, *"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth'" (John 4:21–24)*. It means that God seeks those who worship in spirit and truth.

It is not this mountain, nor that mountain, nor a denomination. When the woman earlier said, *"Are You greater than our father Jacob" (John 4:12)*, that too was like talking about a denomination. "Jacob's well has been here since long ago, and You say You will give something better than this well? Our father Jacob dug a deep well and gave us water to drink and gave his livestock water too, and how good the water from this well is!" In this way she boasted before Jesus, as people boast of a

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denomination. People do not know how they should believe in God or how Jesus Christ has saved them from the sins they commit; they do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and they merely boast of their denomination. They boast, saying, "As for this well, it is several thousand years old. As for this denomination…." Some people talk as if the Presbyterian Church were several thousand years old. The Presbyterian Church has not even existed for five hundred years. Most of the seminaries of the various denominations today were also founded only a few hundred years ago. Their history is not long.

In 313, Christianity was officially recognized in Rome by the Edict of Milan, and afterward Christianity became the state religion of Rome. The period from then until Luther appeared in the 1500s is called the Dark Ages. If anyone opposed the church, they branded him a criminal, killed him cruelly, and confiscated the property he had owned. So Catholicism came to have enormous power. Thus, in the Middle Ages, anyone who opposed Catholicism could not survive, even if he was a king. There was a case in which a king of England broke away from Catholicism when the pope would not grant him permission in a matter of marriage. You all know this, don't you? What came of that was the Anglican Church. The Anglican Church is a combination of the rites of Catholicism and the word of Protestantism. And Protestantism is called 'Protestant,' and this word means 'those who protest.'

Dear fellow believers, what good is it however old a denomination may be, and what good is it however deep Jacob's well may be? If you draw a jar of water and pour it into the pot, and the family drinks it, washes rice with it, boils water with it, and uses it as wash water too, you get thirsty again. After just one day, the water drawn for the day is all gone. The next day you have to draw water again. You have to draw water endlessly,

day after day. However much history and tradition a denomination may have, doctrines established by man cannot satisfy a person's heart. They cannot give living water to the heart. For the one who drinks the water of being born again of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gave, that is, that word, the word *"But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14)* is fulfilled.

If we believe in our hearts that Jesus received baptism from John and had all sins transferred to Him in the most fitting and most just way, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so removed all the sins of you and me, we obtain the remission of sins and salvation and obtain the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? We must not boast of denominations. In John chapter 4, this woman who was boasting of her denomination tussled with Jesus, and then, when Jesus said He would give the water of everlasting life and that whoever drinks this water would never thirst again, she asked Him to give that water to her. Then Jesus told her to call her husband.

The faith that admits one is a sinner

Dear fellow believers, if we want to receive the remission of sins, we must know what kind of sinners we are. And we must know that what we have believed in, known, and followed until now is not God. We must believe that Jesus Christ is God and our Savior. However much God wants to give us the remission of sins, however much He wants to give us the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit, a person must know whether he has now met God or not. If one is a person who has already

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met God, what need is there to meet Him again? Of course it is good to meet Him often, but what need is there for a person who has received the remission of sins to receive the remission of sins again? The remission of sins is received once and for all. It is effective forever. Then, every time we hear the word, it becomes a fountain of water that keeps springing up.

Have all the sins we commit in the flesh been passed on, or have they not? They have been passed on. Dear fellow believers, do you have sin, or do you not? You do not. The sins committed in the world have all been passed on to Jesus. That is why we can worship in spirit through the Holy Spirit and worship in truth through the faith in our hearts. Because Jesus had all sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, we have no sin. Jesus has become our true Savior. If one wants to receive true remission of sins before Jesus, one must know what sins one inherited from one's parents and how long one remains a sinner who commits sin in this world.

Jesus said, *"Go, call your husband" (John 4:16)*. The woman said, *"I have no husband" (John 4:17)*. Jesus said, *"You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly" (John 4:17–18)*, and this woman said that the word was right. We lived in the world believing in money, honor, pleasure, religion, and our own selves, but did they really save us? Did money remove our sins? Did power remove our sins? Neither money nor honor nor power nor religion nor our own selves saved us. One cannot save oneself from one's own sins. I want you to know the fact that however much we may give offerings to the church, however much we may give alms to a Buddhist temple, and even if we offer all our possessions, money cannot remove our sins. Money cannot be

God. It cannot be the Savior. Yet people think that they need money even on the road they take after death.

Dear fellow believers, do you think you need money even on the road you take after death? Dear fellow believers, the kingdom of heaven and hell have nothing to do with money. They have nothing to do with material things, nor with pleasure, nor with honor. They have nothing to do with one's own self. Only by believing in Jesus, only by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection, does one go to the kingdom of heaven. However much power a person may have, he cannot go to the kingdom of heaven by it. At the funeral of a famous person, representatives of various religions sometimes take turns praying for his soul. It is as if to ask that whichever god it may be, at least one of them would take him along.

In Catholicism, they burn incense and pray to the saints to intercede for the soul of the dead. I, too, once prayed such prayers for the dead in the past. They pray all night long, saying, "Pray for so-and-so." They ask the seniors who went to heaven before to pray to God the Father for the dead person who is going to hell, so that He will pull him out of hell. That is religion. However much they clamor, does religion save? Does money save? Does honor save? Does power, does one's own self save? Some people say to trust in one's own fists. As it turns out, it is a laughable thing.

"'For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet'" (John 4:18–19). Dear fellow believers, from the time we were born we could only die. We were beings who could only go to hell. Let us look up what David said. *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm*

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51:5). David says that he was born in iniquity and that his mother conceived him in sin. It means that he inherited his parents' sins and that he was born into this world with the sins of his ancestors. That is why this is called original sin. It means the sin that was there from the origin. Because man was born into the world with this sin and inherited twelve kinds of sin from his ancestors, twelve kinds of sin blossom in man.

Murder, envy, theft, adultery, foolishness, a mad heart—such things keep blossoming through the twelve months of the four seasons. The next year, however firmly one resolves, one sins again. Just as there are twelve months in a year, one commits twelve kinds of sin, and the next year again twelve kinds of sin, and to go on sinning until one enters the grave is human life. David was a man who believed in God well. How did he believe? He said, "This is what I am. I was brought forth in iniquity and conceived in sin." And he said, *"That You may be found just when You speak, And blameless when You judge" (Psalm 51:4)*. It means that he believed that what the Lord judges is right. "If the Lord says He has removed my sins, they are gone, and if He says He has not removed them, they are not gone. I am a person who commits such sins because I was born with such sins in the first place. Please save me. Your judgment is entirely right." In this way he trusted God entirely.

To receive the remission of sins…

Dear fellow believers, if we want to receive the remission of sins, we must believe the word of God entirely. If we do not believe, we say, "In my thinking, it is like this." General Naaman said, *"Are not the Abanah and the Pharpar, the rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?" (2 Kings 5:12)*,

and he said that in his own thinking the rivers of his own country were better than the water of the Jordan, so it would be better to wash there. But we must throw away our own thoughts and look at what God has said and how He has ordained things. If He tells us to wash in the water of the Jordan, we can just wash. God has told us, too, to receive the blessing of being born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River and had all sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again, and that Jesus Christ, who is God, has removed the sins of you and me with the water and the blood and given us the Holy Spirit. And it means that He has given us the blessing of being born anew as new people. We need only believe.

Did we come to be born because we wanted to be born? We were born on this earth without any regard to our will. We became sinners without regard to our will, and without regard to our efforts God has made us His children. We need only believe this. There is nothing but to believe. *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. God the Father seeks those who worship in spirit and truth. He said, *"Those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24)*.

Dear fellow believers, the blessing that God gives to the one who comes before God with the faith that believes that Jesus has become his Savior through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit. Such a person worships in spirit and truth. The one who receives into his heart the remission of sins of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gave and worships is the one who truly worships before God, and worship offered with true faith, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart, is true worship. Among you and me there are those who truly worship and those

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who do not. The one who does not believe that Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John has sin remaining in his heart. The form of worship is no problem at all. Neither on this mountain nor on that mountain; He said, *"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him" (John 4:23).*

Dear fellow believers, what does it matter whether you worship here or worship there? You must truly receive the remission of sins and then worship. Denominations are of no use either. It is too laughable to boast of a history and tradition of only a few hundred years. At first I, too, did not know and thought the denominations were several thousand years old. It has been two thousand years since Jesus was born, but I still thought they were at least a thousand years old. But when I looked at history, most of them had come into being a few hundred years ago. It is only in our country that the Presbyterian Church is talked about so much; if you go to the United States, the Baptist Church is better known. That is right. Rites are not important. We must receive the remission of sins by the Spirit and worship with true faith. That is worshiping in spirit and truth, and that is precisely worshiping after being born again of water and the Spirit. God wants you and me to be born again of water and the Spirit and worship before God, and He wishes to receive that worship.

Jesus has made it possible for us to worship in spirit and truth, so we can worship in spirit and truth. We give thanks that God has made it possible for all of us to worship before God in spirit and truth. We truly give thanks that Jesus had all the sins we commit in the flesh in this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. We truly give thanks that He

had all the sins we commit in our hearts transferred to Him. All the sins we commit out of our shortcomings have also been passed on to Jesus. So we have no sin. We have truly become righteous. Though we fall short, we have no sin. We give thanks before God for making us such people. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

A fountain of water springing up into everlasting life

< John 4:3–26 >

“He left Judea and departed again to Galilee. But He needed to go through Samaria. So He came to a city of Samaria which is called Sychar, near the plot of ground that Jacob gave to his son Joseph. Now Jacob’s well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, ‘Give Me a drink.’ For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, ‘How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?’ For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, ‘If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, “Give Me a drink,” you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.’ The woman said to Him, ‘Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?’ Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall

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give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband," for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'"

The word given at the well

Some people may have heard the word of John chapter 4 more than five hundred times. I have told this story a great many times. Jesus came to pass through the region called Samaria, and Jacob's well was there. Jesus was weary and sat down, and when a Samaritan woman came to draw water, He asked her to give Him a drink. Then the woman said, *"How is it that You, being a*

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Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (John 4:9) and at the end of that conversation Jesus said, *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (John 4:10)*. Here living water appears, and the water of everlasting life appears.

He also said, *"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life'" (John 4:13–14)*. Then this woman asked Him to give her such water, and Jesus spoke to her about her husband. This woman thought, "I see that You are a prophet who knows everything about me," and then said, *"Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship" (John 4:20)*.

She had the idea that there was one place where the Samaritans worshiped and another where the Jews worshiped, and that one had to go there to worship. But *"Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He'" (John 4:21–26)*. This means that the time is coming to worship before God—that the time is truly coming to worship in spirit and truth.

A fountain of water springing up into everlasting life

This woman said that when the Messiah came, He would tell us all things, and Jesus said that He Himself was that One. Dear fellow believers, when is the time that we worship in spirit and truth? What is it for us to drink of the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life? The Lord said that He would give this water to the Samaritan woman, and this means that God gives this water to us as well. Our Lord has given us the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. While living on this earth, we have believed in and followed God with our own thoughts, and we have believed in Him and followed Him until now; yet God said that He would give us the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, and He is also saying that the time is coming to worship in spirit and truth, and that it will be so.

What is this fountain of water springing up into everlasting life that God has given us? It is none other than this: our Lord has removed our sins. Our Lord received baptism from John and had the sins transferred to Him for which we could only die because of our transgressions; He bore those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He removed our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Our Lord is the very One of whom the Scripture says, *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. This means that the Lord has granted His word to our souls as the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life within us. No water of this world can water our hearts. Our souls are not made what they are before the Lord by any thought of our own. Because our thoughts are evil, there is nothing to be gained by our thoughts, and if our hearts sink into our thoughts, they end up becoming a marketplace. So, because our thoughts are evil and of little benefit, if we set them aside and listen closely to

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what our God has said to us, then a fountain of water with which we never thirst springs up in our hearts into everlasting life.

It is nothing else: this water that God spoke of causes us to receive the remission of sins, and all the words He has spoken to us have become for us the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, with which we never thirst. When we believe in God with our hearts, I cannot tell you how much the word God has spoken waters our hearts, refreshes them, and makes the soil of our hearts fertile and rich. As we listen closely to the word of God, as we believe and follow His word with our hearts, our hearts become rich. Because our hearts become that rich, our Lord said to the woman that He would give living water by which one never thirsts, and that it would become a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

Set aside your thoughts

Our saints are bound by their own thoughts and follow the Lord with their own thoughts. There are many saints who, bound by their own thoughts, cannot drink the fountain water and drink muddy water instead. As for our souls, by believing in our hearts the word of God in which our thoughts are not mixed, in which no leaven is mixed, that word becomes for us the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life and becomes the source of life within us. But not knowing what it is to live by faith after receiving the remission of sins, or how to live a life of faith in joy, they simply go by their own thoughts, drinking clean water today and dirty water tomorrow. Having fouled the water with your thoughts, you have no joy in your hearts; your bodies are here, but your hearts have all gone out to the world; your hearts become a gutter, and you wonder why believing in Jesus is so

irritating—do you not have times like that? At such times you are not worshiping before God in spirit and truth; you are judging God with your thoughts and fouling with your own thoughts the clean water springing up into everlasting life. Dear fellow believers, I ask you to set aside your thoughts.

I will repeat this until it is engraved on your hearts. If we sleep a night, get up, and chase after the tail of our own thoughts, our hearts harden in the world, become soaked in irritation, and become soaked in theory. Even having believed in the Lord and received the remission of sins becomes a theory, as we say, "Well, if I've received the remission of sins, I've received it, that's all," and once it becomes a theory, there is no joy. That is what happens when we go forward by our thoughts. Of course, when we must think about the affairs of the world, we must think. But when you read and hear the word, if you set aside your thoughts and believe with your hearts and praise with your hearts, the Holy Spirit who dwells in your hearts makes joy well up in your hearts like a spring. Why are we living our life of faith wrongly? People who are not born again go to the chapel more faithfully, with their Bibles tucked under their arms. There are people who become angels only on Sunday. On that day they do not say even an evil word, and they are very patient. When we see such people, the thought comes, "I am born again, yet I seem worse than that person." Even when we compare ourselves, God's circumcised people, with people who are not born again and do not even go to the chapel, we think, "I seem worse than those people." With such thoughts we come to church and slump down before the ministers as if to say, let things go as they will.

Dear fellow believers, when you go before God, you must set aside your own thoughts every day. Is not the first thing that comes out of human thinking evil thoughts? So evil are our thoughts that we even practice faith with our thoughts. When we

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practice faith with our thoughts, we say, "So-and-so did such-and-such to me," weighing our interests and calculating gain and loss. If it turns out to be a loss, we say, "What was that?" and "Why does that person treat me like that?" and make an uproar in our hearts, and war breaks out in our hearts. The peace of our hearts is shattered. It is plain to see without even looking.

The faith that denies oneself daily

It is not only when I am speaking of it; a life of faith is always lived by denying oneself. The Lord said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23)*. The very first thing He said was to deny oneself. I cannot tell you how many times the brothers and sisters of our church have heard this word. He said to deny ourselves daily and to take up our cross daily and follow Him. We must deny ourselves daily. Yesterday we set aside our own thoughts and were soaked through in grace, but when we sleep and get up, those thoughts rise up again. We are people who follow God.

Faith is that we look to the Lord and follow the Lord; and the point is that when we get up, only if we deny ourselves once again and follow Him is there fullness in our hearts, and only then does the word come into us and take its place. Only when the word takes its place within us does it become the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. If we sink into our thoughts, a hellish heart comes upon us again. *"But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him" (John 4:23)*. That He is seeking—this is what God is saying to us. He said *"and now is,"* and we have been

born again by the word. Then, when we go before God, we must deny our own thoughts, know that our own thoughts are evil, and think on all the words God has given us in order to remove our sins and believe them with our hearts.

When we worship by faith, quietly thinking on the grace God has given us—when we worship before the Lord, giving thanks and rejoicing in the grace by which He saved us and removed our sins—this is worshiping in spirit and truth. Some people worship in spirit and truth, and some people only think useless thoughts and then go home. Dear fellow believers, rather than asking God to do something for us, I ask you to give thanks for what God has done for us and to be soaked in it. Then there is peace and there is joy in our hearts. This is the very secret of living a life of faith.

After we are born again, the fountain of water that keeps springing up in our hearts comes when we do not acknowledge our own thoughts. Only when we acknowledge God alone does it become a fountain of water springing up from within. If we acknowledge ourselves, the springing fountain dries up. It becomes dirty. It becomes theory. It is not applied to real life, and we end up living our life of faith merely as theory. A person who does not believe in his heart that prayer is answered does pray, but he does not wait for the answer to his prayer. But the person who actually denies his own thoughts and believes the word of God in his heart waits for the answer by faith.

The reason the flower of faith fails to bloom in our hearts after we are born again is that we follow the Lord with our own thoughts, judge with our thoughts, and measure with our thoughts as our yardstick. A person of faith denies his own thoughts. There is nothing to lose by believing this word. If we believe, it becomes living water to us. What gives us strength, brings us richness, and brings us blessing is the word of God.

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This word is none other than God. There is nothing at all to lose by receiving God into our hearts. There is nothing to lose by receiving God Himself and following Him by faith.

Those who come in spirit and truth

Dear beloved saints, God is seeking those who come to Him in spirit and truth. But do we come before God in spirit and truth, or do we come with our thoughts? Dear fellow believers, do you truly believe in and fear God from the center of your hearts, or do you do so because it makes sense to your thinking? God is seeking. He is seeking those who worship in spirit and truth. Dear fellow believers, do you believe in our God with your hearts and come before the Lord to worship? Dear fellow believers, rouse your hearts once again and examine them. Do you truly believe as you do this? I am not telling you to force yourselves to believe what you do not believe; I am telling you to rouse again the heart that once believed and say, “This is truly right. I still believe this now.”

When you come before God, I hope your hearts will always come by faith. Then amazing strength arises and joy arises. This is the very fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. After we are born again, the Holy Spirit is in us, and for a while the fountain springs up; but if we block it with our thoughts, however much it springs, it cannot rise up. If our thoughts press it down, even though the fountain is there, it cannot water our lives. It cannot come up. We must never put a lid over it. Our Lord has taken responsibility and made everything so that no dregs can get in. Dear fellow believers, follow the Lord with faith in your hearts. Believe and come before the Lord. Deny your own thoughts. If you come with your own thoughts, you

say, “It is right, all right,” but when circumstances turn bad you say, “This won’t do,” and so you go back and forth, doing it with your thoughts one moment and with your hearts the next. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? Though my words may seem to have wandered here and there, and though I say many things, there is only one point.

Do not block the fountain

This woman said that when the Messiah came, He would tell us all things. Then our Lord said, *“I who speak to you am He” (John 4:26)*. It means, “I am the very One who gives everlasting life, and My word itself is the water of everlasting life and becomes the fountain.” The word of our Lord has become living water to us. For us human beings there is nothing else. Solely through believing in Him with our hearts and meditating on His word, the Lord dwells in our hearts and makes the water gush up for us. The Lord has already given us living water. He has given us the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, but there are those who do not block the top so that it keeps springing up, and there are those who block it, and that is what becomes a problem for us. If we believe, by faith that fountain water reaches our hearts and is applied in our lives. But if we do not believe and block it with our thoughts, calculating, “Should I do this? Should I do that?” then even though the fountain is there, it becomes water we cannot drink, the Lord cannot govern our lives, and our lives do not become abundant. It comes to that because we have blocked it.

If you want a truly abundant life in your living, you must never block it with your own thoughts. Our Lord has already come within us as the fountain of water springing up into

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everlasting life, as a blessing. The Scripture said, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*, and it said *"and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)*. At the moment we received the remission of sins, we received the Holy Spirit as a gift within us. After that, if we believe the word of God and go forward, if we only believe, even though we do nothing, God gives us the ability to act and the ability to follow. It does not come about by our doing something.

Our enemy is our thoughts. Our foe is our thoughts. That foe does not come just one day and leave; it comes every day. Our Lord has given us the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. I cannot tell you how thankful I am for this. I am so very thankful that today, tomorrow, and forever the Lord has become the Lord of my salvation, that the Lord has removed my sins, that the Lord has become my shepherd, that the Lord has become my refuge, and that the Lord has become my God. For me there is nothing else, today or tomorrow, but this: that God has completely removed my sins and completely wiped out my transgressions, and that God leads me on. I cannot tell you how thankful I am that the One who always waters us so that we never dry up is none other than our Lord. The Lord came into our hearts and has never left again. He has not let our hearts crack like the bed of a dried-up rice paddy.

He has always watered our hearts, given joy to our hearts, and made the flower of joy bloom. After our Lord came to us, He remains with us as a fountain that never dries up again. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Give thanks and praise before that Lord. Then the Lord will make your lives rich and fertile. I ask you to set aside your thoughts. Human thoughts are vain and dirty. Praise the Lord who came to us and became such a fountain for us; keep this fountain well and believe well; worship,

praise, and preach the gospel before the Lord; and entrust your lives to that Lord and pray, and so live rich lives. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Samaritan woman who had five husbands

< John 4:6–26 >

"Now Jacob's well was there. Jesus therefore, being wearied from His journey, sat thus by the well. It was about the sixth hour. A woman of Samaria came to draw water. Jesus said to her, 'Give Me a drink.' For His disciples had gone away into the city to buy food. Then the woman of Samaria said to Him, 'How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?' For Jews have no dealings with Samaritans. Jesus answered and said to her, 'If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, "Give Me a drink," you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, You have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. Where then do You get that living water? Are You greater than our father Jacob, who gave us the well, and drank from it himself, as well as his sons and his livestock?' Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband," for you

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have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'"

I studied theology. In Protestant discussions of salvation, Calvinism and Arminianism are often contrasted with one another. But when both of these theologies are examined in the light of the Bible, they have contradictions. One side insists too much on the sovereignty of God alone, and the other side insists on a faith into which much human thinking has entered—to put it simply, a faith to which much more of the human will has been added. But both of these theologies are nothing before God. For scholarship has always been made out of the self-centered thinking of man.

I am not preaching this word to you in order to press my own denomination on you. I want to share, within the word of God, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has given, this word of blessing. So it does not matter at all in what theology or

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in what line you are living your life of faith. I hope that you will know and believe the word of truth, that Jesus has removed all our sins, and so receive the remission of sins. I hope that through that faith you will go to the kingdom of heaven. Then we can become brothers and sisters in Jesus. I am preaching the word of God interdenominationally. The Lord said that whoever believes in Jesus Christ as his Savior, and has received the remission of all his sins by believing in Jesus and been born again, is My brother and sister. So today I want to read the word of God and share grace together with you. The word we are going to look at together today is the word about the Samaritan woman.

A certain encounter

In the word we have read today, a Samaritan woman appears. This woman came out to the well at midday to draw water. Just then Jesus happened to be passing through the region of Samaria, and Jesus asked the Samaritan woman, who had come to draw water at midday, to give Him some water. The Samaritan woman asked Jesus, *"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (John 4:9)*. Here there is a cultural background that we must understand before going on. Samaria was a region of Israel where people lived whose blood had been mixed with that of the Gentiles, because it had suffered many invasions by Gentile nations. So even though they were the same people, the Jews greatly despised those who lived in the region of Samaria. But Jesus was not like that, and that is why the woman, for her part, asked Him this question in return. Jesus said, *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (John 4:10)*.

Jesus wanted this woman to recognize Him. But this woman did not recognize who Jesus was. That is why she asked back, "You have nothing to draw with, so how can you say that you will give me living water?" Jesus said, *"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13–14)*. Then this woman said, *"Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw" (John 4:15)*. Then Jesus said, *"Go, call your husband, and come here" (John 4:16)*. But this woman said, *"I have no husband" (John 4:17)*. Then Jesus said to her, *"You have well said, 'I have no husband,' for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly" (John 4:17–18)*.

The Lord who wanted to give the water of everlasting life

So far we have looked together at the outline of the word of John chapter 4. Within this word we could easily discover a few things. First, we can discover that the Samaritan woman was a woman who could not hold her head up. And we can see the heart of our Lord, who wanted to give this woman the water of everlasting life. Jesus' purpose was not to get water from this woman to drink; it was to give this woman the water that never lets one thirst.

When we look at the word of the Bible, we must not just skim through the storyline, say, "I see," and pass on. We must know that the word written in this Bible was written by God in order to give us the water of everlasting life.

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Whoever truly believes in Jesus and has truly met Him as the Savior has in his heart a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. The reason the Lord speaks this word, whether to the Samaritan woman or to us, was to give the water of life that, once drunk, never lets one thirst again forever. When a person drinks the water that is on the earth, it is refreshing only while he drinks it, and after a little while he is thirsty again. But the water that is in heaven, that is, the water above the firmament, once drunk, never lets one thirst again.

The Bible says, *"Then God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day" (Genesis 1:6–8).*

This is the word God spoke on the second day, when He was creating the heavens and the earth. God said that there is water under the heavens and also water above the heavens, and so He said that there are two kinds of water. The water on the earth only quenches thirst temporarily while one drinks it, but the water above the heavens was the word of life that quenches the thirst of our hearts forever. The water on the earth can be seen as human thoughts, philosophy, literature, and the human deeds done in religious zeal.

So Jesus was saying to this woman, "If you really want to drink this water of everlasting life, go and call your husband." This Samaritan woman was always drinking the water of the earth. This woman had lived with five husbands, but because she had no satisfaction, she was now living with a sixth man. We human beings have many husbands of the earth. I would like to speak just a little about this part and then go into the main word.

Five husbands: money, fame, pleasure, power, and religion

All of us have six husbands. People take money as their husband. They rely on money and believe that if only they have money, that will be enough. They think that if only they have money, everything will be solved and they will find satisfaction. But money cannot quench the thirst of a person's soul. People also live serving fame as their husband. They think that if they have fame, there is satisfaction, because they receive praise and respect from people. But just because other people recognize you, does that become true living water in your heart? There is no satisfaction.

True satisfaction for a person comes when he meets Jesus Christ and, through Jesus Christ, washes all the sins in his heart clean, as white as snow, once and for all by faith. It does not come with money and fame.

People also take pleasure as their husband. People think that if they enjoy pleasures such as drinking, singing, and dancing, there will be satisfaction in their hearts. But no matter how much they pursue pleasure, it does not become the true living water of the heart. That pleasure is like when the Samaritan woman drew water from the well and drank a mouthful: it was refreshing for a moment, and soon she was thirsty again. It was the refreshment of the moment the water passed down the throat; there was no refreshment of the true living water that soaks the heart. Yet people kill their own souls with the pleasures of the world. Trying to find satisfaction by their own strength and their own efforts has instead become the killing of their own souls.

The heart of man was made by God. So the heart of man is a place where God can be received to dwell. Because we were made by God, we can find true satisfaction only when we have

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that God dwelling in this heart. So we realize the truth that there is no satisfaction even in pleasure. I also tell you that we cannot enjoy satisfaction in our hearts through power either. Even if a person has such power that he can bring down a bird flying in the sky with a single word, there is no true living water in his heart.

True satisfaction for a person comes when he has received the remission of all his sins from God and the sins of his heart have been washed as white as snow. For man was made in the image of God. In other words, because man was made in the image of God, he can find true satisfaction only when God has come into him and dwells there. If one wants to meet that God, satisfaction arises in the heart at last only when one has received the remission, once and for all, of all the sins in the heart and all the personal sins one commits while living in this world, by believing in the heart in the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit of Jesus Christ.

Religion, too, cannot give satisfaction to the heart of man. Praying fervently, the zeal to please God by one's own strength—all these human deeds cannot please God. Rather, with this kind of human zeal, the more zealous one becomes, the more wretched the heart only becomes. So far we have spoken of five husbands. Money, fame, pleasure, power, and religion—with these five, too, one cannot obtain satisfaction for oneself.

Here one thing remains. It is the self, which strives to find satisfaction by believing in itself. But placing one's hopes in oneself is also nothing but vanity. That is why we must truly meet Jesus. Meeting Jesus is possible only within the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In believing in Jesus, whether one's occupation is high or low does not matter at all. As you believe in Jesus, have you

really met Jesus? And have you ever had all the sins in your heart washed as white as snow, or not? I want to ask you this clearly.

Wherever I preach the word, the theme is the gospel of the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit. The purpose for which God gave us the word of God is to let us know the gospel that Jesus has washed away all our sins with the water and the Spirit, caused us to be born again, and made us children of God and righteous people, and to cause us to receive the remission of sins and be born again.

I want to preach this word of blessing, this gospel of blessing, of being born again of water and the Spirit, to all who believe in Jesus and to all who do not believe in Jesus. What must we do to be born again of water and the Spirit before God? This is the theme I want to preach today. How can we be born again of water and the Spirit, as our Lord said? Do you know about being born again of water and the Spirit, which Jesus spoke of to Nicodemus? Jesus said as follows.

"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God'" (John 3:5). Here the Lord is clearly speaking the truth that a person can enter the kingdom of God only when he is born again of water and the Spirit, and that a person who has not been born again of water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God. That is why I truly want to preach to you this gospel of being born again, the most precious of all the things I have received from God.

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To believe in Jesus and be born again

What must we do if we want to be born again of water and the Spirit? First, like the Samaritan woman, we must honestly admit what we are before Jesus, saying, "I have no husband."

How do we know Jesus? How we know about Jesus is extremely important. Are there people who know and believe Jesus to be merely a human being? As for the meaning of the name Jesus, it is written in the Bible, *"For He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. In other words, this means that Jesus is God, who has saved us. It means that Jesus is God, who became a man and came to save us from all sins.

Jesus was God Himself in essence. Jesus created the universe and all things. Moreover, He, Jesus, is the Son of God, the Son among the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. When God made this universe and all things, the Father did not make them alone. When He made us human beings, too, the Father did not make us alone.

Let us look at the word of Genesis. *"So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. Then God blessed them, and God said to them, 'Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth'" (Genesis 1:27–28).*

Let us look at the word before it. *"Then God said, 'Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth'" (Genesis 1:26)*. The *"Us"* that appears here is plural.

When we look at this word, we can know that God—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, the Triune God—is God who has the same image as we do. The Bible records that when God made us human beings, the three of Them—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—said, "Let Us make man according to Our likeness."

Then if we say we believe in God yet deny the Triune God, that is not believing rightly. *"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3)*. Also, when God said, "Let there be a firmament," there was a firmament. Who was that God who said, "Let there be," "Let there be," like that? He was none other than Jesus Christ the Son, Jesus, who came to save us from the sin of the world once and for all.

Before Jesus came to save sinners, He was, in essence, in the form of God. That is why we must know and believe in Jesus as the God of salvation, knowing that Jesus is God Himself in essence.

In order to give the Samaritan woman the water of everlasting life, Jesus told her to go and call her husband. We must listen and keep firmly in mind this fact: that when Jesus wanted to give us the water of everlasting life, He said, "Go, call your husband."

You believe in Jesus, but have you ever truly drunk the water of everlasting life? That water of everlasting life is none other than the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this water can be drunk as much as one wants through the word that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. Yet countless people believe in Jesus, but even though they actually look at this word of the Bible, they are not drinking the living water. It is because there is no one who preaches it rightly.

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Jesus is the holy God. His telling her to go and call her husband was a word telling her to bring her sins. The water of everlasting life was the water of baptism that comes from Jesus' removing that person's sins completely. If one wants to receive this blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit, one must know exactly what kind of sinner one is before God. Without knowing one's own state as a sinner, one cannot say that one believes in Jesus. If one believes in Jesus without knowing one's own state, one cannot help but always struggle, living a faith of coming to draw water every day like this Samaritan woman, a life of faith in which one cannot hold one's head up.

If we want to receive the grace of being born again, we must know and feel what kind of sinner we really are before God. The Samaritan woman had lived with five men and was now living with a sixth man.

If this Samaritan woman kept changing husbands until she died, how many would she change? If we guess, supposing she is now about thirty-five years old, it seems she would change husbands at least five more times. This speaks of the weakness that you and I, that everyone, has. It means that we keep on sinning as long as we live on this earth.

You and I have sent away five husbands so far and are living with a sixth husband, and how many more things of the world will we take as our husbands in the future, trying to find satisfaction? You and I have sinned until now. We sinned before God before we believed in Jesus, and we have sinned after we believed in Jesus. Then how much will we sin in the future? If we have sinned until now, we must know that we are people who cannot help but sin in the future as well, because we are weak. Yes. We have sinned until now, and in the future, too, we are those who cannot help but sin because we are weak. Of course,

we will make a willful resolution not to sin. But we are still lacking. Because we are lacking and weak, we will sin.

We human beings are those who cannot help but sin repeatedly and continually, and we cannot help but admit it. You, too, must have had countless experiences of resolving on your own not to sin, then committing the same sin again, and resolving again not to sin, only to sin again. That is precisely the weakness of you and me and of all the people of the world, and that is why Jesus told this Samaritan woman to go and call her husband.

The Samaritan woman said to Jesus, *"I have no husband" (John 4:17)*. On this earth, the only husband who can give you and me everlasting satisfaction is Jesus alone, and apart from Jesus there can be no true husband.

Why do people commit sins they do not want to commit?

The reason is, first, because we are weak, and second, because we have inherited twelve kinds of sins from our ancestors. What are the sins we have inherited through our parents in the flesh? Specifically, what sinful hearts does the Bible say we have inherited?

Jesus said that we have inherited twelve sins through Adam and Eve, going back even further than our parents. Let us look and see whether or not that word is in the Bible.

Jesus said as follows. *"And He said, 'What comes out of a man, that defiles a man. For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from*

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within and defile a man'" (Mark 7:20–23). Jesus said, *"What comes out of a man, that defiles a man" (Mark 7:20)*. What sins has man inherited in his heart? And what sins does he commit? When we look at this word, we can see that part.

If we look at the part before this word, there is an account of the Pharisees slandering Jesus' disciples for eating food without washing their hands. The Pharisees rebuked them, saying that when they themselves ate, they washed all the way up to their elbows, washed their feet, washed their faces well, and dried themselves well with a towel before eating, whereas Jesus' disciples ate without even washing their hands properly.

What they meant was that they themselves were practicing their religion so well and living clean lives. How arrogantly they behaved, saying that they were clean and that Jesus and His disciples were dirty—it was indeed arrogance. Then does sin enter a person's heart through food? It does not. If you do not wash your hands and feet well, does that become sin? Of course, it would be good to wash before eating if you can. But when a war breaks out, when would you wash your hands before eating? If you eat bread with unwashed hands, does that bread turn into sin? No matter how much a person eats food without washing his hands, the sin that sends a person to hell does not enter through food.

Man's sin was fundamentally in the heart

The truly dirty sin is the sin inherited from our ancestors, which is fundamentally in the heart of man. There are also those who think that man's sin comes in from outside. I have seen that some think sin comes into them from outside, and that there are also people who believe so. But such thinking is a very wrong

thought and a wrong faith. Even if one eats food with unwashed hands, all the dirty things become excrement and all come out when one goes to the toilet. Even if all the food goes into a person's stomach, it ends there when he goes to the toilet; but man's sin keeps coming out through the mouth, through the heart, and through actions.

For man, what is true sin? The sin inherited through Adam and Eve, that is, from one's ancestors and one's parents, is true sin. The sin in man's heart is dirtier than all things rotten. What is dirtier than human excrement is the sin in man's heart. Do you believe that this is so?

If anyone listens calmly to this word of truth for just a few hours, he can be born again of water and the Spirit. I believe that through people who have been born again in this way, the gospel will be spread to all the people of the world. So whenever anyone wants to hear this word, I go and preach it to him at any time. For I believe that preaching this word of being born again of water and the Spirit to souls, so that those souls receive the blessing of being born again, is a greater harvest than receiving any reward for the flesh. This word of blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit that Jesus has given cannot be bought with gold or diamonds or anything precious in this world.

Many people in this world now believe in Jesus. But I see that there are not many who have really been born again of water and the Spirit. Among the many pastors, it is hard to find anyone who preaches on the subject of the word Jesus spoke to Nicodemus, "Only when one is born again of water and the Spirit can one enter the kingdom of God"—that is, on how one is born again of water and the Spirit. Jesus clearly said to Nicodemus that only if he was born again of water and the Spirit could he enter the kingdom of God, that he must be born again of water and the Spirit. Likewise, the word about being born

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again must be preached clearly today as well, but how many clergymen are there who preach this important word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? All around there are only those who have not been born again.

They preach as follows: "Believe in Jesus and receive blessings for the flesh. And become rich. Believe in Jesus and prosper in the flesh too; receive the blessings of heaven and the blessings of the earth—just receive many blessings, no matter what." They preach only that people should receive blessings, as if they themselves were the ones giving the blessings. Then some people spread out the hems of their garments, struggling to receive something. Also, many ministers preach the word after making people's minds dazed. They make them shout "Lord!" three times and pray at the top of their voices, and then they preach the word. But the word of God must be preached in quietness and calm, in the faith that believes the word.

God is an extremely holy Being, but the word says that the heart of man, on the contrary, is filled with twelve sins. Jesus is saying that these twelve sins that appear in Mark chapter 7 are in the heart of man.

What did He say defiles a man? From where did He say sin comes out to defile a man? He said that it comes out of the heart of man and defiles a man. He did not say that man's sin enters the heart of man from outside and so man becomes defiled; He said that the sin inside man comes out and defiles man and defiles this world. Jesus said, *"Out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts" (Mark 7:21)*.

Have you ever thought that man's evil thoughts are sin? When you have only thought something and not put it into action, do you think that, too, becomes sin? God said that this is sin. Even though God said so, the majority of people do not see it that way. Whatever bad thoughts a person has, as long as he has

not put them into action, they do not think it is sin. Jesus looks into the center of a person's heart, but people look only at the outward man.

Jesus sees the bad thoughts in our hearts, in our minds, and points them out as sin. Jesus also says that harboring a lustful heart or having a thieving heart in our human hearts is sin. He says that a murderous heart, the kind of heart that wants to kill another person, is sin. Also, all these things of which He said, *"Thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:22)*—if they are in the heart, even if one merely harbors them, God calls that person one who has sin. Moreover, He judges that even if one has only a hair's breadth of sin, one is a sinner who will go to hell.

These are the sins that we must now think about seriously and deal with. Are these twelve bad thoughts and bad hearts in your heart and mine, or not? Knowing this is important. God says that these twelve sins are the sins inherited from Adam in the heart of each and every one of us, you and me. And we must know that because we were born with these sins in our hearts, in our souls, from the time we were born, we are sinners.

Jesus says to people, "In the heart of each and every one of you there are twelve sins. That is why you commit twelve sins every day. So you are sinners." Are you a sinner? Are you a sinner before God? Are you a sinner to yourself?

Jesus rebuked the Pharisees, saying, "The sin in your hearts is a dirtier sin than hands that eat food without being washed." Here we can know that the viewpoint from which God sees sin and the viewpoint from which we humans see sin are different. People neither judge nor try someone as a sinner unless he has committed some crime in the light of national law or civil law. So they think they have no sin. That is the viewpoint from which people see, but the viewpoint from which God sees is different.

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God says to a person who, even if he has not committed such criminal acts, fundamentally has the twelve sins inherited through Adam and Eve, “You are a sinner who has twelve sins, and you commit twelve sins every day throughout your life,” and He has told him that he is a great sinner both before himself and before God.

We are all descendants of Adam and Eve. Were you and I not born with twelve sins in our hearts when we were born into this world? There is no one who was not. All were born with twelve sins. That is why, when God sees us, we are very wicked sinners. We are sinners who put on a great show of hypocrisy. We try to appear as if we were not sinners, as if we were good, as if we were very righteous, but God has judged, “You are all sinners. Unless you are born again through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you will all go to hell. You will enter the lake that burns with fire and brimstone.”

The law of God says that the wages of sin is death

We must see ourselves from the viewpoint of the word God speaks to us, and we must admit it. We must believe so, and believing so is right. The Bible says, *“The wages of sin is death” (Romans 6:23)*. And God said that if one has even a hair’s breadth of sin, one goes to hell.

But the question is, who is there without sin before God? Who is there who does not sin? Everyone cannot help but be a sinner. Yet people think they have no sin before God. With their hypocrisy, people polish themselves through religious life, pretending to be righteous and pretending to be good, and think that they have lived kindly and so have no sin.

Long ago God spoke to Adam. *"And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, 'Of every tree of the garden you may freely eat; but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die'" (Genesis 2:16–17).* But Adam and Eve fell for the enticement of the serpent, Satan the devil, and ended up picking and eating the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, which God had told them not to eat.

Originally, the fallen angel is an angel of hypocrisy. Is not one who, though he is not God, tries to become like God an angel of hypocrisy? After Adam and Eve sinned, they covered their bodies with fig leaves. By making aprons of fig leaves and putting them on, they tried to cover the sin inside them. But if one puts on clothes, is one's sin covered? It is never covered. Even if one made an apron out of a thick wall, out of concrete, and put it on, the sin in one's heart cannot be covered before God. After Satan the devil made Adam and Eve sin against God, the sin that had come into their hearts could not be covered by anything like man's good deeds, righteousness, or kindness, no matter what they did.

Yet there are many people who live a religious life with good deeds, righteousness, and kind acts in order to cover themselves. But all the religions of this world have not been able to remove the sin in people's hearts. Religion has polished people's outward appearance and put on a fine form of godliness, but it has not removed even one of the sins in their hearts. All the religious acts in this world are just like the fig leaves that Adam and Eve made and put on after they sinned.

If a person wants to be born again of water and the Spirit, he must know how holy God is. God cannot even sin; He is only holy. We must know that God is holy, but man, on the other hand, is so very dirty.

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Before the holy God, man is a very dirty being and a being who has sin. If we want to receive grace before God, we must know how dirty a sinner we are. Only then do we know how holy God is and at last seek grace and mercy from God. When a person knows the holiness of God and knows his own dirtiness, he simply confesses his sins. "I am a sinner." We human beings are sinners who have nothing to say before God except those words. That is why it is written in the Bible, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)*.

What the word "confess" means in this word, *"If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (1 John 1:9)*, is this: it is to admit before God that we fundamentally have the twelve sins inherited through Adam and Eve, and that, not only do we have those sins, but because this flesh is weak, we commit a great many sins.

Then what sins must we confess? In this part, *"If we confess our sins,"* the Korean Bible expresses sin in the singular, but in the English Bible it is expressed as "sins," that is, in the plural. It is speaking of all sins, the sins of the world.

It means to confess that we commit sins because of the twelve sins inherited from Adam and Eve, our ancestors. And it means to acknowledge the word of God's judgment, that when we are judged for our sins, we go to hell. Because we are lumps of sin who have sin, we sin knowingly, we sin unknowingly, and we sin always. We confess like this because we are sinners who keep on sinning even though we know we must not sin like this.

To confess that we are sinners who will keep on sinning until we die—"I am such a sinner. I am a sinner who cannot help but sin, a sinner who sins until I die"—this was the true meaning of the word *"confess"* that is spoken here before God.

To confess, to admit, that God is holy and that we are fundamentally sinners, sinners who sin now, who will sin in the future, and who sin until we die—that is the truly right confession before God.

He who admits he is a 100% sinner becomes a 100% righteous person

If a person wants to receive the grace of the remission of sins before God, he must confess that he is really a lump of sin, one who will sin in the future as well, and therefore a sinner who cannot help but go to hell, and he must believe in what Jesus has done. "I am one who cannot help but go to hell. God, please save me. If You do not save me, I will go to hell. I am completely a sinner, and You are the completely righteous God." Admitting in this way that one is a perfect sinner, a sinner going to hell, is true confession and the basic attitude for receiving grace.

What kind of sinner does God call and cause to be born again of water and the Spirit? God seeks the person who admits his sins like that, like the Samaritan woman. And God gives the blessing of the remission of sins, the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit. To the one who confesses that he is not "a little bit of a sinner" but "a sinner through and through," that is, "a 100% sinner," God removes all those sins 100%, completely, and blesses him. But what about us human beings? We human beings, whether we believe in Jesus or do not believe in Jesus, how much of a sinner do we think we are before God the Creator? Some people say they are only this much of a sinner. In God's sight they are 100% sinners, but they set a limit and say they are only so much of a sinner, so God must be dumbfounded.

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Because they do not admit that they are sinners through and through, they cannot receive the remission of sins completely, and even when it is given, they cannot receive it. That is why we must acknowledge before God that we are complete lumps of sin and sinners who sin until we die. Such a person can go before Jesus and say, "I am a complete lump of sin, and a sinner who sins until I die. I am a person who will go to hell. Jesus, please save me." Because this person knows that he himself is a 100% sinner and a sinner who will go to hell, he believes 100% in the gospel of being born again of water and the Spirit that Jesus gives, and receives the remission of sins.

On the other hand, the person who says, "I have only a little sin, but other people kept provoking me, so I sinned just this much. Please remit just this much sin," brings just this much before Jesus every day and asks to have it remitted, and so in the end he does not receive the remission of all his sins. In the end, because there is a lump of sin this big fundamentally in his heart, that person goes to hell even though he believes in Jesus. We must know ourselves rightly through the word and believe rightly. This is truly important.

The Samaritan woman honestly confessed to Jesus, *"I have no husband" (John 4:17)*. This woman had had as many as six men, yet she said she had none. That meant that she had no true husband. Likewise, we too have nothing righteous, nothing just, nothing good before God. We cannot help but say that we have nothing but the twelve sins inherited from our parents and the personal sins we commit in the world every day until we die, from the time we are born on this earth and as we live out our lives. Before the holy God we are complete sinners, those who can only go to hell completely. Unless God remits all these sins, unless He saves us from all these sins, we can only enter the

eternal fire bearing our sins and die. We are sinners who can only be so.

Dear fellow believers, are you sinners before God? Do you have a little sin, or a lot? Are you a little bit of a sinner, or a complete sinner? If you confess that you are a sinner with many sins, you can receive the grace of the salvation of Jesus Christ. I hope that all of us, like the Samaritan woman, will honestly admit that we are complete sinners and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gives, and so obtain the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, who gave us life

< John 4:13–42 >

"Jesus answered and said to her, 'Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw.' Jesus said to her, 'Go, call your husband, and come here.' The woman answered and said, 'I have no husband.' Jesus said to her, 'You have well said, "I have no husband," for you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly.' The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet. Our fathers worshiped on this mountain, and you Jews say that in Jerusalem is the place where one ought to worship.' Jesus said to her, 'Woman, believe Me, the hour is coming when you will neither on this mountain, nor in Jerusalem, worship the Father. You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth.' The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.' And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet

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no one said, 'What do You seek?' or, 'Why are You talking with her?' The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 'Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, 'Rabbi, eat.' But He said to them, 'I have food to eat of which you do not know.' Therefore the disciples said to one another, 'Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?' Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, "There are still four months and then comes the harvest"? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: "One sows and another reaps." I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.' And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all that I ever did.' So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.'"

The hope we enjoy in a weary world

You have worked hard this past week. I do not know how the week went by. It passed so quickly that I do not know where it

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went. Holding meetings is hard, and all sorts of other things are hard too, and I cannot tell you how weary I am; I truly wish the Lord would come quickly. When I think of myself, I wish He would come quickly, but when I think of those who have not yet been born again, my heart wishes He would come after a long, long while. The Bible says, *"All things are full of labor; Man cannot express it" (Ecclesiastes 1:8)*, and it is truly wearisome. The world is weary, and the hearts of us the righteous are weary too. So many things have happened that, although the year is not even over, it feels as if we have already lived a whole year. I truly want our Lord to come to this earth as soon as possible, so that we may go to a beautiful place where there is no imperfection and live there resting at ease, lacking nothing. Truly, that is how it is. That is why I want to preach the gospel more quickly, so that our Lord may come quickly.

It is truly hard, but our Lord has saved each and every one of us, and so we live through the Lord. Truly, if it were not for the Lord, how could we live? If it were not for the Lord, what joy would there be in living in this world? Even among the songs of the world there is a song that laments that, though one drinks and sings and dances, there is nothing but sorrow in the heart. Truly, in this world, if it were not for the Lord, even if we drink and sing and dance and do all kinds of things, there is no satisfaction.

When I see people who have not received the remission of sins living on until their hair turns so white, I feel that it is remarkable. I wonder how they can live like that, and whether they have some special secret that I do not know. I mean, what enjoyment, what pleasure, what sense of fulfillment do they live for? Truly, even if one drinks, enjoys pleasures, and dances, what remains in a person's heart is nothing but sorrow and weeping that fill it. Apart from our Lord, nothing can satisfy our hearts. Only the Lord can satisfy our hearts, and only the Lord

can fill our hearts to the full with all happiness, all blessings, all satisfaction, all fulfillment, and all good things.

Apart from the Lord, there is nothing. If it were not for the Lord, this world would truly be a trivial, petty, and dreary world. I wonder how I would have lived if I had not believed in the Lord. If I had not believed in the Lord, I would have departed not long after being born into this world, with many more days still left to live. Yet I met the Lord, and so I live this fulfilling life. This world is weary, but because I met the Lord and the Lord is in me, I live with hope and fulfillment. Because the Lord is in you, you can at least endure the difficulties and hardships of this hopeless world. You can endure because of the Lord. If it were not for the Lord, there would be no one as pitiful as we are. But through the Lord we are the happiest of all people.

The woman of the town of Sychar

Today I am going to speak about the Samaritan woman in John chapter 4. Long ago, in a very small town called Sychar in the region of Samaria, there was a woman. One day this woman came to draw water from a well that had been there since the time of her ancestors. The Bible says, *"It was about the sixth hour" (John 4:6)*, so it was midday. It was the hour when other people were resting because it was too hot, and the story is that this woman came to the well with a waterpot on her head at that very hour when others were resting.

When this woman came to Jacob's well, Jesus was sitting by Jacob's well. Jesus asked this woman to give Him some water. This woman said, *"How is it that You, being a Jew, ask a drink from me, a Samaritan woman?" (John 4:9)*. Our Lord said, *"If you knew the gift of God, and who it is who says to you, 'Give*

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Me a drink,' you would have asked Him, and He would have given you living water" (John 4:10). The woman retorted, "How can You say You will give me water when You have nothing to draw with? Shouldn't it be You asking me for water?" Then Jesus said, *"Whoever drinks of this water will thirst again, but whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:13–14)*. This is the conversation that this woman and Jesus had with each other.

In fact, all living things die without water. The reason people strive to find out whether or not there is water on Mars or other planets is also that they are looking for a place with water, because where there is water, living things can live. But outside the earth, though traces of water or ice have been found, a place where water flows that living things can drink and live on has not yet been found.

Water is life not only to man but to every living thing. Jesus is saying, *"But whoever drinks of the water that I shall give him will never thirst. But the water that I shall give him will become in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life" (John 4:14)*. Truly, if we drink the water that our Jesus gives, we obtain everlasting life. Truly, our Lord came to give us life, and He truly gave us life. Our Lord gave life to you and me and made us live, and truly, our Lord met us.

This Samaritan woman, too, kept repeating a life of coming to draw water at the hour when others rested, and then, not long after drawing and drinking that water, becoming thirsty again and coming back to draw water again. Since this Samaritan woman lived repeating the task of coming to draw water in the heat of midday, how weary she must have been! This woman could not stand with her head held high before people, nor could

she stand with her head held high before God; she was a person who could not step forward boldly where many people were gathered. But in the end, this woman comes to drink the living water that makes her never thirst again.

We, too, truly know that our Lord is the Savior, meet the Lord, believe the word He speaks, and obtain everlasting life. Truly, our Lord has given us life. When we think about it, we, too, like this woman, had not obtained life and so wandered thirsty in religion. Truly, we were hardly any different from this woman. Just as much as this woman, who had to do her errands while others rested, we, too, were people ashamed because of sin. We could only die because of sin. We were thirsty because of sin. Truly, we could only die. But just as the Lord spoke to this woman, He gave life to us as well. Today we share the word on the theme, "Our Lord has given life."

Before this Samaritan woman met the Lord, there was truly no water of life in her heart. When Jesus said that He would give this woman water, she said, *"Sir, give me this water, that I may not thirst, nor come here to draw" (John 4:15)*. When this woman said this, Jesus said, *"Go, call your husband, and come here" (John 4:16)*, and she said, *"I have no husband" (John 4:17)*. *"For you have had five husbands, and the one whom you now have is not your husband; in that you spoke truly" (John 4:18)*. Jesus knew everything, and that is how He spoke to her. This woman was startled that Jesus knew everything about her.

So at first she took Jesus for a prophet. Then, as she talked with Him, this woman's spiritual eyes were opened. "Ah, this is the very Messiah! He is the Savior!" Having discovered this fact, this woman left her waterpot, went into the town, and preached the gospel. In fact, this woman had asked Him to give her that water so that she would never again have to come this way to draw water while others rested. At that point the Lord told her to

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go and call her husband. The woman said that she really had no husband, and Jesus said that she had had five husbands, but the man she now had was not her husband either, so what she said was right.

The satisfaction the world cannot give

"Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet" (John 4:19). The woman was amazed at Jesus' power. Everything that people do in this world must be exactly the same as what this woman was doing. That she had lived with five husbands yet had no true husband of her own means that there is truly no satisfaction in anything one trusts and relies on in the world. Dear fellow believers, everyone living in this world is born, studies, marries, has sons and daughters, earns money, enjoys pleasures, and eats and drinks as he lives, but this means that none of the things of the world can give satisfaction to his heart. The point is that no one can truly obtain satisfaction from all the things of this world. Man cannot obtain satisfaction from anything in this world.

This woman's saying, "He is truly not my husband," even though she had lived with five husbands, means that although she was living with her husband now, there was no true satisfaction. Do we have satisfaction as we live in this world? Is there satisfaction in the things of the world? Is there satisfaction in earning money? Is there satisfaction when we drink and eat delicious things? Is there satisfaction in our hobbies? The point is that there is no satisfaction in any of them. It is that none of the things of the world can give satisfaction to you and me.

People think those things will give satisfaction, and they try plunging into them and chasing after them, but those things do not give satisfaction. There is no true satisfaction in anything of

this world. Even in this church of the born-again, just because we do the work, is there satisfaction in the work itself? There is none. We are satisfied with the Lord alone; there is no satisfaction in the work itself. Nothing whatsoever can fill your heart, your soul, with satisfaction. This is the meaning of that word.

"I have no husband" (John 4:17). If the man who was then living with this woman as her husband had heard this, his pride would have been hurt. "What? She has a husband, and yet she says she has none. That is upsetting." That is probably what he would have thought. Why would this woman have said that her husband was not her husband? It was because, although she relied on him, trusted him, and loved him as her husband, there was no true satisfaction in her heart. Dear fellow believers, we are the same. Do we, too, have satisfaction in the things of the world? There is none. Dear fellow believers, truly there is no satisfaction in the things of this world. Just as this woman said that even the husband she was now living with was not her husband, does a husband, a wife, money, all kinds of good circumstances, wealth, or power give true satisfaction to our hearts? Dear fellow believers, are you satisfied if you have such things? I truly wish I could become that kind of person. I wish I could live like a person who is satisfied with just a little of the things of the world and can live contentedly buried in them, the kind of person who is satisfied and excited with just a little. There are times when I think I would like to become like someone who, though he may look simple-minded, is always cheerful without a thought or a worry. Such a person is so delighted when given just a little to eat that not only is his heart satisfied, but he laughs with joy from head to toe. The reason there are times when I want to become such a person is that there is such a complete lack of satisfaction in reality. It is not that I

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really want to become such a person; it is an expression of how much I want to live obtaining and enjoying satisfaction in my heart.

Dear fellow believers, are you truly satisfied? Are you satisfied if you have power? Are you satisfied with money or possessions? Are you satisfied with your family? This woman was not satisfied with such things. Neither am I. You, too, will not be satisfied. It is the same with a wife, the same with a husband, the same with children, the same with money, the same with honor, the same with wealth, the same with power; those things do not give true satisfaction. There is no one but Jesus who gives us true satisfaction.

I am not saying that, because there is no satisfaction in the world, you should fall into nihilism and give up on life. I am telling the facts just as they are. When we think about it, if it were not for the Lord, would a person have satisfaction? There is none. Dear fellow believers, what satisfaction is there? The Samaritan woman in the word, out of shame, came out to the well at midday when everyone else was resting, with something like a cloth draped over her head because the beating sun was so hot, and was drawing water. She fills the bucket with water, draws it up, takes a sip, and then pours it into a small jar. Then with that water she washes rice, makes bread to eat, washes her face, and does the laundry. Because the water drawn that day was all used up that day, she had to come again to draw water at that same hour the next day. This woman lived like that day after day, every day. The woman's life was weary, and there was no satisfaction in her heart. Like this woman, we, too, have no satisfaction.

Dear fellow believers, even if we are born again, there is no satisfaction apart from our Lord. I do this and that in preparation for overseas missions, and when things seem to be going well I

feel satisfied, and when they do not go well I feel stressed. Either way, I feel good because I am working for the Lord. It is because, through that work, many souls have been saved and will be saved. Even so, all that work does not give satisfaction, stability, peace, and contentment as much as the Lord does. Through this word, you and I must think again about what we are really trying to obtain satisfaction from. Dear fellow believers, we must think again about whether we can really obtain satisfaction from the things of the world.

A person who has never thought about this will mistakenly believe that the things of the world will give satisfaction, and will chase after the world. We must think about it. If there were real satisfaction in the things of the world, we would have to follow after all of them. But the One who always refreshes our hearts, always satisfies us, causes the work of life to take place, and gives blessings is the Lord. Apart from the Lord, there is no one who can refresh your hearts, give you satisfaction, and give you blessings. Jesus alone is the One who guides you on the way of everlasting life, the way of blessing, and lets you receive salvation. Only Jesus gives true satisfaction to you, gives true satisfaction to me, and gives true satisfaction to all the people on this earth. Those who have met Jesus are satisfied in their hearts when they think of that Jesus.

Think of that Jesus. Knowing that nothing in the world can give you satisfaction, set aside other thoughts for now and think of the Lord. When you think of the grace of salvation and the blessings the Lord has given you, you come to enjoy satisfaction. When you think of that grace of salvation and those blessings, you obtain satisfaction.

The Lord has removed all your sins and mine. The Lord has removed all your sins, making you as white as snow, and has made you the people of God. Dear fellow believers, if we do not

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believe in the Lord, and do not drink this water that never lets us thirst again, which our Lord gave us through His baptism, His blood, and His life, where could we go to find rest? When you think in your hearts of the Lord who gave you salvation, your hearts become peaceful, you find rest, and true satisfaction comes to the heart that was dissatisfied. Whatever your circumstances, when you think of the Lord, satisfaction comes to your hearts. The Lord indeed is the fountain of blessing.

The Master of our hearts

We must know the fact that we cannot enjoy satisfaction through the things of the world. And we must believe it. When you come to realize that although you have tried to enjoy satisfaction through the things of the world, there is absolutely no satisfaction in them, and when you come to realize that the things of the world are only temporarily necessary while we live on this earth, whereas the Lord is the One we absolutely and eternally need, I hope you will believe it.

Have we perhaps gotten things reversed? I am asking whether the master and the guest have switched places. The Lord is truly our eternal Master, and the Lord is the Master who gives you eternal rest. Yet are we not driving that Lord out and trying to obtain satisfaction from the things of the world? And are we not being satisfied in that way? Are you not simply settling down in the world, as if all these things that are not the Lord were giving you satisfaction? Dear fellow believers, if so, we must turn back. We must realize this.

However lacking and however weak you may be, our Lord has saved you and become your Master. And our Lord is giving you true satisfaction and all things. Are you not treating the Lord

as nothing more than an accessory, something you wear when you need it and toss aside when you do not? Please do not think of the Lord in that way. It is not the Lord who is the accessory; it is the world that is the accessory. What we use because we need it temporarily and then toss aside when we no longer need it is the things of the world.

The Lord has given eternal salvation to you and me. He has given us the fountain of water that never lets us thirst again. The Lord has removed all your sins and mine. Our Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John at the Jordan River, and had all the sins of you and me transferred to Him. And He received the judgment in our place on the Cross. And He rose again and is alive even now. Thus He has become the true God to those who truly believe, has truly become their Savior, and has become the sure guarantee of salvation. And after saving us, our Lord wants to sit in your hearts as the Master. It is that He wants to sit in your hearts not as a stranger passing through but as your Master. Now, whether or not you acknowledge that Lord as your Master depends on your thinking and your heart. If you do not treat that Master as your own Master, it is wrong.

It is when you truly treat the Lord as your Master that you truly obtain satisfaction. I hope you will not try to obtain satisfaction from the things of the world. Do not strive for the things of the world. Do not always try to quench your own thirst with the things of the world, as this woman did when she came to draw water. Believe that the One who gives us eternal satisfaction and has quenched our thirst forever is the Lord, and I hope you will know the fact that the Lord is seated in your saved hearts.

Dear fellow believers, is it the things of the world, or is it the Lord? Have the things of the world given you true satisfaction, or has the Lord given you true satisfaction? Even now, is the

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Lord giving you satisfaction, or do the things of the world give you satisfaction? Dear fellow believers, you must discern well and think well. And you must realize once again, acknowledge, and confess that the Lord has truly given you true satisfaction. And you must confess by faith that He is the One who will give you satisfaction in the future as well. Just as Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*, the Lord is my Master and the Lord who will give us true satisfaction. We, too, must confess, "The Lord is my Master." And we must live our lives by faith.

Dear fellow believers, one who has met the Lord obtains satisfaction as if he had found a fountain of water even in the desert. It is because we try to obtain satisfaction from the things of the world that dissatisfaction comes to us every day; one who has met the Lord lives a life in which his throat is always refreshed and his heart is always refreshed, even in the desert. It is because you do not know the Lord who came to you. It is because you do not believe in the Lord who saved you, and because you do not acknowledge or realize how precious that Lord is.

Such a precious Lord has come to us and met us, yet because we set that Lord aside and try to enjoy satisfaction and fulfillment through the things of the world, every day we are irritable and short-tempered, we snap over nothing at all, and there is no satisfaction. And so, to obtain satisfaction, we have to go looking for something new and do that too. Dear fellow believers, will that do? The Lord has already come to you and me and become our Lord; that Lord has given us the fountain of water that will never let us thirst again; the Lord is seated in our hearts—so will it do for us to seek the things of the world and try to be satisfied with them? Dear fellow believers, that truly must not be. If that happens, we become wretched people.

You are people who have received the remission of sins. On this earth, if God permits, you do this and you do that. But those are all disposable things. The One who is truly your eternal satisfaction is the Lord. The Lord gives you satisfaction and is seated in your hearts. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will truly believe in the Lord and live. I hope you will enjoy satisfaction with the Lord alone.

The woman who left her waterpot and testified

After this woman met the Lord, she asked, "The Samaritans worship on this mountain, but do the Jews say that one must worship in Jerusalem?" Our Lord spoke as follows: "The place is not what matters. Wherever one worships, he must worship in spirit and truth. When one worships having received the remission of sins, with the Holy Spirit dwelling in him and in a state without sin, that is true worship. When one believes in the Lord in his heart, receives the Lord into his heart, believes the word that the Lord is in his heart, and worships God the Father, this is true worship. The worship offered by one who has been born again is true worship. And the time for that is coming." Then this woman left behind her waterpot and everything else, went into the town, and said, *"Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?" (John 4:29)*. She testified of the Lord she had met and of the word of God she had heard. Dear fellow believers, our Lord knows everything. He knows everything that you and I have done. The Lord has known us since we were in our mothers' wombs. He has known us even from before we were born on this earth. Dear fellow believers, before God nothing can ever be hidden. It is that God knows everything.

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Dear fellow believers, this Samaritan woman met the Lord. She knew and believed the fact that the Lord is the Son of God and the Savior. Now, in this age of the New Testament, for you and me to be saved, we need only believe that Jesus is the Savior who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again three days later—that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This woman met the Lord who knows everything and speaks of everything, and after she knew that Savior and believed in her heart, she left her waterpot and testified to the people. So many people heard this woman's testimony and believed in Jesus, and came to Jesus. Many people came to Jesus through that woman, and after hearing His word for themselves, they truly came to believe. Likewise, in this age too, preachers of the gospel preach the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and many people receive the remission of sins. Those who have received the remission of sins read this word, and through the word of God their faith becomes firm and steadfast.

Jesus is the Savior of the world and the God of salvation. We, too, live exactly the same life as this woman. We are extremely busy in this world, but in fact we live because of the Lord. And we are satisfied because of the Lord. If it were not for the Lord, we could not possibly enjoy satisfaction. Nothing whatsoever gives satisfaction. I hope you will look once again to the Lord who saved you, recognize once again that though the world was busy, none of those things gave you satisfaction, look once again to the Lord, and once again enjoy satisfaction in the Lord.

In our lives, there is satisfaction when we meet the Lord. Even one who has met the Lord must keep firmly in mind that it is the Lord who gives satisfaction. He must believe it. Whether one is lacking or outstanding, all obtain satisfaction through the Lord. Whoever one may be, all obtain satisfaction through the

Lord. Who, other than the Lord, can give you satisfaction? Who, other than the Lord, can give you grace and give you blessings? Is there anyone? There is no one. I, too, have no satisfaction apart from the Lord. Even though I have been saved, if it were not for the Lord, whatever I did, would there be satisfaction? Whatever I did, would true satisfaction come? Who gives true satisfaction? Jesus gives it. Therefore we must live enjoying satisfaction in Jesus.

We must keep in mind the fact that until now both you and I have lived because of Jesus, and that because of Jesus this earth, too, has been preserved until now. It is not only those who believe in Jesus who need Jesus; this universe, too, needs Jesus. If Jesus stopped holding them up, the earth, the universe, and the stars would all fall away. Because Jesus made everything, just as this world would all break apart if He did not breathe His power into it and withdrew His power, so our lives, too, all depend on the Lord. The Lord has saved you, so you should think about how much satisfaction you obtain and enjoy through the Lord as you live.

Truly, the Lord has given satisfaction to you and me. If you know that Jesus has given you satisfaction, if you know the fact that the Lord gives satisfaction, you become completely absorbed in Him. Even if your eyes wander elsewhere in the world for a while, you always return to Him.

The Lord has given satisfaction to you and me. We give glory to the Lord. After this woman met the Lord, she must have truly obtained satisfaction, lived the rest of her life satisfied and testifying of the gospel, and lived well, fearing God. Dear fellow believers, the Lord has blessed you and me so that we, too, can live a life like that of the Samaritan woman. I hope that you will realize this fact in your hearts and believe it, and that through the Lord you will truly live a satisfied life, living for the gospel for

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the rest of your lives as well. I believe that our Lord has given such a blessing to you and me. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

A life of worshiping God and reaping the fruit of eternal life

< John 4:22–38 >

“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth. The woman said to Him, ‘I know that Messiah is coming’ (who is called Christ). ‘When He comes, He will tell us all things.’ Jesus said to her, ‘I who speak to you am He.’ And at this point His disciples came, and they marveled that He talked with a woman; yet no one said, ‘What do You seek?’ or, ‘Why are You talking with her?’ The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, ‘Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?’ Then they went out of the city and came to Him. In the meantime His disciples urged Him, saying, ‘Rabbi, eat.’ But He said to them, ‘I have food to eat of which you do not know.’ Therefore the disciples said to one another, ‘Has anyone brought Him anything to eat?’ Jesus said to them, ‘My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work. Do you not say, “There are still four months and then comes

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the harvest”? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together. For in this the saying is true: “One sows and another reaps.” I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors.’”

What kind of worship does God receive? There are many people who worship, and there are many works that are said to be serving God. But today the Lord says that there are particular worshipers whom the Father seeks. This is the answer He gave to the Samaritan woman who asked where to worship. That word reveals who the Messiah was that the woman had been waiting for, and it changes the woman into one who leads the people of her town to Jesus.

At the same time, the disciples came back with something to eat. But the Lord said that He had food of which they did not know. And He told them to lift up their eyes and look at the fields to be harvested. The Lord, who had been speaking of worship, now speaks of food and harvest. These words are not separate from one another. When we know who Jesus is and what work He came to do, we can truly worship God and also take part in the work in which the Lord delights.

Worship offered knowing the Savior

Let us read verses 22 through 24.

“You worship what you do not know; we know what we worship, for salvation is of the Jews. But the hour is coming, and

now is, when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth; for the Father is seeking such to worship Him. God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth."

Jesus divided worship into worshiping *"what you do not know"* and worship in which *"we know what we worship."* Worship does not become complete merely by devoting oneself in one's own way. We must know whom we believe in and what He has done for us. The Lord said that salvation is of the Jews. Long ago God promised that the Savior would be born from the descendants of Judah, the son of Jacob, and the One who came from the tribe of Judah according to that promise is Jesus, who is now before the Samaritan woman. Israel, who had received the law of sacrifice, could know through those sacrifices that when the Savior came, He would bear the sin of the people and receive the judgment of that sin for them.

If people say they believe in God but do not know the Savior whom God sent, they remain in a faith that makes a god out of their own thoughts and serves it. Traditions handed down from men or the outward form of worship cannot take that place. The Lord made the woman know God and made her know Himself. Knowing and believing what kind of God He is and what salvation He has given is the foundation of true worship.

The Lord said that God is Spirit. Because God is not a material substance with a form, He is not an object that we can make into a visible shape and serve. He is One who is on the mountain, in Jerusalem, and in this very place where we are sitting. That is why those who have received the remission of sins walk with that God wherever they are. Because He knows all our hearts and is living, He does not delight in the hypocrisy of putting on the outward appearance of worship while not believing inwardly.

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Then what is it to worship in spirit and truth? “Spirit” here refers to the Holy Spirit. To worship God, one must first meet Jesus Christ, receive the remission of sins, and have the Holy Spirit in one’s heart. Jesus had all the sins we commit with our flesh transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, was nailed to the Cross while bearing those sins and received all the judgment, and rose again from death three days later. To those who believe this and have been washed of all their sins once and for all, God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift. “Truth” means believing truly. It is to go forward believing, without the slightest hypocrisy or falsehood, the fact that Jesus is truly our Savior and the One who has removed all our sins.

But many people believe that Jesus took away the original sin, but that the sins they commit every day must be washed away each time by prayers of repentance. One thing is missing from that faith. What is missing is the fact that, just as in the Old Testament sins were passed on by laying hands on the head of the sacrificial offering, John the Baptist passed our sins on to Jesus at the Jordan River. So even while saying they believe in Jesus, they call themselves saved sinners and offer worship with sin still remaining in their hearts. With such a faith, one cannot worship in spirit and truth.

So reason it through once. Confirm before the word whether the Lord already had the faults you committed today, and the sins you will commit in the future out of weakness, passed on to Him at the Jordan River. How could He who took away the sin of the world not be your Savior? When, even after reasoning it through in our minds, there is no flaw in His being our Savior, we truly believe in Him. There is still a lack in our deeds. But what is lacking is our deeds, not the salvation the Lord has fulfilled.

The Bible speaks of how perfect the Lord's sacrifice is as follows.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Jesus did not save us insufficiently. With one offering, offered once and for all, He saved us perfectly forever. God does not tell us to go and find a way to wash away our sins again; He makes us believe in the remission of sins He has already fulfilled. Because we know that fact, we are freed from the heart that puts forward its own merits, and we give thanks and praise for the grace we have received. God receives the praise and prayer that are offered believing in this perfect remission of sins.

This worship does not end with the confession made during the hour of worship alone. A life that acknowledges God as God, whether circumstances are good or hard, and carries out by faith the duty one has before Him—this is a life of truth. When such people realize their wrongs, they do not stubbornly insist on their own way but follow the word. They think about how others might be saved and devote their hearts to the work the Lord has entrusted to them. Even when what they have to offer seems small, God delights in those who live offering that small thanksgiving and faith before Him.

The testimony of the woman who met the Messiah she had been waiting for

The woman said that when the Messiah, that is, the Christ, came, He would make all things known. She had been waiting for the One whom God would send. Before that waiting, Jesus revealed Himself clearly. Let us read verses 25 and 26.

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"The woman said to Him, 'I know that Messiah is coming' (who is called Christ). 'When He comes, He will tell us all things.' Jesus said to her, 'I who speak to you am He.'"

The Savior the woman had been waiting for was speaking with the woman at that very moment. Jesus did not tell the woman to go and look for someone in the distant future. He let her know that He Himself was the Christ. The One who knew what the woman had done, the One who spoke of the fountain of water springing up into everlasting life, the One who was teaching the worship to be offered to God—He was the promised Savior. The woman now recognized Him as the Christ.

Christ means 'the Anointed One.' He is the Prophet who knows everything about us, the High Priest who removes the sin of the people, and the King who made all things. If we regard Jesus as merely one among great men, then what He did also ends up being no more than what one man did. But because He is God who came in a human body, He was able to remove the sin of mankind. Those who know that Jesus is the Christ believe in and receive His salvation.

At that time the disciples came back. They marveled that Jesus was talking with the woman, but no one asked the reason. In the meantime, the woman left her waterpot and went into the town. Let us read verses 28 through 30.

"The woman then left her waterpot, went her way into the city, and said to the men, 'Come, see a Man who told me all things that I ever did. Could this be the Christ?' Then they went out of the city and came to Him."

The woman did not make people stay with her. She told them to come and see Jesus. Before giving the woman living water, the Lord first exposed her sins. But He, who knew all that the woman had done, was the One who had already borne all those sins at the Jordan River. Because she had met the One who knew

everything about her and yet saved her, the woman could not keep still. Hearing what she said, the people went out of the town and came to Jesus.

Our testimony, too, points to Jesus in this way. When we preach the gospel, we can build relationships with people and lead them, like the woman, saying, *"Come, see."* But people are not saved because of our skill with words. When they hear the written word that Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and that He received the judgment on the Cross in our place, and when they hold on to that word and believe it, sin disappears from their hearts. So rather than putting forward how zealously you believe, preach exactly what the Lord has done for you.

We, too, can let those who are tormented by sin, and those who live a life of faith yet do not know the remission of sins, hear the word of the Lord. Do not try to force people into submission; listen to what they do not know, and explain it to them with the written word. The One to whom our testimony points is always Jesus Christ.

The food of the Lord, who fulfills the Father's will

While the people were coming to Jesus, the disciples urged the Lord to eat. But the Lord said that He had food to eat of which they did not know. The disciples asked one another whether anyone had brought Him food. While the disciples were thinking of the food before their eyes, Jesus spoke of the work the Father had entrusted to Him.

Let us read verse 34.

"Jesus said to them, 'My food is to do the will of Him who sent Me, and to finish His work.'"

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Jesus said that doing the will of the Father who sent Him and finishing His work was His food. The Lord clearly knew the purpose for which He had come to this earth. It was the work of saving those under sin and causing them to obtain life. The conversation He had with the Samaritan woman was also the work of doing that will. Pointing out the woman's sins and letting her know that He was the Christ was, to the Lord, food more satisfying than a meal.

The word "finish" means to carry something through to the end and complete it. The Lord did not merely open the way of salvation a little and leave the rest to us. Having even the sins we would commit in the future passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, dying on the Cross because of those sins, and rising again from death—all these were the work the Father had entrusted to Him, and to the Lord each one of them was food. The Lord fulfilled completely the salvation that a sinner cannot accomplish by himself.

Let us read John chapter 6, verse 40.

"And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

The Father wants those who see the Son and believe to obtain eternal life. Jesus worked for that will. Even on a wearying journey He spoke to the Samaritan woman, and He also let the disciples see the work of saving souls. Just as food strengthens the body, the work of doing the Father's will was a work in which the Lord delighted so much that He called it food.

This Lord has entrusted His work to us who have been saved as well. It is the work of preaching to people the salvation the Lord has fulfilled. Therefore, serving the gospel is not a price paid in order to receive the remission of sins. It is a life of taking

part in the Father's will as those who have received the remission of sins.

The food of the spirit gained by doing the Lord's work

A person has a belly of the flesh and a belly of the heart. The body gains strength only when it eats food, and the heart of a born-again person is filled when it does the work of God. The people of the world are satisfied only when they eat bread, but the righteous enjoy satisfaction when they do the work of the gospel the Lord has entrusted to them. This is the food of the spirit, which the world does not know.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins. So if they do not do the work of God, their hearts grow hungry like a person who has skipped a meal. Just as we eat three meals a day, the soul also must eat this food every day in order to live. If people only talk about the fact that they have been saved while pursuing only what they want, their bodies may be full but their spirits will starve. On the other hand, when we see one soul hear the gospel, receive the remission of sins, and rejoice, our hearts become rich even if we have nothing. It is because the Lord who saved that soul rejoices within us as well.

The work of God does not consist only of preaching the word before people. Some preach the word of the gospel, and some prepare and send out books so that the word may be spread. Some look after the needs of their fellow workers, and some take on the cleaning or small tasks behind the scenes. If it is work offered for the gospel, there is no high or low. When we cannot

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preach the gospel directly, preparing and praying so that the gospel may be spread is also the Lord's work.

There are times when we have been busy all day long and yet do not know what we have done. When our bodies are tired and the visible results are few, we may even become discouraged. At times like that, when your strength fails, seek this food all the more. We can help the Lord's work even through small tasks that no one notices. Let us preach the word we can preach, help with the work we can help with, and faithfully finish the work entrusted to us. As we walk with the Lord in this way, our faith grows, and serving the Lord becomes the joy of our hearts.

The harvest of eternal life, sown and reaped together

The Lord turned the eyes of the disciples toward the fields. Let us read verses 35 and 36.

"Do you not say, 'There are still four months and then comes the harvest'? Behold, I say to you, lift up your eyes and look at the fields, for they are already white for harvest! And he who reaps receives wages, and gathers fruit for eternal life, that both he who sows and he who reaps may rejoice together."

People said that the time of harvest would come only after four months had passed. But the Lord told them to lift up their eyes and look now. The people of the town had heard what the woman said and were coming out to Jesus. Before the Lord were people who needed to hear the word of salvation. The disciples had to lift their eyes from thinking only of the food they would eat and see the work of gathering fruit for eternal life.

Why is now the time of harvest? It is because the Lord had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He

received from John, and received all the judgment of that sin on the Cross. Salvation has already been fully accomplished. The work that now remains is to preach this word and reap those who believe. The time has come when the grain is fully ripe and can be reaped as soon as the sickle is put to it.

We, too, are apt to put off the Lord's work, saying that we will do it someday when our circumstances improve. We think that for now making a living is urgent, that we are not yet prepared enough, and that a better time must come. But the Lord makes us see the work He has entrusted to us now. There are souls who need the gospel, and there are opportunities to help in the work of preaching the word to them. It is not that we can serve the Lord only after all the problems we have are over. We need only take part with the grace we have received and the strength we have been given now.

The fruit the Lord spoke of is fruit for eternal life. Those who hear the gospel we preach and believe that Jesus has saved them are that fruit. Like the Lord who rose again from death, they obtain the life of rising again and living forever. So the fruit we should rejoice over is not the number of people gathered, but each and every person who has truly believed the word of the remission of sins. What we must preach and keep is the gospel of the Lord, who has washed away our sins.

Let us read verses 37 and 38.

"For in this the saying is true: 'One sows and another reaps.' I sent you to reap that for which you have not labored; others have labored, and you have entered into their labors."

The One who sowed salvation on this earth is Jesus Christ. God promised through the prophets of the Old Testament that He would send the Savior, and those servants kept and preached that word even while being persecuted. And the Lord Himself came and fulfilled all of that promise. Because the apostles and

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the people of faith who went before us preached that gospel, we, too, have heard the gospel. We are not people who make salvation, but people who go about reaping the salvation that has already been made.

That is why the wages the reaper receives are also grace. Since He has let us take part in reaping the fruit of eternal life, though it is not something we achieved by our own labor, those who preach the gospel are truly happy people. The Lord makes the one who sows and the one who reaps rejoice together. No one can boast of himself alone because he saw the fruit at the end, nor can anyone call the earlier labor vain because there is no visible fruit yet. Those who preach the word and those who help in that work value one another's labor, and they rejoice together when one soul believes the gospel of the remission of sins.

The Father seeks those who worship in spirit and truth. We believe in the perfect remission of sins that Jesus has given and go before God with thanksgiving. And with that faith we serve the work in which the Lord delights. Just as the woman testified of the Christ she had met, we, too, preach the word of salvation and lead people to Jesus.

Let us not regard this work only as a burden. The Lord has let us take part in the joy of reaping the fruit of eternal life. Even when the work entrusted to us seems small, let us carry it out by faith. Let us give thanks to those who labored before us, value those who work with us, and join our hearts together for the spread of the gospel. Lifting up our eyes to look at the fields that are white, let us continue this blessed work, in which the one who sows and the one who reaps rejoice together. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The Savior of the world, made known through the word

< John 4:39–42 >

"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all that I ever did.' So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word. Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world.'"

In a town of Samaria, people who believed in Jesus came into being. At the beginning of it was the testimony of one woman. The woman told people about the Jesus she had met, and those who heard her words came to the Lord. But the text does not end with the woman's testimony. The people asked Jesus to stay with them, and they heard the Lord's word directly. And they confessed that they knew Jesus was indeed the Savior of the world.

The way we came upon the gospel is similar to this. Someone first preached the word to us, and led us to church or handed us a book containing the gospel. Through that labor we came to know Jesus. But the fact that the one who preached it to us is certain does not by itself make our faith clear. Only when we hear and know through the word how the Lord has saved us does

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that faith at last become our own. Today's text shows how the people who came to the Lord through one person's testimony came to know the Savior with certainty through the word.

The news of salvation spread through one person's testimony

Let us read verse 39.

"And many of the Samaritans of that city believed in Him because of the word of the woman who testified, 'He told me all that I ever did.'"

The Bible says that many Samaritans of that town heard the woman's testimony and believed in Jesus. Here, take note of the words *"who testified."* A witness is a person who speaks of what he himself has seen, heard, and become certain of. The woman did not repeat a rumor she had heard somewhere. She spoke of the One she herself had met at the well.

Then what did the woman testify? It was that *"He told me all that I ever did" (John 4:39)*. The woman had things she wanted to hide from others, and she had wrongs she had done knowingly as well as wrongs she had done without knowing. Yet the One she was meeting for the first time knew all of it and told her. Instead of hiding her shame, the woman told the people of the town that she had met One who knew everything about her.

A person who has received the remission of sins cannot just keep still like this. It is because the grace he has received is too great. Peter and John also said, *"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20)*. God lets the world hear this gospel through the mouths of those who have been saved. Only when we open our mouths do people hear the news of salvation. Is there anyone who hesitates, wondering what

power his own words could have? If you know the salvation the Lord has given, you are already a person who has something to preach.

Then what do we testify? If we tell how earnest we were and how long we struggled, the listener begins to measure the size of his own efforts. The testimony of salvation is telling by what word we came to believe in the remission of sins. It is to tell others when, through whom, and what word we heard, and that from that word we learned how Jesus removed our sins. More important than the date is the basis. That we believed on the basis of the word of God—that is the testimony of salvation.

Here let us also clearly remember the place of the witness. The woman was the witness who led people to Jesus, and the One who saved them was Jesus. Many people heard the woman's words and believed, but the One toward whom that faith was directed was the Lord. We who preach the gospel also speak so that people's eyes do not rest on us ourselves but turn toward Jesus. When they get to know the Lord we have met, the testimony bears its proper fruit.

Jesus, who stayed with them and let them hear the word

Let us read verses 40 and 41.

"So when the Samaritans had come to Him, they urged Him to stay with them; and He stayed there two days. And many more believed because of His own word."

The Samaritans came to Jesus and asked Him to stay with them. Those who had come to believe after hearing the woman's words now invited the Lord to their own town. It is precious that they invited Him after they had believed. They wanted to know

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the Lord more and to hear His word more. The Lord accepted their request and stayed there two days. The word of salvation that had been given to one woman was now heard by the people of the whole town.

The text makes clear the reason that many more believed. It was *"because of His own word."* It was not that the atmosphere of a large crowd produced faith, nor that the woman's persuasion held that faith up. The word of God has power. It is because that word is none other than God. So when we hear that word and believe, sin disappears.

The Apostle Paul also testifies as follows about where faith comes from.

"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).

When we preach the gospel, we sometimes use illustrations. Illustrations serve only to help the listener understand. A person receives the remission of sins when the word Jesus spoke enters his heart and he believes that word. So rather than relying on the emotion of a story, we open the Bible and let people hear two words: the word of the baptism, that Jesus bore that person's sins through the baptism He received from John, and the word of the Cross, that He received the judgment on the Cross for him. When this word enters the heart, sin is completely removed, and the Lord becomes that person's Savior.

The one who hears the word also needs time. Just as the Samaritans heard the word at the Lord's side for two days, we too ask about what we wonder about, look again at the difficult parts, and hear the word. Yet knowing something and realizing it are different. When a person who knows the word explains its meaning, the Holy Spirit gives realization to the heart and mind of the listener. "Ah, so that is what that word meant." At that moment, that word at last becomes his own.

Today we meet Jesus through the written word. Through the word we know God, through the word we know that we are sinners, and through the word we know that Jesus bore our sins. There is no need to wait for a special experience that someone else had to happen to us as well. We need only confirm the Lord's salvation in the word God has recorded and believe.

The assurance of salvation based on the word of the Lord

Let us read verse 42.

"Then they said to the woman, 'Now we believe, not because of what you said, for we ourselves have heard Him and we know that this is indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world'" (John 4:42).

The Samaritans said to the woman, *"Now we believe, not because of what you said."* Through the woman's words, too, the people had believed. But now they had heard for themselves. They themselves now knew directly the very One of whom the woman had testified. The news of salvation they had first heard from another had now become the truth they themselves believed and confessed.

The labor of the one who preached the word to us is truly precious. Because that person explained it to the end, we know the gospel today. Let us give thanks for that grace. But we place the assurance of salvation not in the one who preached it but in the Lord of whom he testified. If we hold on only to who it was that told us we were saved, then whenever sin is revealed in our hearts, we try to get confirmation from that person again. When others acknowledge our faith we feel at ease, and when we hear even the slightest word of doubt, we are shaken.

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Then what must we know? The Samaritans said that they knew Jesus was indeed the Savior of the world. Do you know that Jesus is your Savior? To know that, you must know the baptism Jesus received from John. You must not believe while leaving out that baptism which John the Baptist gave. In that baptism He received from John the Baptist, we can see how the Lord became our Savior. John the Baptist, who baptized Jesus, testified of the Lord as follows.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).

What the Lord bore was not the sins of a few people or the sins up to a certain point in time, but the sin of the world. The sins we commit throughout our lives after being born into this world are also included in it.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Jesus had all the sin of the world passed on to His own body. Bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and received in our place the judgment we were to receive. And three days later He rose again from death and became our eternal Savior. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. This salvation is the salvation God fulfilled through Jesus Christ and made known through the word.

The basis of our faith lies in a place more certain than the words of men. The Bible has recorded so very exactly what God has done. We believe by seeing and holding on to that written word.

That is why the assurance of salvation stands on something firmer than the temperature of our hearts. There are days when our hearts are fervent and days when they are quiet. When our

bodies are tired, even our thoughts grow heavy. Even so, there is no change in the sin that was passed on to the Lord and in the judgment He received in our place on the Cross. Our faith holds on to that fact of what the Lord did.

The confession of the Samaritans is our confession today. Let us go one step further than merely following along because others believe. Let us confess that the Bible testifies how Jesus washed away our sins, and that we, too, hear that word for ourselves and believe. When we have this assurance, whoever may ask, we can let them hear the Lord's word instead of boasting of ourselves.

Our lives that testify of the Savior of the world

The confession of the Samaritans goes beyond the fence of their own town. They called Jesus *"indeed the Christ, the Savior of the world" (John 4:42)*. Jesus, who spoke to one woman at the well, was the Savior of the people of that town, and He was the Son of God who had come to save the whole world. The Lord's salvation is a grace given to everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, without regard to background or anything to boast of.

The Apostle John also testifies of this fact.

"And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent the Son as Savior of the world" (1 John 4:14).

The Son whom the Father sent is the Savior of the world. Jesus is the Savior of the world and the God of salvation. Therefore this word of salvation is needed by all the people of the world. Even now there are people who live a life of faith without having resolved their own sins, and there are people who, not knowing the Savior, live by their own strength. They, too,

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like us, can come to the Lord only when they hear someone's testimony.

Look at the path the Samaritans walked in today's text. First, they heard one person's testimony and believed. Next, they invited the Lord and heard His word directly. And on that word their faith stood firm. If someone hears our testimony and comes before the gospel, we lead him before the word and hear the word together with him, and we serve at his side so that he stands firm in faith among those who believe.

Because the salvation we have already received is so precious, we preach it. Let us not keep our mouths tightly shut. Let us open our mouths and testify of the remission of sins Jesus Christ has given us and of the salvation He has made known to us through the word. Let us preach the word calmly and clearly, so that the salvation Jesus has fulfilled is revealed rather than our own zeal or the size of our gathering.

What we are to preach is what Jesus did—when, where, and how—to save us. Think of a person reading a book that contains the gospel. In that book, the one who preached it stays hidden behind. Instead, what the Son of God did for us at the Jordan River, on the hill of Golgotha, and at the empty tomb is written there exactly. Through that word many people receive the remission of sins even today.

If another person has gone beyond our words and has come to know and believe the word for himself, that is something to rejoice over. On the day the Samaritans said to the woman, *"Now we believe, not because of what you said" (John 4:42)*, the woman's testimony bore its most beautiful fruit. The joy of a witness does not lie in binding people to himself. It lies in that person standing before the Lord in faith.

At the beginning of today's word there is the woman's testimony, and at the end there is the clear confession of the

Samaritans. In between stands Jesus, who stayed with them and spoke to them. Because the Lord spoke, those who believed became many, and they heard for themselves and came to know the Savior. Let us give thanks to the Lord, who let us hear the word of salvation, and let us also hold precious the labor of those who preached this grace to us.

Now we are those witnesses. Just as the words that began with one woman became the confession of a whole town, the word we open our mouths to preach also becomes, for someone, the way to meet the Lord personally. Jesus, who received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him, who bore those sins and received the judgment on the Cross, and who rose again—He is indeed the Savior of the world. We who have heard that word for ourselves and believed testify of that Savior today as well. ✉

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Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The faith that receives the Lord who saved us

< John 4:43–45 >

“Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country. So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast.”

After staying two days in Samaria, Jesus went to Galilee. The Samaritans heard the Lord’s word for themselves and confessed that Jesus is truly the Savior of the world. After that precious event, the Lord set out on the road again. On that road the Lord said that a prophet has no honor in his own country. And when He came to Galilee, the people there welcomed the Lord. Within these three short verses, His hometown, which did not honor the Lord, and the Galileans, who received the Lord, appear together.

We gain strength when people recognize us, and we are easily discouraged when those close to us turn away from us. It is the same when we preach the gospel. When someone we thought would listen well to what we say shows no interest, our hearts grow heavy. Jesus in today’s passage did not entrust His steps to people’s appraisal. The passage also shows what the Galileans who received the Lord had. Following this word, let us consider with what faith we should welcome the Lord and with what heart we should preach the gospel.

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The steps of the Lord, who did not dwell on people's appraisal

Let us read verses 43 and 44.

"Now after the two days He departed from there and went to Galilee. For Jesus Himself testified that a prophet has no honor in his own country."

After the Lord had stayed with the Samaritans for two days at their request, He left there and went to Galilee. He did not keep staying in the place where people who heard the word and believed had arisen. It was because in other places, too, there were people who needed to meet the Lord and hear the word.

On that road the Lord *"Himself testified"* that a prophet has no honor in his own country. The Gospel of Mark records the reaction people showed when the Lord taught in His hometown. Though they were astonished at the Lord's wisdom and power, they rejected Jesus, saying, *"Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary?" (Mark 6:3)*. They had known Him only as a fine young man who had grown up in the same village. But Jesus is God, who came clothed in a human body. The reason He could tell the Samaritan woman all that she had done is also that He knows us completely, because He is the One who made us.

There are times when the appearance we have long seen actually blocks the word. If we think we already know, we do not hear to the end what He is saying. To know Jesus rightly, first lay down your preconceptions and ask as follows: "Who is this One fundamentally? Is this One my Savior? Is He the One who will save me from all my sins?" If you hold those questions and listen earnestly to the Lord's word, you will realize that He is telling you everything about yourself, which no one else has ever been able to tell you.

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We who preach the gospel also find comfort before this word. We, too, know that this is so, as we preach the gospel to those around us. The closer people are to us, the more rarely they accept it. Even so, this age is the time when the gospel must be preached. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, all who are going to believe do believe.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lose its power because people do not honor us. Jesus, too, went the way He had to go, knowing that He would not be honored. The purpose of preaching the gospel lies in that person being saved from his sins and knowing Jesus. If we hold on to this purpose, we can lay down our hurt feelings and preach the word again.

We must know the Savior through the work the Lord did

Let us read verse 45.

"So when He came to Galilee, the Galileans received Him, having seen all the things He did in Jerusalem at the feast; for they also had gone to the feast."

The Galileans received Jesus. The passage also tells us the reason. It was because they, too, had gone up to Jerusalem at the feast and had seen all the things Jesus did.

Their going up to Jerusalem at the feast was in order to offer sacrifices to God. They were sacrifices in which sheep and oxen were slaughtered and offered. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, a person laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it, and as that offering shed its blood and died, he received atonement. And at that very feast, the One they saw in Jerusalem was Jesus. The true sacrificial offering to which all the sacrifices they had been offering

pointed was right before their eyes. What the Lord had done remained in their hearts, and when that Lord came to their land, they gladly welcomed Him.

Long ago God promised light to the land of Galilee. Concerning the Lord's working in Galilee, Matthew quotes Isaiah's prophecy as follows.

"'The land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, By the way of the sea, beyond the Jordan, Galilee of the Gentiles: The people who sat in darkness have seen a great light, And upon those who sat in the region and shadow of death Light has dawned'" (Matthew 4:15–16).

The people of His hometown, who thought they had seen the Lord up close for a long time, did not honor that light. Rather, it was the people who sat in darkness who saw a great light. Today is no different. It is not the person who knows this and that and judges for himself, but the person who, as long as he is taught accurately, accepts it, saying, "Yes, that is right," who welcomes the Lord.

Galilee is also the place from which many who became the Lord's disciples, like Peter and Andrew, came. They were men who went out in boats and cast nets. What those who received the Lord needed was not much knowledge but knowing the Lord rightly. We, too, cannot live a life of faith by the Spirit if we believe in Jesus only loosely. We must know and believe who Jesus is and what He did for us.

Then what does it mean to receive the Lord? The Galileans welcomed Jesus as their Teacher, as their Savior. They welcomed the Lord, asking Him to come to them and preach the word to them, and to stay with them and teach them. The Gospel of John showed these two paths from the beginning. Although the Lord *"came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11),* there were also people who received Him.

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"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).

The one who receives Him is the one who believes in His name. It is not stopping at being amazed at seeing what the Lord did, but welcoming the One who did that work as one's own Savior. It is easy to praise Him with one's mouth, saying that He is a good person. But the one who receives the Lord hears through the word what He did for him, and accepts that word as true. To the one who believes in this way, God gives the right to become children of God.

The complete salvation confirmed by the written word

The Galileans saw what the Lord did at the feast. We have the word that those who saw and heard the Lord at His side have handed down to us. The Apostle John said, *"Which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled" (1 John 1:1)*. Today we, too, see through the word the work of the Lord that they saw.

The Scriptures testify of the event in which Jesus came to the Jordan River to receive baptism from John. When John tried to stop Him, the Lord spoke as follows.

"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).

What does it mean to fulfill all righteousness? Removing our sins is precisely all righteousness. Just as at every sacrifice the sacrificial offering had a person's sins passed on to it and died in his place, so Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to

Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Bearing those sins, the Lord was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and so received in our place the judgment we were to receive. On the third day the Lord overcame death and rose again, and became our eternal Savior. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Lord, who knows us completely, has solved our problem of sin with this gospel and met us.

Hebrews says as follows that this salvation is a work already finished.

"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10).

The sacrifices the Galileans offered at every feast had to be offered again when the year changed. But the Lord offered His own body once and for all. So we cannot gather up how much devotion we have shown or how long we have lived a life of faith and make them the ground of our salvation. What has sanctified us is the body of the Lord, offered once and for all. Believing this fact and welcoming the Lord is the way we receive the Lord today.

A life that treasures the opportunity to preach the gospel

The Lord left Samaria and went to Galilee, and the Galileans welcomed Him. The news of the gospel did not stay in one village. And it has come even to us today. Before the Lord comes again, this gospel will be spread throughout the whole world. The Lord has called us to that work.

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The word apostle means ‘one who is sent.’ The Lord did not simply leave alone those who had been saved, met the Lord, believed His word, and lived fearing God. Saying, *“Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations” (Matthew 28:19)*, He sent them to every nation and every region. Just as the Lord moved His steps from Samaria to Galilee, today we, too, preach the gospel in the place to which we have been sent. The home, the workplace, and the neighborhood where we stand are that very place.

When we preach the gospel, we must first teach the person clearly that he has sin. It is because one can receive the remission of sins only when he knows that he has sin. Speak not only of the faults that appear on the outside but also of the sin in the heart. There are many people who, although they say they believe, are tormented by the sins they commit every day. Let them hear the word that the Lord already had all those sins passed on to Him at the Jordan River and was judged for them on the Cross. When they learn that word, people believe, and they are also set free from the burden of those sins and enjoy true freedom.

The people hardest to preach to are often our own family. One’s own family stubbornly refuses to believe. Even so, our family members are souls, and other people are souls too. Moreover, in the flesh we have received much kindness from our family. So let your family hear the gospel with the heart of doing the duty you ought to do. If you were refused once, watch for the right time and let them hear it again.

The Apostle Paul exhorts us on how we should use our time.

“See then that you walk circumspectly, not as fools but as wise, redeeming the time, because the days are evil. Therefore do not be unwise, but understand what the will of the Lord is” (Ephesians 5:15–17).

The word *"redeeming the time" (Ephesians 5:16)* means to buy up the opportunity. It means to preach the gospel when it is a good time to preach the gospel. This present age is exactly such a time. The one who looks ahead to the days to come and prepares today, and makes good use of the opportunity given, is a wise person with faith. Today there are people who will hear the word, and today there is work that we can take on.

We do not do this work in order to be saved. Because the Lord has already saved us from sin, we serve with thanksgiving. If it were work that could continue only when we receive people's applause, we would soon grow weary. But when we think of the Lord who saved us, we gain strength again.

In today's passage, the people of His hometown, who had seen the Lord for a long time, did not honor Him, while the Galileans, who saw what the Lord did and kept it in their hearts, received Him. We have heard through the word and believed the work the Lord fulfilled through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, the Cross, and the resurrection. Welcome that Lord every day as your Teacher and as your Savior. And like the Lord, who did not entrust His steps to people's appraisal, preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit at this time, when it is right to preach. ✉

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Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

Faith that believes the word of the Lord that gives life

< John 4:46–54 >

"So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death. Then Jesus said to him, 'Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.' The nobleman said to Him, 'Sir, come down before my child dies!' Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your son lives.' So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way. And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, 'Your son lives!' Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, 'Your son lives.' And he himself believed, and his whole household. This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee."

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There was a nobleman who had a son. That son was sick at Capernaum and was at the point of death. When the father heard the news that Jesus had come into Galilee, he went to Him. He hoped that Jesus would come down to his house and heal his son. But instead of going down with him, the Lord gave him one word: *"Go your way; your son lives" (John 4:50).*

The man believed that word and went back. He had not yet seen his son's face, nor had he heard the news that the fever had gone down. Even so, he believed because the Lord had spoken. The plot of the story is that a father asked for his son's sickness to be healed, and in the end the son was healed. But what this word wants to tell us is deeper than that. Today let us look together at the faith that believes the word of the Lord.

The father who came to the Lord for his dying son

Let us read verses 46 and 47.

"So Jesus came again to Cana of Galilee where He had made the water wine. And there was a certain nobleman whose son was sick at Capernaum. When he heard that Jesus had come out of Judea into Galilee, he went to Him and implored Him to come down and heal his son, for he was at the point of death."

The place Jesus came to again was Cana of Galilee. It was the place where, before, when the wine ran out at the wedding feast, He had the waterpots filled with water and made that water into good wine. That was the first sign the Lord performed. Today's passage records the second sign that took place in that Cana.

The nobleman was a man who held a high office. But before his dying son, he was simply a father who needed the Lord's help. When he heard the news that Jesus had returned to Galilee

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by way of Samaria, he came to Him and implored Him earnestly. With due courtesy he asked Him to *"come down and heal his son" (John 4:47)*. At the point where human strength could do nothing more, he placed his last hope in the Lord.

But in his request was contained the method he hoped for. He wanted the Lord to come down to his house, lay His hands on his son's head, and let him see the sickness healed right there before his eyes. We, too, have this kind of heart when we come to the Lord. We think that this thing must happen first, and that we can be at ease only when some change is visible before our eyes. It is the same before the problem of sin. It seems we will know that our sins are gone only when we feel or see something. But our thoughts do not determine the Lord's power. The Lord was far greater than the method that man had in mind.

Faith that believes the word of the Lord before seeing a sign

Let us read verses 48 through 50.

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Unless you people see signs and wonders, you will by no means believe.' The nobleman said to Him, 'Sir, come down before my child dies!' Jesus said to him, 'Go your way; your son lives.' So the man believed the word that Jesus spoke to him, and he went his way."

Before one nobleman, the Lord said *"you people."* This was a word spoken not with one person in view but with all the Jews in view. "You saw Me make water into wine, and so you have come to Me asking Me to heal the sickness, have you not? If I do not perform a miracle before your eyes but do it with a word alone, will you believe?" This is the meaning of the word the Lord spoke. The Lord knew all about this heart of people. It is

the heart that will believe only when something appears before its own eyes.

How about us today? Looking back, there have been many times when we believed after seeing a thing done. If we do not first believe the word, but believe, saying, "It has all been done," only after we have prayed and seen the thing come to pass, that cannot be called true faith. If we believe and follow because God has done something for us, our greed is contained in it. The heart that will follow only if circumstances change is a heart that believes the results before its eyes rather than the word.

Even after hearing such a rebuke, the nobleman did not back down. As if to say that it did not matter what word he heard, he earnestly asked again: *"Sir, come down before my child dies!"* It would be of no use once the child had died, so he was asking Him to come before then. Then the Lord spoke: *"Go your way; your son lives."*

This time the Lord did not go down, lay His hands on him, and pray, nor did He pray again two or three times and keep watch at his side all night. He finished it with one word. *"Your son lives."* That was all. With that word the sickness was already healed. Because He is God, who made all things by His word in the beginning, when the Lord speaks, it comes to pass exactly as He has spoken.

The man believed that one word alone, right there, and went. It is the same when we trust one another. When a man who has no money to pay right now says, "Please send me the goods. I will surely pay you at the end of the month," the one who trusts him sends the goods on his word alone. That is credit, and that is faith. If we believe even the words of men like this, what more is there to say about the word spoken by Jesus, who is God? When we say we believe in Jesus, we believe that Jesus is God,

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and we also believe the word He spoke. Believing what we have not seen with our eyes—that is faith.

That faith changed this father. The man who had been trying to bring the Lord to his own house now became a man who went back alone, holding the Lord's word in his heart. Outwardly he seemed empty-handed, but he had the word, *"Your son lives."*

The word that gives life has been recorded for us

That nobleman met Jesus in person and heard the word directly. Then how about us today? However wide we open our eyes, we cannot see the form of Jesus. Two thousand years ago Jesus came in a human body and spoke to His disciples and to this nobleman, but now the Lord has ascended into heaven. And what remains with us is the word the Lord spoke. Because this word recorded in the Bible is the word Jesus spoke, if we believe this word, it becomes the same faith as believing the word Jesus spoke when He appeared in person. What that nobleman believed and what we believe are exactly the same.

Let us read John 20:31.

"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."

God did not record this event in order to tell us an old story. He recorded it so that we might believe that the One who brought a dying child to life by His word is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing we might have life in His name.

Then what is the word that gives life to our souls? Just as the Lord said to the nobleman, *"Your son lives" (John 4:50)*, what does the Lord say to us about how He has removed our sins? When were our sins passed on to Jesus? They were passed on

when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. At that time the Lord had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body once and for all. And bearing those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and received in our place the judgment we were to receive. Three days later He rose again from death and saved us. This work is recorded concretely in the Bible.

Just as the nobleman held on to the word and believed, the one who holds on to this word and believes realizes that his sins, which had already been passed on to Jesus at the Jordan River, have been washed away from his heart as well. Just as the son's sickness disappeared according to the word the nobleman believed, the sins the Lord has removed disappear from the believer's heart as well. People ask how one can receive the remission of sins once and for all. But the moment we hear the word and realize, "Ah, so this is what this word means," the sins He has already washed away are washed away from our hearts just the same. And to those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift and gives the right to become children of God.

Hebrews testifies of the completeness of that salvation as follows.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

In the word that follows, the Holy Spirit testifies of this fact to us. "*Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17)*. After the Lord finished the work of saving mankind and ascended into heaven, the Holy Spirit testifies with this word in the hearts of those who believe: "I have remitted all your sins. I have accomplished eternal atonement."

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Then, when we receive the remission of sins, does Jesus appear in a dream or a vision and speak to us? It is not that our sins are washed away because someone who appeared in that way said, "I love you." The Lord speaks even today through the word of the Bible: "When I received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, I had all your sins passed on to Me. And I died on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved you." He comes to us through the word and speaks to us in this way.

The Apostle Peter also has us find the basis of being born again in the word.

"Having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever" (1 Peter 1:23).

What the Church of God asks is whether a person has been born again by believing the word. To be born again, we must believe the word that Jesus bore our sins. Do not put off the remission of sins until some special experience comes. When the word which lives and abides forever says that all our sins have been washed away, believing that word is the way to be born again.

The son who came to life at the very hour the Lord spoke

Let us read verses 51 through 53.

"And as he was now going down, his servants met him and told him, saying, 'Your son lives!' Then he inquired of them the hour when he got better. And they said to him, 'Yesterday at the seventh hour the fever left him.' So the father knew that it was at the same hour in which Jesus said to him, 'Your son lives.' And he himself believed, and his whole household."

As the nobleman was going down to his house, he met his servants. The servants reported that the child was living. The father asked the hour when he began to get better, and the servants answered that yesterday at the seventh hour the fever had left him. The child who had been burning with fever was healed at that very hour. The father knew that this was the very hour when Jesus had said, *"Your son lives" (John 4:50)*. The hour He spoke and the hour the child came to life matched exactly. The word spoken in Cana brought to life the child who was in Capernaum.

Here there is an order of faith. This father first believed the word and went back, and then he experienced that it had come to pass according to the word. If we first believe in our hearts, later we experience it in our lives. Trying to believe only after experiencing first is not true faith but unbelief. Holding on first to what is written in the word of God before it comes to pass—this is faith.

It is the same with the remission of sins. As we live believing the word, we come to experience it: "Ah, the Lord has removed this sin, too. He has removed this sin, too." Every time a sin we commit out of our shortcomings is exposed, we realize that the word that Jesus has already taken that sin away is true. But if we live without believing the word, sins keep piling up. There may be some of you who cannot believe it all at once. Even so, you can believe one verse. If there is sin in your heart, hold on to that one verse that says He has removed your sins. If you believe one verse, later you will experience it.

And it was not only the nobleman who believed. He himself and his whole household all believed in Jesus. They did not stop at the joy that the son had come to life; the whole household came to believe in Jesus, who had brought that son to life by His word.

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Let us read verse 54.

"This again is the second sign Jesus did when He had come out of Judea into Galilee."

In the first sign the Lord changed water into wine, and in the second sign He brought a dying child to life by His word. Both signs point to who it was that did these things. He is the Son of God, who is not bound by human circumstances and who, when He speaks, brings it to pass exactly as He has said.

Let us believe the word and follow the Lord today as well

Just as we believed the word when we received the remission of sins, we also live our lives after receiving the remission of sins believing the word. Concerning prayer as well, the Lord promised, *"Ask, and it will be given to you" (Matthew 7:7)*. Even when nothing appears before our eyes right away, we tell everything to God, who helps and keeps us, and live holding on to that word.

Then what should a person who has received the remission of sins seek first as he lives? The Lord spoke as follows.

"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33).

The goal of life for a person who has received the remission of sins lies in pursuing the righteousness of God first. The faith that says that if you attend church you will become rich and everything will go well is a faith for the flesh. Because we have received the remission of sins, we hope that other people, too, will receive the remission of sins as we have. We hope that they, too, will believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, gain peace of heart, and reach the kingdom of heaven. Setting our

hearts first on serving this gospel is the faith that lives by the Spirit. When we do the work of God first in this way, we come to experience God, who knows our needs, adding the rest to us.

A person who believes the word moves. When the Lord said, *"Go your way" (John 4:50)*, the nobleman immediately set out on his way. We, too, if we have learned the Lord's will from the word, take today's steps according to that will. Not because He has shown us signs and miracles, but because God has spoken in this way, we believe that it will come to pass according to this word and follow the Lord. The people of the world follow what is visible to their eyes, and the born-again follow the word.

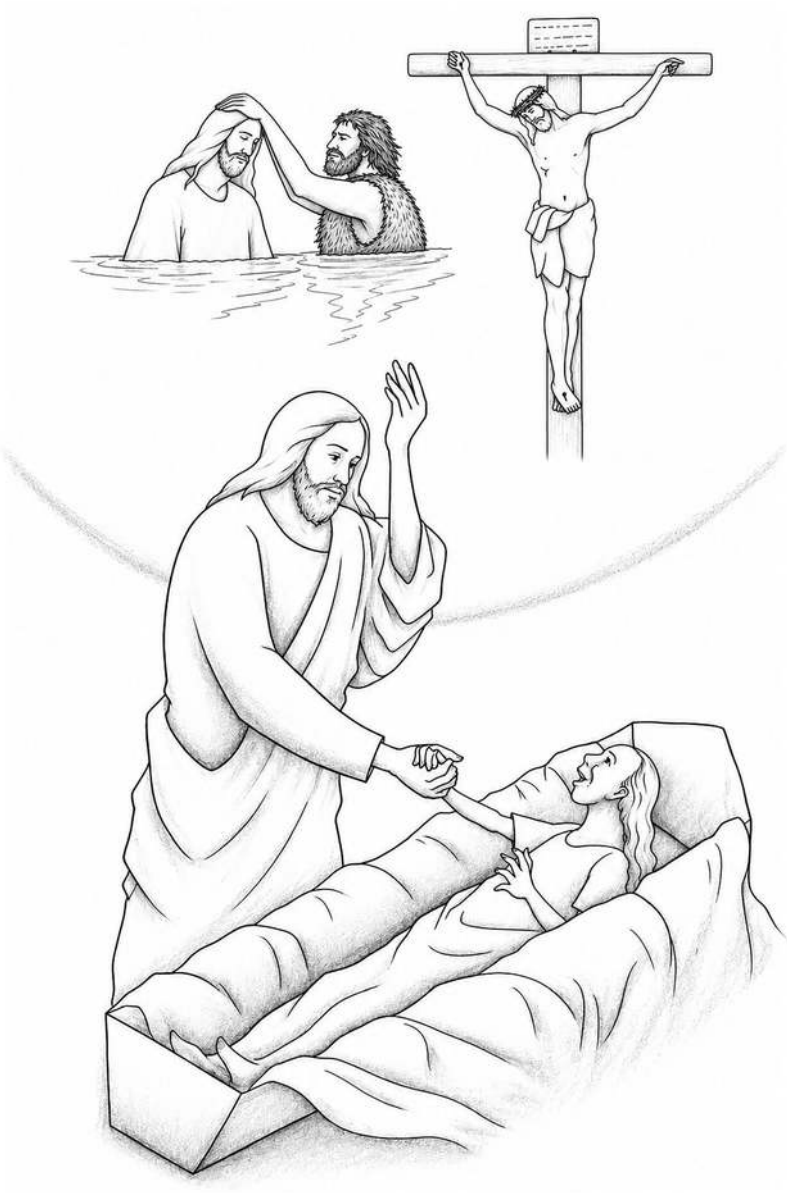
The nobleman came to ask Him to save his son, and he went back a man who believed the word. And he saw that his son had come to life exactly as He had said, and he believed in Jesus together with his whole household. We, too, have the word of the Lord: the word that He had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, the word that He bore those sins and received the judgment on the Cross, the word that He rose again from death, and the word that He will remember our sins and our lawless deeds no more. Whenever your heart wavers, return to this word. And like the nobleman, hold on to one word of the Lord and go back to where you stand today, and I hope you will live each day experiencing the Lord, who brings it to pass exactly as He has said. ✉

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CHAPTER

5

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You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who came to seek us, who were unable to rise on our own

< John 5:1–9 >

"After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had. Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.' Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath."

By the pool of Bethesda, many sick people were gathered. Hoping to be healed, they waited for the water to move. Among

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them was a man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. He said that even when the water moved, he had no one to put him into the pool. He had the desire to be healed, but by his own strength he could not take even a single step forward. It was to that very man that Jesus came.

The One we must look to in today's word is Jesus, who raised up that sick man. The sick man was not healed by moving faster than others or by getting into the water with someone's help. When Jesus spoke, the man was immediately made well. In this event is revealed the mercy of the Lord, who came to us who cannot save ourselves. Let us look together in this word at the gospel that the Lord has done what we could not do.

A man who was waiting but could not solve his problem on his own

Let us read verses 1 through 4.

"After this there was a feast of the Jews, and Jesus went up to Jerusalem. Now there is in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate a pool, which is called in Hebrew, Bethesda, having five porches. In these lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed, waiting for the moving of the water. For an angel went down at a certain time into the pool and stirred up the water; then whoever stepped in first, after the stirring of the water, was made well of whatever disease he had."

At a feast of the Jews, Jesus went up to Jerusalem. By the Sheep Gate there was a pool called Bethesda, and there were five porches there. Bethesda means 'the house of mercy.' In those porches lay the blind, the lame, and the paralyzed, waiting for the water to move. Yet in that place called the house of mercy,

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what the sick people looked to was not the mercy of God but the moving of the water.

There, a story was being passed around that an angel came down from time to time and moved the water, and that whoever got in first at that moment was healed of whatever disease he had. So the attention of the sick was entirely on the water. The blind man, though he could not see, could hear the sound of the water moving before anyone else; the lame man could get in even if he had to drag one leg; and the paralyzed man could get in even if he had to use up all the strength he had left. They were all people who thought, "I can do it." Within that method, in which only the one who got in first was healed, the fastest and the strongest won.

Let us read verses 5 through 7.

"Now a certain man was there who had an infirmity thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there, and knew that he already had been in that condition a long time, He said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?' The sick man answered Him, 'Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me.'"

This man had been sick for thirty-eight years. The Bible does not say in detail what his illness was, but it tells us that he was lying there and that he could not get in before others when the water moved. He must have been a man who had to be fed by someone and who needed another's hands even to turn over as he lay. He told Jesus his circumstances just as they were: he had no one to put him in, and while he was going, another went down before him.

The state of this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years is exactly our own state. Every person is a being who is born in sin, commits sin all his life, and dies. Just as that sick man could

not cure his own illness by himself, neither can we remove the sin in our hearts by ourselves. We think that if we try a little harder, if we pray more, if we are more faithful than others, our hearts will someday become clean. But the judgment of the sins we have already committed does not disappear because we repent and strive. The idea that only the one who meets the conditions is healed is the method of Bethesda, where people waited for the water to move, and the method of religion made by man.

When people judge themselves, they tend to think only of a few conspicuous actions. They consider themselves fine because they have not done any great wrong, and they find points in which they are better than others and feel reassured. But Jesus said that evil thoughts, covetousness, and pride come out of the heart of man and defile him. When we lay our hearts bare before God honestly and look at them, we discover that we, too, are the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, with nothing to offer.

Therefore, the first thing to do in the face of our problem of sin is not to become a better person by comparing ourselves with others. It is to admit our own sin and inability before God. The one who met Jesus by the pool of Bethesda and was healed was not the many sick people who thought they could do it, but the one man who confessed that he could not. The one who knows that he can escape from sin only if the Lord saves him knows how precious the salvation the Lord gives is.

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The Lord who knew our circumstances and came to seek us first

Jesus saw the man lying there and knew that he had already been sick a long time. It was not that the sick man went to the Lord first and explained his situation. The Lord came to where he was, saw him, knew, and spoke to him. Among the sick people who filled the five porches, the place where the Lord stopped His steps was, past those who said they could do it, the spot where a man who could do nothing lay. This is the grace we must see first in today's passage.

Why did Jesus not ask the blind or the lame whether they wanted to be made well? Had He asked them, they would probably have answered, "Yes, I want to be healed. But do not worry. If only the water moves, I can get in by my own strength." The heart of a person who says he can do it himself is already full of his own strength. The Lord's question is given to us today in exactly the same way. It is the question whether you really want to be made well, whether you truly want to receive the remission of sins. The one who knows his true state answers earnestly before this question that he absolutely needs the Lord.

The sick man answered from within his own thinking. He said that he had to get into the water but had no one to put him in. He was not yet able to confess that the One standing before him was the One who would heal him by His word. But in that answer was a heart that had completely laid itself down, knowing there was nothing more it could do by its own strength. He was a man who needed someone to put him in—that is, a Savior. Jesus did not wait for a complete confession; He knew the sick man's situation and spoke first. That man's salvation depended on the mercy of the Lord.

We, too, when we come to God, first weigh how prepared we are. We think that we ought to know at least this much, that we ought to correct that fault first, that we ought to have lived a life of faith for a long time. But Jesus is not One who came to reward those who have solved their sin by themselves. He came to this earth to save us, who had to be judged because of sin. The Lord Himself said, *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13).*

Because God loved us, He sent His Son in a human body. That Son came knowing all our sins and weaknesses. Therefore, do not draw back from the grace of the Lord because you have come to know your own shortcomings. Even when you are trapped in the thought that there is no one who understands you, look to the Lord, who knows you. The Lord fully supplies the satisfaction we could not get from people.

When the Lord spoke, he was immediately made well

Let us read verses 8 and 9.

"Jesus said to him, 'Rise, take up your bed and walk.' And immediately the man was made well, took up his bed, and walked. And that day was the Sabbath."

Jesus did not move the sick man to the water's edge or wait with him for the time when the water would move. He only spoke a single word, telling him to rise, take up his bed, and walk. Then the man who had been lying there for thirty-eight years was immediately made well, and he took up the bed he had been lying on and walked. He was healed even though he had not gotten into the pool. Outside the method he had been thinking of, the Lord Himself healed his illness.

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In this passage, two things appear that move. One is the water of the pool that the sick were waiting for, and the other is Jesus, who came to the sick man and spoke. The water of the pool never once healed him in thirty-eight years, but when the Lord moved, he immediately rose. First there was the grace of the Lord, and the one who received that grace rose and walked.

Our remission of sins, too, was accomplished not because we moved but because the Lord moved. It is not that we count one by one the sins we have repented of and are newly washed each time. Someone had to have our sins passed on to him and receive that judgment in our place, and Jesus has already accomplished that work. We receive the remission of sins by knowing and believing what He has done.

The Lord came in a human body, and when He turned thirty, He received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament received the laying on of hands and had the sin of the people passed on to it, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Not only the sins that showed outwardly but even the evil thoughts within the heart, even the sins we would commit from the time we are born until the day we die—He bore them all at that time. When John the Baptist tried to stop Him, the Lord spoke as follows.

"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).

The word *"thus"* refers to the most fitting way, the way without which it could not be done. John the Baptist testified of that Jesus as follows.

Let us read John chapter 1, verse 29.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

Jesus, who bore the sin of the world, shed His blood and died on the Cross. He received in our place the judgment of death, which is the wages of sin. And three days later He rose again from death and became our eternal Savior. The baptism He received from John and His death on the Cross are not two separate events; they are joined into one salvation, in which He had our sins passed on to Him and brought that judgment to an end. To those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, God gives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The sick at Bethesda waited vaguely for the water, not knowing when it would move. But we are people who have learned through the word what Jesus has done. Believing a story handed down among people and believing the salvation the Lord has actually accomplished are entirely different. That salvation is the ground of our faith.

The Apostle Paul testifies that God did what we could not do.

"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

Even when we tried to become righteous by keeping the law, we were weak and could not do so. But God sent His Son, condemned our sins in His flesh, and had Him receive the judgment. The Lord accomplished what we could not do. Jesus, who raised up the sick man by the pool of Bethesda, is our Savior today.

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A life that always holds on to the salvation given once and for all

The passage says that the man was immediately made well. He did not get better little by little, as if receiving physical therapy; he became a whole man at one time. The remission of sins is the same. It is not something completed little by little after striving for many years; it is the grace of receiving by faith the salvation Jesus accomplished once and for all. If one washes away original sin when he first believes and then washes away the sins he commits daily by repenting daily, that cannot be called being immediately made well. Because the salvation God has given is perfect, we can rest in that grace.

This is the word to which Hebrews testifies.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

It says that by one offering He has perfected them forever. The sins Jesus bore through the baptism He received from John include even the sins we will commit in the future. So the Lord's salvation is not shaken just because we newly discover our own shortcomings after receiving the remission of sins. That salvation the Lord accomplished once and for all is valid today and until the day our lives come to an end.

If we realize we have done wrong, we admit it honestly, and we set right the harm we have done to others. But that is not paying the price of sin. Since the Lord has already received the judgment of sin, we rely on that grace and go on living, following the Lord again.

Therefore, let us not live only on the memory of the day we first heard the gospel. Today, too, receive the word of that gospel into your heart, and hold on to the salvation the Lord has already accomplished with your faith today. When your shortcomings

are exposed, when you are ashamed and discouraged because of your own evil, look to the Lord, who told the sick man to rise and walk. He is the Lord who had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and said on the Cross, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. Let us live believing clearly each day in the grace the Lord has given, as we hear and share the word together.

In Romans is recorded the grace given to those who are in Christ Jesus.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2).

The Lord has set us free from the law of sin and death. The one who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished by having our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment on the Cross, and rising again from death is in Christ Jesus. In that person's heart dwells the Spirit of life. Do not make the anxiety of your own heart a greater verdict than this word God has given. Believe how the Lord has saved you, and give thanks for that grace.

Verse 9 adds that this happened on the Sabbath. The sick man was healed that day and took up his bed and walked. But afterward, rather than rejoicing that the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years had risen, people made an issue of his carrying his bed on the Sabbath. In the eyes of those bound by the framework of religion, the ordinances come before the man who was healed. Let us, too, not hold on only to the forms of faith and lose sight of the Lord who raised us up. The one who believes in the salvation the Lord has accomplished lays down

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the heavy labor of trying to produce the remission of sins by his own strength and comes before God.

The new life given to the one He raised up by grace

That the sick man took up his bed and walked was not a condition for receiving grace but the result of having received grace. In our lives as saved people, too, this order is clear. We do not buy the remission of sins by serving and being faithful; because the Lord has saved us, we serve the Lord with thanksgiving.

The Apostle Paul explains together the grace of salvation and the life that follows it. *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them" (Ephesians 2:8–10).*

Since salvation is the gift of God and not of works, the one who has been saved cannot boast of himself. At the same time, God created us for good works. Jesus not only healed the illness of the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years but also gave him the strength to rise and walk. For us, too, He not only removed our sins but also gave us the strength and the gifts to serve the Lord. We, who used to strive only to solve our own sins, can now serve in the work that pleases the Lord.

What we are to do with that strength is to make known the salvation the Lord has accomplished to those who are still lying down, weighed down by the burden of sin. Let us speak the word of the Savior to those who think they can go to God only after they have become good enough, and to those who are still clinging to their own efforts today as if waiting for the water to

move. Rather than boasting of our experience or our zeal, let us clearly preach the gospel that Jesus bore our sins in our place and received the judgment.

The sick man lying by the pool of Bethesda said that he had no one to help him. But Jesus came to him, and when the Lord spoke, he was immediately made well. We, too, were the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, unable to wash away our own sins. To such people as we were, the Lord came, and He had all sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment, rose again, and accomplished salvation. Here is the reason we give thanks today.

Lay down the thought of obtaining the remission of sins by your own strength, and believe in the salvation accomplished by the Lord, who came to seek us. Let us who have already received that grace hear the word of the gospel today, too, and rely on the mercy of the Lord. Just as the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years took up his bed and walked, let us praise the Lord, who raised us up, and walk the path He has entrusted to us. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus Christ, who is equal with God

< John 5:12–30 >

"Then they asked him, 'Who is the Man who said to you, "Take up your bed and walk"?' But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.' The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God. Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does

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not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation. I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me.'"

The blessed place called the Church of God

When I see people who leave the Church of God or do not come to the place of worship, my heart aches. The thought comes to me, "Ah, they have left the blessed place. Yet again they are leaving." If there are unavoidable circumstances, that would be all right, but if not, the thought comes to me, "They do not know how admirable and desirable a place this place, this church, is on this earth."

The church God established in this world is the church built with water and blood, the church Jesus Himself established. Jesus said to Peter, *"On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18)*. God establishes the church where there are gathered those who

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have faith in this salvation that the Lord gave us through the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection, that is, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And through that church He reveals and fulfills the will of God, blesses, and saves souls.

Of this church that Jesus established, He said that the power of death cannot prevail against it. This means that no power whatsoever can prevail against it. Yet if someone leaves the church even after receiving the remission of sins, that is the same as letting go, of his own accord, of the blessing given to him.

Moreover, if someone takes the word he learned here, goes into a gathering of people who are not born again, and tries to make use of it there and show himself off, that is a truly dangerous thing. He may be able to tell others about it, but in a place where there is no word, it is hard to keep the faith he has received.

The Lord said, *"They put new wine into new wineskins, and both are preserved" (Matthew 9:17)*. This means that those who have received the spiritual new wine of heaven, that is, the salvation God has given, must be in the Church of God. Those who have heard not the word God gave but the teachings of this earth and a false gospel are in their own churches, and those who have heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins must be separately within the Church of God. Only then are both preserved.

It is truly a pity to think of those who have heard the gospel yet cannot come into the church, and those who have dropped out of the place of worship without any special reason. We must pray well for them and guide them, but this is not something that can be done by our own ability. When we lay down all fleshly methods and ask the living Lord, God the Father, "Please take

hold of his heart and lead him into the church," praying and entrusting it to Him, those souls come into the church.

It is never the case that people come because we use some means or method. We can do our part as far as going to them, preaching the word to them, and guiding them. But the One who fundamentally takes hold of that person's heart is God the Father. It is the Father who takes hold of the hearts of His children and leads them into the church, the body of God.

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years by the pool of Bethesda

Now let us consider together the word of God we have read today. Long ago, in the great city of Jerusalem in the nation of Israel, there was a pool called Bethesda. Many sick people were gathered there, and the Bible says that there *"lay a great multitude of sick people, blind, lame, paralyzed" (John 5:3)*. Why would they have been gathered there? It was not because the pool was cool, or the water was clear, or there were many fish. There was a strange legend there that had come down from long ago.

The legend goes as follows. From time to time an angel comes down to the pool; the angel cannot be seen with the eyes, but the water of the pool suddenly begins to move. When the water moved like that, whoever was sick with whatever disease, only the one person who went in first would be healed.

Just as many countries have such legends, Israel also had such a story. That is why many people had gone to be by that pool.

Around that large pool there were *"five porches" (John 5:2)* where the sick could stay. It seems that people slept in those

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roofed colonnades, took shelter there when it rained, ate and lived there, and drew water from the pool to drink and wash with. Then Jesus went up to Jerusalem and stopped by that Bethesda, whose name means 'the house of mercy.'

When Jesus looked around the place, it was full of people with all kinds of diseases. As Jesus looked all around, His eyes stopped on one man. He was the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years. He could only lie there, so he could not even wash his own face or cook his own food. He was a man who ate when someone brought food and fed it to him, and who had to relieve himself lying down. It had been thirty-eight years since he fell ill. So we cannot tell whether he was fifty or sixty years old. Seeing that his body had grown and he had become an adult, he probably fell ill when he was in his teens or around twenty, and if so, he would have been close to fifty.

Jesus asked this sick man, *"Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6)*. The sick man answered, *"Sir, I have no man to put me into the pool when the water is stirred up; but while I am coming, another steps down before me" (John 5:7)*. He seemed to be pleading as follows: "Even if the water moves, I cannot go by myself, and I have no relative or family to put me in. I lie here with only my mouth still alive. I am a man who lives by his mouth alone, asking for just one spoonful when someone cooks a meal, and asking for a bit of side dish." Even among the sick, he was a very pitiful man.

Jesus came to this sick man, asked him, *"Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6)* and said, *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8)*. Then the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years rose up on the spot, slung over his shoulder the bed he had been lying on, and walked out. How amazing a miracle took place!

This is how the Bible records this event. There is so much that could be said about this event. But today, rather than expounding the gospel contained in this event, I intend to speak about who our Lord is.

What happened on the Sabbath

As it happened, the day on which Jesus healed this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, saying, *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8)*, was the Sabbath of the Jews. The Sabbath lasts from sunset on Friday until sunset on Saturday. Judaism kept it that way, and those who keep Saturday as the Sabbath today keep it that way too. But because the day on which this man who had been healed walked off carrying the bed he had been lying on was the Sabbath, this became a great religious problem.

On the Sabbath, the Jews even cooked all their food in advance and ate it after warming it up a little. If a person so much as stuck a single needle in the front of his garment and walked about five hundred steps, he was considered to have broken the Sabbath. It meant that the offense of carrying a load was established. That day was a day when everyone put down all work from their hands and feet, ate at ease, talked with one another, worshiped, and rested.

The sick by that pool were all Israelites too, so they were all resting. Then someone called Jesus came striding up, asked the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, *"Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6)* and said, *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8)*. Then that man, who was close to fifty, sprang up, carried his bed on his shoulder, and walked away.

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This became a very big problem. It was fine that he got up, and fine that he was healed, but how could he walk off carrying his bed? If He had instead said, "Rise and walk," and the man had walked off empty-handed, it would have been less of a problem. Even so, it would still have been a problem. On that day, which in today's terms was the Lord's day, one was supposed to lie still or sit and rest and not do any work, yet He had healed a sick man, so that alone was a problem to begin with. On top of that, a load had been carried as well. Even sticking in a single needle and walking more than five hundred steps violated the law, yet this man had gone off with that heavy bed on his shoulder, so the people were greatly agitated: "This is serious. Where in the world is there such a fellow as this?"

So the people asked, *"Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" (John 5:12). "The one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place" (John 5:13)*. The people were trying to find out who it was who had healed a man on the Sabbath and told him to take up his bed and walk. After that, *"Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.' The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath" (John 5:14–16)*.

Aren't people really funny? Today is the Lord's day. Even on the Lord's day we can work. We have to cook and eat, and when guests come, we have to buy something delicious and serve them. We can exercise, and if only we had the ability, we could even heal the sick. But under the law of the Jews, it was absolutely not so. What I am saying now is an introduction. I am

giving you the background in advance in order to speak about something else.

Some people, though they believe in Jesus, believe in a very old-fashioned way, and they say that since today is the holy Lord's day, one must not go to a store and buy things. Among conservative churches that pride themselves on believing well in a legalistic way, there are some that teach this. I do not mean to slander such people; the point is that there really are many such people even now.

The church attended by the husband of a fellow believer we know is also a church of a denomination that prides itself on believing in Jesus better than anyone in the world, and that church teaches that one must not go to a store and buy things on the Lord's day. Then what do they do when guests come? They say that because it is the Lord's day, they cannot even serve their guests. They cannot go to the butcher's shop, and they cannot go to the store. It is nonsense. When guests come, one must serve them.

When the Bible tells us to keep the Sabbath, it is a word telling us to keep in our hearts that salvation by which the Lord removed all our sins with water and blood, that is, with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. It is a word telling us to keep that faith, not a word telling us not to go about or not to go to a store and buy things. Sabbath means to rest at ease. It is telling us to keep this heart of salvation, by which the Lord has set our hearts at peace. What is black is letters, and what is white is paper. Whether you look at a novel, what is black is letters and what is white is paper, and whether you look at the Bible, what is black is letters and what is white is paper. The point is that reading the Bible and believing without knowing the meaning the Author of the Bible spoke is all law.

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The Bible says, *"The letter kills, but the Spirit gives life" (2 Corinthians 3:6)*. Believing only according to the letter kills people. Faith that knows and believes the meaning hidden within it is true faith. But what I want to speak about today is not this. If we look at the words that follow, some very extraordinary words appear.

"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working"

As we read this word, several questions arise. Jesus calls God Father, and Jesus in turn is called Lord and is called Jesus, and because of these titles there is a part that is confusing to our hearts. Through this word today I intend to clear up that part. When the Jews persecuted Jesus, *"Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:17–18)*.

Jesus broke the Sabbath. And He said, *"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17)*. So the Jews would have asked, "Who is your father?" and Jesus said that God was His Father. The Jews were dumbfounded and jumped up in outrage. Breaking the Sabbath was already outrageous enough, but when they asked why He had healed a man on the Sabbath, He said, "My Father is working, so I, the Son, am working too," and when they asked who His father was, He said, "It is God." If today someone asked a young man, "Who is your father?" and he answered, "My father is God," wouldn't anyone say, "That man has lost his mind"? For the people of that time, there were so many outrageous things every time they

looked at Jesus. Seeing Jesus call God His own Father, the Jews jumped up in outrage.

But who is Jesus really? He is God the Father's own Son. We must know exactly who Jesus is. Jesus has a Father, and that Father is the one and only God. And Jesus is His Son, the Son of God the Father. Because we believe this, we call God Father, and we say that Jesus is the only Son of God, the Son of God.

The Son also does what the Father does

The Lord went on to say as follows. *"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner'" (John 5:19)*. This means that Jesus sees all the works the Father does on this earth. It means that He sees everything about what works the Father does and how He does them. Therefore, it means that Jesus, the Son, does the works the Father intends to do.

And He said as follows. *"The Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel" (John 5:20)*. God showed Jesus everything. He showed Him everything about the work of saving people, which people He saves and how. Jesus, the Son of God, heard and knew all the will and the words that the Father spoke and intended to do, and He saved people as the Father's representative. That is how He acted.

Let us read the word that follows. *"As the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will" (John 5:21)*. This means that if the Father raises the dead, the Son also raises the dead. It means that the Son does exactly the same works the Father does. When we know what

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works Jesus, in whom we believe, does, what authority He has, and who He is, we do not ramble when we pray, and our faith also becomes very firm. If God the Father raises the dead, Jesus, the Son of God, also raises the dead. It means that if God judges the world, His Son also judges the world.

He also said as follows. *"The Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son" (John 5:22)*. This means that God the Father sent His own Son to this earth and had Him do, through the Son, all the works the Father intends to do, exactly as the Father does them. Our Father God entrusted everything to His own Son. The authority to judge, the work of raising the dead, the work of saving, the work of passing judgment, the work of giving life to people and judging the wicked—to whom did He entrust all of these? He entrusted them to Jesus.

Let us also read the word that follows. *"That all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him" (John 5:23)*. This means that the Father gave all authority to His Son so that, just as the Father receives honor from all created beings, the Son also receives honor in the same way.

And He said as follows. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24)*. He said that the one who hears and believes this word the Lord spoke, and who believes in the One who sent the Lord, has eternal life. God the Father sent Jesus. The one who believes all the words of salvation Jesus spoke to us when He came to this earth, who believes that Jesus became the Savior, and who believes that the One who sent Jesus is God the Father, has eternal life, does not receive judgment, and has passed from death into life.

The one who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with water and blood is a person who has been saved. And the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, the only Son whom God the Father sent, and that this Jesus has saved us, is a person who has obtained everlasting life. He has obtained eternal life, does not receive judgment, and has passed from death into life. So we must look carefully at this word. It is not a word saying that anyone who merely believes in God obtains everlasting life. It means that the one who hears and believes the word the Lord spoke obtains everlasting life. The Lord came to this earth and spoke many words. He spoke the gospel, saying, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life" (John 6:54)*. It means that the one who believes in this Jesus, and believes in God who sent Jesus, has obtained everlasting life.

"Those who hear will live"

The Lord went on to say, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live" (John 5:25)*. The Lord said that the time when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God is right now. The time when the Lord was on this earth was about two thousand years ago from now. Today the world counts its years from the time Jesus Christ came. When Jesus said at that time, in that place, *"The hour is coming, and now is" (John 5:25)*, it refers to the very time when the Lord was speaking. It means that when the dead hear the voice of the Son, they will live.

Those who hear come to believe, and through faith they live. In fact, all the people on this earth, having been born into this world, have not died in the flesh, but spiritually they are all dead

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people. Everyone who has sin in his heart is a dead person. The Bible calls such people spirits in prison. In 1 Peter there is the word, *"By whom also He went and preached to the spirits in prison" (1 Peter 3:19)*. Even if the body is free, if there is sin in the heart, one is shut up in prison. Aren't sinners shut up in prison? Also, a person who has sin is a dead person.

That is why, when they hear the voice of the Son, they live through faith. We heard and believed the voice of the Son, that is, the word of life of Jesus Christ, and so we have come to life. So we have been saved. We have been saved through Jesus.

The Lord went on to say, *"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John 5:26–27)*. Jesus, the Son of God, came as our Savior. The name Jesus means Savior. Jesus is by nature God and the Christ. He is the King of kings, the One who created the universe and all things in it, the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven who saved sinners from sin, and the Prophet. Because He holds all three of these offices, He is called the Christ. In a word, Jesus is the Savior who came to save mankind from sin. It means that just as God the Father has life in Himself, also gives life, and also has the authority to judge, He has granted that Jesus, the Son of God, likewise has life in Himself.

And the Father entrusted to the Son the work of judging the world, all the authority of judgment to judge those who do not believe. In the Book of Revelation there appears the judgment of the great white throne, and the One seated on that white throne is Jesus Christ. In Revelation chapter 5 there appears a book sealed with seven seals, in which all the plans of God are written. When that book is opened, He judges according to that book and gives everlasting life to those to whom He is to give everlasting life, and in heaven they sing a new song to Jesus the Lamb, who

has taken that book: *"You are worthy to take the scroll, And to open its seals; For You were slain" (Revelation 5:9)*. In Revelation chapter 20 as well, the One who sits on the great white throne and judges is Jesus Christ. Why did He give the Son the authority to judge? This word explains it. *"And has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John 5:27).*

What is meant by His being the Son of Man? It means that God, who created the universe and all things in it, put on human flesh and came to this earth. During His life of thirty-three years, He received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, bore that sin and shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved all the people of this world from sin. It means that on account of that merit, the Father entrusted to the Son not only the work of giving life but also the work of passing judgment and judging. Therefore, we must know that Jesus also has the authority to judge.

Let us read the word that follows. *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28–29)*. This word speaks of what will happen when this world ends. We do not know when the Lord will come, but when the Lord comes, the time comes when all who are in the graves will hear the voice of Jesus Christ. Now we hear the word of God through evangelists. But in the last days, many people will be in the graves, in the ground. At that time, it means, Jesus will come Himself and, just as He spoke to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, He will open the graves and tell them all to come out. It means that they will hear the voice of the Son once again. At that time,

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those who have done good, that is, those who believed the word of God, believed in the Son, believed in the Father, and believed in that salvation, will come out to the resurrection of life, and those who did not believe will come out to the resurrection of condemnation.

Jesus, the Lord of life and of judgment

He said that those who have done evil will come out to the resurrection of condemnation. What, then, are evil deeds and good deeds here? They are believing and not believing. We are all evil by nature. But Jesus, the Savior, came and saved us with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The one who accepts this into his heart is a good person, and the one who, even though Jesus saved him with His baptism and the blood of the Cross, does not believe it but rejects it becomes an evil person before God. Because it is rejecting that love, it is truly evil. It is billions of times more evil than cheating others out of their money or killing people in this world. For it is rejecting the true love of God. Conversely, to be good is to accept the true love of God with thanksgiving.

What I want to say is that Jesus has saved us. This Jesus delivered us from sin. Because Jesus came to this earth and saved us, we have been saved. Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, died on the Cross, rose again from death, ascended into heaven, and is alive even now. Because this Jesus gave us life, we have been saved. Therefore, we must know well who Jesus is. Who is Jesus? He is God's own Son.

Also, God the Father gave His Son Jesus the authority and the power to give life to people, and He also gave Him the

authority to judge. So, through faith in that salvation by which Jesus saved us with water and blood, we have obtained the eternal life Jesus gives. And through faith in this Jesus, we have been saved from judgment. We have been saved from sin. Jesus does all the works the Father does. Jesus is God's own Son, and just as Jesus' Father is God to us, Jesus is likewise God to us.

We have been saved only through faith in this Jesus, and we must believe that Jesus is God. What about the Jews? Jesus said to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8)*. To put it simply, He raised the dead.

The Lord said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)*. The Lord received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, bore that sin of the world and went and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. In this way He saved all those who suffer because of sin, those who would go to hell and receive judgment because of sin. We believe that Jesus is God's own Son, our Savior, and the God of salvation. Jesus is also God to us.

This is how we must know and believe in Jesus. We often tend to underestimate Jesus. There are times when we think that the Father is mighty, but what power could the Son have, and what could the Son do? But all the authority the Father has, that is, the power to give life to people and make them live and to make the universe and all things in it, the Son also has. The Son also exercises that power. And just as the Father has the authority to judge all who go against God, the Son Jesus—our Savior, the God of salvation—also has the authority to judge those who do not accept the love of Jesus, who go against that truth, and who oppose good with evil. Therefore, Jesus is the God of salvation to us, and the Father's own Son.

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He has salvation, life, and the authority of judgment, all of them. To believe in Jesus is to believe in the Father, and to believe in the Father is to believe in Jesus, whom the Father sent. The two are one and the same. We must believe in Jesus as our own Savior. We must know without fail that we have been saved by believing in Jesus. Even if we do not know God the Father well because He is not visible to our eyes, we must believe without fail that we have been saved by believing in Jesus. We must not take Jesus lightly. We must not regard the name Jesus like the name of the person next door. The name Jesus means Savior, and the One who came as that Savior is God's own Son, the true God to us, the Lord of life and the Lord of judgment. The one who believes His word obtains life, and the one who defies His word receives judgment.

He is the God of life and salvation, who saved us from sin, and He is our shepherd. Jesus is God to us who believe. He is also the Son of God. Just as Jesus' Father is God to us, Jesus is the same God to us. By believing in that God, we have obtained everlasting life, obtained life, and escaped judgment. This is how we must believe. Has Jesus saved you?

Jesus has saved you. It is not that the Father came Himself and saved you. The Father sent His own Son Jesus and saved us. So we have been saved through Jesus, by believing in Jesus.

Therefore, being saved by believing in Jesus is exactly the same as being saved by believing in God the Father. So this salvation is unshakable. As I said at the beginning, when we see those who have left the Church of God even after receiving the remission of sins, it is truly a pity, and we must pray for them. This place is such a blessed place. In closing, I will sum up. Some people think that Jesus is a created being, that is, one of the angels. Others think that Jesus is one of the great prophets, like Ezekiel or Daniel. But Jesus is not a created being. He is

God. He is the Son of God and the God who gave us life, the Lord of life.

Jesus is also the Judge who will judge in the future. Such is the Jesus in whom we believe. That is why the Bible says, *"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*. The name Jesus means Savior, and Jesus, who came as that Savior, is God. He is the Son of God and God to us, the Lord of life and the Lord of judgment. We must hold this faith firmly. And when we believe the word of Jesus, who testifies of it? The Holy Spirit, the Spirit who is holy, testifies of it. When we hear and believe the word of the Son, the Holy Spirit affirms that this faith is right, dwells in the heart of the one who believes, and causes him to obtain everlasting life. The Holy Spirit becomes the guarantee.

This is how we have been saved. Jesus saved us with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection, and this Jesus is God, equal with the Father. I hope that you will know this and live your lives, firmly settling in your hearts this steadfast faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Son of God, who gives true rest

< John 5:10–18 >

"The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.' He answered them, 'He who made me well said to me, "Take up your bed and walk."' Then they asked him, 'Who is the Man who said to you, "Take up your bed and walk"?' But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place. Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.' The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well. For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

The man who had lain sick for thirty-eight years was made well. When Jesus told him to rise, take up his bed, and walk, he was made well at once and walked. A man who had spent all those long years only lying down came to walk—how amazing a grace this is! The people around him ought to have clapped

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their hands and rejoiced with him, asked who had healed him, and given thanks to Him. Yet among those who saw him, there were some who took issue not with the fact that he had been made well, but with the fact that he was carrying his bed. For that day was the Sabbath.

Today's passage shows us both the Lord, who healed the sick man, and the people who could not accept that work. They spoke of the Sabbath, but they failed to recognize the Son of God, who raised up a man on the Sabbath. In the face of their persecution, Jesus said that His Father had been working until now, and that He, too, was working. Let us look together at this word to see who gives us true rest and who Jesus is, who saved us.

Those who took issue with the bed he carried rather than with the grace of his healing

Let us read verses 10 through 13.

"The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed.' He answered them, 'He who made me well said to me, "Take up your bed and walk."' Then they asked him, 'Who is the Man who said to you, "Take up your bed and walk"?' But the one who was healed did not know who it was, for Jesus had withdrawn, a multitude being in that place."

For the Jews, the Sabbath lasted from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. On that day they even cooked their meals in advance and ate them warmed up, and if a person walked only a few hundred steps with a single needle stuck in the front of his garment, it was regarded as carrying a load. So a man walking along the road with the bed he had been lying on slung over his shoulder was, in their eyes, a man who had broken the Sabbath.

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They said to the man who had been cured that it was the Sabbath and that it was not right for him to carry his bed.

Look at this conversation. The man who had been cured answered that *"He who made me well" (John 5:11)* had told him to take up his bed and walk. But they asked, *"Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" (John 5:12)*. Concerning the same event, one side spoke of the One who had healed him, while the other side looked for the man who had made him break the ordinance. Does this mean that even though he had been made well, he should have kept lying there just as he was because it was the Sabbath? That was not a law God had established, but a law men had set up according to their own will.

At this time, the man who had been cured did not yet know who it was that had healed him. For there was a multitude there, and Jesus had already withdrawn from that place. The grace he had received was clear, but he did not yet know the One who had bestowed that grace. Let us, too, not stop at merely remembering the help we have received from the Lord, but go on to know clearly, through the word, who Jesus is, who saved us.

What was God's purpose in giving the Sabbath? Genesis records that God finished the work He had been doing, rested on the seventh day, and blessed that day. Rest means that body and mind rest at ease. The true rest God intends to give man is the rest of a heart that has been freed from the burden of sin. To keep the Sabbath is not to keep a date, but to keep in our hearts the salvation by which Jesus removed all our sins. So if one sees the Lord's work of raising up the sick man and yet cannot rejoice, he has spoken of the Sabbath while missing the One who gives rest.

We cannot read this scene merely as something that happened to the people of that time and pass it by. Even today there is a faith that claims to believe in Jesus yet still regards sin

as remaining in the heart, and clings to ordinances and devotion in order to wash away that sin. If sin remains in the heart even while one believes in Jesus, that is no different from the faith of old Judaism, which clung to the letter and to ordinances. Although the Bible testifies that Jesus washed away all sin, such people say, "How can a person receive the remission of sins once and for all?" and think that they will be accepted only after paying off the debt of sin for the rest of their lives.

The man who had been cured walked according to the word of the One who had healed him. We who have believed in the salvation the Lord fulfilled also make the word of the Lord, who saved us, the ground of our faith, whatever others may say. When the Lord has told us to rise and walk, we cannot lie down again in that place, pressed down by what people say.

The Lord, who spoke again to the man who had been healed

Let us read verses 14 and 15.

"Afterward Jesus found him in the temple, and said to him, 'See, you have been made well. Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you.' The man departed and told the Jews that it was Jesus who had made him well."

Jesus met the man again in the temple. Saying, *"See, you have been made well" (John 5:14)*, He confirmed that he had been made well, and told him to sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon him. The Lord cared even about the life he would live after he came to walk.

This word resembles the word He spoke to the woman who had been caught in adultery and brought to Him. To that woman the Lord said, *"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more"*

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(John 8:11). Both of them heard this word after first receiving grace. Then did the Lord say this because He saw that the man could now live without committing a single sin? No, He did not. We, too, sometimes stumble in our weakness after being saved, and the Lord knows that better than anyone.

Then what is the sin the Lord warned against? It is the sin of abandoning the grace one has received and going back to one's former place. It is going back to the old faith, saying that one will receive the remission of sins again after having received it once and for all; it is knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet abandoning it to follow the ways of the world. The greatest of all sins is the sin of not believing in but rejecting the salvation the Lord fulfilled. If one knows grace and yet turns away, the heart becomes harder than before, and it becomes more difficult to return. This is the "worse thing" the Lord spoke of.

This word also tells us where one who has received grace should walk. It tells us to follow the Lord with the faith that believes in Him. If, saying that we are saved and that is enough, we let go of the Lord and live as our flesh desires, we are glad only for a moment when we first meet the Lord, and our lives gradually fall apart. The Lord's grace is not a reason to take sin lightly, but a reason to live looking carefully into what pleases God.

Even so, do not be discouraged because of your weakness. The wrongs that are exposed after we are saved are not a new debt that must be paid again; they are sin that had already been passed on to the Lord, for which He was judged on the Cross. So when a wrong is exposed, we admit it, saying, "Yes, I did wrong. But I believe that the Lord bore this sin as well," and follow the Lord again. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of one who has received the remission of sins. Even when we stumble in

weakness, the Holy Spirit makes us uncomfortable in the unclean place and turns us back to the Lord.

Hebrews says clearly what kind of sacrifice the Lord's sacrifice is.

"For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14).

Jesus Himself became the sacrificial offering, removed all our sins, and made us holy and perfect forever. If a person who has been perfected by that one offering piles up devotion and ordinances once again in order to wash away sin, he is, like those who tried to rest by keeping a date, setting aside the One who gave rest and trying to rest by his own strength. The freedom we have received is not the freedom to enjoy sin, but the freedom to serve the Lord, released from the fear that we must pay off the debt of sin by ourselves.

After the man who had been cured learned that it was Jesus who had healed him, he made that fact known to the Jews. Let us, too, put Jesus at the center when we speak of the grace of salvation. It is to testify not of what efforts we have made, but of how the Lord has saved us.

The Father works, so the Son also works

Let us read verses 16 and 17.

"For this reason the Jews persecuted Jesus, and sought to kill Him, because He had done these things on the Sabbath. But Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.'"

They persecuted the Lord on the grounds that Jesus did these things on the Sabbath. Before them the Lord said that His Father had been working until now, and that He, too, was working.

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Even on the Sabbath, the Father does not cease from the good work of healing the sick, meeting those who are pitiable, and removing sin. The healing of the sick man was a work the Son did according to the Father's will.

Here we see an amazing fact. The Jews tried to keep the Sabbath by not working. But the Father and the Son worked in order to give man rest. When man fell into sin and was headed for destruction, the work of sending the Son to raise up sinners and make them His own people was a work that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit had deliberated on and determined before the creation of the world. Raising up the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was also within that will. Through the Son, the Father revealed that He Himself is the God of love and the holy and righteous God.

That work the Son did is none other than our salvation. The Son of God came to this earth in a human body. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had all the sins of the world passed on to Him, and bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the judgment we should have received. Then three days later He rose again from death and became our Savior, who is alive even now. Because the One who had our sins passed on to Him also received that judgment on the Cross, our salvation is perfect. The Holy Spirit comes into the heart of one who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and guarantees that salvation.

It is not that God loved us little by little in proportion to how hard we tried. God loved us first and sent the Son, and the Son fulfilled salvation. What we must do is to know this Savior and believe His word.

The work of salvation, in which He removed sin and received the judgment, has already been fully accomplished. Because the

Lord's work is complete, our hearts, which had struggled to deal with the burden of sin by ourselves, finally rest. This is the true rest the Lord gives.

Jesus, who saved us, is God

Let us read verse 18.

"Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God."

The conflict did not stop at the issue of the Sabbath. For Jesus said that the God whom the Jews served was His own Father. Just as the child of a man is a man, He who calls God His own Father is God. That word was Jesus revealing Himself as equal with God, and so they sought all the more to kill Him.

But the reason they were able to kill the Lord did not lie in their power. Not a single sin could be found in Jesus, and One who is without sin has no reason to be put to death. Yet the Lord had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and because He bore that sin, He could die on the Cross. When the time came, the Lord gave Himself up of His own accord to those who came to arrest Him. It was in order to receive that judgment in our place.

Let us read John chapter 1, verses 1 through 3.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

The Word was with God, and He was God. All things were made through Him. That Word became flesh and dwelt among us. Jesus, who came to us, is not an outstanding being among

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created beings, but the One who made all things. If one regards Jesus as a created being while believing in Him as the Savior, that is a grave error.

Therefore, the confession that Jesus saved me is the confession that God Himself saved me. God came in a human body for me, received baptism from John the Baptist for me, was nailed to the Cross for me, and rose again from death for me. When we know that Jesus is God, equal with the Father, we realize how great and amazing this salvation is. Because being saved by believing in Jesus is the same as being saved by believing in the Father, no one can shake this salvation. It is not a salvation whose worth changes according to our feelings or other people's opinions.

In the passage that follows, the Lord says that not honoring the Son is not honoring the Father. The Father revealed Himself through the Son, and through the Son He saved us. So one cannot claim to exalt the Father while lowering the Son. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God. We have become children who call God Father by believing in Jesus, but the authority of Jesus that today's passage makes clear lies in the fact that He is God by nature. The One we rely on is the Son of God, who gives life and fulfills salvation.

Let us enjoy by faith the rest the Lord has given

In today's passage, the man who had been cured took up his bed and walked. Those who rebuked him saw the bed he carried, but we see the Lord, who made him well. Jesus, who met that man again and spoke to him; Jesus, who made clear that He works together with the Father; Jesus, who has power and is equal with God—this Jesus has saved us.

If we know this Lord clearly, we do not abandon the grace we have received even in the face of people's opposition. Jesus is not only a good One who took pity on us but God, equal with the Father, and He removed all our sins and brought the judgment to an end. So let us guard our hearts against teachings that deny the salvation He has fulfilled.

Even when shortcomings are exposed in our hearts, let us not hide our sin but admit it, and look to the Lord, who bore even that sin. Let us hear and believe the word of the gospel together, and serve God with the freedom and thanksgiving the Lord has given. Let us keep in our hearts the love the Father bestowed through the Son, and honor Jesus Christ, who is our God and Savior.

Since the Lord has raised you up, do not lie down again in the old place where you used to count up the debt of sin. Hold firmly in your hearts the faith that believes in the Son of God, who worked to give us rest, and remain in the true rest He has given. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Son of God, who gives life and judges

< John 5:19–29 >

“Then Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.’”

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The Son who accomplishes the salvation of the Father

The man who had been sick for thirty-eight years rose up and walked at the word of Jesus. But not all who saw that work gave glory to God. They persecuted Jesus, saying that He had healed a sick man on the Sabbath, and when the Lord said that He also worked because the Father was working, they sought all the more to kill Him, saying that He called God His own Father and made Himself equal with God. Even in the face of such attacks, the Lord did not retreat in the slightest.

Today's passage is the word in which Jesus revealed who He is before those adversaries. He did not merely explain where the power to heal the sick came from; He taught who it is that gives us life and who it is that will judge us at the last. Eternal life and judgment depend on how we know and believe in Jesus.

Let us read verses 19 through 21.

"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will.'"

The word that the Son can do nothing of Himself unless He sees the Father doing it does not mean that Jesus lacks power. It means that the Father and the Son are of one heart and in full communion with each other. The Son does not decide on His own and do anything different from the Father's will; He does the very thing the Father wants. So, just as the Father gives life to the dead, the Son also gives life to those whom He wills.

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The Jews saw only the outward appearance of Jesus, who had come in a human body. But Jesus is originally God, who made the universe by His word, and He has been with the Father from before the foundation of the world. Therefore Jesus knows the Father's will and fulfills that will completely. Even in His going to that one man among the many sick people by the pool of Bethesda, we see the Father's heart toward those who suffer and the Son who works according to that heart.

Then what was the work that the Father, loving the Son, showed Him in full? It was the work of having the sin of this world passed on to the Son in order to give life to those who were dead in sin. The Father had first sent John the Baptist as the one who would represent mankind, and the Son went to that John and received baptism from him. When John tried to stop Him, Jesus said as follows.

"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).

In this way, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and washed away our sins. His being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood was to pay the price of our sins in our place, and His rising again three days later was to deliver us from death, judgment, and destruction and make us live again. The Son fulfilled with His own body the salvation the Father had willed.

Therefore Jesus is not One who merely demands that the dead try to live; He is the Savior who gives life to the dead. When we, who cannot remove our sins by ourselves, believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts, all our sins are removed, and the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts and makes us children of God.

The faith that honors the Son just as it honors the Father

Let us read verses 22 and 23.

"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him."

The Father has committed all judgment to the Son, and He has also made clear His purpose in doing so. It is so that all people should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. To reject the Son is to reject the Father who sent the Son.

What does it mean to honor the Son? It is not only to exalt and call on the name of the Lord, but to know and believe what the Son actually did. People say they believe in God, yet they pay no attention to how God saved them. They call on the name of Jesus, yet they leave out the fact that the Lord had sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John; they speak of the Cross, yet they do not know why the sinless Lord had to shed His blood and die there. But only when we know the One who bore our sins and paid their price can we honor Him as God.

To honor Him is to esteem Him highly, to value Him, and to serve Him. Jesus humbled Himself for us, but His honor and power are not in the least inferior to the Father's. Therefore, those who honor the Son give thanks for what He has done, believe and follow His word, and, respecting that word, preach it to others. To know who it is that saved us and to accept what He has done just as it is—this is the faith that honors the Son.

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Those who have heard the word of the Son and passed from death into life

Let us read verses 24 and 25.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live."

Jesus said that he who hears His word and believes in the Father who sent Him has everlasting life. He did not speak of some possibility in the distant future; He declared that such a person has already passed from death into life. Then how is it that the one who believes does not come into judgment? It is because the Father's heart, which was set on judging when He saw the sins of men, was resolved by His passing our sins on to the Son and judging that Son. Since the Son received judgment in our place, we who believe in that Son have no reason to be judged again.

Even before we received the remission of sins, we ate, drank, and worked. Outwardly we were alive, but because there was sin in our hearts, we were cut off from God. Just as a tree cut off from its roots still bears green leaves for a while, the fact that the body moves does not mean that there is life before God. A soul dead in sin needs the life that the Son of God gives.

Jesus says that the time when the dead hear the voice of the Son is right now. What is the voice of the Son? It is the gospel of the truth that the Son of God had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and received that judgment on the Cross. That voice was heard when the Lord was on this earth, and today it is

heard through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Church of God preaches. A person dead in sin comes to life not by making his own heart clean by himself, but by hearing and believing this word. To come to life from death is to receive the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit comes into the heart of the one who has received the remission of sins, makes him a child of God, and lets him enjoy everlasting life.

That is why hearing the gospel is important. Those who try to produce the assurance of salvation within their own thoughts are always shaken. But the salvation the Lord has fulfilled does not change according to our feelings. Jesus bore not only the sins from before we believed, but also all the sins we would commit while living our whole lives in our weak flesh.

As Jesus washed His disciples' feet, He said, *"He who is bathed needs only to wash his feet" (John 13:10)*. The sins that a person commits out of weakness as he lives on, after his whole body has been made clean by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, were already settled perfectly by the Lord when He received baptism from John and was nailed to the Cross. So when your wrongs are exposed, do not hide them, but tell them to the Lord just as they are. On the basis of the merit of the Lord, who bore even those sins, our hearts become clean again, and we gain the strength to follow the Lord again.

Our Savior has the authority to execute judgment

Let us read verses 26 and 27.

"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man."

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Just as the Father has life, so the Son also has life in Himself. The Son not only gives life but also has the authority to execute judgment. As for the reason He received that authority, Jesus says it is *"because He is the Son of Man" (John 5:27)*. God came to this earth as the Son of Man, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and bore the sin of mankind, was nailed to the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death and saved us. Because He accomplished all that labor, the Father gave the Son the authority to execute judgment.

It is truly important to know in whose hands our end lies. The One who will judge us is the very Jesus who saved us. He who had our sins passed on to Him knows the salvation we have received, and He who received our judgment in our place on the Cross knows how perfect that salvation is. Could the Lord Himself nullify the salvation that He came as a man and accomplished once and for all? Since the Savior is the Judge, there is no way He will judge us wrongly.

To us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this is a great comfort. We go boldly before Him, relying on the righteousness the Lord has fulfilled.

At the same time, we must not take lightly the Lord who judges. The Lord gave us new life and sent us into this world to preach this gospel of life to souls that are still dead. It is the Lord's will that others, too, hear and believe the grace we have received and come to life. Therefore, let us examine what our hearts are like toward this work the Lord is doing.

The Lord does not make an issue of sins committed out of weakness. For He has already removed even those sins. A person who is pained when his shortcomings are exposed and relies on the Lord's righteousness comes to the Lord. But it is a different matter to claim to have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet not serve the gospel, and to go down the road

of deliberately living only for one's own flesh while pretending to serve the Lord. The sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit is not remitted. Not believing in the work by which Jesus came to this earth and saved us from sin through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit, and believing in that salvation and yet not preaching the gospel is also the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit. The Lord deals with such a person by the same law as with one who does not believe, and so that person receives the judgment of hell.

We must not take this warning lightly, as if it were merely an exhortation to live diligently. The Lord who gave us life wants to give life to other souls as well; if we cling only to the words that we have been saved and abandon that work, that is the road of opposing the Lord.

This does not mean, however, that our labor adds anything to the atonement Jesus has accomplished. The One who bore sin and paid its price is the Lord alone, and we have been saved by that grace. Rather, the Lord looks at how the one who has received that salvation treats the life the Lord has given him and for whom he lives. Where are we spending our time, our bodies, and our hearts? Are we not gladly spending our strength for our own pleasure and circumstances while closing our hearts to the work of the gospel? Let us believe in the grace that has fully saved us in our shortcomings, and let us serve the work of preaching life together with the Church.

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A life of walking with the Lord while waiting for the resurrection of life

Let us read verses 28 and 29.

"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation."

In verse 25 He spoke of souls that hear the voice of the Son now and come to life, and now He speaks of the time when all who are in the graves will hear that voice. The soul that was dead in sin obtaining life by believing the word, and the people in the graves rising in the future, are proclaimed together. Jesus said not to marvel at this. It means that we should not think it strange in the least, either that the Lord is the Judge or that He gives new life to those who believe. The Lord who gives us everlasting life now will also make our bodies live again in the future. The Lord's rising again from death shows that we, too, will live again.

A person's life does not end with death. Before the voice of the Lord, even the grave cannot hold a person. But not everyone comes forth to the same place. Though the resurrection is the same, one group comes forth to the resurrection of life and lives with the Lord forever, and the other group comes forth to the resurrection of condemnation and goes into the fire that is never quenched. Once the Lord saves, He saves forever, and once He judges, He judges forever.

Then who are those who have done good, and who are those who have done evil? Measured before God, there is nothing good in man that he can put forward in the least. Therefore, what divides good from evil here is not human merit but faith. The one who has received into his heart the word that Jesus saved us through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the

Cross is the good one, and the one who has rejected that saving love is the evil one. There is no sin in the heart of the one who has believed in the Lord's righteousness, while sin remains in the heart of the one who has not believed. The one with no sin in his heart comes forth to the resurrection of life, and the one in whom sin remains comes forth to the resurrection of condemnation.

And that faith is revealed through one's life. Jesus spoke of those who have *"done"* good. They are not people who merely resolved to do good, but people who, after receiving the remission of sins, have lived for the gospel and for souls, uniting with the Church and fellowshipping with the Lord despite their shortcomings. The Lord comes to take those who lived that way and went into the grave. As in the warning we heard earlier, the road of living only for oneself while claiming to believe is not the road of those who have done good.

Therefore, let us not make what we enjoy on this earth our only hope. Let us live out the days the Lord has granted together with the gospel. Let us hear the word of God, serve the Lord together with the brothers and sisters who have received the same grace, and preach the gospel to those who have not yet heard the word of life. Ask the Lord for what you need. With what the Lord supplies, we can serve together.

The Lord who saved us is our Judge and the Lord of life. For us who believe in Him and walk with Him, the resurrection of life is waiting. Let us not erase the warning with the fact that we have received grace, nor forget, in the face of the warning, the salvation the Lord has completed. Waiting for that voice that on that day will call us who are in the graves, we give thanks and glory to God, who will make us live again and let us enjoy eternal life. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The resurrection of Jesus is for the completion of our salvation

< John 5:19–29 >

"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner. For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel. For as the Father raises the dead and gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will. For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life. Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live. For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man. Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come

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forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.'"

John Chapter 5, read on Easter Sunday

Today we have read the word of John chapter 5. Since today is Easter Sunday, you may wonder why we have read this word instead of speaking about the resurrection. Our Lord rose again from death, ascended into heaven, and is coming again. As we consider together the word we have read today, I intend to look at the meaning of the resurrection as well. In John chapter 5, among the sick people lying by the pool of Bethesda, the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was healed.

When the Lord said, *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8)*, he immediately took up his bed, rose, and walked.

That day was the Sabbath. *"The Jews therefore said to him who was cured, 'It is the Sabbath; it is not lawful for you to carry your bed'" (John 5:10)*. This is how they rebuked the man who had been cured. And they asked him, *"Who is the Man who said to you, 'Take up your bed and walk'?" (John 5:12)*, but that man did not know who it was that had healed him. Afterward Jesus appeared to him and revealed Himself, saying, *"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (John 5:14)*, and the Jews came to know that the One who had healed that sick man was Jesus. So the Jews persecuted Jesus, saying that He had done such things on the Sabbath. I am giving you this word first because, in order to understand the word that comes next, you need to know the story that comes before it.

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The Son, who is equal with the Father

At that time, *"Jesus answered them, 'My Father has been working until now, and I have been working.' Therefore the Jews sought all the more to kill Him, because He not only broke the Sabbath, but also said that God was His Father, making Himself equal with God" (John 5:17–18).* This means that Jesus said that He Himself is equal with God the Father. The whole passage we have read today speaks about Jesus, who is equal with God the Father. It means that although He is not higher in position than the Father, He is the very same God, and that the Father gave the Son the very same authority that He Himself has.

So Jesus said that since the Father works even on the Sabbath, He, the Son, also works. Even on the Sabbath the Father does good works, healing the sick and meeting pitiable people to remove their sins. Therefore, when Jesus said that He also works, the Jews persecuted Jesus, saying, "Where is there anyone as arrogant as this?" But Jesus did not yield in the slightest, and He spoke as follows. *"Then Jesus answered and said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, but what He sees the Father do; for whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner'" (John 5:19).*

It means that because the Father works, He, the Son, also works. Today, Easter Sunday, is a day set apart once a year to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, bore those sins and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. Then He went up to the kingdom of heaven, and when the time comes, He will come again to take us. Now in this passage, Jesus keeps saying that He is equal with the Father. He says, *"Whatever He does, the Son also does in like manner" (John 5:19),* and He says, *"As the Father raises the dead and*

gives life to them, even so the Son gives life to whom He will" (John 5:21). "For the Father loves the Son, and shows Him all things that He Himself does; and He will show Him greater works than these, that you may marvel" (John 5:20). This means that because God the Father loves the Son, He wants the Son to receive the very same honor and glory from all people and all created beings as He Himself receives. So it means that He gave the Son power and made the Son also do the work of raising the dead.

We tend to think of Jesus as One far lower than God the Father. But Jesus is equal with the Father. Today, as I speak about this, I intend to share the meaning of Easter Sunday as well. Jesus has the very same power and authority that God the Father has. This is because God the Father gave the Son such authority and power. When the Jews picked a quarrel with Him over His healing a sick man on the Sabbath, the Lord said, *"My Father has been working until now, and I have been working" (John 5:17),* and this word meant, "Just as the Father raises the dead, I also give life to whom I will. I am equal with the Father. I am your God and your Savior." Jesus did not say this with words only; He is our Savior who actually has such authority and power and does such works. On this Easter Sunday today, we must ruminate on this word once again and think of our risen Lord.

The authority committed to the Son

Let us read the word that follows. *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father. He who does not honor the Son does not honor the Father who sent Him" (John 5:22–23).* This means that God the Father does not carry out all

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the judgment Himself but has committed it to the Son. Then does this mean that something has happened to God the Father? With God there is no such thing as death. That is why Jesus also said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6)*. God is the One who exists of Himself and exists forever, and He is good and perfect. God the Father sent His Son to this earth and had Him do the work of salvation, which saves all mankind from sin and makes them children of God. He did this in order to save the people who resemble the image of God and make them His children, so that they too could call the Father of Jesus Christ their own Father. And it was to make Jesus our true Savior.

This means that all these things are what God the Father did in order to show them to the angels who opposed God and challenged the authority of God. By making the people who resemble the image of God His children through His Son, God showed what kind of God He is, and how righteous and merciful He is. He showed that a person becomes a child of God through the special grace and love of God, and that there is no one who can challenge God or seize that authority by power. That is why He said, *"For the Father judges no one, but has committed all judgment to the Son, that all should honor the Son just as they honor the Father" (John 5:22–23).*

This is a delegation. For example, there are times when the chairman, the president, or an executive of a company goes on a business trip abroad. At such times he chooses someone to whom he can entrust his duties and delegates everything to that person for a while. God did this just as such a man delegates and leaves, saying, "While I am away, I entrust these duties to this person, so all of you listen to him and get his approval just as you would get mine."

This word says that God the Father delegated to His Son. The work of raising the dead is also something God the Father does,

but it means that Jesus Christ also gives life to anyone, whoever it may be, if He decides, "I must give this person life." It means that He received such authority and power. The work of judging, too, is not something only God the Father does. It means that Jesus Christ received by delegation from God the Father the authority to save people, the authority to judge, and the authority to choose or not to choose whom He will. Therefore, in John chapter 5, many sick people besides this man were lying by the pool of Bethesda, but Jesus came there and asked the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, *"Do you want to be made well?" (John 5:6).*

That man answered that he wanted to be made well, but that when the water was stirred, others went in before him. Then Jesus said, *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8)*. This means that Jesus has the authority to give this man life. Jesus did not go to the other people, because they thought they had at least a little strength and could do something, and they relied on their own strength. It means that He went to the man who had given up, thinking he could do nothing himself, and became his Savior. That man wanted to be made well, and he wanted to rise and walk. When He said, *"Rise, take up your bed and walk" (John 5:8),* he wanted to rise.

The work the risen Lord does

The Lord gave that man power, straightened his stiffened joints, and gave him the strength to rise, and so He made him rise. This word says that in this way He raised the dead. What kind of Lord is our Lord, who rose again from death? If the Lord's merely rising again from death had nothing to do with us, what meaning would it have? Jesus rose again from death in

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order to give life to those whom He wills and to judge those whom He will judge. He also rose in order to wash away all the sins of those who believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, to clothe them with the love and blessing of God and make them children of God, and to make them live forever with God and with the Lord. The Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He completed the work of saving all mankind from all sins. The Lord, who was nailed to the Cross, went into the tomb, and rose again, now shows mercy and grace to those who believe and ask the Lord for help, and He saves them. But it means that He judges those who do not believe, like the Jews.

The Lord's resurrection has tremendous meaning. The Lord was born on this earth as the Son of Man, as a son of man, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. Through all these things the Lord has done, He now saves those who believe, and He surely judges those who are to be judged. The Lord, having received all authority by delegation from God the Father, rose again in order to do the works that the Father does. It means that He rose again from death in order to save us today as well, to make those whom He wills children of God, and to judge those who are like the angels who rebelled against the will of God.

Jesus Christ is equal with God the Father. He falls short of God the Father in nothing. There is only the difference in status of being the Father and the Son. In the Gospel of John the Lord says, *"If you ask anything in My name, I will do it" (John 14:14)*. This means that the Lord is our Savior, our Judge, the One who gives us life, and our God. It means that He is God, who has the very same power as God the Father. In this way the Lord shows us that He is equal with the Father.

Jesus Christ came to this earth and showed, through all the things He did for us, that He is equal with God the Father. That is why Jesus said, *"He who has seen Me has seen the Father; so how can you say, 'Show us the Father'?" (John 14:9)*. This means that He is equal with the Father. Why did the Jews accuse Jesus and hand Him over to the Roman soldiers in order to nail Him to the Cross and kill Him? It was because Jesus said that He is equal with the Father, that He is God. Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I AM" (John 8:58)*. In the eyes of the Jews this was an outrageous word. "How old are you, that you say you existed before Abraham, a man who lived thousands of years ago?" But Jesus was saying that He is God. Jesus is God, the Savior, the One who gives us life, the One who created the universe and all things in it, and the One who both judges and gives salvation to those who believe. He is saying that He is equal with the Father.

Therefore, on this Easter Sunday, we must know this. Jesus Christ rose again in order to show that He is God, who now gives life to those whom He wills, gives salvation to those who rely on God and do not refuse the righteousness, love, mercy, and grace of God, and judges those who refuse them. We must know that the Lord has worked in order to do this.

The Lord spoke as follows. *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who hears My word and believes in Him who sent Me has everlasting life, and shall not come into judgment, but has passed from death into life" (John 5:24)*. If we hear the word of the Lord and believe, that is salvation. God the Father sent the Lord, and if we believe in the One who sent Him and believe in Jesus Christ, that is salvation. That Jesus Christ saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He also sent us to this earth as preachers of the gospel.

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Whoever believes in the One who sent the Lord has received eternal life, does not receive judgment, and has passed from death into life. The Bible says, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. God the Father sent His Son, and that Son received baptism from John and had the sins of all the people of this world transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. It means that He has made those who believe this not perish but receive eternal life. And God the Father and Jesus Christ remitted our sins and met us, and They sent us to people to preach the gospel as preachers of the gospel. It is of those who receive us and believe the word we preach that He said that they have *"passed from death into life" (John 5:24)*.

The Lord is the Creator who created us; He is the Savior who, when we had fallen into sin, fully accomplished the righteousness and love of God and saved us from sin; and He is the Judge who judges the wicked. He is telling us that He is such a One, that He is equal with God the Father. Therefore we must know Him so and believe in Him so. Both when the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was healed, and when He met the woman caught in the act of adultery and remitted all her sins, Jesus told them to sin no more.

Among sins, the sin of refusing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the greatest sin. And when the Lord said to this man who had been sick for thirty-eight years, to the woman caught in adultery, and to us today, *"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (John 5:14)*, He was saying that what the Lord hates most is for those who have received the remission of sins to follow the customs of the people of the world, become one with them, and live like them.

In fact, what the Lord hates most is serving idols, and in the same way He hates most that people follow the world. He hates most for a person who has received the remission of sins to follow the people of the world and their customs and live serving idols together with them. That is what He was saying. Then who is the One who becomes the Judge and judges? It is Jesus Christ. Then who is Jesus Christ? He is God and the Judge. Revelation chapter 5 says that the One who takes the scroll that is in the hand of God the Father, who sits on the throne, and opens its seals is Jesus Christ. And it records Him as the One who had been slain.

Jesus Christ came to this earth and was born as the Son of Man, as a son of man; He received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. It means that not only did He save us in this way, but He also gives everlasting life to those who believe in the righteousness, love, and salvation of Jesus Christ, who saved us by the water and the Spirit, and brings eternal judgment upon those who do not believe. It means that He is such a God.

There are many people who think of Jesus as if He were one of the four great sages of the world. They place Him alongside men like Socrates, Buddha, and Confucius. But Jesus Christ is the King of kings, who created the universe, saved us from sin, and will give us everlasting life. And He is the Judge who will judge forever those who refuse this love of God and do not believe. We must know this fact. Jesus is equal with the Father. We have received the remission of sins by believing in this Jesus Christ.

The Lord said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, the hour is coming, and now is, when the dead will hear the voice of the Son of God; and those who hear will live" (John 5:25)*. What does

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this word mean? He spoke it in the present tense. Even now, those who hear will live. We must know how to hear the word of God. We must know how to preach the word, and we must also know how to hear it. Will the One who judges the people of the world be God, or a created being? Will the One who judges be the highest, or the lowest? The One who judges is the highest of all.

Jesus, who has become the Judge

Let us read the word that follows. *"For as the Father has life in Himself, so He has granted the Son to have life in Himself, and has given Him authority to execute judgment also, because He is the Son of Man" (John 5:26–27).* This means that the Son does the very same works that the Father does. It means that He is able to do them. So the Father granted the Son also to have life in Himself, made those who believe in the Son receive life, and gave Him authority to execute judgment because He is the Son of Man. That the Lord became the Son of Man means that God was born on this earth as a son of man and came as the Savior. He said that because of this work—that as the Savior He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us—He received the authority to execute judgment.

Jesus Christ came to this earth and was born in a human body, and at the age of thirty He received baptism from John the Baptist and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. Then, bearing the sin of the world, He went and was hung on the Cross, was nailed to it, shed all His blood even to the blood of His heart, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and died, and three days after

He died, He rose again. If the Lord had not done those things, He would have had no authority to judge.

But when mankind had fallen into sin, the Lord Himself came to this earth, received baptism from John in His own body, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He completed the work of delivering us from all sins. Therefore, it means that the Lord now has the authority to judge those who do not believe. It means that He received that authority from God the Father. So by whom will those who do not believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ be judged in the end? They will be judged by Jesus Christ. It means that they will receive the judgment of the great white throne. Jesus Christ, when He came the first time, was born on this earth in a lowly human body in order to save lowly mankind and became our Savior, but it means that the Lord who will come again comes as a majestic and mighty Judge. That is why, in the Book of Revelation, people cry out in utter terror. It says that they *"said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb!'" (Revelation 6:16)*. Jesus Christ is the Savior and the Judge. Therefore we must believe in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ gives us new life. Jesus Christ remits our sins and makes us children of God.

The Lord went on to say, *"Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:28–29)*. He said that all who are in the graves will also hear the voice of the Lord, and that at that last judgment, those who have done good will rise again to life, and those who have done evil will rise again to judgment. All people rise again. If it were all over at death even for those who did not

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believe and did evil on this earth, that would be better, but they too will surely rise again. It means that He raises them again so that those who have done good may have life, and those who have done evil may receive judgment. Jesus Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death three days after He died. On the Cross the Lord said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and died, and three days later He rose again. Then He went up to the kingdom of heaven, and He said that He would come again.

Faith that looks far ahead

The meteorologists of the world say this. They warn that if things go on like this, great climatic anomalies will strike this region where we live as well. You have probably heard what the meteorologists say on the news. Every year the air currents change, so that some places grow hotter and others cooler, and there are even forecasts that huge waves will sweep over coastal villages. People let it pass, thinking, "Someday it will happen, I suppose," but the meteorologists speak after launching satellites and calculating how the air currents flow. There are many people who believe what they say. I, too, believe the word of God, but I also believe what they say.

According to the meteorologists, the temperature of the sea is rising every year, and they say that the temperature of the sea in the region where we live is rising much faster than the world average. So various changes are taking place, such as fish moving to other places. They say that if the temperature of the sea rises just a few more degrees from here, a great deal of water will evaporate and great climatic anomalies such as torrential

rains will occur, making it difficult for life to survive. Everything will come to an end. The meteorologists warn that the Asian region in particular will suffer great damage from climatic anomalies such as heat waves and torrential rains. Yet people are truly foolish. They think it is enough if today is all right, if tomorrow is all right, and if the ten or twenty years of their own lifetime are all right, and they do not think further ahead. But we do think.

Before long, an age is coming when people will not be able to live on this earth. Whether you believe it or not, this will actually come to pass. I am not saying this to frighten people. The Lord rose again. That He rose again means that He died and came back to life. Then He went up to heaven, and He is coming to this earth again. He will raise the dead who are in the graves, and He will take the living with Him. He will raise us in the first resurrection and make us reign for a thousand years in the new heaven and the new earth. And at the second judgment, He will raise those who are to be judged and cast them into the fire that is never quenched. This will surely come to pass.

We, too, will rise again

Those who believe in the righteousness of Jesus have no sin in their hearts, and those who do not believe in Jesus have sin in their hearts. If the Lord does not come soon, we too will die someday, whether from sickness, from a natural disaster, or while at work. But when the Lord comes, we will rise again just as Jesus rose again. And where the Lord goes, we will go too. It will surely be so. I believe that when the Lord comes again to this earth, I will rise again with the Lord, and that the Lord will raise me and make me live with Him in that kingdom. It would

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be good if all the beauty we now see with our eyes were preserved, but even if all of it is destroyed, I believe that the Lord will make a new heaven and a new earth for those who, like me, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is, the people of God and His children, the people to whom He has given life—and make them live there.

To me this is not a religion. In my heart there really is such faith. So I live in hope. There is a waiting in my heart. That the Lord rose again tells us that we too will die and rise again. It tells us that every person is born once, dies once, and rises again. If it all ended with death, it would be nothing. If the Lord had come to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then entered death and simply ended there, it would have been nothing. But the Lord rose. And all people will rise again. *"Those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29)*. This means that those who accept and believe the love of God rise again to enjoy everlasting life, and those who do not do so rise again to receive judgment forever.

On this Easter Sunday we sang hymns of the resurrection. The Lord asks us, "Do you believe that you will rise again?" Then He asks, "Is there no sin in your heart?" It means that we will rise again, to be sure, but if there is sin in our hearts, we will rise to the resurrection of condemnation. That Jesus rose tells us that we will rise again. The Bible says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*. Jesus Christ died on the Cross and entered death and then rose again in order to give us new life. Only, while new life is indeed received, some receive a new life in which they live enjoying the blessing and glory of everlasting life, and others rise again to receive judgment forever. That the Lord rose means

that we too will rise. We will rise again. Christians will all rise again.

We have hope. All the things the Lord did when He came to this earth were done for us. What did I say the Lord hates? He hates that people follow the world. To the woman caught in the act of adultery the Lord said, *"Neither do I condemn you; go and sin no more" (John 8:11)*. And to the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years He also said, *"Sin no more, lest a worse thing come upon you" (John 5:14)*. Why did He say so? It means that if, after meeting the Lord and knowing and accepting the remission of sins, a person goes back to Judaism or goes back to the world and follows the world, his heart becomes more evil and he becomes a worse person, so that he cannot come back. The Lord is equal with God the Father. That is why we pray to the Lord and praise Him. Because the Lord is God and is equal with God the Father, we praise Him, pray to Him, and preach Him. We say that He is the Savior, the Lord of life, and the Judge. Because He is equal with God the Father, we believe not only in God the Father but also that Jesus Christ is our God. We believe that the Holy Spirit, too, is our God. I believe this as well.

As I grow older, I too feel the weakness of the flesh. If the gospel were not yet fully spread, I would have to live longer and preach it, but once the gospel has been spread, I want to go quickly before the Lord. Once the gospel has been spread, what remains after that? A period of seven years remains. The Antichrist will appear and become the one who binds the whole world into one and rules it. He will hold everything in his grasp, giving out food and medicine only with his permission, and controlling everything. Such a one will come. During those seven years natural disasters will occur, fire and hail will fall from heaven, the trees will burn, and a third of the people will die. These things will happen during the seven years.

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That is why the Bible says, *"Blessed are the dead who die in the Lord from now on" (Revelation 14:13)*. When that period ends, there is nothing else after it. Toward the end of that period the Lord will come again and give new life, and the Millennial Kingdom will be established. This is real. From now on the world on this earth will change very rapidly, and there will be many people who cannot adapt to that change. Those who are well off will be far too well off, and those who are badly off will be far too badly off. The age in which one could live well by effort alone is passing away. On top of that, if natural disasters occur even just twice as often as now, it will be hard to live. If an age comes when the mountains collapse and the rock is laid bare, when stones and trees are all swept down so that the mountains are stripped bare without a single tree, when roads and valleys are blocked, and when there is no way for human strength to put things right—would life be worth living? Such a time is coming soon.

Therefore, I hope that we Christians, on this Easter Sunday, will believe in Jesus well, preach the gospel well, and not set our hope on this earth. However much we pile up with our hope set on this earth, it will not remain. On this Easter Sunday, I hope you will know that we will live again. We must also know the fact that the Lord is the Lord of our life, our Savior, and our Judge. Let us live awake and praying with this faith. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Eternal life gained by coming to the Savior of whom the Scriptures testify

< John 5:30–47 >

"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true. You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me. And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe. You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life. I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and

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you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God? Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

Jesus, who saves according to the Father's will

People can read the Scriptures and say that they know God, and yet fail to accept the very Savior whom God sent. Those who opposed Jesus in today's passage were like this. They searched the Scriptures and set their hope on Moses. But when He of whom the Scriptures testify stood before them, they did not receive Him. The Lord revealed not so much what they knew as whom their hearts were turned toward and what they were seeking.

This word is given also to us who open the Scriptures today. The reason God gave us the Scriptures is so that in them we may meet Jesus, who saved us, and come to Him and receive life. If we stop at reading the word to pile up knowledge and to show ourselves off, we do not enjoy the blessing of that word.

Let us read verses 30 through 32.

"I can of Myself do nothing. As I hear, I judge; and My judgment is righteous, because I do not seek My own will but the will of the Father who sent Me. If I bear witness of Myself, My witness is not true. There is another who bears witness of Me, and I know that the witness which He witnesses of Me is true."

Jesus worked by putting the Father's will before His own. He did the work the Father sent Him to do, and He judged as He heard from the Father. Therefore the work the Son does is the very work the Father does, and His judgment is righteous. He is not One who overlooks a person's sin because that person praises Him, or who judges out of personal feelings because someone opposes Him.

If the Lord judged as He heard, then for us too, the standard that divides right from wrong is the word of God. People's thoughts differ from one another, and the world's appraisal changes easily. Even when we want to know whether our faith is right, we examine ourselves in the light of what is written in the Scriptures. What the word says is right, we firmly believe and go forward with; what it says is not right, we need only correct.

Next, the Lord says that if He bears witness of Himself, it is not true. Even among people, when someone says with his own mouth that his words are true, others do not readily believe him, but when another person says that his words and deeds are true, they believe. Yet there is another who bears witness of the Son, namely, the Father who sent the Son. Therefore that witness is true.

The salvation we have received also stands on this witness. The Father loved us, who were doomed to die because of sin, and sent the Son, and the Son, according to that will, bore our sins and received the judgment. So our confession, "I am saved," is not a word that comes from our own feelings but a word spoken in faith, holding on to the word that God testified first. Our zeal and people's appraisal change from day to day, but the salvation that the Father fulfilled through the Son and Himself testified of remains the same.

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John's testimony and the works the Father gave Him to finish

Let us read verses 33 through 36.

"You have sent to John, and he has borne witness to the truth. Yet I do not receive testimony from man, but I say these things that you may be saved. He was the burning and shining lamp, and you were willing for a time to rejoice in his light. But I have a greater witness than John's; for the works which the Father has given Me to finish—the very works that I do—bear witness of Me, that the Father has sent Me."

John testified of the truth. He was the Elijah who was to come, and the servant of God sent ahead of the Savior. The Lord called him the burning and shining lamp. A lamp is lit for a while and shines on the place where people must go. People once rejoiced in that light, but they stopped at welcoming the lamp and did not come to the Savior on whom that lamp shone.

Then what did John testify? Let us read John chapter 1, verse 29.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

John testified that Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. This testimony had a clear basis. It was because Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. That is why John, seeing Jesus coming toward him bearing that sin, could cry out, *"Behold!"* John's testimony turned people's eyes away from John himself and toward Jesus, who would bear our sins and go to the Cross.

Though the Lord says that He does not receive testimony from man, He still brings up John's testimony. He is not One who would be puffed up because John testified of Him, nor One

who needs people's recognition in order to be the Savior. Even so, the reason He said this word is exactly as He said: *"That you may be saved" (John 5:34)*. The Lord wanted even those who opposed Him to be saved.

Then the Lord reveals a greater witness than John's. It is the works the Father has given the Son to finish. Raising up the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years was one of them, but the work the Father entrusted to the Son does not stop at healing the sick. Being born on this earth in a human body, receiving baptism from John and having all the sin of mankind passed on to Him, dying on the Cross bearing that sin, rising again three days later—this whole life of thirty-three years is the evidence that the Father sent the Son.

In the Old Testament God promised that He would remove our sins, and the Son actually removed our sins according to that promise. He did not remove this sin and leave that sin behind; He removed all sins. Therefore the power of salvation lies not in our resolve but in what the Son whom the Father sent actually did. Whoever believes this work in his heart has the sin of his heart removed, receives as a gift the Holy Spirit whom God gives, and becomes a child of God.

Let us also read verses 37 and 38.

"And the Father Himself, who sent Me, has testified of Me. You have neither heard His voice at any time, nor seen His form. But you do not have His word abiding in you, because whom He sent, Him you do not believe."

The Father Himself testified of the Son. When Jesus did that work of receiving baptism from John and bearing all the sin of mankind, the door of heaven opened and the Father's voice was heard.

"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17).

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At the very place where the Son was bearing the sin of the world, the Father Himself testified that He was well pleased with that Son. The Apostle John also recorded this witness as follows.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:6–8).

The water, the blood, and the Spirit—that is, the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the Spirit who testifies that this work is true to the heart that believes it—bear witness as one. That is why the conscience of one who believes in this gospel calls God Father without any qualms. But if someone calls God Father while leaving out the baptism He received from John and holding on only to the blood of the Cross, sin still remains in his conscience.

Those who opposed Jesus did not hear the Father's voice, nor did His word abide in them. This was because there was no room in their hearts for the word of God to stay. To believe the word of God is to believe God, and it is to receive the witness from God. The heart in which the word abides gladly accepts the Son to whom that word points.

The purpose of searching the Scriptures

Let us read verses 39 and 40.

"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me. But you are not willing to come to Me that you may have life."

The Scriptures testify of Jesus. When Jesus spoke this word, the Scriptures people were reading were the Old Testament. The word that promised the Seed of the woman, and the bronze serpent lifted up high in the wilderness, also testify of Him. The stopping of the Jordan River, which had been flowing down, shows beforehand how Jesus would bear once and for all, through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, the sin of mankind that had flowed on without ceasing. Just as those bitten by serpents looked at the bronze serpent and lived, faith arises in the heart of one who looks to Jesus, who bore the sin of the world, died hanging on the Cross, and rose again, and that person is saved.

The Jews searched the Scriptures, thinking that in them they had eternal life. Yet though they read them so much, they were not willing to come to Him to whom the Scriptures point. Have you read the Scriptures and been saved by believing in Jesus Christ revealed in them? Even one who at first knew only the Cross learns, while searching the Scriptures, of the gospel of the truth of the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross, and is saved. Therefore our faith is built not on the words of men but on the Scriptures. A faith that follows the Jesus preached by a certain person because one likes that person is bound to that person, but the faith that believes in Jesus revealed in the Scriptures as God and as one's own Savior obtains salvation.

Dear fellow believers, what did we come to the Lord to obtain? Many people come thinking that if they believe in Jesus they will become rich, be healed of sickness, have peace in their homes, and succeed in the world. The Lord rebuked such a heart. The purpose of coming to the Lord is to receive the remission of sins, obtain eternal life, and become children of God. The one who first receives the remission of sins then lives according to

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God's will and enjoys both the blessings of this earth and the spiritual blessings of heaven.

Eternal life is the life given by the Lord, who lives forever. Because it is the life the Lord bought by paying the price of our death, that life continues forever even when our bodies decline and our life on this earth ends. We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are those who have already obtained this eternal life. So there is no reason to judge our lives by looking only at the circumstances before our eyes. When things go well it seems we have gained everything, and when they do not go as we wish it seems we have lost everything, but the remission of sins and the eternal life the Lord has given are greater than a day's success and last longer than the health of the body.

There are times when, even while serving the Lord, our hearts grow impatient. We want to see results quickly in proportion to our efforts, and we want everything to be accomplished within the time we have set. Eyes that see only what is near grow weary easily. Let us carry out the work entrusted to us today with eyes that look far ahead, looking to God, who has given us eternal life. Those who know that they have eternal life do not lose their reason to give thanks even in the midst of hardship.

The honor God gives rather than the praise of men

Let us read verses 41 through 44.

"I do not receive honor from men. But I know you, that you do not have the love of God in you. I have come in My Father's name, and you do not receive Me; if another comes in his own name, him you will receive. How can you believe, who receive

honor from one another, and do not seek the honor that comes from the only God?"

The honor spoken of here is the credit and praise one receives from men. The Lord is not One who came to seek such honor; He is One who came to pay the price of our sins according to the Father's will. But in those who opposed the Lord there was no heart that loved God. One who loves God believes in God and follows Him, but one who loves men and himself seeks to be recognized before men. So they gave honor to and received honor from one another and did not seek the honor that comes from God.

The Lord came in the Father's name, that is, as the Savior whom the Father sent. But He, who was born in an animal's manger and wore the clothes of a commoner, did not have the appearance people had hoped for. It was exactly as the Prophet Isaiah said: *"He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2)*. If He had come in the appearance of one with power, people would have received Him. The heart that follows by looking at outward appearance and power welcomes one who comes in his own name and pushes away the Savior who came in the Father's name. This word also makes us look ahead to the last days, when many people will accept one who calls himself the Christ and performs mighty works.

A heart that seeks honor from men blocks faith. When how others see us becomes the most important thing, what God has said is pushed aside. Even if the word is true, we do not accept it if it hurts our pride, and even if a word is wrong, we gladly listen if it exalts us. Here is the reason the Lord said, *"How can you believe" (John 5:44)*.

Then what is the honor that comes from God? To be clothed with honor is to have one's standing changed. Just as Joseph,

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who was sold as a slave and shut up in prison, became the prime minister of Egypt, a sinner bound for hell becomes a child of God. God accomplished this through the Son, who came as the Word become flesh. Because the Lord paid the full price of our sins, we have come to stand before God as people without sin, and this is the honor that comes from God. We did not raise our own standing; the Lord glorified us.

However much people may praise us, that praise cannot remove our sins. On the other hand, even if people do not recognize us, the fact that Jesus saved us by the water, the blood, and the Spirit remains as it is. Those who know this honor of having become children of God entrust their faith not to the applause of men but to the witness of God. The praise we offer to God, too, is not a song sung under compulsion but a confession that flows out in thanks for the love that saved us.

Therefore, while doing the Lord's work, let us not wait only for people's recognition. If hearing that we have done well becomes our goal, our hearts easily grow cold when there is no praise. The word says, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. When we work for the glory of God, who glorified us, the work entrusted to us is precious and rewarding even if it looks small. We come to ask the Lord for the wisdom and strength we need, and the Holy Spirit governs our thoughts and will and makes us live as people of the Spirit.

Believe in the Savior to whom the writings of Moses point

Let us read verses 45 through 47.

"Do not think that I shall accuse you to the Father; there is one who accuses you—Moses, in whom you trust. For if you believed Moses, you would believe Me; for he wrote about Me. But if you do not believe his writings, how will you believe My words?"

The Jews hoped that a great leader like Moses would come again and lead them. But saying that one respects Moses and believing the writings of Moses are not the same. Since Moses wrote about Jesus, if they had believed his writings, they would have believed Jesus as well.

The Lord says that He will not accuse them, who do not believe, to the Father. The one who accuses them is Moses, in whom they hoped. The law that Moses received from God and handed down lays bare one by one the sin of not following God and of loving men and the world more than God, and accuses it. In the face of that accusation, one who has sin remaining in his heart cannot obtain eternal life, nor can he become a child of God.

But the writings of Moses do not contain only the law that exposes sin. Through the sacrifices, God also showed the sacrificial offering that would bear sin and the way of atonement. Let us look at the word of the sacrifice that Moses recorded.

"Then he shall put his hand on the head of the burnt offering, and it will be accepted on his behalf to make atonement for him. He shall kill the bull before the LORD; and the priests, Aaron's sons, shall bring the blood and sprinkle the blood all around on the altar that is by the door of the tabernacle of meeting" (Leviticus 1:4–5).

One who had sinned could not remove his sin by putting forward his own good deeds. When he laid his hands on the head of the offering as God had ordained, his sin was passed on to the offering, and that offering paid the price of sin with its death. On

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the Day of Atonement, the tenth day of the seventh month, the high priest, representing the people, passed on all at once the sin of the people that had piled up over the year.

"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man" (Leviticus 16:21).

If in the Old Testament the high priest passed on the sin of the people once and for all through the laying on of hands, in the New Testament John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, passed on the sin of mankind once and for all by baptizing Jesus. One who believes the writings of Moses, seeing Jesus receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, immediately recognizes, "So this is how He bears our sins." Jesus, who had sin passed on to Him in this way, went to Golgotha bearing that sin, and shed His blood on the Cross, receiving the judgment in our place.

That is why the Lord said that if they did not believe even the writings of Moses, neither would they believe His words. The Old Testament is the promise that God commanded, and the New Testament is the word in which that promise was fulfilled. One who believes the law of sacrifice that Moses recorded quickly believes also the gospel that fulfilled that law of sacrifice. If someone exalts the name of Moses while rejecting the fulfillment of the word he recorded, he cannot be called one who believes the word. If God accomplished salvation in a way different from our own thinking, what must be corrected is not the word but our thinking.

We are those who have obtained eternal life by believing in the Savior of whom the Scriptures testify, and those who have been clothed with the honor that comes from God. Today, too, through the word, the Lord asks us, "Do you believe in Me, who

received baptism from John to bear your sins, died on the Cross for you, and rose again?" John's testimony, the Father's voice, and the writings of Moses all point to this one Person; how could we who have heard that witness not come to Him? We must come to Him by believing in what Jesus has done. ✉

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CHAPTER

6

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Let us eat and drink the food of life by faith

< John 6:31–59 >

“Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, ‘He gave them bread from heaven to eat.’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.’ Then they said to Him, ‘Lord, give us this bread always.’ And Jesus said to them, ‘I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.’ The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven.’ And they said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, “I have come down from heaven”?’ Jesus therefore answered and said to them, ‘Do not murmur

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among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, "And they shall all be taught by God." Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.' The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.' These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum."

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"The true bread from heaven"

To the great crowd that was following Him, Jesus took five barley loaves and two fish—about the amount of a single lunch box—and, giving thanks over them, fed people numbering about five thousand men alone. If the women and children are counted as well, He blessed that one lunch box and fed far more people with it.

So the Jews followed Jesus in great numbers. People who had nothing to eat and people who were sick followed Him around in great numbers. Jesus healed the sick, here today and there tomorrow, and met those who had sin and gave them the remission of sins.

To the crowd following Him, the Lord said, *"Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him" (John 6:27)*.

Then the people said, *"Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, 'He gave them bread from heaven to eat'" (John 6:31)*, and demanded that He give them not the food which perishes but the kind of bread that, once eaten, gives everlasting life. When they demanded this, the Lord said, *"For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:33)*.

They kept on demanding: *"Lord, give us this bread always" (John 6:34)*. Since He had said that whoever eats the bread from heaven obtains everlasting life, they were asking Him to let them eat such bread. Then the Lord said, *"I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst" (John 6:35)*.

The Lord then went on to say as follows. *"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will*

by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:37–40).

When Jesus spoke like this, it sounded like an answer that missed the question. The people were asking for bread they could taste with their mouths, but the Lord says that He Himself is the bread of life. He said that they must eat this bread, that God the Father had given this bread to them, and that whoever eats this bread obtains everlasting life. What the Lord was saying was that if people eat the Lord Himself, they obtain salvation and obtain everlasting life.

The word I want to give you today is this word that He spoke: *"For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world" (John 6:33)*. It means that, just as this word says, Jesus gave Himself to us.

"My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world"

That is how He gave us life. Although this word looks complicated, when it is boiled down, it is speaking of the flesh and blood of Jesus. It is speaking of the Lord's flesh and blood, and it means that He does not let the one who eats this bread die, and that this is the will of God. That is why Jesus said, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51)*.

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Jesus said that He Himself is the living bread which came down from heaven. It means that He is not dead bread but living bread. He said that if anyone eats this bread, he obtains eternal life. And He said, *"The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51),* and this means that He gave us His flesh and let us eat it.

The Lord let us eat His flesh and so let us obtain eternal life. That Jesus gave us His flesh speaks of how much the Lord loved us.

When we truly love someone, we sacrifice ourselves. Jesus came to this earth and gave His body to us. He gave up His body to us for our salvation. And so He let us receive the remission of sins and obtain new life.

I think about how much the Lord must have loved us to have died like this. It means that God gave His own flesh, His own self, to us. It means that because Jesus Christ loved us so much, He gave His flesh, His body, to us.

I am truly thankful also that the Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him and washed away our sins, and then shed His blood on the Cross and rose again from death and saved us. But as I think about all of that, I am truly thankful in my heart for that one part: that the Lord gave up His body to us because He loved us.

The Lord loved us so much that He gave up His own flesh, His own body, to us. The Son of God put on a human body, came to this earth, and sacrificed Himself. With the sacrificial love of giving up His own body to us, He saved us from sin and saved us from judgment.

I have a thankful heart for the love with which the Lord loved us. I have a thankful heart that He sacrificed Himself and saved

us. If the Lord had not loved us, how could He have given us His own body, His own flesh, and saved us?

The Lord gave up His own body for the people He loves. He gave up His body, and with that body He received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. This is truly love condensed, love packed into this work.

That He gave up His body to us means that He loved us this much and saved us this completely and gave us eternal life. I know that this is the love of God, and that He did so because of love. The Lord said, *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever" (John 6:51)*.

And He said, *"The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51)*. The Lord keeps saying that He gave His flesh. He said that He is the living bread which came down from heaven, not dead bread but living bread, and this bread, too, refers to the body of Jesus. Also, His saying *"My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51)* refers to His own body.

The Lord gave up the glory of heaven and for a short while came as a man, borrowing the body of a woman. So He had a human body. And it means that He gave up that body for our salvation. The Lord keeps speaking of His flesh. "I have given My body to you in order to save you from death and give you new life, to give you eternal life." In this way He is saying that He gave His body to us.

The Lord gave us His body and so loved us, removed our sins, and saved us from sin, and it means that if we believe in that love, He keeps us from ever dying. So His saying *"My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51)* refers to the Lord's receiving baptism from John the Baptist with His

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body and having our sins transferred to Him, shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again from death.

That He gave up His body to us, that He loved us in that way, means that He had our sins transferred onto His body through baptism. The word that follows reads as follows. *"The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you'" (John 6:52–53).*

The word they could not understand

The Jews quarreled among themselves. A blessing like placing His hands over one lunch box, giving thanks, making it multiply greatly, and letting all those many people share it and still have some left over—that they could understand. But when He spoke concretely of His own flesh, saying, *"The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51),* they could not understand it at all. Even now there are people who hear this word of God and do not understand it well.

In Genesis chapter 2, God did not see it as good that Adam, one man, lived alone. So it says, *"And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on Adam, and he slept; and He took one of his ribs, and closed up the flesh in its place. Then the rib which the LORD God had taken from man He made into a woman, and He brought her to the man. And Adam said: 'This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh'" (Genesis 2:21–23).* Adam marveled and was delighted. He was saying that this was truly beautiful and truly good.

Concerning this word that Adam spoke, *"This is now bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh" (Genesis 2:23)*, it is said that the woman symbolizes the Church and the man symbolizes Jesus Christ. It means that God loves and saves the Church of God in this way. The first man is Adam, and the One who came to this earth as the second Adam, putting on a human body, as the Savior of mankind is Jesus Christ. It was this Jesus Christ who made the Church of God.

The Lord gave up His body to us, and with that body He received baptism from John and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. Then He was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. In that way He made those who believe in Him children of God. That is why we believe and say that the woman symbolizes the Church, that is, the Church of God.

But when it is put this way, there are many people who do not understand well what it means. In the same way, when the Lord said, *"The bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world" (John 6:51)*, the Jews could not understand. He said that He would give bread, yet He said that bread was the flesh of Jesus; He said that He would give up His body for us, told them to eat it, and said that whoever eats it obtains eternal life—so they could not understand it at all.

Because they could not understand it at all, a commotion arose among the Jews. They quarreled among themselves. They quarreled, asking what on earth this meant, how a man could feed them his own flesh, how He could say He would give it, and how He could tell them to eat it. Then the Lord said again and again, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53)*.

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The food we must eat without fail

The Lord said that one must absolutely eat the flesh of the Son of Man to obtain eternal life. It means that one must eat the Lord's flesh, the Lord's body, to obtain eternal life. It means that one must eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink the blood of the Son of Man. It means that this is something one must eat without fail, and that whoever does not eat it does not obtain life and does not obtain eternal life.

It means that whoever does not eat the flesh of Jesus, that is, the body of Jesus, and does not drink the blood of Jesus has no life in him. It means that if you want to obtain eternal life and obtain new life, never thirst, and live enjoying eternal life, you must eat the body of Jesus. You must eat the flesh of Jesus and drink the blood of Jesus. It means that you must eat and must drink without fail.

Then how can we eat the flesh and blood of Jesus? Some people say that there is only one way to eat the flesh and blood of Jesus. They say it is because Jesus, while holding the Lord's Supper at the Passover, broke bread and said, *"Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26)*, and gave the cup, saying, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28)*, and told them to commemorate this until He comes. So there are many people who interpret and think that eating the flesh and drinking the blood of the Son of Man spoken of in John chapter 6 is holding the Lord's Supper and taking part in it, and that in this way they obtain eternal life.

But that is not how we eat the body of Jesus and drink the blood of Jesus. What does the flesh of Jesus, that is, the body of Jesus, refer to? It refers to the work Jesus did when, with that body, He received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin

of mankind transferred to Him and washed away our sins—that work of redemption by which He accomplished our salvation. By believing that truth, that fact, we come to eat the flesh of Jesus, that is, the body of Jesus.

It means that whoever believes the fact that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, and believes the fact that He shed His blood on the Cross and rose again from death and saved us, becomes one who has eaten the flesh of Jesus. This is exactly what Jesus was saying here.

At the Lord's Supper, priests set out a wheat wafer and speak of transubstantiation, which says that it actually changes into the flesh of Jesus. But that wheat wafer is not the flesh of Jesus. It is a rite. Jesus loved us and gave up His body in order to remove our sins, and with that body He received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him. It means that He celebrated the Passover Supper, symbolizing it with bread and wine, so that that fact would be commemorated.

Passover means passing over. When the angel of death comes, anyone who has sin suffers death. But the Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist with His body and had our sins transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died, and then rose again and saved us from all sins. To the one who believes that fact, death does not come. It means that even if the body dies, he lives again, and the one who is alive now and believes has received the remission of sins in his heart and obtained eternal life, and so he lives forever.

The Lord spoke this word in order to say that. Jesus came to this earth, and loving us so very much, He gave up His body to us, had our sins transferred to Him with that body through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. It was in order to

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commemorate this work by which He saved us and loved us and removed our sins and gave us eternal life that He said the ceremony of the Lord's Supper should be held.

That is why Jesus keeps saying this: "I am the bread of life. I am the bread of life which came down from heaven, the bread of life whom the Father sent. This is My flesh, My body, given so that all the people of this world may obtain life. The reason I came to this earth putting on a human body is to receive baptism from John the Baptist and have your sins transferred to Me once and for all, die on the Cross, and rise again from death, and so save you. My body is that which has had your sins transferred to it." He was saying that if you eat this by faith, you receive the remission of sins and are washed of your sins, and through this you become children of God and obtain eternal life.

Our eating the flesh and blood of Jesus with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something we may do or not do. When you go to university, there are what are called required courses. You must earn the credits for those courses no matter what. You must earn the attendance marks, the exam marks, and the assignment marks—all of them. If you fail to earn the credits, you fail the course. Then you have to pay the tuition again and take that course again. If you do not earn them, you cannot graduate.

Our believing in God is the same. We know and believe God the Father and God's Son Jesus Christ as our Savior. Jesus put on a human body and came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, went to the Cross bearing that sin of the world and was nailed to it and shed His blood, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. It means that this work is not something we may believe or not believe; only when we believe it without fail do we receive the

remission of sins and obtain and enjoy eternal life. We must believe without fail.

The token of love

I think about it. I am truly thankful that the Lord saved me. That is what I believe. You, too, surely believe so. Jesus took on human flesh, was conceived in the womb of the Virgin Mary, and was born into this world. With that body He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He loved us. That He loved us even to the point of giving up His body—I think that is the evidence of the love with which the Lord loved us, and I give thanks.

How much He must have loved us to give up His body to us! Do we not also give up our own bodies for the people we love? Some people gave their bodies to the independence movement to free their country from oppression. They sold all the property they had and gave it to the independence movement, and gave even their own bodies. They gave everything—their spirit, heart, body, and possessions—and some of them fell sick and died in the process.

Some people, feeling so sorry for someone drowning, and because they love that person, throw themselves in to rescue him, and save that person but die themselves. Such things are not very common, but neither are they rare. We hear stories of someone who died trying to save a friend who fell into the water, or of a father, a mother, an older sister, or a younger sibling who died trying to save a child on the railroad tracks. Knowing they would die, they sacrificed their own bodies to save the other person.

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Just as there are such things, Jesus is by nature the only Son of God the Father. He is the One who should be in heaven, ruling over all created beings and receiving glory. Yet because He truly loved us, all the people living in this world who bear the image of God, He put on a human body according to the Father's will, came to this earth, and gave up His own body to us.

How did He give up His body? His receiving baptism from John the Baptist was His giving up His body. And then He died hanging on the Cross and rose again three days later. To save us, because He loved us, Jesus gave Himself completely for us. He received baptism from John the Baptist, was stripped of His clothes, was despised and insulted, suffered the pain of being nailed to that horrific Cross, poured out all the blood of His heart and died, and then rose again from death. It means that He loved us that much.

The very token of the love with which the Lord loved us is that we have been saved from sin. When I think of that, I feel all the more in my heart before God, "God, I thank You for Your love." I truly feel it keenly. That He gave up His body for us, for the remission of our sins, so that we might obtain new life, so that we might live forever, so that we might receive all the blessings of the kingdom of heaven—because that was the true love with which God loved us, I truly give thanks.

Therefore we must eat the flesh and blood of Jesus with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He said that whoever does not eat the flesh and blood of Jesus has no life. He said that whoever eats the flesh and blood of Jesus has life. Our eating the flesh and blood of Jesus is eating them with the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must eat them without fail. If you are a person who believes in Jesus, a person who knows Jesus, a person who truly wants to receive the remission of sins, a person who wants to

become a child of God, a person who wants to obtain new life and live forever, you must eat the flesh and blood of Jesus by faith.

The eternal life everyone longs for

Whoever eats has eternal life. He obtains new life. Whoever believes has eternal life, and whoever does not believe has no life, only an eternal curse. Everyone longs for eternal life. People pursue living forever. There are cases where people say that life is too hard and they want to die, and choose death, but think of the scene where someone in the family has passed away and a funeral is being held. We know that while that person was alive, we shared affection with one another.

Suppose a loved one with whom we had a close relationship and who was joined to us by the same blood has left this world. When we look at that person, what is it that grieves us? We grieve because that person has died. Our hope was for that person to live and to live better. What mankind grieves over is death. So when we think about what it is we truly wish for, with the departed before us, we come to realize that it is eternal life. We think, "If there were such a thing as dying and coming back to life and going to the kingdom of heaven to live forever, there would be nothing more to wish for; I hope you go to a good place and live well."

We hope to live forever in a place where there is no more sickness, pain, death, or curse, where there is no Satan the devil and no evil people, a beautiful place where there is true freedom, joy, satisfaction, and peace, a place where nothing is lacking and where there are all the spiritual blessings and the rich blessings of the earth. That is our heart toward the one who has departed,

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and it means that in our own hearts, too, there is such a true hope. It means that we have a longing for eternal life.

This is the highest purpose that man has. What we want most is eternal life. It means that to obtain this eternal life, we must believe this truth—that the Lord came to this earth and gave us His body, received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us—that is, we must eat the flesh and blood of Jesus by faith.

We must believe the fact that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist with His body and had our sins transferred to Him. So we must believe this fact, that He has removed all our sins, that He has taken all our sins away. And we must believe the fact that Jesus went to the Cross bearing that sin of the world and was nailed to it and shed His blood and died, and then rose again and gave us new life. Only when we believe do we obtain eternal life. We must eat by faith without fail.

Whoever eats by faith obtains eternal life, and whoever cannot believe does not obtain eternal life. That is why Jesus said, "I am the bread which came down from heaven, the living bread. This bread is My body for you. It is My flesh, which I give so that the people of this world may obtain life," speaking of it as His flesh. He was speaking more concretely of His body.

That Jesus had all our sins transferred onto His body through baptism once and for all and made us sinless, and that He went to the Cross and, bearing our sins, was nailed to it and shed His blood and died, and then rose again and gave us the remission of sins and new life—the Lord is telling us to believe that truth. Whoever believes has obtained eternal life.

Therefore we can obtain eternal life by faith, and we can receive the remission of sins by faith. By eating and drinking the flesh and blood of Jesus by faith, we can obtain eternal life.

Those who have already eaten, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have obtained eternal life. They have received the remission of sins. But those who do not yet believe, those who have not eaten the flesh of Jesus by faith, have not received the remission of sins.

Can we say that it is enough just to drink the blood of Jesus? Jesus said, *"Whoever eats My flesh" (John 6:54),* and so He said that we must eat His flesh. If I were to say to you, "I will give you my flesh, so eat it," who would eat it? Everyone would run away, saying it is filthy. Who would want to eat human flesh?

But the flesh of Jesus must be eaten by faith. It must be eaten not in a fleshly way but spiritually. We must eat it in order to receive the remission of sins. If we eat the flesh of Jesus in order to receive the remission of sins, we receive the remission of sins. Because Jesus had our sins passed on to Him, we are washed of our sins. That is the remission of sins. And if we drink the blood of Jesus, we obtain new life. For the blood is life. Jesus received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, died hanging on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He became our Savior. If we believe in Jesus our Savior, who came to this earth in flesh and blood in this way, and in His love, we receive the remission of sins and obtain new life and eternal life. That is why He said to eat the flesh and blood of Jesus.

True food, true drink

Jesus said, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:54–55).* As for whoever eats the flesh and blood of Jesus, his soul has already come alive, but his body dies. But it means that the Lord

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will raise him up again from death at the last day. At that time we will rise again and enjoy eternal life with God.

And the Lord said, *"My flesh is food indeed" (John 6:55)*. It means that it is food. And He said that the Lord's blood is *"drink indeed" (John 6:55)*. We obtain new life by eating the flesh and blood of Jesus. We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit eat the flesh of Jesus very often, every time we experience our own shortcomings and weaknesses as we live on this earth.

Even if it seems that you are not eating, when you fall short, when your thinking goes wrong, when you fall into weakness and fall into sin, you come to eat that flesh. You often eat it spiritually, in your heart, thinking, "The Lord had this sin, too, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John." That is why Jesus said, *"My flesh is food indeed" (John 6:55)*. Because we eat the flesh of Jesus often, we do not suffer hunger and can live with strength; we are filled, and strength arises in our hearts.

We eat the flesh of Jesus very often. That is why Jesus said that His flesh is true food. What is the true food of a person's soul? It is that Jesus, with His body, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. It means that that love—with which Jesus loved us, loving us even to the point of giving us His body, having our sins transferred to Him through baptism, dying on the Cross, and rising again from death to save us—and that righteous salvation become the true food of our souls.

It is true food. By believing that fact, by eating the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by believing in our hearts and eating the fact that Jesus had our sins transferred onto His body through baptism, our souls do not hunger but are filled. I, too, eat often. When I do a lot of work, I feel my shortcomings and eat often. I

fall short, but because I eat the flesh of Jesus often, I am living well.

Though my body grows weary, I am living well. You, too, are living because you eat the flesh of Jesus. Food is not something eaten only once but something eaten continually. As long as we live, we need food. We need daily bread every day. What do we eat every day as the food of our hearts and live on? We eat the body of Jesus every day. We eat every day the fact that Jesus had sin transferred onto His body through baptism. By eating it every day, we do not die but live.

Therefore we must not eat only once, when we receive the remission of sins, but eat by faith every day. In the prayer the Lord taught, too, there is the word, *"Give us this day our daily bread" (Matthew 6:11)*.

What is daily bread? It is that Jesus loved us and gave up His body to us. It is that He gave up His body, received baptism from John the Baptist, and had our sins transferred to Him. This is our food. It is the food of faith and the food of salvation. And concerning the blood of the Son of Man, the Lord said, *"My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55)*. When someone who was dying obtains new life, it is refreshing. In a living person the blood circulates. If the blood does not circulate, one dies. Whoever believes that the Lord had our sins transferred to Him with His body, died on the Cross, and rose again from death and gave us new life—whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—is one who has obtained new life.

In the Lord, and the Lord in us

Then, in conclusion, what becomes of the one who has eaten the flesh and blood of Jesus? Such a person comes to abide in

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the Lord, and the Lord also comes to abide in that person. The Lord said, *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:56–57)*.

It means that whoever has eaten the Lord's flesh and drunk His blood becomes one with the Lord. The Lord abides in us and we abide in the Lord, and we become one body. This is the result and the blessing that one who has eaten the Lord's flesh and blood receives. We want to receive the remission of sins and become one with the Lord, we want to go and live in the kingdom of heaven, and we want the Lord to abide in us while we are on this earth. This is exactly what receiving the remission of sins is, and what receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift is. Because we have received the remission of sins, the Lord abides in us by the Holy Spirit.

And in conclusion the Lord said as follows. *"This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever. These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum" (John 6:58–59)*. The Lord taught this word in the synagogue. He gathered the Jews, seated His disciples, and stood and taught, just as we hold worship services in a chapel today. It was not a word He spoke as if grumbling to Himself.

Whoever eats this bread lives forever. I have eaten the Lord's flesh and drunk the Lord's blood by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those among you who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have also become people who have eaten the Lord's flesh and drunk the Lord's blood. Therefore the Lord abides in you, and you abide in the Lord. You have become one. You have become people who have obtained eternal life.

Therefore, when we hold the Lord's Supper, we must not hold it merely as a rite. When we receive baptism in church, too, we must not receive it merely as a rite. While performing the rite, we must go beyond that rite and know and receive the real truth that God has given us within it. The flesh and blood of Jesus were for giving us new life.

The flesh of Jesus concretely refers to His body, and it refers to His having had our sins transferred onto that body. That Jesus, with that body, received baptism from John, died hanging on the Cross, and rose again from death means that He had our sins transferred to Him, died in our place, and rose again, and so gave us new life and eternal life.

Therefore whoever believes obtains eternal life. Eternal life means living forever. It means obtaining the qualification to live forever. Like someone who obtains a patent, we, out of the countless people living on this earth, obtain from God the blessing of eternal life. No one can take away this blessing of eternal life that we have. For it is what God has given. That is why we are happy people.

Therefore we must preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to people until the end of the world, until the day the Lord comes. We must preach, saying, "Eat the flesh of Jesus. Drink the blood of Jesus. Eat and drink the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith."

I think once again of how Jesus loved us and gave up His body to us, saved us from sin, and gave us new life and eternal life, and I truly give thanks for the love with which God loved us.

The Lord did not love us with words only; He loved us even to the point of giving up His body to us. I feel that love once again and ruminate on it, and give thanks by faith. Dear beloved saints, when we hold the Lord's Supper we commemorate the

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flesh and blood of Jesus; I ask you to believe without fail that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist with His body and had our sins transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so washed away our sins and gave us new life.

The Lord gave us His body in order to give us the remission of sins and new life and eternal life, in order to abide in us and to have us abide in Him, in order to become one body with us. I hope that you will know this fact by faith and eat it by faith and receive all the blessings. And I hope that while you live on this earth, you will always eat the flesh and blood of Jesus by faith, and become people whose souls do not hunger and who enjoy eternal life. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who knows our circumstances and gives life

< John 6:1–15 >

“After these things Jesus went over the Sea of Galilee, which is the Sea of Tiberias. Then a great multitude followed Him, because they saw His signs which He performed on those who were diseased. And Jesus went up on the mountain, and there He sat with His disciples. Now the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, ‘Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?’ But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, ‘Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.’ One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter’s brother, said to Him, ‘There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?’ Then Jesus said, ‘Make the people sit down.’ Now there was much grass in the place. So the men sat down, in number about five thousand. And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, ‘Gather up the

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fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.' Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten. Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone."

A great multitude followed Jesus. It was because they had seen the signs He performed on the sick. Even when Jesus went over to the other side of the Sea of Tiberias and went up on the mountain and sat with His disciples, the people gathered around the Lord. It was just when the Passover, a feast of the Jews, was near. The gaze of the Lord, as He looked at that great crowd, took in even their hunger.

The Gospel of John records the signs Jesus performed one by one, and each time it reveals who it was that did that work. So it was with the first sign, when He made water into wine at Cana of Galilee, and so it was when He raised up the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years by the pool of Bethesda. In today's passage, about five thousand people ate their fill with five barley loaves and two fish, and the fragments that were left filled twelve baskets.

But before that happened, the first words to come from a disciple's mouth were an answer that there was not enough. The people were many, and the food was little. This is a situation familiar to us as well. There is much work to take on but not enough strength, and there are many people to preach the gospel to, but the people to work with us and the material means are not

plentiful. In today's word, let us look together at who the Lord is who knows that situation, and at what the life is that He intends to give us.

The Lord who knows what He will do, ahead of the disciples' calculations

Let us read verses 5 through 7.

"Then Jesus lifted up His eyes, and seeing a great multitude coming toward Him, He said to Philip, 'Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?' But this He said to test him, for He Himself knew what He would do. Philip answered Him, 'Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little.'"

It was not that Jesus asked Philip because He did not know what to do. The Bible says that the Lord asked in order to test Philip, knowing Himself what He would do. The disciples had been watching at His side as the Lord healed the sick and raised the dead. The disciples were the ones who had seen, more closely than anyone, the signs that made the great multitude follow Him all the way here. The Lord was asking whether those disciples truly believed in Him, and whom they would look to when faced with this problem.

Philip made a calculation. Two hundred denarii was the wages a laborer would have to work two hundred days to receive. He answered that even if bread were bought with that much money and handed out a little to each, it would not be enough. Even if they had had that money, where could they get bread to feed so many people at one time? Philip's arithmetic was accurate. But that calculation left out the Lord, who was standing

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right in front of him. The answer worked out by human wisdom was that it was impossible.

When we, too, face some matter, we first weigh it up. We look at how much money is needed, how many people will join us, and how far we can go with our own ability. Then, when the thought comes, "This will not work; we will only end up losing out for nothing," we even shut our hearts. Even in the work of serving the gospel, there are times when, after judging that it is hard to do with what we have, we lose even the thought of asking the Lord. Our calculations cannot determine the Lord's power.

The Lord saw the great multitude coming first, and He was also the first to bring up the problem of feeding them. A person who is worried about his own food finds it hard to think of others as well. But the Lord cared, thinking that these many people ought to have something to eat. That same Lord knows all about our circumstances today as well. He knows where we are stuck and what we find hard to take on. Lift your eyes from your own shortcomings, and turn your hearts to the Lord who knows you.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, we meet human limits. There are times when our bodies are worn out, the work we were doing does not go as we wished, and there is no one to help. If at every such time we try to produce all the answers by ourselves, only our worries deepen. Remember the word that the Lord Himself knew what He would do. What we need is not so much the ability to solve every situation in advance as the faith that relies on the Lord who knows that situation.

The faith that goes to the Lord even with what is lacking

Let us read verses 8 and 9.

"One of His disciples, Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, said to Him, 'There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?'"

Andrew, too, saw the many people and the little food. He also knew that five barley loaves and two fish were hopelessly short for this crowd. So he said, *"But what are they among so many?"* Yet even so, Andrew told the Lord the fact that that little was there. He hoped for the Lord's blessing, with the thought that if it were the Lord, He could surely feed even these many people.

Faced with the same situation, the answers of the two disciples diverged. Philip calculated, and Andrew relied on the Lord. Since by calculation it was already impossible, there was no way but to rely on the Lord. Today these two attitudes are both present in us as well. There is the heart that reckons up the situation and looks for reasons why it cannot be done, and there is the faith that brings even a little to the Lord. There were many disciples, but the one who, on the spot, told the Lord of a boy's loaves and fish was Andrew.

We are apt to think that we can go to the Lord only after what we have has become sufficient. We try to seek help after we have sorted out the problem to some extent and have something worth offering. Then, at the very time when help is desperately needed, we end up worrying alone. What Andrew told the Lord about was something hopelessly insufficient in human eyes. The Lord uses that faith rather than abundant food.

To pray in faith is to tell the Lord one's circumstances without hiding them. If you need workers to serve the gospel with you, ask Him to send workers. If you lack the wisdom to handle the work entrusted to you, ask for wisdom. If the material means you need are short and the way is blocked, tell Him that situation. Whether it is a problem that has come upon you or a

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problem the church bears together, bring it to the Lord rather than relying on people. Worrying alone for a long time and entrusting it to the Lord are different things. When we admit that our strength is insufficient, the reason to rely on the Lord becomes all the clearer. The Lord said to His disciples as follows.

"Until now you have asked nothing in My name. Ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be full" (John 16:24).

It is also because of this word that we ask in the name of Jesus when we close our prayers. Look not at how great what we have is, but at who it is that receives it and works. The Lord can use even what is in our small hands.

The Lord who has us share together the grace by which He fed them to the full

Jesus told them to make the people sit down. There was much grass in that place, and when the people sat down, they were about five thousand in number. The Gospel of Matthew, which records the same event, says that those who ate were five thousand men besides women and children. It was a crowd that could not be handled with the food held in one boy's hands. But where they sat, there was the Lord, who would give them food.

Let us read verses 11 through 13.

"And Jesus took the loaves, and when He had given thanks He distributed them to the disciples, and the disciples to those sitting down; and likewise of the fish, as much as they wanted. So when they were filled, He said to His disciples, 'Gather up the fragments that remain, so that nothing is lost.' Therefore they gathered them up, and filled twelve baskets with the fragments of the five barley loaves which were left over by those who had eaten."

Jesus took the loaves and gave thanks. He asked God's blessing upon them. The Bible does not record in detail how the bread multiplied. It only says that after the Lord had given thanks He distributed them, and likewise gave of the fish as much as the people wanted, and that all ate and were filled. That crowd, for whom it was said there would not be enough even if each had a little, all ate of five barley loaves and still there was some left over.

The One who did this work is Jesus. It was not that there was power in the five loaves, nor that the disciples multiplied the food, nor that the people collected a little from each. Feeding five thousand and leaving twelve baskets over is something only Jesus can do. The Lord is God, who is not bound by human limits.

The Lord had the disciples serve together in that work. The Gospel of Matthew records that the Lord broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave to the multitudes. It is clear who gives the food and who receives it and distributes it. Because the Lord supplied it, the hands of the disciples could distribute food to that great number of people.

The barley loaves and fish that one boy had speak to us today as well. The two fish speak of the Church of God, and the five barley loaves speak of the body of Jesus, which He gave up to save us—that is, the grace of salvation. Before the countless people of the world, the gospel the Church of God preaches looks small. But when the Lord gives His blessing upon it, many people eat and there is still some left over.

The truth that gives life to people's souls is not something we made up. Because we heard through the word and believed the salvation Jesus accomplished, we preach that gospel with our mouths, put it into writing and send it out, and pray and labor for that work. The Lord knows who will hear the gospel of life through the word that has left our hands. For the person far away

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who reads that word and believes, the salvation the Lord accomplished is just as complete.

Even after they had eaten their fill, there was work for the disciples to do. The Lord told them to gather up the fragments that remained so that nothing would be lost. The people seated there were already full, yet the fragments gathered filled twelve baskets. So it is with the food of life we have received today. Besides us gathered here, there are many people in all the world who must hear and believe this gospel. The Lord wants the food of the word He has left to us to be fed to them as well. Let us treasure the word we have received, gather it well into our hearts so that nothing is lost, and share it with those who need that food.

We must believe in the Savior to whom the sign points

Let us read verses 14 and 15.

"Then those men, when they had seen the sign that Jesus did, said, 'This is truly the Prophet who is to come into the world.' Therefore when Jesus perceived that they were about to come and take Him by force to make Him king, He departed again to the mountain by Himself alone."

The people saw an amazing thing. And they said that Jesus was the Prophet who was to come into the world. It was because there was a promise God had given through Moses.

"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear" (Deuteronomy 18:15).

The Prophet whom Moses spoke of points to the Christ who was to come. Christ is the One who came with these three offices—Prophet, High Priest, and King—and saves us. As the

Prophet He teaches the truth; as the High Priest of heaven He had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and offered His own body as the sacrificial offering; and as the King of kings He accomplishes that work. The sign was a work to make people recognize who He is. Therefore, we must not stop at receiving from Him what we need, but, as Moses said, we must hear His word.

But the multitude tried to take Jesus by force and make Him king. They thought that if the One who gave them plenty to eat became king, their hunger would be over. Jesus perceived this and departed again to the mountain by Himself. The Lord did not want to be known as One who hands out bread for a meal. He wanted to be known as God, who gives life.

Jesus is truly the King of kings. But the place where the Lord received the title *"the King of the Jews" (John 19:19)* was not the throne people tried to set Him on by force, but the Cross. Pilate put on that Cross the title *"Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews" (John 19:19)*. The reason the Lord, the King of the Jews, could be hung on that Cross was that, as the High Priest, He had first received onto His body the sin of the people of Israel and of all mankind.

The heart that calls Him a wonderful person with its lips while trying to hold on to the Lord only as One who will do what it wants is the same now as it was then. Let us also examine ourselves as to whether the reason we seek the Lord stays only with our immediate circumstances. We need food and clothing, and we can ask the Lord for those needs. But the hunger of the flesh returns even after we have eaten bread. However abundantly a person may live, he cannot solve the problem of sin and death by himself. Jesus is the Lord of life, who solves that problem.

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In the same chapter, the Lord makes this fact clear. Let us read verse 35.

"And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'"

The Lord said that He Himself is the bread of life. The salvation we need is in Jesus Himself. The bread that fed five thousand was food for one meal, but the Lord gave up His own body and became the food of life for all the people of the world. When we know and believe what He has done for us, our souls receive life. This faith does not end with watching a sign and marveling at it; it is the faith that accepts the remission of sins Jesus accomplished as our own salvation.

The Son of God came to this earth in a human body to save us. And when He turned thirty, He received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. According to the law of God by which one laid hands on the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament to pass sins on to it, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. All the sins we commit with our hearts, with our thoughts, and with our deeds from the time we are born until we die, the Lord bore at that time. This is the word the Lord spoke to John at that time.

"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).

The Lord, who thus fulfilled all righteousness, bearing the sin of the world, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and so received the judgment of our sins in our place. And three days later He rose again from death and completed our salvation. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart has all his sins washed away once and for all, receives the

Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. To believe this work the Lord accomplished as our own salvation—this is to eat the bread of life by faith.

It is not because we clung to Him weeping with great emotion or prayed for a long time that we have become people without sin. Because Jesus bore our sins and paid the price for them in our place on the Cross, we who believe that fact have the remission of sins. Even when the weakness of the flesh is exposed, the ground of salvation remains the same. The labor of serving the gospel is the work of those who first received the food of life sharing that food out of thankfulness. Those who know the life they have received from the Lord preach Jesus, who gave that life, rather than themselves.

Let us entrust today's circumstances, too, to the Lord who gave us life

The disciples, looking at the five barley loaves and two fish, thought there was no way to feed so many people. But the Lord gave the food, fed the people until they were full, and the disciples even gathered up the fragments that remained. Before the disciples' eyes there was nothing but lack, but the One who was with them was God, who supplies abundantly.

Now we believe in that Lord as the Savior. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and, by shedding His blood once and for all on the Cross, received the judgment of our sins in our place, and that judgment is never repeated again. Yet every day we see ourselves full of faults. Each time, the abundant food that feeds our hearts is the word that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, has already had passed on to Him even the

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sins we commit today and the sins we will commit tomorrow. The heart of the one who eats that word by faith is full and unashamed, and the Holy Spirit dwells in that heart. So what we receive from the Lord every day is not only the assurance of the remission of sins.

Jesus, who delivered us from sin and death and rose again, even now hears our prayers asking for help. Do not think that you receive salvation from the Lord but must bear the hardships that follow by yourself. Entrust to the Lord who gave you life even the problems before you today.

Our hope does not lie in how much or how little food we have now. It lies in Jesus, who saved us from sin and knows our circumstances. He fed the multitude on the mountain that day, and today also He is God, in whom we believe and from whom we ask for help. Just as Andrew told the Lord of a boy's five barley loaves and two fish, I hope that you will tell the Lord all your weaknesses, hardships, and hopeless circumstances just as they are, ask Him, and take abundant food by faith. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who comes to us in the storm

< John 6:16–21 >

“Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing. So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. But He said to them, ‘It is I; do not be afraid.’ Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going.”

Only a short while before, the disciples had seen the power of Jesus, who fed a great multitude until they were full. With five barley loaves and two fish, about five thousand people ate, and there was still some left over. When the multitude tried to make Jesus king by force, the Lord departed alone to the mountain, and when evening came, the disciples got into a boat and headed for Capernaum. It was already dark, and a great wind blew and the waves rose. Jesus had not yet come to them. The disciples who had seen the Lord’s marvelous work were now rowing hard on the dark sea.

This scene is something we also meet while we live by faith. We came to know the Lord’s grace and gave thanks, but soon a hard time comes upon us. The grace we have passed through is

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clear, but the hardship before our eyes is all too clear as well. We received the remission of sins once and for all by faith, but the days we live on this earth go on for decades, and during that time we meet many occasions when the Lord's help is absolutely necessary.

Today's word recounts how Jesus came near to those disciples. The Lord walked over the sea that had frightened the disciples, and He told them who He was. The disciples who heard that word welcomed the Lord with joy, and the boat soon reached the land where they were going. Through this event, let us look together at who Jesus is, who comes to us in the storm.

A fierce wind blew even on the way of following the Lord

Let us read verses 16 through 18.

"Now when evening came, His disciples went down to the sea, got into the boat, and went over the sea toward Capernaum. And it was already dark, and Jesus had not come to them. Then the sea arose because a great wind was blowing."

The disciples were going by boat toward Capernaum. If we look at the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus urged His disciples to get into the boat and go ahead of Him to the other side. The disciples were crossing over in obedience to the Lord's word. On that very way, a great wind blew and the waves rose.

There are times when we think that the Lord is with us only when things go smoothly. Our hearts grow dark, wondering why it is so hard when it is the work of serving the gospel, and why problems arise when we are following the Lord. But look at who the people in this boat were. They were the disciples of Jesus.

The way they were going was also a way the Lord had made them go.

In serving the gospel, there are times when the results appear slowly compared to the labor put in, and many problems may rush in all at once. At such times, do not doubt the whole way you have come following the Lord by looking only at the storm before your eyes. Remember the Lord, who has guided us until now.

The disciples rowed hard amid the great wind and the waves. But human labor could not overcome the storm. A storm on the night sea was a dangerous thing for those in the boat. We, too, strive in the work entrusted to us, but we meet problems that go beyond our own strength. Even with much experience, fear comes, and even when we work hard, there are times when the way is blocked. What is needed at that time is the Lord, who knows us and helps us. When things are truly urgent, a person of faith uses faith. Rather than calculating his circumstances, he looks to the Lord.

The Gospel of Mark records that the Lord saw the disciples straining at rowing. The Lord was not visible to the disciples' eyes, but the Lord was watching them. Even before we have confirmed the Lord's help with our own eyes, the Lord knows our situation.

Listen to the word of the One who walked over the fearful sea

Let us read verses 19 and 20.

"So when they had rowed about three or four miles, they saw Jesus walking on the sea and drawing near the boat; and they were afraid. But He said to them, 'It is I; do not be afraid.'"

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The disciples rowed about three or four miles. Then Jesus came near the boat, walking on the sea. It was a sea where a great wind was blowing and the storm was rising, but the Lord walked on it. The waves that had blocked the disciples could not block the way of the Lord coming to them. Jesus came to the very place where the disciples were suffering hardship.

Yet the disciples were afraid even when they saw the Lord. Matthew and Mark record that they cried out, thinking it was a ghost. Since something was approaching over the pitch-dark sea, they could not help being afraid. They had not yet recognized who it was that was approaching. We, too, before we rightly know the Lord who is beside us, look only at what is before our eyes and are gripped by fear.

Then the Lord said, *"It is I; do not be afraid" (John 6:20)*. Only when they heard that voice did the disciples recognize that it was Jesus. The One who spoke this word was not someone who watched the disciples' situation from afar and merely offered comfort. He is the Lord who walked over the storm-tossed sea and came right before them. Therefore, in this word there is a clear basis for overcoming fear. For Jesus, who came to them, is greater than that sea.

Worry does not go away merely by steeling one's heart. Even if we tell ourselves that it will be all right, when a problem that still remains comes to mind, our hearts waver again. At that time, think about who the Lord is. He who walked over the water is the Lord who saved us.

To believe the word is to accept the Lord's word as true rather than our own thoughts. It is to believe the fact that the Lord can help even when we judge that it is too hard for our own strength. It is not that we believe in the Lord only after every problem has been solved. We believe in the Lord at the very time when the problem is there.

The One who walked over the sea is the Creator who made all things

We give thanks for the fact that Jesus washed away our sins. That Jesus is almighty God, who made the universe and all things by His word. He walked over the sea. This event is not something that merely shows that Jesus had a little more power than man. It is something that reveals that He is our Creator.

Let us read John chapter 1, verses 1 through 3.

"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made."

All things were made through Him. The sea, the wind, and the people rowing on it were all made by the Lord. He walked over the waves that had made the disciples tremble because He is God. Just as it is written that in the beginning *"God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3)*, when the Lord speaks, it comes to pass just so. It is something man cannot do, but because He is Jesus, He can do it.

Then why did the Lord show the disciples Himself walking toward them on the water? It was because the disciples were not yet able to believe in Jesus as the God of salvation. While He was on this earth, the Lord clearly revealed who He was, so that they would believe in Him as God and be saved from sin. He was God and at the same time man. He who walked on the storm-tossed water shed tears before a human death when Lazarus died. In ordinary times He lived just like us human beings, and He humbled Himself in a weak form.

The almighty One, who can do anything, became the sacrificial offering for us. The Lord, who came in a human body, went out to the Jordan River and received baptism from John the

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Baptist. What the priest of the Old Testament did by laying his hands on the head of the offering to pass on sins was accomplished through the baptism John the Baptist gave. John the Baptist did the work of passing on the sin of mankind, and Jesus did the work of bearing that sin which had been passed on to Him and receiving judgment. The Lord, bearing that sin, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and three days later He rose again from death.

Let us read John chapter 1, verse 29.

"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"

In the sin of the world that John testified of, all the sins of our whole lifetime are also included. We believed in the baptism the Lord received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection, and so we were washed of all our sins once and for all, and the Holy Spirit came into our hearts that had received the remission of sins. The Jesus who saved us in this way is the very almighty God who walked on the water. Whoever believes that He is the Creator also accepts just as it is the word that this Creator has saved him through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Yet even after receiving the remission of sins, when we meet hardship as we live, there are times when we regard Jesus as if He were someone without power. If we forget that He is the God of power, our prayer easily ends up as a mere formality. When we rightly know who Jesus is, the heart with which we pray also changes. We come to ask for help from the One who actually hears and will answer. A person may have the heart to help but lack the strength to do so, and he may grow weary from his own problems alone. The Lord is different.

Peter was a man weak enough to deny the Lord three times later on. But he did not fall because of that weakness. It was

because he knew and believed who Jesus truly was—almighty God, who is equal to the Father. We, too, often see our own shortcomings. What holds us up at that time is the faith that knows who the Lord is who saved us.

The disciples who welcomed the Lord reached the land where they were going

Let us read verse 21.

"Then they willingly received Him into the boat, and immediately the boat was at the land where they were going."

The disciples who had been afraid just a moment before now rejoiced. Knowing that the One who had come near was Jesus, they received the Lord into the boat. And the boat immediately reached the land where they were going. John conveys not how the disciples held out in the midst of the storm, but the fact that the Lord came to them, that they welcomed the Lord, and that the boat reached its destination. This event, in which He kept the disciples in the storm and brought them to the land where they were going, is also a word telling us that God holds and keeps the church when the church undergoes hardship on this earth.

On the way we have walked, too, there has been the Lord's help that cannot be explained by our own strength alone. There were many hardships, but each time the Lord was with us, and so we have come to this day. We give thanks to the Lord, who has guided us this far.

When a hard time passes, we hold on long to the memory of our suffering, yet we easily forget how the Lord helped us. When we look back on how the Lord guided us, thanksgiving arises, and that thanksgiving becomes the strength to rely on the Lord

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in the days ahead as well. For we believe that the Lord who has been with us until now will do so in the days ahead as well.

Let us believe in the Lord's power and serve the gospel together

This word is also a great strength to us who labor together for the gospel. The places where the gospel must be preached are vast, but the people we can go to and care for ourselves are limited. Our coworkers who preach the word far away need wisdom and the fullness of the Holy Spirit, and their livelihood also needs help. Even in places our hands cannot reach, we can believe in the Lord's power and pray for them.

We pray because the Lord can actually help that person. Jesus, who walked across the night sea to His disciples, visits them today as well and gives them strength. We, too, are living amid the prayers of others and the help of the Lord. Whenever you pray, know the power of Jesus, who walked on the water, and ask Him. In prayer that believes God will hear, there is expectation. Even a heart that was discouraged by looking at circumstances regains strength as it looks to the Lord.

In the work of serving the gospel, each person has his own labor entrusted to him. There are those who preach the word, those who prepare literature, and those who work and pray in order to support that work. Rather than trying to hold everything together by our own strength, we value one another's labor and rely on the Lord together. It is the Lord who accomplishes the work, and we serve with the strength He gives.

The Lord, who rose again from death, had His disciples make disciples of all the nations and teach them the word He had

commanded. There is a promise He gave together with that mission when He entrusted it to them.

"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

In the word to preach the gospel, there is the promise that the Lord will be with us. Therefore, do not lay down the work of the gospel by looking only at your circumstances. The Lord, who said He would be with us to the end of the age, will uphold our labor in the days ahead as well, and He will accomplish the work of saving souls to the very end.

Remember the One who came near to the disciples on the dark sea. He let the frightened disciples hear His voice, and He brought them to the land where they were going. The Jesus we believe in today is that very One. He is the Savior who received the judgment of our sins on the Cross, and He is the God of power who made all things. The Lord, who said, *"It is I; do not be afraid" (John 6:20),* on the storm-tossed night sea, has brought us this far, and He will also bring us to the land where we are going in the days ahead. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The bread of life that makes us live forever

< John 6:22–40 >

“On the following day, when the people who were standing on the other side of the sea saw that there was no other boat there, except that one which His disciples had entered, and that Jesus had not entered the boat with His disciples, but His disciples had gone away alone— however, other boats came from Tiberias, near the place where they ate bread after the Lord had given thanks— when the people therefore saw that Jesus was not there, nor His disciples, they also got into boats and came to Capernaum, seeking Jesus. And when they found Him on the other side of the sea, they said to Him, ‘Rabbi, when did You come here?’ Jesus answered them and said, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.’ Then they said to Him, ‘What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.’ Therefore they said to Him, ‘What sign will You perform then, that we may see it and believe You? What work will You do? Our fathers ate the manna in the desert; as it is written, “He gave them bread from heaven to eat.”’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to

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you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' Then they said to Him, 'Lord, give us this bread always.' And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst. But I said to you that you have seen Me and yet do not believe. All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day.'"

It is the day after the five thousand ate the loaves. The crowd remembered that the evening before there had been only one boat on the shore, and that only the disciples had boarded it and left. But when morning came and they looked around, Jesus was not there. They got on boats that had come over from Tiberias, went all the way to Capernaum, and at last found the Lord. Then they asked, "Rabbi, when did You come here?" That the Lord had walked on the sea that night and gone to His disciples was something they did not know.

These were people who came seeking the Lord even across the sea. Outwardly, they look like truly zealous people. But instead of answering the question of when He had come, Jesus spoke of why they were seeking Him. The Lord looks not at a person's footsteps but at what his heart seeks.

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Our coming to worship today and listening to the word is also a matter of seeking the Lord. Then what are we seeking the Lord in order to obtain? We may hope that the difficulties of our lives will be resolved, and we may hope that our bodies will be healthy and our work will go well. But what the Lord came to give us was something far greater than a single meal of bread. In this passage Jesus reveals that He is the bread of life, and He promises to give eternal life to those who believe in Him and to raise them up at the last day. Let us follow that word in order.

What the Lord looks at is what our hearts seek

Let us read verses 26 and 27.

"Jesus answered them and said, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, you seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life, which the Son of Man will give you, because God the Father has set His seal on Him.'"

A sign is a supernatural work that only God can do. Feeding five thousand with five barley loaves was a sign pointing to the fact that the One who did it was God, who had come in a human body. Having seen that sign, the crowd should have thought as follows: "Who is He? Is He not the very Savior whom our fathers were told would come?" But their interest stayed fixed on getting bread to eat again. The Lord knew their hearts, and He rebuked them, saying that they were seeking Him because they had eaten of the loaves and were filled.

We too can look only to the benefits the Lord gives. We rejoice when difficulties are resolved, but we do not actually try to find out how Jesus removed our sins. If we believe like that,

our faith too rises and falls with the circumstances of our lives. When things go well we are zealous, and on the day we fail to get what we hoped for, our hearts grow distant.

That is why the Lord said not to labor for the food which perishes. The food which perishes lasts only while it is being eaten. However well we eat, it is digested and gone, and then we must eat again. Even money saved by working diligently all one's life loses its value as the years pass. Above all, with it we can neither wash away the sin in our hearts nor obtain the life beyond death. Of course, we work in order to make a living. What the Lord warned against is a life in which the whole heart is taken captive by that work and the matter of one's own soul is put off until later.

Then what is the food which endures to everlasting life, that is, the food which does not perish? It is Jesus Himself and what He has done for us. To labor for that food is to follow in our thoughts what Jesus has done. Why did He who is God humble Himself and become a man? Why did He have to receive baptism, and why did it have to be from John the Baptist? Why did He say, as He died on the Cross, that it was finished? The one who follows the word in his thoughts wherever the word leads, as a train follows its tracks, and accepts in his heart that all of it was for him, is the one who obtains this food.

He said that the Son of Man gives this food. The Son of Man is God, who came to this earth in a human body, that is, Jesus. And God the Father set His seal on Him. To set a seal means to stamp with a seal. It means that the Father had stamped His seal and determined that when He saved mankind fallen into sin, He would do it through His Son. He had even determined the method. It was that He would have the Son come in the form of a man, receive baptism from John the Baptist to bear the sin of mankind, pay the price of sin on the Cross, and rise again from

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death. Therefore, the Savior of mankind is Jesus alone. Neither Moses nor anyone else can stand in this place. If we take lightly this God who put on human form, came to seek us, and gave us everlasting life, what on earth could we regard as weighty?

Believing in the One the Father sent is the work of God

Let us read verses 28 and 29.

"Then they said to Him, 'What shall we do, that we may work the works of God?' Jesus answered and said to them, 'This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent.'"

On hearing the word to labor for the food of everlasting life, the people asked what they should do. We too, when we hear the words "the work of God," first call to mind a list of things we must do. We reckon how much we must serve, what we must offer, and what rules we must keep. But Jesus' answer was one thing. He said that believing in Him whom God sent—that is the work of God. Believing is also a work. When we believe, we receive the remission of sins; when we believe, we become children of God; when we believe, we obtain everlasting life; and when we believe, that faith becomes the food of our hearts.

How does that faith come about? It begins first with believing that God is alive. Next, when one looks at oneself in the light of the word that God has given, one realizes that one needs a Savior. Then he searches through the word to find out what Jesus, whom God sent, did when He came to this earth. "Why did He come? What did He do when He came? If He came to remove the sin of the whole world, did He bear my sins too? Then how did He bear them?" The one who searches out and

follows the word like this is the one who does the work of God, and at last he believes and obtains everlasting life.

The Gospel of John says in chapter 1 that there was another man who was sent from God. That man's name is John. John the Baptist was sent to do the work of transferring the sin of mankind to Jesus and to testify that Jesus is the Savior who bears and takes away the sin of the world. Therefore, included in the faith that believes in Jesus, whom God sent, is also knowing the event in which John the Baptist baptized Jesus and passed our sins on to Him. True faith goes one step further than knowing the meaning of Jesus' name; it is knowing and believing what He did.

The salvation the Lord has fulfilled is our bread

Then the crowd demanded a sign again. They asked what sign there was that they could see and believe Him, and said that their fathers had eaten in the wilderness the manna that came down from heaven. What they meant was that Moses had fed their fathers with the bread of heaven, so what would He do? Even though they had seen the five thousand eat the loaves only the day before, they sought yet another sign.

Let us read verses 32 through 35.

"Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, Moses did not give you the bread from heaven, but My Father gives you the true bread from heaven. For the bread of God is He who comes down from heaven and gives life to the world.' Then they said to Him, 'Lord, give us this bread always.' And Jesus said to them, 'I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.'"

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The Lord first corrected them as to who had given the manna. Even the manna in the wilderness was not given by Moses but by God the Father. And now that Father gives the true bread from heaven, and He said that this bread is the bread which comes down from heaven and gives life to the world. The manna fed the body while they passed through the wilderness, but this bread makes the soul that is dead in sin live forever.

The crowd asked Him to give them that bread always. They were still thinking of bread eaten with the mouth, while the Lord was speaking of Himself. They were talking about two different kinds of bread. So the Lord said plainly, "I am the bread of life."

How did Jesus become our bread? The bread refers to that body with which the Lord came to this earth in the flesh, bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and saved us from sin by the blood of the Cross. Think of the Day of Atonement in the Old Testament.

"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man" (Leviticus 16:21).

When the high priest laid both his hands on it, a year's worth of Israel's sins passed at one time onto the head of the goat. That goat went out into the wilderness bearing the iniquities of the people. This very thing was fulfilled at the Jordan River when John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus. All the sins of the world passed onto the body of Jesus at that time once and for all. The Lord, bearing the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross and received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and He overcame death and rose again, becoming our Savior. The work He fulfilled in this way has become the bread of eternal life for you and me.

Then how is this bread eaten? Unlike bread eaten with the mouth, this bread is eaten by believing with the heart. The Lord Himself placed side by side the one who comes to Him and the one who believes in Him. When we believe the word that the Lord took our sins away through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment on the Cross, that bread enters into us and becomes life. Those who receive into their hearts this bread, which holds the truth of the remission of sins, receive the remission of sins; the Holy Spirit comes into their hearts and they live as children of God; and in the end they enjoy everlasting life. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in.

He said that the one who eats this bread neither hungers nor thirsts. Since the flesh must still eat food every day, what the Lord spoke of is the hunger of the soul. Before we met the Lord, however hard we lived in the world, our hearts were hollow and empty whenever we were alone. Because sin remained in our hearts, we were thirsty even as we worshiped. But since believing that the Lord removed all our sins, our hearts are full and secure. Even when the worries of the world come, we overcome their weight and get up again. If we look around us, there is a saint whose heart is bright and whose face is bright even though his circumstances are hard and seem beyond his strength. That appearance of his—giving thanks because of the Lord despite his lack and following the Lord—comes from the fact that he is a person who has eaten the bread of life.

The crowd asked for this bread always, but we who have received the remission of sins are already eating this bread every day. In the Old Testament, the clean animals that could be eaten were those that had cloven hooves and chewed the cud. We too must ruminate well. As we live, our shortcomings are exposed and things that trouble our conscience arise. At that time we

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draw the word we have heard back up into our hearts. Did the Lord have this sin, too, passed on to Him? For what reason did the Lord go to John the Baptist? When we digest the word again like this, that word becomes food for the spirit in our hearts and cool water that wets our dry throats. Just as we needed Jesus when we were saved, even after being saved we live by this bread of life.

The Lord never casts out those who come to Him

In verse 36 Jesus said that the crowd had seen Him and yet did not believe. They had talked with the Lord face to face, had eaten the bread He gave, and had seen with their eyes the signs He performed. Their own faith, which they had kept since the time of their fathers, became a stumbling block instead, and they closed their hearts to the word that the One who had come in a human body was the Savior sent by God. Today too, there are many who call on the name of Jesus yet are reluctant to accept the words He spoke. While saying they believe in Jesus as the Savior, they lightly pass over the word that the Lord saved us through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. That is a faith that believes only half. Truly believing in Jesus is believing every word He spoke.

Let us read verse 37.

"All that the Father gives Me will come to Me, and the one who comes to Me I will by no means cast out."

Who is the one the Father gives to the Son? It is the one who knows his sins before God and is in anguish. It is the one who admits that he has broken the word of God many times and that, by the law of God, he is a person bound for hell. God leads a person with such a heart to the Son. At times He causes his work

not to go well, and He even causes him to fall ill or to go through great hardship. When his heart thus comes to look for something to rely on, God brings that person to the place where the gospel is preached. Our sitting here today and listening to the word is also the result of the Father having led us to Jesus.

Even good medicine is of use only to a sick person. Jesus called Himself a physician, and the one who is in pain because of his sins comes to the Lord, that Physician. To come to the Lord is to rely on the Lord. The word 'rely' has in it the sense of leaning on. To hold on to the word, saying, "I am weak, so I will lean on what the Lord has done," and "So the Lord has done this for me"—that is faith. The Lord never casts out the one who comes like that. Instead of telling him to come after washing away his sins, He calls him to come just as he is, with his sins.

"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28).

The Lord is One who accepts the lacking rather than the outstanding. So if there is anyone who asks what qualification he has, knowing that he is lacking and knowing that he has sin is that very qualification. Because he is lacking, he came to the Lord, and the Lord embraces that lacking person. What we should hold on to is not our own circumstances but the words Jesus spoke and the work He fulfilled. Believe in the Lord without hesitation. The one who has received this grace becomes humble, gives thanks to the One who saved him, and comes to want to follow His will.

The Father's will is to bring those who believe to life

Let us read verses 38 through 40.

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"For I have come down from heaven, not to do My own will, but the will of Him who sent Me. This is the will of the Father who sent Me, that of all He has given Me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of Him who sent Me, that everyone who sees the Son and believes in Him may have everlasting life; and I will raise him up at the last day."

People thought the Messiah would come in majesty. But the Lord was born through the body of the virgin Mary and grew up in a carpenter's home just as we do. The King of kings humbled Himself and came down from heaven in order to meet us. And on this earth He did the will of the Father who sent Him. That will was to send the Son, pass the sin of mankind on to Him, and, by paying the life of the Son as the price, let us obtain new life.

To save every one of those the Father entrusted to the Son without losing a single one—that is the will of the Father. When we believed in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross and received the remission of sins, the will of the Father who sent the Son was fulfilled in us. Now the Father of Jesus Christ has become our Father. This salvation obtained by faith is kept forever and remains unchanged to the end. For God keeps us from every threat of the devil and brings us all the way to His kingdom.

If one could live forever by eating a single loaf of bread, how expensive that bread would be! If everlasting life were a life that could be bought with money, people, even without God, would have bought and sold it as much as they pleased. But God gave this life so that anyone—whether one who has much or one who has little, whether learned or unlearned—may obtain it if only he believes in the Son. That is what the word "everyone who believes" means.

To have obtained everlasting life means never to die, for all eternity. People seek eternal life in many religions, but there it remains to the end a mere wish. The everlasting life the Lord has given is a gift actually placed in our hands. And the Lord promised to raise us up at the last day. The Apostle Paul speaks of that day as follows.

"Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed— in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed" (1 Corinthians 15:51–52).

On the day the Lord comes again, those who believed and fell asleep will rise from their graves clothed in new bodies, and the saints who are alive will suddenly be changed into a body like the Lord's and live with Him forever. Those who have eaten the food that does not perish rise again in bodies that will not perish. Even if on this earth the strength of our bodies weakens and what we once enjoyed diminishes, this life we have received from the Lord does not diminish in the least. Anyone becomes anxious when thinking of the days ahead. But we who have received this life, which the Father willed and the Son promised, are people whose future is already guaranteed.

What will those who have received eternal life live for?

There are two kinds of people in this world. One kind follows Jesus in order to fill the needs of the flesh, and the other kind believes in Jesus and receives the remission of sins, and follows Jesus in order to preach this food of life to others as well. Which are we? The Lord called those who had labored only for the food

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which perishes to the food of everlasting life. For us who have already received the remission of sins, too, that word is still alive just as it is.

The work we do every day looks the same as other people's from the outside. But even while doing the same work, what we do it for can differ. If one works only so that he alone may eat well and live comfortably, that is work for the food which perishes. That work, repeated day after day, soon becomes tedious and irritating. But when that work is used for sharing the bread of life with others, the same labor becomes work for the food of everlasting life. Then there is fulfillment in that work, and there is thanksgiving.

To preach the gospel is to be a witness. It is to testify, "The Lord has saved me by the water, the blood, and the Spirit." Many hands come together along the way by which that testimony is conveyed. Even the small work of sweeping and cleaning in the church is the work of God, and all those labors come together so that someone hears the word and comes to know Jesus, the bread of life. Those who have eaten the bread of life can share that bread with others as well. For the bread we have eaten is the true bread.

Life has already been given freely by Jesus, and we have received that grace first. What those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross are to do on this earth is to live according to the will of God and give glory to God. So they ruminate on the work He fulfilled and believe it, and they convey that joy to others. It is the life received by faith that causes us to offer our lives to the Lord.

So let us look back on our own hearts. Are worries about money and daily life pushing out every thought of the Lord? If a heart that sought the Lord only as One who fills the needs of

the flesh still remains, lay that heart down before the word being spoken to you today. At the end of the road that rejects the bread of life there is the judgment of sin, and before those who believe there is eternal life.

Jesus is our bread of life today as well. He removed our sins through the baptism He received from John and the Cross, He does not cast out those who come to Him, and He will raise us up at the last day. Therefore, let us who have eaten this bread by faith labor not for the food which perishes but for the food which endures to everlasting life. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who gave His own body and made us live

< John 6:41–51 >

“The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, ‘I am the bread which came down from heaven.’ And they said, ‘Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, “I have come down from heaven”?’ Jesus therefore answered and said to them, ‘Do not murmur among yourselves. No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, “And they shall all be taught by God.” Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father. Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world.’”

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John chapter 6 begins with the story of bread and continues with the story of bread. At first it was the bread for the body, when He fed five thousand people with five barley loaves. Next, the Lord said that He was the bread which came down from heaven, and then He said that He was the bread of life. In today's passage He says that He is the living bread which came down from heaven, and finally He says that this bread is His flesh. The word deepens step by step, and when it reaches today's passage, what that bread is becomes clear.

But the people who were listening to this word drew away step by step. They thought they knew Jesus well. They knew everything—who His parents were, and in what town He had grown up and what He had done there. That very knowledge became a stumbling block, so that they could not accept the Lord's word. This is how different it is to know stories about Jesus and to believe in Him as our Savior.

With this word before us today, let us look in order at who the Jesus we believe in is, and what He has given us.

The Savior who cannot be known by looking with human eyes alone

Let us read verses 41 through 43.

"The Jews then complained about Him, because He said, 'I am the bread which came down from heaven.' And they said, 'Is not this Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How is it then that He says, "I have come down from heaven"?' Jesus therefore answered and said to them, 'Do not murmur among yourselves.'"

When they heard the word that He was the bread which came down from heaven, the Jews must have recalled the manna their

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fathers had eaten in the wilderness. Yet the One standing before their eyes was the son of Joseph. They knew His parents, and, as the other Gospels relate, they knew Him as a young man who had grown up in a carpenter's house. That young man had turned thirty and received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and now He was saying that He had come down from heaven, so they could not possibly accept it. So they murmured among themselves.

The reason they did not recognize Him was that they knew Jesus only in the flesh. Had they looked at the works He had done, they could have recognized Him. The Lord had fed five thousand people with five barley loaves and had healed the sick. Had they known that He was the Messiah promised to their fathers, they would have fallen down before Him. But in their hearts there was no fear of God. So they confined the One whom God had sent within the frame of what they knew, and judged Him.

Jesus came among people as the son of Joseph, but He was not One who came from the earth. He is the Son of God, who came down from heaven.

"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

He who is God by nature came among us through the body of the virgin Mary, putting on human flesh. Because He came from heaven, He can give us the remission of sins and give us life. If we regard Jesus as a great teacher who came from the earth, or as one of the saints the world respects, such a Jesus cannot remove our sins. Because God became man and came, our salvation is complete.

The appearance of the Lord as He came before people was the appearance of an ordinary man. That is why even today many

people call on Jesus while regarding Him as little more than a figure belonging to the earth. If we believe that way, our faith, too, becomes something made according to our own will: we hold on to it when we need it and push it aside when it becomes inconvenient. But Jesus is our Savior, our shepherd, and our Judge. He is not One whom we can sway as we please.

The Lord told those who were murmuring not to murmur. Seen with human eyes, it is only natural that this word sounds curious and strange. But the one whom the Father leads to the Son hears and believes that word instead of murmuring. The Lord goes on to speak of that leading.

Those who hear the Father's teaching and come to Jesus

Let us read verses 44 through 46.

"No one can come to Me unless the Father who sent Me draws him; and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the prophets, 'And they shall all be taught by God.' Therefore everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Me. Not that anyone has seen the Father, except He who is from God; He has seen the Father."

The Lord said that one can come to Him only if the Father draws him. The reason He emphasized this word repeatedly is that both recognizing the Son and believing that He has saved us by the water, the blood, and the Spirit are things beyond human strength. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—the Triune God—led us to Jesus Christ so that we met Him, believed in Him, and were saved.

Then what we seek as we come to the Lord matters. A person who believes in Jesus and seeks only to become rich, to be

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healed of sickness, and to have things go well comes as he pleases, believes as he pleases, and then goes back. The Father does not bring to the Son a person who seeks only the food which perishes. God looks at the center of a person's heart. He leads to the Son the person who comes before the Lord because he wants to live forever, because he wants to receive the remission of sins and become a child of God.

This word is also a comfort to us who preach the gospel. The One who makes a person believe is the Father. Faith arises more by the Father's leading than by a person's urging. There are people whom God leads to church, and there are people to whom He gives understanding and faith when they hear the word. So all we need to do is preach the word and leave the work of leading to the Father.

The Lord went on to say that everyone who has heard and learned from the Father comes to Him. God leads us by His word. The writing of the prophets that the Lord quoted is a word from the Book of Isaiah.

"All your children shall be taught by the LORD, And great shall be the peace of your children" (Isaiah 54:13).

The Old Testament promised the coming Messiah again and again. It spoke of the One who would come as the Seed of the woman, the One who would bear the sin of the people in their place. God also gave the law and taught that all people are sinners before that law. The one who has learned in this way through the word that he is a sinner, and has learned of the promised Savior, comes to Jesus in order to be saved. The one who learns the word comes to eat the bread of life that He has set out.

The place where we receive this teaching today is also the place of the word. When we hear the word preached by a person who believes in the gospel, we hear, beyond the words of a man,

the word that God speaks. When that word is preached, the Holy Spirit in our hearts gives us understanding. Therefore, treasure the time of hearing the word. It is the time when the Father leads us to the Son.

In verse 46 the Lord said that the only one who has seen the Father is He who is from God. The One who has seen the Father is the Son alone. We know God because the Son, who has seen the Father, has spoken to us. Therefore, faith is different from holding on to a special feeling or a vision. It is believing that the word spoken by the One who came from the Father, and the work He did, are true. The one who believes in that Son knows the Father's love and salvation, and can preach it to others. And the Lord promised that He will raise up at the last day those who come to Him in this way.

The everlasting life already given to those who believe

Let us read verses 47 through 50.

"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die."

He said that he who believes has everlasting life. Here, he who believes is the one who knows that he is a sinner who can only go to hell before God, and who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given. Instead of saying that he will obtain that everlasting life in the future, the Lord said that he already has it. We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are people who have the life that lives forever. Since we were born

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once on this earth, our bodies die once. But our souls have already obtained everlasting life, and the Lord will also raise up our bodies at the last day and make them live forever.

This everlasting life is not something we obtained by piling up a holy life or by having ability. God gave it freely to those who believe. The one thing He told us to do is to believe. The faith that believes what the Lord has done is the channel that leads to everlasting life. And faith is believing the word of God. Feelings come and go, but the word remains as it is. If we believe as God has spoken and as the Lord has fulfilled, everlasting life is ours.

The Lord compared Himself with the manna. The fathers in the wilderness ate the manna that came down from heaven, but in the end they died. People today regard that story of the manna as a tale of old, but the Lord actually sent down the bread of life by which we can live. Bread exists to be eaten. And the way to eat this bread is faith. In the one who believes in his heart in Jesus, the bread of life, the soul that was dead in sin comes alive again. That is being born again.

Who is the bread of which one may eat and not die? It is Jesus alone. Only by believing in the Son whom God has appointed, in the salvation He has fulfilled, do we obtain the remission of sins and everlasting life.

Therefore, together with the fact that you have received the remission of sins, remember also that you are a person who has everlasting life. The one who has everlasting life is bold in the face of the future. Even when the day comes to grow sick and old and stand in the face of death, where he will go is clear. The reason the saints of the early church could be bold at the place of martyrdom was also that the Lord had given them everlasting life. We need not think of ourselves as too great or too small; we

need only know and believe, just as it is, that God has made us beings who live forever.

The Lord who gave His own body for the life of the world

Let us read verse 51.

"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."

As the word about the bread deepened in this way, the Lord finally reveals what that bread is. He said that the bread He would give is His flesh. To give His flesh means to give His body. It means that He who came down from heaven came putting on human flesh and gave that body to us.

Why did the Lord have to come in the flesh? We also sin with our hearts and thoughts, but it is our bodies that actually commit that sin. That is why the Lord came putting on flesh exactly like that of man and saved us impartially. When He turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and bore all the sins of the world on His body; He gave up that body on the Cross and received in our place the judgment we were to receive; and He rose again from death and gave us new life. The baptism the Lord received from John was the baptism He received in order to feed us His flesh.

The Apostle John testifies as follows.

"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth –ASV" (1 John 5:6–7).

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That the Lord saved us by water and blood refers to His being born through the body of a woman, His receiving baptism from John, and His being hung on the Cross. Among these, the baptism He received from John was truly a great event. For it was there that He bore the sin of mankind. Without that event, even if the Lord had died on the Cross a thousand times, ten thousand times, our sins would have remained as they were. If someone, without having had another's sins passed on to him, stepped forward in court saying he would be punished in that person's place, would such words hold up? Because our sins were first transferred onto the Lord's body, He could righteously pay the price of those sins on the Cross.

The Lord gave this flesh for the life of the world. The sins of every person born on this earth, from Adam until today and until the last day, were laid on that body. He made it so that all the people of the world might live by eating that body through faith. In our salvation there is not the slightest bit of our deeds or merit. It is a salvation that the Lord fulfilled entirely.

To eat this flesh means to believe in the heart. To believe that Jesus came in the flesh, received our sins on that body, gave that body up on the Cross, and rose again—this is eating His flesh. The one who eats this bread lives forever.

Place side by side the one sentence that says He saved us on the Cross, and the sentence that says He received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins, received judgment on the Cross while bearing those sins, died, and rose again, and so saved us. Which is deeper and more concrete? Everything the Lord did was for us, and all of it is important. The one who has believed this gospel and eaten the bread of life is a child of God who has received the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit is with him in his heart.

A life of fearing God, who has given life

There is something we who have eaten the bread of life now need. It is a heart that fears God. The Jews in the passage had no fear of God in their hearts, so they saw Jesus only in the flesh and murmured. Through the Scriptures we know that Jesus is the One who made the universe and all things, and that He became man and came, received baptism from John the Baptist, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so became our Savior. So there arises in us a heart that wants to respect Him, to fear Him, to love Him, and to obey Him. This is the fear of God.

Without this heart, following God feels like a burden even after we have been saved. We resist, asking why our freedom is being bound. The thought that, since we have been saved, we can live as we please and just make sure of the Lord again at the end is a thought of the flesh. This obedience is different from offering something as the price for obtaining everlasting life. It is that we become so grateful for the life we have already received that we want to follow the will of the One who gave that life. The Lord saved us first so that we would live for those who have not yet been saved.

But people easily become absorbed in something. They become absorbed in a person, absorbed in work, or absorbed in the culture of the world. To be absorbed in something is to love it. The Apostle John exhorts believers as follows.

"Do not love the world or the things in the world. If anyone loves the world, the love of the Father is not in him. For all that is in the world—the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life—is not of the Father but is of the world. And the world is passing away, and the lust of it; but he who does the will of God abides forever" (1 John 2:15–17).

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If we love the world, there is no place left in our hearts for the love of God to stay. The world and its lust pass away, and the one who does the will of God abides forever. Putting God in first place is the faith that fears Him.

This fear is revealed in daily life. When the word shines on our wrongs, we say yes and admit them, and we rise again believing that the Lord has removed even those wrongs. Even when a fellow believer, a brother or sister, seems lacking, we do not treat him rudely. For he, too, is one of God's people whom the Lord made live by giving His body. We wait for him, teach him, and help him when he is weak. And we labor together so that this bread of life may be preached to those who have not yet heard the gospel. It is putting the will of the Lord who made us live before our own feelings and calculations.

We cannot always live this way by our resolve alone. So ask God every day for a heart that fears Him. Whenever your heart grows weak and you become absorbed in what is before your eyes, return to the word and think first of the Lord's will.

Jesus is the living bread which came down from heaven. He is not One who gave us a moment's comfort and left; He is the Savior who bore our sins on His own body, gave up that body, and made us live forever. Giving thanks for this grace, let us treasure His word above our own thoughts. Looking to the Lord who gave His own body to make us live, I hope that today, too, we will live by the faith that loves and fears God, who saved us. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

I am the bread of life

< John 6:47–58 >

“Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead. This is the bread which comes down from heaven, that one may eat of it and not die. I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, ‘How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?’ Then Jesus said to them, ‘Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.’”

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The word that goes on from bread to flesh and blood

John chapter 6 has seventy-one verses. At the beginning of chapter 6, the miracle of the five loaves and two fish appears. There were many people following Jesus around, but there was nothing to eat. Then Jesus asked Philip, *"Where shall we buy bread, that these may eat?" (John 6:5).*

Philip answered, *"Two hundred denarii worth of bread is not sufficient for them, that every one of them may have a little" (John 6:7)*. While such talk was going back and forth, a disciple named Andrew said, *"There is a lad here who has five barley loaves and two small fish, but what are they among so many?" (John 6:9)*. Jesus had the people sit down on the grass and blessed that lunch box containing five barley loaves and two salted fish. When He blessed it, it multiplied into a huge heap, and the fragments that were left over after it had all been handed out to the people *"filled twelve baskets" (John 6:13)*.

This is how the incident of the bread appears. After that, the people tried to make Jesus king, but Jesus had not come to become a king of this world. Jesus went to another region, but the people searched for Him and followed Him there. Jesus said to them, *"You seek Me, not because you saw the signs, but because you ate of the loaves and were filled. Do not labor for the food which perishes, but for the food which endures to everlasting life" (John 6:26–27)*.

Then what is the food which perishes, and what is the food which does not perish? What must we do to eat the food which does not perish? Jesus carried forward His word about the bread, saying, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:29)*.

Jesus went on to the word that He would give His flesh. He said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life. Your fathers ate the manna in the wilderness, and are dead" (John 6:47–49).*

He connected the two and said that although their fathers had lived by eating the manna sent down from heaven, what God actually intended to give was the bread of life.

It means that if people eat this bread, they live. *"I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world. The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you'" (John 6:51–53).* Jesus kept speaking about the bread, and now He speaks about His flesh.

At first He gave bread to the hungry people, and to those who ate that bread and, pleased with it, followed Him around, He said to labor not for the food that would perish and disappear but for the food that leads to everlasting life. When they asked what the food that does not perish was, He said that it was to believe in the One whom God had sent, and so He spoke of Himself. And He said, *"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:57).*

Jesus was speaking of Himself. He said that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood. The Jews were at a loss. Wondering, "How on earth does He mean to give us His flesh, and how does He mean to give us His blood?" they quarreled among themselves.

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So finally Jesus said, *"This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:58)*. He keeps speaking of His flesh.

The word of the Bible reveals Jesus Himself. Jesus tells His listeners that if they eat His flesh and drink His blood, they obtain life. Because He keeps saying words that cannot be understood by human reason even when we read them, there are times when we want to pass quickly over them.

But we must know that this word is a word Jesus spoke in order to remove our sins, give us everlasting life, and bless us by giving His flesh and blood.

Flesh and blood eaten as a rite

Catholicism speaks of the seven sacraments. One of the seven sacraments is the Eucharist.

The Eucharist is eating the body of Jesus. While keeping the Passover, Jesus gave bread to His disciples and said, *"Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26)*, and He gave them the cup and said, *"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28)*. Following this word, Catholicism makes wafers and performs the Eucharist.

While eating the Last Supper with His disciples, Jesus distributed the bread and gave the cup, and He said that this was His flesh and this was His blood. Commemorating that word is the Lord's Supper service.

Catholicism says that one obtains everlasting life by keeping this rite of the Lord's Supper. So at Mass they have people sing hymns about the Lord's Supper, and the people come forward before the priest; when the priest says, "The body of Christ," the

one receiving says, "Amen," and receives the wafer in his mouth or on his palm and eats it.

They say that this is precisely the way to keep the word we read today, *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56)*. They claim that eating the bread and drinking the wine at the Lord's Supper is eating the flesh and blood of Jesus. As for the method, too, they say that when the priest blesses the bread, the bread actually changes into the body of Jesus and the wine actually changes into the blood of Jesus, so that when the believers receive and eat it, they are eating the flesh and blood of Jesus.

That is why they perform the rite of the Holy Supper. They do so in order to obtain everlasting life and obtain new life by eating the bread and wine.

Then why did they make the seven sacraments? The point is that a priest must be the one to do this. They have laid it down that only when a priest offers the prayer of blessing and people eat the bread the priest gives and drink the wine the priest gives does it become eating the flesh and blood of Jesus, and so they obtain everlasting life.

So they say that first of all one must take part in the rite of baptism. Without even knowing the meaning of the baptism Jesus received from John, they go through that rite unconditionally as a sign of believing in Jesus. Next comes what they call the sacrament of confirmation: they say that even if one believes, it will not do unless the Holy Spirit helps from within, so one must receive the laying on of hands. And that, too, must be received from their own clergy.

And at the rite of the Lord's Supper as well, they say one must receive the bread and wine from a priest and eat them. They have set up the seven sacraments so that if people belong to them and take part in the seven rites, they receive the remission of sins,

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obtain everlasting life, and receive blessings from God. And when the Reformers came out of Catholicism, they brought this framework of being bound to rites right along with them. Protestantism, too, is not very different in that it attaches great importance to rites.

Anyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can preach the word from this very place. But unless one has graduated from a seminary, Protestant churches do not grant the right to preach the word. It is exactly the same as Catholicism. Just as Catholicism has made seven rites and says a priest must officiate at them, in Protestant Christianity, too, one is given the right to preach the word only after graduating from a seminary, passing through the stages of evangelist and licensed preacher, and receiving ordination as a pastor, and to take part in the rite of baptism one must receive separate instruction. The point is that what they have made so complicated is utterly different from the word of the Bible.

Catholicism made its creed at the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, and later, in the Middle Ages, it laid down the seven sacraments. It made these its own prerogative and decreed that only by submitting to them does one receive the remission of sins and obtain everlasting life. Protestant Christianity, too, says that one must hear sermons from someone who has graduated from an orthodox seminary and must take part in its rites. And it has divided up the remission of sins in its doctrine, so that it is not received at one time but in parts, like paying off installments: original sin is remitted, and the sins one commits every day are remitted by offering prayers of repentance each time.

And there they wield their authority. But when I read the word of the Bible, it is absolutely not so. Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, he who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life" (John 6:47–48).*

The baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross

That whoever eats His flesh and drinks His blood receives the remission of sins and obtains everlasting life—the Lord keeps saying this. The place where this word was finally fulfilled is the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His body; by going to the Cross and being nailed to it and shedding His blood, He became the sacrificial offering of atonement that removes our sins; and He rose again from death. By believing in that Jesus, we become people who receive the remission of sins and obtain everlasting life.

When Jesus came to this earth and, at the age of thirty, began His public ministry of saving mankind, the very first thing He did was to receive baptism from John the Baptist. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him. The word baptism has the meaning of washing. It means washing away sin. The sin that Adam and Eve committed was on us, and when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, that sin was transferred onto the body of Jesus. It was passed on to Jesus. Having had the sin of the world, that is, the sins of all people without a single one left out, transferred to Him, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, died, rose again, and became our Savior.

By believing in that Jesus, we eat the flesh and blood of Jesus. In that way we receive the remission of sins and obtain everlasting life. This is what the Bible says. The core of the Bible is this word He spoke: *"He who believes in Me has everlasting life. I am the bread of life" (John 6:47–48)*. It means that the one who believes has the life that lives forever.

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"By giving My flesh and blood to you as the sacrificial offering of atonement, I have removed your sins. If you believe this, you receive the remission of sins and obtain everlasting life." This is what the Lord was saying. So Jesus said, *"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53)*.

The Lord keeps saying this. He did not say it only once. Why did Jesus repeat it like this? He did so in order to engrave it on our hearts and minds. However smart a person may be, he does not remember for long what he has heard only once and let pass.

What has been ruminated on again and again is stored in the storehouse of memory. So what was easily learned is soon forgotten, but what was hard to memorize and was therefore repeated over and over in the heart comes to mind by itself even later, and one can say it right away. That is because it is stored in the storehouse of memory.

Jesus said, *"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53)*. The Son of Man is the Son of God, yet He is the One who came as a son of man, that is, as the son of Mary. It means that unless one eats His flesh and drinks His blood, there is no everlasting life, and if one eats by faith, there is everlasting life. Then what is the flesh of Jesus? It is the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist.

Jesus had sin transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. And bearing that sin of the world, He went to the Cross, shed His blood and died, rose again, and became our Savior. To save us from sin, Jesus received baptism from John in His own body, was hung on the Cross, died, rose again, and became our Savior. It means that if we believe in this Jesus in our hearts, He gives us the remission of sins and gives us everlasting life. It means that we have become beings that never

die. As children of God and the people of God, we become beings that never die for all eternity.

This is eating the flesh and blood by faith. This is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Before He was hung on the Cross, at the Holy Supper Jesus broke the bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, *"Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26)*, and He gave them the cup and said, *"This is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28)*.

This word means as follows: "In the Old Testament age, I promised that if you laid your hands on the sacrificial offering to pass your sins on to it, took its blood, and offered the sacrifice according to the law of sacrifice I had established—putting the blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, pouring it out at the base of the altar, and burning the flesh—you would receive the remission of sins. The blood shed in the New Testament according to that promise is the blood of the covenant."

"According to the promise I have received baptism, and now I must be hung on the Cross and die. I will die and rise again. If you believe that I have removed all your sins, you receive salvation." This is what the Lord was saying.

That is why He said to commemorate it.

At the Holy Supper, the Lord told us to commemorate His receiving baptism for us and His dying on the Cross for us. So we commemorate it. It means that we are to commemorate by faith that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, died and rose again, became our Savior and remitted our sins—that He has removed our sins.

It is not that unless we take part in the Holy Supper we can neither receive the remission of sins nor obtain everlasting life. Because Jesus already received baptism from John in order to

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remove our sins, our sins were transferred onto the body of Jesus. They were passed on to Him. Since our sins had been passed on to Him, Jesus, who bore our sins, had to shed His blood and die, as the word says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. So He suffered harsh affliction on the Cross, was nailed to it, poured out all the blood of His heart, and met death.

And after He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and breathed His last, He rose again three days later, just as He had promised His disciples while He was alive.

And for forty days He testified of His resurrection. Whoever believes in that Jesus as his own Savior has received salvation. We must eat the flesh and blood of Jesus with our hearts, by faith. Even if we eat the bread and drink the wine at the Holy Supper every day, it is of no use. As we eat the bread, we recall and think of the fact that Jesus received baptism from John in His own body and had our sins transferred to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, and we perform the rite by faith; it is not that we receive the remission of sins by that act. We receive salvation by believing in our hearts.

The reformation of faith

Therefore, we must carry out a reformation of faith in our hearts. Today, Protestant believers and Catholic believers alike place meaning in what they themselves do. They hold that one must act in such and such a way to be saved. If they obtain salvation by doing something themselves, that is religion.

What we believe is the truth, as the word says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. We receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus. Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and

had our sins transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and died and rose again. By believing in this righteous work of Jesus, who has removed our sins, we receive the remission of sins in our hearts.

That is why the Bible says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. By faith we become righteous, by faith we can follow God, and by faith we can receive blessings. By faith we can go to the kingdom of heaven. It does not come about by our works.

Then are our works unnecessary? Because we have been saved, we offer our bodies, hearts, and minds to become the flower-calyx of the gospel in order to preach the gospel to others. So salvation is obtained by faith; it is not that we are saved by taking part in the Holy Supper and receiving and eating the bread. That is not how everlasting life is obtained.

Jesus spoke at such length and so repeatedly in order to say this. He could have said it just once, yet He kept repeating it, so those listening might say it is tedious. But to put it in a word, the baptism Jesus received from John is the baptism He received in order to feed His flesh to us.

Since Jesus had our sins transferred onto His body by the baptism He received from John, our sins have been washed away, and Jesus had to die on the Cross in our place. That Jesus was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood was His receiving the judgment for our sins in our place. Because He thus paid the price of sin, we who had been dead because of sin have obtained new life again.

We were the ones who had to die, but Jesus bore our sins and paid the price of sin in our place, and so, by believing that Jesus is our Savior, we have become people who have obtained new life. Put in a nutshell, this is it.

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Therefore, we must carry out a reformation of faith in our hearts. We must correct our faith. In the past we thought we had to do many things with our bodies in order to obtain salvation. But now we who have been saved believe that Jesus had our sins transferred onto His body by His baptism, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood to pay the price of sin in our place, died and rose again, and became our Savior. And with this faith we offer our bodies and hearts and serve in order to preach this gospel to those who do not know this truth.

We must correct our faith and believe, be saved, and do the work of serving others. I believe that the Lord has said this to us. The Lord said, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day" (John 6:54)*. He said that He will raise us up at the last day. When is the last day? The Antichrist will appear in this world and rule the people of the whole world, and he will kill everyone who does not listen to him and does not acknowledge him as God. At that time we will be martyred. When we have been martyred and the Antichrist is puffed up with pride, the Lord will immediately come down from heaven and lift us up into the air.

This is the word He spoke. *"I will raise him up" (John 6:54)*. It means that when we believe in the Lord and die, that is not the end; the Lord will bring us to life again, take us to His kingdom, and let us enjoy the life that never dies.

The salvation He fulfilled once and for all

It is truly amazing. Yet today, Catholic leaders and Protestant leaders have seated themselves in the place of Jesus. They tell people that they must listen well to what they say and receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, that they

must be sanctified, and that if they believe as they have been taught, they receive the remission of sins and go to the kingdom of heaven. And yet they are not Jesus.

Jesus had our sins transferred to Him by His baptism. Our sins, the sin of mankind, were transferred to Jesus. They were passed on to Him. Who are the people of the world? All the people who have been born and have died from Adam until now are the people of the world.

So it means that our sins, without a single person left out, were passed on to Jesus. Because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him, He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood in our place, died and rose again, and became our eternal Savior. Jesus' receiving baptism from John was His having our sins transferred to Him, and Jesus' shedding His blood and dying was His receiving the judgment for our sins.

Having had sin transferred to Him by His baptism and having received the judgment for that sin, He paid the price of sin, died and rose again, and became our Savior. He came into this world in order to remove our sins, deliver us from sin, and make us His own people. The Lord is our Lord.

As Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*, Jesus, as the Christ, carried out the roles of King, Prophet, and High Priest. As the Prophet He taught us this truth, and as the High Priest He had our sins transferred onto His body by the baptism He received from John and paid the price of sin with His body, and so He saved us from sin. He is the Creator who made the whole universe, and He is Jesus Christ, the King of kings, who removed the sin of all mankind.

He became our Savior. He is our King. The One who removed our sins is He. Sin does not disappear by believing in theological doctrines. Theological doctrine teaches that one must reach sanctification day by day. That is absolutely not so.

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Jesus removes our sins once and for all. Through His life of thirty-three years, He removed sin at one time. He had sin transferred to Him by the baptism He received from John once, He died once, and having died once and risen again, He saved us.

When people have no money, they buy things in installments. If you buy a refrigerator in installments, you pay a certain amount every month. But Jesus our Savior is not like that. He is not One so lacking in power. He is One who has the ability and power to remove our sins once and for all; He is not so stingy as that.

If He had to remit every day the sins we commit every day, it would be troublesome for Jesus and troublesome for us as well. As Jesus was dying on the Cross, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and died. It means that He removed them all at one time. It means that through His life of thirty-three years He received baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior.

True food and true drink

This is the truth. The word of the Bible is all truth. The Lord said, *"My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55)*. The flesh of Jesus is true food. When we have done wrong and done wrong again as we live in this world, did Jesus have those sins transferred onto His body by the baptism He received from John, or did He not? He had our sins transferred to Him.

It means that He had our sins transferred to Him by that baptism. That is why He said, *"My flesh is food indeed."* As we live, we ruminate, "Jesus had this sin, too, transferred to Him by

His baptism." Even when only two people get together, their opinions do not agree, and each tries to live according to his own thinking. That is how human beings are by nature. So when two or more gather, we need only ask, "What do you think? This is what I think. But Jesus said this," and then believe in our hearts and follow not your thinking or my thinking but the word of the Bible. The idea is this: since Jesus said this, let us do this.

How true a word is the word of Jesus, *"My flesh is food indeed"*! "Since I had all your sins transferred to Me by the baptism I received from John, does that not become food for you? When you commit sin, your heart is distressed and your conscience is tormented until you look like death, but since I had all your sins transferred to Me by My baptism, I am the One who must take responsibility—is there anything left for you to take responsibility for?"

"So how is it? Doesn't your heart feel good?" This becomes the food of life. It becomes the food of our hearts, the food of our souls. Otherwise, we would have to live every day with a worried face and then die. It would be telling us to go on always weeping, always grieving, always in anguish, and then just go to hell.

That is what people say. Offer prayers of repentance, offer prayers of repentance again—they point out the sins committed every day and drive people hard. But Jesus says, "That sin, too, I had transferred to Me by My baptism. It is a sin already settled. That sin, and all the sins of the world as well, I have removed." Therefore, He told us to receive the remission of sins by faith and live loving one another and in harmony, as He said, *"As I have loved you, that you also love one another" (John 13:34)*.

He said, *"My blood is drink indeed."* A drink is something refreshing. Jesus had our sins transferred to Him by the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood

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and suffered, and when He had poured out all the blood of His heart and was breathing His last, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. He paid the price of all our sins in full. So how refreshed our hearts and our consciences are! It means that He has removed our sins so perfectly that there is nothing left for us to do. It means that He has removed them completely. This is the love of the Lord, and this is the salvation the Lord has given us.

Those who abide in the Lord

The Lord said, *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him" (John 6:56)*. By the baptism Jesus received from John, our sins were passed on to Him. Because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him, He was nailed to the Cross as the price of our sins and received the judgment in our place, shed His blood and died, rose again, and became our Savior. That is why the Lord abides in the hearts of us who believe, and we can abide in the Lord. It means that we can become one body.

When we expound this word of the Bible verse by verse, it is so very true and so very certain. *"He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."* We must eat the flesh of the Lord. How do we eat it? Must we tear it off and eat it? Jesus came to John the Baptist at the Jordan River, received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, and to pay the price of our sins He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, rose again, and became our Savior. We receive that Jesus into our hearts and receive the remission of sins by faith. And the Lord abides in our hearts through the Holy Spirit and is with us until the end of the world.

So when we are having a hard time, when something comes up that we cannot resolve, we pray like this: "Lord, I simply

cannot resolve this matter. I fully believe that You have removed my sins, but I cannot resolve this thing that has come up in my life. Lord, please take this problem in hand." Then the Lord takes it in hand and resolves it, and as we go on living, we find it has been resolved. So we say, "Thank You, Lord." We pray and then forget, but the Lord gets it resolved. We do not remember it and do not even give thanks but just go on living, yet the Lord is still our Lord.

The Lord said, *"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me" (John 6:57)*. It means that Jesus Christ was sent by God the Father. It means that the Father sent the Son to save us from sin.

God's purpose in making man from the beginning was to make human beings in His own image and make them His own children. But if He had made us children of God from the very beginning, the other created beings would have resisted God, saying, "Why did You make some the people of God from the beginning and make others like beasts? Are we not all the same created beings?" So it means that God made man in His own image and set the purpose of making him become the people of God.

So, *"As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father"*—Jesus, too, lives because of the Father. And He said, *"He who feeds on Me will live because of Me."* Jesus keeps wanting us to feed on Him. How do we feed on Him? We feed on Him by faith.

"I believe the fact that Jesus had my sins transferred to Him by His baptism, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died to pay the price of my sins, rose again, and became my Savior." Believing like this is eating. It is accepting. The Bible says, *"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to*

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become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12). It is receiving Him. It is not something done with the head alone; it is receiving Him with the heart.

"Will live forever"

The Lord said, *"This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever" (John 6:58)*. Jesus compared Himself to bread. "When you eat bread, does it not become food for you, so that you gain strength and your life is sustained? By the baptism I received, I had your sins transferred onto My body, and to pay the price of your sins I was nailed to the Cross, shed My blood and died, rose again, and became your Savior."

"Eat by faith the fact that I am your Savior. Eat it in your hearts. Believe. Accept. Then you will live forever." Do you want to live forever?

You must want to live forever. You must want to live forever in a good world without suffering. To let us live forever in the kingdom of heaven, Jesus came as our Savior and did all the work of the Savior.

He gave His flesh and blood to us. If we eat them in our hearts by faith, we become the people of God. As we live on this earth, we have a hard time sometimes because of the weather, sometimes because of work, and sometimes because someone gives us trouble, but time passes. And we come to obtain everlasting life. When we have finished all the work we have to do on this earth, the Lord will come to take us. Every time I preach the word, some people may think, "Today, too, he is surely going to talk about baptism."

But this word tells us that the flesh and blood of Jesus were the baptism Jesus received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection. And Jesus is speaking about everlasting life, about living again, about food, and about drink.

Through the things in our lives, the Lord is telling us that if we believe in Him, we come to obtain all these things. How great the Lord is! The Lord is not One who knows only one thing and stubbornly insists on it; He is truly a gentleman and a great One. He is the Creator. Jesus is our Creator and Savior. He who gave up His own body, received baptism from John, gave Himself over to death on the Cross, and rose again from death to save us—He is our friend, our shepherd, the Lord of eternal life, and our Bridegroom.

We will live, and when the time comes, we will go before the Lord. We have received the remission of sins by believing in the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross, and we have become people who will live by faith, do by faith the work the Lord has entrusted to us, and then go before the Lord and enjoy everlasting life. We give thanks to the Lord. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Eternal life received through the Lord's flesh and blood

< John 6:52–59 >

"The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you. Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me. This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.' These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum."

When we read today's passage, the word "eat" keeps coming up. Eat the flesh, drink the blood, the one who eats Me, he who eats this bread. Within eight verses the Lord speaks again and again of eating and drinking. To a hungry person, what word could be more welcome than the word to eat? From the fact that

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the Lord repeated it so many times, we can see how much He wanted us to eat.

Yet what the Lord held out for us to eat was His own flesh, and what He held out for us to drink was His own blood. To someone hearing it for the first time, it is a startling word. But in this word there is the love of God. God Himself came clothed in a human body; with that body He received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins, and with that body He received judgment in our place and gave us life.

Let us follow the word and see what this food the Lord has set before us is, how we eat it, and how the one who has eaten it lives.

The faith that accepts the life the Lord has given

Let us read verses 52 and 53.

"The Jews therefore quarreled among themselves, saying, 'How can this Man give us His flesh to eat?' Then Jesus said to them, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you.'"

Just before this, in verse 51, the Lord had said that the bread He would give is His flesh, for the life of the world. The Jews who heard that word quarreled among themselves. How, they said, can a man give his own flesh to others to eat and give his own blood to drink? At the thought of tearing off and eating a man's flesh, they were shocked and perplexed.

The place where they stumbled was the thought of the flesh. The thought of the flesh is measuring the word of God only by human eyes and human reasoning. Measured by that yardstick, the Lord's body can neither be cut up and handed out, nor can His blood be received and drunk. But when we stand on God's

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side and think of the work by which God removed our sins, the meaning of this word is clearly seen.

Believers, too, are often caught by this thought of the flesh. Even after receiving the remission of sins, there are many times when we weigh first what is seen with the eyes and grasped with the hands, and try to fit the word to our own thinking. At such times, faith is to ask first what the Scripture says, before asking whether this word fits our understanding. God's thoughts are far higher than our thoughts.

When the people did not understand, the Lord said more plainly, *"Unless you eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood, you have no life in you" (John 6:53)*. That body of the Lord, who came as a man, is the flesh He gives us, and what flowed out of that body is the blood He gives us.

This word is not a recommendation, as if it were good to eat but just as well to go hungry. It is food that we must eat in order to live. The Lord earnestly wanted those who had not yet received the remission of sins to eat His flesh and drink His blood.

The Lord's flesh and blood are eaten and drunk by faith. With our bodies, mankind as a whole cannot share and eat the Lord's flesh, but by faith anyone can eat it. To believe is to acknowledge that we live only if we have this, and to entrust ourselves to what the Lord has done and rely on it. And just as no one can eat a meal in another's place, this faith, too, is each person's own portion.

If a person refuses to accept this love, the love of God ends up being in vain for that person. When God has established it this way, what reason is there not to believe? If the Lord did all this for us who were sinners, what we must do is accept that love just as it is.

The Lord, who bore our sins and shed His blood and received the judgment

The Lord always spoke of flesh and blood together. In verse 53, and in verses 54 and 56 as well, He said to eat the flesh and drink the blood. Then what does the Lord's flesh point to, and what does the Lord's blood point to? Only when we know this rightly can we fully eat the food the Lord has set before us.

The Lord's flesh is the body with which He received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. When John the Baptist baptized that body, the sin of all mankind passed on to the Lord. Then what kind of person is John the Baptist? The Lord said of him as follows.

"Assuredly, I say to you, among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than he" (Matthew 11:11).

God established the greatest among those born of women as the representative of mankind. To fulfill all righteousness, the Lord received baptism from that John the Baptist, and through that baptism He received the sin of the world onto His body and bore it. So our sins are now not on us but on the Lord's body. To believe the fact that our sins passed on to the Lord through the baptism He received from John the Baptist—this is eating the Lord's flesh.

Then what is the Lord's blood? Bearing the sin of the world on His body, the Lord went to the Cross. There He was nailed and shed His blood, and so He received in our place the judgment of sin that we were to receive. The Prophet Isaiah recorded this work in advance as follows.

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"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).

The Lord was wounded and bruised because of our transgressions and iniquities. He who had no sin paid the price of our sins in our place. Because the Lord gave up His life in our place, we were delivered from judgment. To believe that the judgment of the Cross is the judgment in our place—this is drinking the Lord's blood.

These two are linked as cause and effect. Where is there an effect without a cause? Because the Lord first received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins passed on to Him, He could pay the price of those sins on the Cross. Because His was a body laden with sin, He could suffer humiliation, shed His blood, and die. And He rose again three days later and became the Savior who gives us life.

Here the love and the justice of God are together. God loved us and saved us, but instead of covering sin over, He actually passed that sin on to the body of His own Son and had Him actually pay the price of that sin. That is why no one, however closely he examines it, can find fault with this salvation.

So whenever your own sins come into view, hold fast to these two things together. When the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist, He took away even those sins, and on the Cross He received even the judgment of those sins. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the true food and true drink that give us life.

The one who abides in the Lord and lives because of the Lord

Let us read verses 54 through 57.

"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him. As the living Father sent Me, and I live because of the Father, so he who feeds on Me will live because of Me."

The Lord said that the one who eats His flesh and drinks His blood has eternal life. Eternal life is not merely living on endlessly; it is living forever without sin. Think of living forever with sin still held in your heart. That would be eternal torment. Because the Lord took our sins onto His own body, we can live forever before God without shame.

The Lord went on to say that He would raise him up at the last day. In chapter 6 alone He made this promise four times. That is how sure a promise it is. When a person dies, he is buried in the ground. Yet the Lord will raise up such people as us at the last day, have us take part in the first resurrection, and make us live together forever in His kingdom.

In verse 55 the Lord said that His flesh is true food and His blood is true drink. This is a word in which He used as a figure something we know well. When we eat bread we are full, and when we drink water when we are thirsty we are refreshed. A person wandering in the desert and about to collapse, who gets water and a rice ball from a passing traveler, regains his strength. To our souls, which were starving, cut off from God because of sin, the Lord's flesh and blood are exactly such food and drink.

The Lord's flesh fills our souls. When we believe that our sins passed on to the Lord through the baptism He received from

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John the Baptist, the hunger of the soul is filled. Man is different from the beasts and cannot live on the food of the flesh alone. If there is sin in the heart, however well one eats, one is in torment. The remission of sins is the true food of our souls.

The Lord's blood refreshes our hearts. When we think that the Lord received on the Cross all the judgment we were to receive, our hearts become refreshed, as if a thirsty person had gulped down a glass of water. Now there is not a single judgment left for us.

Yet there are people who enjoy drinking only the drink. They are those who believe only in the blood of the Lord's Cross. They, too, say that their hearts are refreshed when they think of the Cross. They believe that the Lord is the Son of God, that He died on the Cross, and that He rose again and will come again. But in their hearts there is still sin. Because they do not know the work by which the Lord took away that sin through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, they have only wet their throats with a glass of drink while their stomachs remain hungry.

In verse 53 the Lord said that only those who eat the flesh and drink the blood have life in them. Having life here means that the Holy Spirit is in that person. The Holy Spirit comes and dwells in a heart whose sins have been washed away. That is why the one who has drunk only the blood has no life in him, even if his heart is refreshed for a while. The Lord gave flesh and blood together.

Now, verse 56. The Lord said that the one who eats His flesh and drinks His blood abides in Him, and He in that person. When we believe that our sins passed on to the Lord through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and that the judgment of those sins was finished on the Cross, sin disappears from our hearts. On a heart made clean in this way, God sets His seal with

the Holy Spirit, and the Holy Spirit takes His seat in that heart. The Lord and we become one.

That is why the one who abides in the Lord always lives together with the Lord. In hard times the Holy Spirit holds him up, reminds him of the word, gives strength to his heart, and guides him. At first that touch may feel faint. But as we go on living by faith, we come to experience the Lord, who leads us at our side more attentively than the closest friend.

Also, when we do what the Lord dislikes, the Holy Spirit who is in us is made uncomfortable. There are times when our hearts feel heavy and uneasy for no reason we can tell. That is the time to look back at what we are thinking and what we are doing. For the One who is in us is the Master of our hearts.

In verse 57 the Lord said that the living Father sent Him, and that as He lives because of the Father, so the one who feeds on Him will live because of Him. All of this was accomplished by the Father sending the Son to this earth. The Father planned it and sent the Son, and had the Son receive baptism from John the Baptist, shed His blood on the Cross, and rise again.

Just as Jesus lived because of the Father, we now live because of Jesus. He is the One who removed our sins, He is the Lord of life, and He is the One who has now come into our hearts. That is why, even though our bodies die for a time, our souls are always alive. The strength by which we live today also comes from Him.

The grace of salvation remembered and confessed through the Lord's Supper

When they read this passage, in which the Lord spoke of His flesh and blood, many people think of the Lord's Supper. The

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church has commemorated the Lord's body and blood by sharing the bread and the cup. Yet some teach that the bread of the Lord's Supper changes into the actual body of the Lord and that one must receive and eat it to obtain eternal life. Others think that they receive grace just by taking part in the Lord's Supper. Is that really so?

Listen to the word about the Lord's Supper that the Apostle Paul preached.

"For I received from the Lord that which I also delivered to you: that the Lord Jesus on the same night in which He was betrayed took bread; and when He had given thanks, He broke it and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body which is broken for you; do this in remembrance of Me.' In the same manner He also took the cup after supper, saying, 'This cup is the new covenant in My blood. This do, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of Me.' For as often as you eat this bread and drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death till He comes" (1 Corinthians 11:23–26).

The Lord said to remember Him. Remembrance is to recall what has already been accomplished and engrave it on the heart. The bread points to that body with which the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins, and the cup points to the blood that body shed on the Cross. As we break the bread we believe, "The Lord took away my sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist," and as we drink the cup we believe, "The Lord received the judgment in my place."

Taking part in the Lord's Supper does not in itself wash away sins. It is the one who has first believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins who commemorates that grace. If one obtained eternal life by eating the bread, there would be one way to receive the remission of sins and another way to obtain eternal life. The Lord gave both

the remission of sins and eternal life together to those who believe in His flesh and blood.

Therefore the Lord's Supper is not a mere ceremony but a confession of faith. Before the bread and the cup, we confess before God, "I believe in this gospel." And we give thanks anew for how great a love it is that God came clothed in a body and did all these things.

Paul said that as often as we eat the bread and drink the cup, we proclaim the Lord's death till He comes. The Lord's Supper does not stop at remembering what is past; it makes us look to the Lord, who is coming again. And it sends us to those who do not yet know this food.

The life shared together by those who have received love

Let us read verses 58 and 59.

"'This is the bread which came down from heaven—not as your fathers ate the manna, and are dead. He who eats this bread will live forever.' These things He said in the synagogue as He taught in Capernaum."

The Lord once again compared the two breads. Even though the manna the fathers ate in the wilderness came down from heaven, all who ate it died. However fine the bread of this earth we eat, it cannot deliver a person from death. Even if we brought a mill for making bread into the church building and ate bread every day, people would still die. Only by eating the bread which came down from heaven, that is, the Lord who came to bear our sins, do we live forever.

Who else is there who received baptism from John the Baptist, bore the sin of the world, and shed His blood on the

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Cross to receive that judgment? There is only the one Son of God, who came down from heaven. He is our only Savior, and His flesh and blood are the only food of life.

But bread fills not the one who looks at it but the one who eats it. Going one step further from knowing that the Lord is the bread which came down from heaven, let us receive and eat that bread as our own bread. The moment we believe and accept that our sins passed on to the Lord through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, we eat that flesh and drink that blood together with it.

The Lord taught this word in the synagogue in Capernaum. Even where people were quarreling with one another, the Lord taught to the end. Before people who found it hard to understand, He repeated the same word again and again, seeking to give them life. This word we hear today is likewise a love conveyed to us again and again in that way.

We who have eaten this bread now become those who share this bread. We feed the food of life we have eaten to others as well. First of all, our families. Could you just stand and watch while you alone are full and your family goes hungry? Tell your mother and father, your husband, wife, and children, "When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He bore all your sins." They, too, will eat this bread and obtain eternal life.

This is not a matter of paying a price to obtain salvation. It is a matter of sharing that love because we have already received it. We call it spreading the gospel when a person who has accepted and eaten the love of God shares that love with others. The One who saves people is the Lord, and the Lord uses us on the way by which that word is spread.

If there is anyone who has not yet received and eaten this food, accept it into your heart at this time. What remains for a

soul that pushes away to the very end this food the Lord has set before him is death and judgment. But the Lord said that the one who feeds on Him will live forever. If you believe the fact that the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and bore your sins, and the fact that He received judgment in your place on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us completely, you, too, become today one who has eaten this bread.

The Lord gave us His flesh and blood, and so He gave us eternal life. That flesh is the body with which He took away our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and that blood is the life with which He received our judgment in our place on the Cross. In the one who has eaten this food, the Lord dwells through the Holy Spirit. So live because of the Lord, as befits one who has eaten the Lord's flesh and drunk His blood. And set that food of life on the table of your family and your neighbors as well. ✉

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Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord's word that gives life to our souls

< John 6:60–65 >

"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?' When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, 'Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before? It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life. But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.'"

John chapter 6 begins with a scene in which many people follow the Lord. A great multitude followed Him after seeing the signs of His healing the sick, and the people who had eaten their fill from five barley loaves tried to take Him by force and make Him king. There were also many who called themselves the Lord's disciples. But when the Lord told them to eat His flesh and drink His blood, complaining arose among those very disciples. Today's passage begins at that point.

It was the same Lord and the same word, so what made the hearts of these people stumble? This question was not thrown

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only at the multitude in Capernaum two thousand years ago. The Lord still asks the same thing today of each one of us who comes before Him and hears the word. For what reason are we following the Lord?

The people to whom the word of life became a stumbling block

Let us read verses 60 through 62.

"Therefore many of His disciples, when they heard this, said, 'This is a hard saying; who can understand it?' When Jesus knew in Himself that His disciples complained about this, He said to them, 'Does this offend you? What then if you should see the Son of Man ascend where He was before?'"

The disciples spoken of here are not only the twelve disciples. The word refers to the many people who at that time were following the Lord around, saying they would learn from Him. When the Lord fed them physical bread, and it seemed that their own circumstances would also be resolved if they set Him up as king, they were overjoyed. But instead of giving them more bread, the Lord told them to eat His flesh and drink His blood. To people who had been expecting physical bread, this word sounded absurd.

The reason they said it was hard was that they had followed the Lord out of fleshly motives. To a person whose heart is set on the things of this earth, the spiritual blessing the Lord speaks of is a matter outside his interest and a matter he cannot even understand. Because they heard it with the thoughts of the flesh, it became a very hard saying.

This word still sounds hard today. If one tries to understand this word while setting aside the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit, the way to unravel it is blocked. Many people say that the Lord gave up His body on the Cross, but that speaks only of the blood of the Cross. There are truly many people who set aside the baptism the Lord received from John the Baptist and believe only in the Cross. Because they do not know that the Lord's flesh was given in order to bear our sins, they still hesitate before the word that tells them to eat His flesh. Even people who nodded at the words that we should praise the Lord, pray, and do good works find it grating to their ears when they hear the word that, since the sin of mankind was all passed on to Him through the baptism the Lord received from John the Baptist, those who believe this have no sin.

But those who understand know. The Lord did not tell them to tear off His flesh and eat it. The Lord, who came in a human body, received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, received the judgment on the Cross while bearing that sin, and rose again from death. This word tells us to believe this work as a work done for us. Once we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this word, far from being hard, is truly easy, exact, and trustworthy.

In verse 61, the Lord knew in Himself the hearts of those who were complaining and asked whether this offended them. It is a question asking whether they, who had been trying to follow Him, had stumbled because of this word and come to the point where they would have to leave Him. The Lord did not back down at that point but went a step further and spoke.

In verse 62, the Lord asked what they would do if they saw the Son of Man ascend where He was before. The Lord had said that He was the bread which came down from heaven. It means that He was asking whether they would believe then, if they saw Him who came down from heaven ascend to heaven again. The

Lord actually rose again and ascended to heaven, is now at the right hand of the throne of God the Father, and is the One who will come again.

The Lord, who came down from heaven, removed our sins through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River and the Cross, rose again, and ascended to heaven—the people who properly know and believe all these things were not many then and are not many now. Many people believe as if it were a religion, and so they say they believe without knowing what the Bible says. To believe like that amounts to making up a Jesus of one's own and believing in him. We must know the truth and believe the truth.

The Lord's word that gives life to our souls

Let us read verse 63.

"It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life."

The Lord spoke this word, like a final conclusion, to the multitude who had eaten their fill of bread. It means that His being with them was not in order to give them bread. Though it is a very short saying, I cannot tell you how important this word is. Here lies the reason the Lord came to this earth. The Lord came to give life to our souls. So, standing before this word, I will ask you first: Is your soul alive?

The body remains for a while, then dies and decays. But our spirit is eternal. To deliver from sin that soul which was dead because of sin and to give it new life—this is what the Lord wanted most. Even though the outward man grows old day by day, the inward man whom the Lord has made alive lives forever.

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Then how did the Lord give life to our souls? The Son of God came to this earth in the flesh. And to fulfill all righteousness, He received baptism from John the Baptist and had all our sins passed on to His body. With that body He shed His blood on the Cross, received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and rose again three days later. When we believe and accept this work by which the Lord saved us with His own life, the soul that was dead comes alive. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it is the word that is spirit and life, which gave life to our souls. When we believe this gospel, the sin in our hearts is actually washed away, and God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift into that heart without sin and makes us live as children of God.

Then what is the flesh that He said profits nothing? First, it is the thought of the flesh that takes the word about eating the Lord's flesh only as a matter of chewing and eating with the mouth. Eating with the mouth does not bring the soul to life. The salvation the Lord accomplished with His body by coming in the flesh is the work that gives us life. When we believe that work in our hearts, the soul lives.

Another thing that profits nothing is faith that believes in order to gain the profit of the flesh. A faith that follows Jesus while calculating that the flesh will prosper if one believes in Him is the same as believing in a religion of the world. The Lord did not come to this earth to make our bodies prosper. He came to remove our sins, give us new life, make us children of God, and give us eternal blessings. The Apostle John also wrote this order as follows.

"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2).

The soul must prosper first. When we believe in our hearts what the Lord has done, receive the remission of sins, and

become children of God, then after that we come to experience God also caring for and helping our lives. To a faith in which the order is reversed, a faith that puts the prospering of the flesh first, the Lord's word becomes a stumbling block. That was the case with the multitude in verse 60.

The Lord said that the words He spoke to them are spirit and life. Our body lives when it eats food, but our spirit lives only when it eats the word of God. The Lord's word is the word that removes our sins, gives everlasting life, gives life to the soul, and on the last day raises even this body again. Yet because people eat the word only as a formality, the soul suffers famine. When we accept it by faith, the soul is filled, the problems of the heart are solved, and we enjoy everlasting life.

The Lord, who knows even unbelief and calls by grace

Let us read verses 64 and 65.

"'But there are some of you who do not believe.' For Jesus knew from the beginning who they were who did not believe, and who would betray Him. And He said, 'Therefore I have said to you that no one can come to Me unless it has been granted to him by My Father.'"

The Lord knew from the beginning who those who did not believe were, and who would betray Him. Because the Lord is the Son of God who came down from heaven and the God who made the universe, He knows all things. The Lord knew everything from the beginning—both the inner hearts of the people who were complaining and who would finally turn away from faith.

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Though one can cover it up before people by appearing to follow, the Lord sees the heart. Having attended church for a long time and knowing many Bible stories do not in themselves become evidence of faith. What the Lord asks is one thing: whether you now believe in the Lord, who received baptism from John the Baptist and shed His blood on the Cross for you.

In verse 65, the Lord repeated the word He had spoken in verse 44. It means that anyone can come to the Lord only when the Father enables him to come. Believing in Jesus as the Savior is not something that happens by itself because someone teaches it, nor something that happens because one makes up his mind that he wants to believe. The Father must draw him. That is why, when we hear this word, we all come to humble our hearts before God.

Then what kind of person does the Father draw to the Son? It is the person who honestly acknowledges himself before God. It is the person who tells God, "I am a wretched person in human terms; I want to believe, but I do not know the way," and asks for mercy. God has compassion on such a person, draws him to the Son, and makes him know and believe that the Son removed his sins and received the judgment for him. On the contrary, a person whose heart is hardened and who is satisfied with the things of the world drifts away from faith in the end, even while seeing the Lord close at hand.

We sometimes think like this: "Why does that person not believe even after hearing this gospel?" The answer is in this word. So instead of sighing, we embrace that person in prayer. We intercede with God the Father, asking Him to have compassion on that soul and draw him to the Son. We, too, received mercy in that way and have come this far by the Father's drawing.

The word of life entrusted to souls that have come alive

The word that it is the Spirit who gives life also teaches us what we live for on this earth. The purpose of life changes for a person who has been given life by the Lord. If until now he lived only for the flesh, now he lives with his purpose set on the work of giving life to other people's souls.

We still eat, work, raise families, go to our jobs, and live our lives. Let us keep our place, but whatever we do, let us make our purpose clear. The word *"whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)* means, in the end, that we should live for the work of giving life to people's souls. Even if there are days when we are weak and fall, let us live knowing which way is the right way.

Even what we have gathered by striving all our lives, we cannot take a single thing with us when we depart. The work that remains forever is the work of preaching the gospel so that one soul receives the remission of sins. The law makes a person realize his sin. But only when the person who has realized his sin is told about the One who removes that sin does that soul live. When we let him hear the word that the Lord had his sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received that judgment on the Cross, that word becomes spirit and life to him as well.

We are people who fall short. Seen in terms of the flesh, we are people with no qualification to do God's work. Yet God has entrusted to such people as us the work of delivering souls from sin. This is the greatest blessing given to our lives. Just as the Lord came to this earth and gave us life, we, too, take His heart as our example and give ourselves so that those who are not yet God's people may gain life. If, though we have the Lord who

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removed our sins, we are satisfied that we alone have been saved, that is to forget the grace we have received.

Because it is a work too great for one person's strength alone, God gave us the Church and has made us do this work together through the Church. The Lord said that He remembers even the giving of a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple. Even the small labor offered for this work is remembered before the Lord.

The great multitude in verse 60 sought physical bread and complained that this word was hard. But we have been made alive by the Lord's word, which is spirit and life. We ourselves, who preach this word to other people, also hear this word every day and realize its grace anew. Remembering the compassion of the Father, who drew us to the Son, I hope that you will firmly establish your faith on this word, which is spirit and life and which gave life to our souls. ✉

Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

Faith that follows the Lord, who has the words of eternal life

< John 6:66–71 >

“From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, ‘Do you also want to go away?’ But Simon Peter answered Him, ‘Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life. (And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God –ASV)’. Jesus answered them, ‘Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?’ He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve.”

If we follow John chapter 6 from beginning to end, the number of people changes noticeably. When the chapter begins, there was a crowd of about five thousand, counting men alone, beside the Lord. But when the chapter ends, the only ones left beside the Lord are the twelve disciples. In between, the Lord said to eat His flesh and drink His blood, and He said that it is the Spirit who gives life and that the flesh profits nothing.

At that word, many people went back. The Lord asked the remaining twelve whether they also wanted to go away. Peter answered. And the Lord said that even among those twelve, one

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was a devil. Those who left, those who remained and confessed, and those who remained yet did not believe—these three kinds of people are together in today's text. Where do we stand before this word?

The word of salvation that does not change even when many leave

Let us read verses 66 and 67.

"From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more. Then Jesus said to the twelve, 'Do you also want to go away?'"

The people who had been following the Lord around like clouds scattered like an ebbing tide. While they followed the Lord, they thought in their hearts as follows: if only we follow this man, we will rise in the world; if only we follow this man, even the poverty of the flesh will be solved; we have truly met a great teacher. When He healed their diseases and fed them bread, they gladly followed. But when the Lord said that they must eat His flesh and drink His blood to gain eternal life, they turned away, saying that they had thought He was a decent person but He was a disappointment.

The text records that they walked with the Lord no more. It was not that they were hurt for a moment and stepped back a little. Saying that there was no more hope to expect from this man, they said, "Let's go, let's go," and turned their steps away completely. The Lord received much persecution, but He also had a great many followers. Those many people slipped away at this one word. The reason they left is one: they followed only to gain the things of the flesh, and they did not believe the Lord's word.

Even today this is repeated. Those who follow the Lord seeking the food which perishes turn away before the word that the Lord had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment on the Cross. The way they act is exactly the same as that of the crowd that followed the Lord around at that time and then left.

That is why we who preach the gospel, even when we meet such people, preach the salvation the Lord has accomplished just as it is. Making up a new salvation that people would like is not the work entrusted to us. Preaching just as it is what the Lord accomplished at the Jordan River and on the Cross—that is the work we have been entrusted with.

What we should note is the fact that the Lord did not change His word in order to hold on to those who were leaving. If He had withdrawn the word about flesh and blood and promised to give them more bread, they would have stayed. But what the Lord intended to give was the remission of sins and eternal life. It was the Lord's will that even one person be truly saved rather than that many people gather. Even if people leave, the truth remains the truth as it is.

After many people had left, the Lord asked the remaining twelve whether they also wanted to go away. It is the question, "I did not come to make you rich or to heal your diseases, so what do you hope for in following Me?" The Lord told those who remained, too, to reveal their own faith for themselves. If we remain only because many others remain beside Him, that is nothing but standing by leaning on another person's faith. This question is the question given to each of us today.

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Because the Lord has the words of eternal life

Let us read verse 68.

"But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life.'"

While the other disciples kept silent, Peter stepped forward first and answered. Peter was a man who later, in his weakness, even stumbled. But at this time he understood what the word the Lord had spoken meant. So his answer was not words that came from his circumstances but a confession that came from faith. It means that since the Lord has the words of eternal life, to whom else would they go? From this answer we can see that Peter was a born-again man. Because the Lord's word had given life to his spirit, he remained beside that word.

The words of eternal life are with the Lord. The One who gives us life is the Lord. The words the Lord spoke are, without a single exception, words of eternal life and words of truth. And that word is the word of the remission of sins. Even the Lord's telling us to eat His flesh and drink His blood was a word spoken to give us the remission of sins. Through this word recorded in the Bible and through the church that rightly preaches that word, a person comes alive forever. If we believe this word, how could we leave the Lord? It is because people do not believe that they leave.

Then how do we eat this flesh and blood? It is to believe in Jesus Christ, who came by water, blood, and the Spirit. God the Father sent John the Baptist and Jesus Christ to this earth and solved the problem of the sin of mankind. The Lord had all our sins passed on to His body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, receiving in our place the judgment we were to receive, and He rose again from death and

became our Savior. Believing this is eating the Lord's flesh and drinking His blood, and by this faith we have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit as a gift.

We who have received the remission of sins are still weak and stumble. But the Lord has already borne even those faults and been judged. So even when our wrongs are exposed, we admit them, hold fast to the salvation that washed away even those sins, and rise again. The ground on which we were made righteous is not our works but the salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Where else would we obtain this life again? Could we wash away our sins with the recognition or the wealth of the world, or with man's philosophy and religious zeal? The only One who received judgment in our place is the Lord alone. So no matter what temptation, persecution, or deception comes, we guard our faith in the Lord and the Lord's church. He has the words of eternal life; to whom shall we go? Peter's confession is our very confession.

Faith that believes and knows the Holy One of God

Let us read verse 69.

"And we have believed and know that thou art the Holy One of God."

Peter and the disciples knew who Jesus was. They knew that He was the Messiah the Old Testament had promised, the Savior who was God come in the flesh to this earth to deliver them from sin. The Jesus the disciples saw was not a great man but God. They knew and believed that this very One was the Son of God and the Lamb of God. Because they believed in this way, they were saved. This confession is different at its very root from the

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expectation of the crowd that left, who thought they had met a great teacher.

If we regard Jesus only as a great teacher, we come to take what we like from among His teachings and throw away what is uncomfortable. The crowd that left did just that. But if we believe that Jesus is God who came to save us, we lay down our own thoughts before His word. Instead of choosing a salvation that is convenient to understand, we learn and accept the salvation God has accomplished.

Peter said that they had believed and known. Without believing, how could one know? What the disciples believed and knew was what God had done. It is the fact that God the Father sent the Son, that the Son received baptism from John the Baptist and took away our sins, and that He died on the Cross and rose again and became our Savior. When God says in the Bible that He did so, we believe that word. When we believe in this way, we come to know who the Lord is.

There are times when we cannot fully fathom all this. That is only because the knowledge on our side is short; what God did on His side is perfect. But Peter and the disciples knew. Of the twelve, all except Judas knew this. And we, too, have come to know by faith what it is to eat the Lord's flesh and to drink His blood. Believing this is more important than anything else. I, too, believe this. Do you also believe so?

Judas, who did not believe in the Lord even though he was among the twelve

Let us read verses 70 and 71.

"Jesus answered them, 'Did I not choose you, the twelve, and one of you is a devil?' He spoke of Judas Iscariot, the son of

Simon, for it was he who would betray Him, being one of the twelve."

In the very place where Peter confessed, saying "we," the Lord said that one of them was a devil. He was one of the twelve whom the Lord Himself had chosen. The text reveals that he was Judas Iscariot, the son of Simon, and that he was the one who would betray Jesus. As He had said in verse 64, the Lord knew this from the beginning.

Judas heard the word close to the Lord, saw the signs, and was in the position of a disciple. Yet he did not believe in the Lord. What must the Lord's heart have been like, as He went about with the twelve and saw that the heart of one among them remained, to the end, turned away from Him? Faith is something each and every person has before the Lord. In the end Judas betrayed the Lord. The Lord spoke of him as follows.

"The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

So fearful is it to be beside the Lord and yet, in the end, not believe in Him. If a person hears the word of salvation up close and yet refuses it to the end, only the judgment of sin remains before him.

Therefore, in the light of this passage, we first look back on our own hearts. What saved us was not a position, or service, or the years spent beside the Lord, but Jesus, who bore our sins and was judged. We have received the remission of sins by believing in Him. The story of Judas is a word given so that we may make clear the ground of the faith on which we stand. Having a work entrusted to us by the Lord and believing in the Lord with the heart must be distinguished. The work entrusted to us is fruit that comes from faith, and what saves us is faith that believes in what

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the Lord has accomplished. Stand on the faith that, like Peter, believes and knows who the Lord is.

A life that remains, giving thanks to the Lord, who gave eternal life

People follow the Lord in order to fulfill their own wishes, and when their expectations are not met, they leave. But to the one who knows the remission of sins and the eternal life the Lord has given, that grace is more precious than anything in the world. Even when circumstances become hard, the salvation that washed away our sins remains the same, and whether people recognize us or not, the grace of having become children of God is also unshaken.

What we hope for is, in the end, this: to become people who eat and drink the Lord's flesh and blood by faith and have not a single sin in their hearts, people who become children of God and live with the Holy Spirit, and people who preach the will of God and at the last enjoy eternal life. The Lord has already opened all of that way.

Those who believe in the Lord first receive the remission of sins and eternal life, and on top of that they enjoy, in spirit and body, the blessings the Lord gives. The Lord bestows grace on us and gives us the gift of salvation; He helps us and blesses us. That is why we can give thanks to the Lord even on hard days.

We, too, have the needs and hardships of the flesh, and each time we ask God for help. But at the center of our faith is the Lord, who delivered us from the judgment of sin and made us live forever with God. That is why learning this word with fellow believers and serving together is precious. And we preach these words of eternal life so that those who have not yet heard

may also eat by faith the flesh and blood of the Lord that we have eaten.

The Lord asks us today as well whether we also want to go away. We can answer like Peter: since the Lord is the One who washed away our sins and gave us eternal life, to whom else would we go? This confession is not a boast that we are strong, but faith that the salvation of the Lord who gave us life is true.

Let us give thanks to the Lord, who gave the words of eternal life. Let us believe in the grace by which He washed away our sins with His own flesh and blood and made us children of God. Rather than looking at which way many people go, let us look to the Lord who saved us. Like Peter, who remained beside the Lord and confessed even after the five thousand had scattered, the place beside the Lord, who has the words of eternal life—that is the place where we are to remain. ✉

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◇ About the Next Series

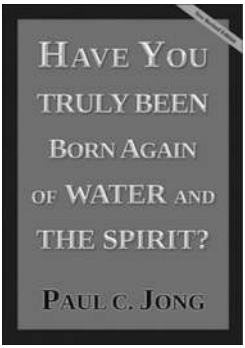
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

News about newly released books, as well as various ways to access them—including eBooks (PDF, EPUB), audiobooks (M4A, MP3), and online reading—can be found at **www.bjnewlife.org.**

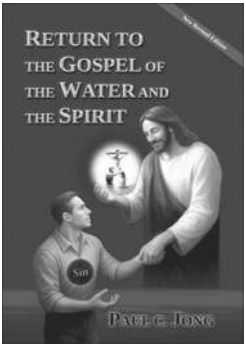
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

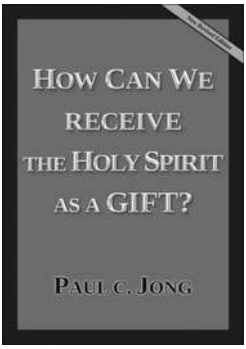
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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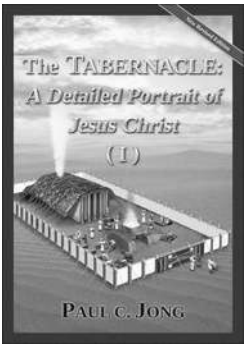
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]

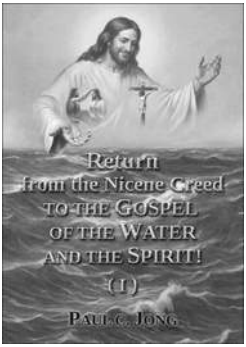


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

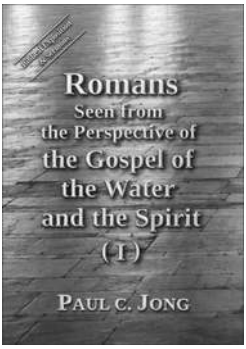
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

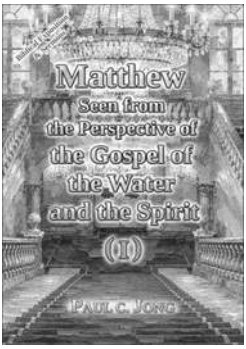
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



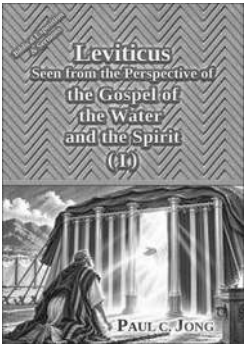
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

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Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

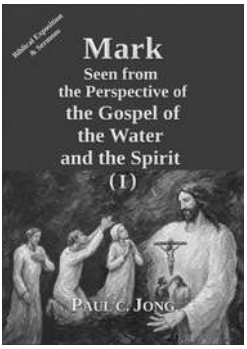


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the consecration ceremony of the priests, Aaron's first sacrifice, and the incident of Nadab and Abihu.

The author, Pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in this book, he also explains the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, connecting it to the sacrifices of Leviticus.

How can a sinner be made sinless? This book gives a clear answer to that question through the Bible.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)

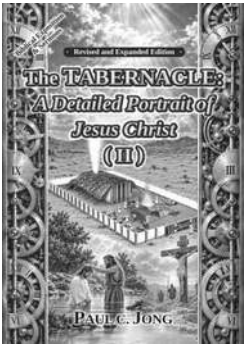


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

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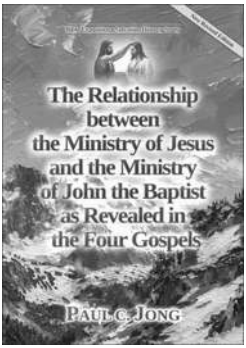
The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (3-Volume Series)



God had the tabernacle set up in the wilderness in order to dwell among the people He had delivered out of Egypt.

Through the Biblical Exposition of Exodus chapters 25–31 and the sermons on the tabernacle, this book conveys the heart of God, who wants to make His sinful people holy and keep them near. The promise of salvation contained in the tabernacle was fulfilled when Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again. Looking into the utensils and sacrifices of the tabernacle and the office of the high priest, we come to know the meaning of the remission of sins received by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and of the eternal atonement. Through the tabernacle, we seek to know God's love for us and to share the joy of living together as His people.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels [New Revised Edition]



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

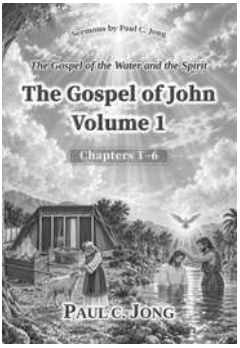
Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of John (3-Volume Series)



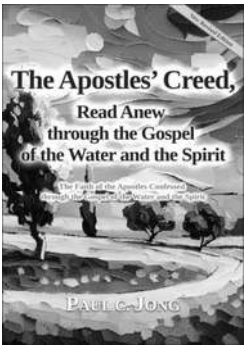
"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

John chapters 1–6 reveal who Jesus is. He is the Savior—the God who created all things, who Himself came in the flesh, received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the sin of the world, received its judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead, thereby saving us perfectly once and for all. The testimony of John the Baptist, the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again, the Samaritan woman, the sick man at Bethesda, and the bread of life all point to the same One, and the Word is unfolded in light of the salvation accomplished by Christ Jesus. Those who believe in the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus, who is God, are born again of water and the Spirit and receive eternal life.

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Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

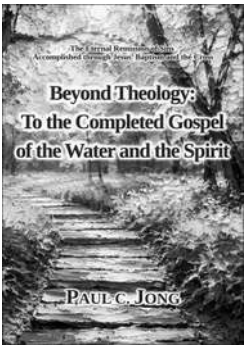


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

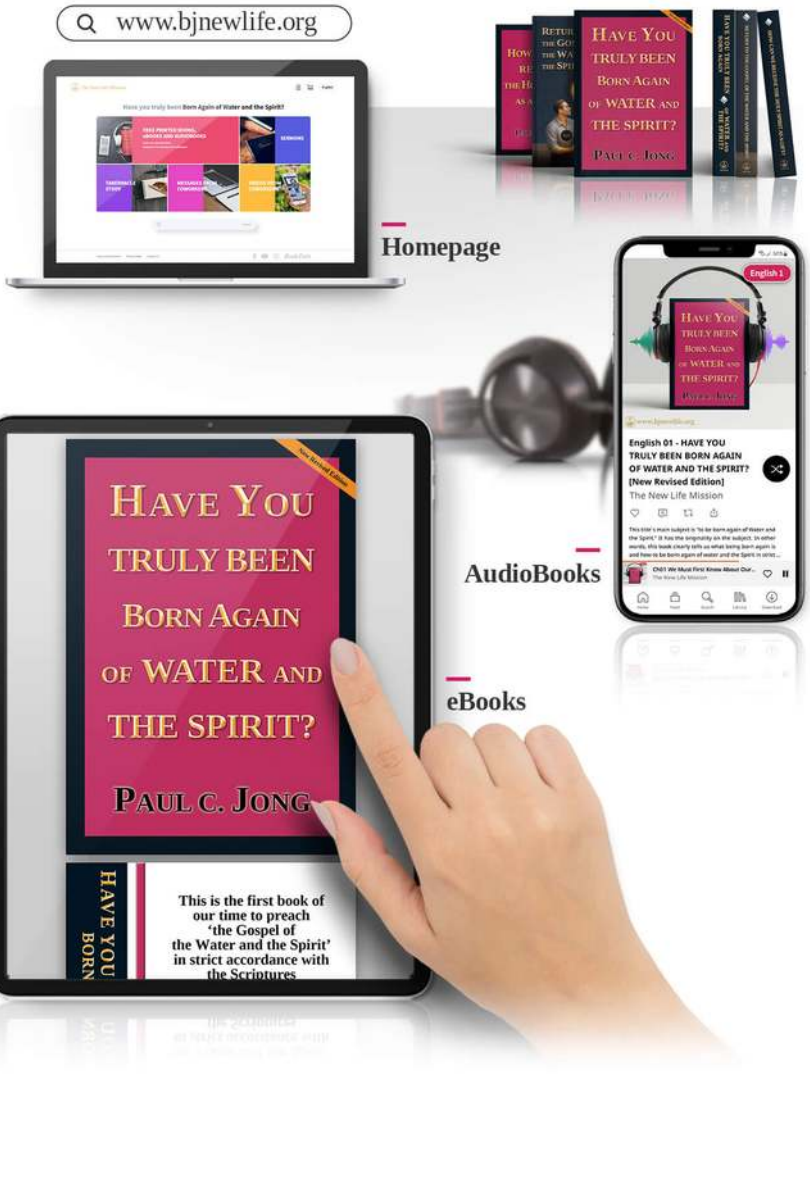
This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

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Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For about 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the Cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing, and publishing sermon collections and Biblical Exposition Series that expound the Bible chapter by chapter, based solely on the Word of God.

His works continue to be published and have been translated into more than 110 languages, reaching readers in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available free of charge at www.bjnewlife.org, while paperback editions can be purchased on Amazon.

You can download Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian Books to Computer, Tablet or Smartphone.

The water of life that began at the Jordan River

In the first six chapters of the Gospel of John, water flows through every chapter: the Jordan River, the stone waterpots of Cana filled to the brim, the water and the Spirit He spoke of to Nicodemus, Jacob's well, and the pool of Bethesda. The water people relied on each had its limits, but all the water the Lord gives leads to the Jordan River. There John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and cried out, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).

Just as the offering of the Old Testament had sins passed on to it by the laying on of hands, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John. There was no reason for the One without sin to be hung on the tree of the curse. The Lord received the judgment of that sin, which had been passed on to Him, with the blood of the Cross, and rose again three days later, showing that He is in His very nature God. The word that tells us to eat the flesh of the Son of Man and drink His blood is also a call to believe this very work.

The multitude who had eaten the bread and were filled went away, but when the Lord asked the remaining disciples whether they also wanted to go away, Peter answered as follows: "Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68). The one who has drunk the water of life that began at the Jordan River no longer wanders in search of another spring. For that water becomes in him a fountain of water springing up into everlasting life.

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