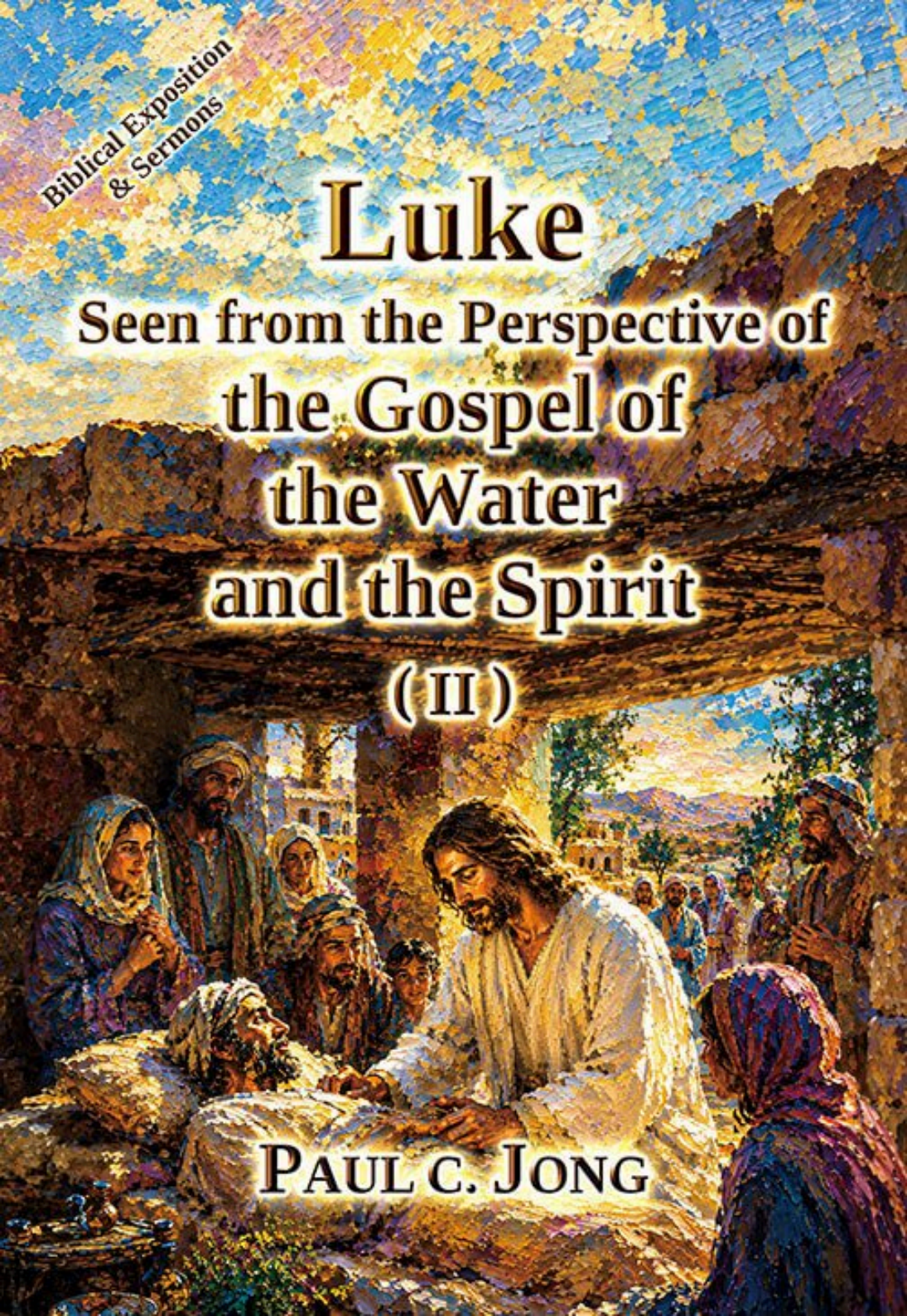
Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Luke

Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

(II)



PAUL C. JONG



A Life That Believes the Word, Follows the Lord, and Preaches the Gospel

The Gospel of Luke does not stop at teaching us about the works that Jesus performed as mere knowledge; it leads us to know and believe what God accomplished in order to save sinners. Luke chapter 7 through chapter 10 shows us this very journey of faith.

True faith does not begin with emotion or mystical experience. It begins from knowing the written Word and believing it in the heart: that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself once and for all with the baptism He received from John, bore the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead.

Salvation was completed not by man's goodness or effort, but by Jesus. The person who has believed in that salvation must not chase after his own thoughts, but rely on the word of God, and live united with the church, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls that have not yet been saved.

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and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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Luke
Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)

PAUL C. JONG

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Luke seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (II)

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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.

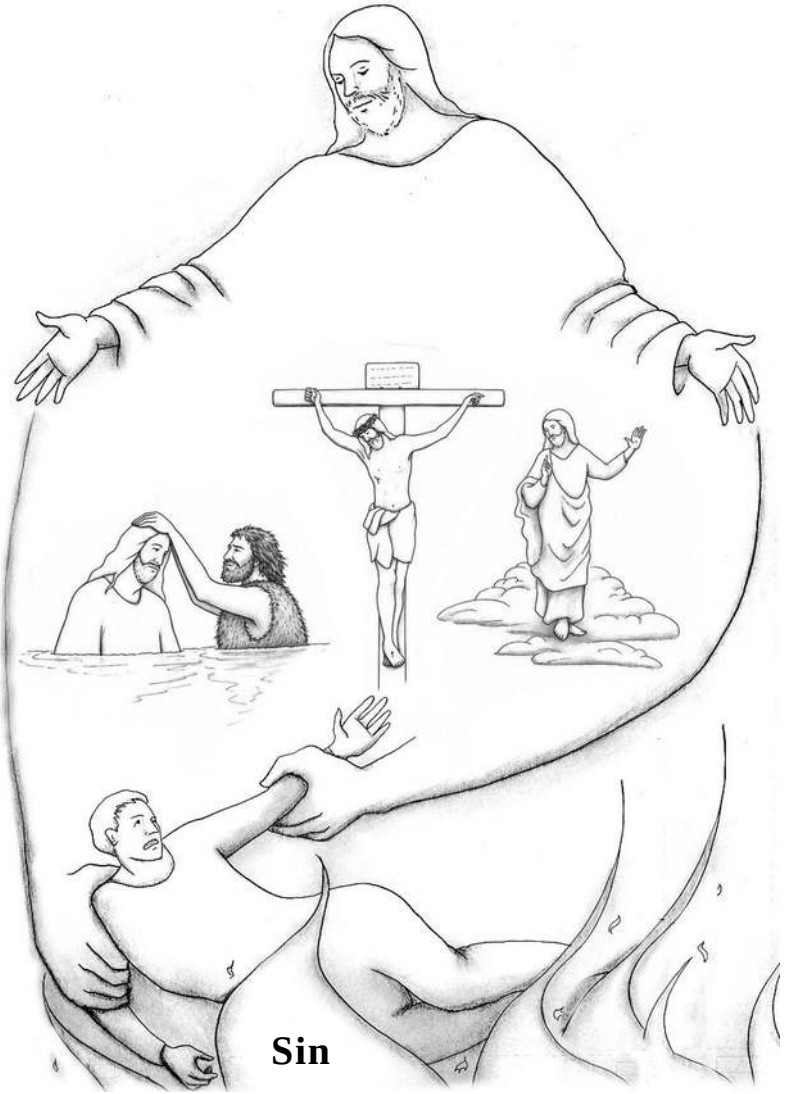
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

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

To read the Gospel of Luke is not to learn the events that Jesus performed merely as knowledge. It is to know through the Word what God accomplished in history in order to save sinners, and to believe in the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Volume 2 of the Gospel of Luke shows whom the person who has believed in that salvation must rely on and what he must live for. Salvation was completed by Jesus, and the saved person believes that Word and lives serving the gospel together with the church.

Volume 2 of the Gospel of Luke covers Luke chapter 7 through chapter 10. We meet the centurion who sought only the Word, the widow of Nain who lost her only son, the woman who poured fragrant oil on the feet of Jesus, and the various fields of the heart that received the seed of the Word. Next we examine the way of the disciple who denies himself and follows the Lord, the preaching of the gospel by the seventy, and the parable of the good Samaritan, who saved the man who fell among thieves. All these words point in one direction: that the saved person must believe the Word, be united with the church, and live preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The faith that knows the word of God and believes it in the heart

The centurion in Luke chapter 7 confessed that he was not worthy to receive Jesus into his house, and yet he believed that

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if the Lord only spoke the word, his dying servant would be healed. He did not see Jesus merely as a man who heals diseases; he acknowledged Him as God, who rules over life and death. True faith does not begin from emotion or from a special experience. It begins from knowing who the Jesus recorded in the Bible is, and from receiving in the heart the fact of salvation that He took charge of our sins once and for all with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and then rose from the dead. Because the One who spoke is God, we can believe that Word even when we cannot see with our eyes or feel with our emotions.

The widow of Nain could not raise her dead son by her own strength, but Jesus had compassion on the woman and raised up the young man. To us also, who can do nothing in the face of sin and death, the Lord came and solved the problem of sin and death with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The woman who came into the house of the Pharisee knew that she was a sinner who had to receive the remission of sins, and because she believed in Jesus as her Savior, she poured out the fragrant oil. The person who does not rely on his own goodness and religious deeds but believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins, loves the Lord who saved him, and can entrust even his hardships and worries to Him in faith.

Luke chapter 8 shows the word of God as the seed, and the heart of the person who hears the Word as the field. The good field is the heart that hears and receives the Word and then endures even in hardship and bears fruit. The fruit of faith does not come from the emotion of a moment. It is borne when we do not leave the Word and the church even in the midst of trials and the cares of the world, and when we serve the gospel for the souls that have not yet been saved. Jesus said that those who hear the

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Word and do it are His own family. The saints who have been saved are the family of God, holding one another up within the church and serving the gospel with one heart.

A life that denies self and follows the Lord

In Luke chapter 9, Jesus says to deny oneself, to take up one's cross daily, and to follow Him. To deny self is not to hate oneself or to follow another person without any thought. It means not insisting that one's own thoughts and judgments are more right than the word of God. It means laying down one's own desires and plans when they collide with the Word, and following the Lord. If the saved person follows the Lord in order to achieve his own purpose, or looks back at the world, he cannot walk the way of the gospel to the end. When we believe that Jesus is the King of our hearts and the God who has overcome the power of Satan, we can live for the kingdom of God and for the preaching of the gospel without looking back.

A life that preaches the gospel for the salvation of souls

In Luke chapter 10, Jesus sends the seventy out two by two and has them preach the kingdom of God. Today also the Lord preaches the word of salvation through the church and the workers of the gospel. Therefore we must not judge an evangelist by his appearance or his shortcomings and so make light of the Word he preaches. At the same time, to follow something unconditionally merely because a man has said it is not faith either. We must open the Bible, confirm whether that

Word agrees with the salvation the Lord accomplished, and receive it in the heart. The workers of the gospel likewise must not try to establish their own authority, but must preach the word of salvation accurately, so that people may receive the remission of sins and their names may be written in heaven.

The parable of the good Samaritan is not a story that teaches a way to obtain eternal life by man's good deeds. Like the man who fell among thieves and was nearly dead, we could not save ourselves under the power of sin and Satan. The priest and the Levite could not save him, but the Samaritan went to him first, treated his wounds, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. The sermons explain this Samaritan as the figure of Jesus, who came to sinners and saved them with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord feeds and cares for the saved person with the Word within the church. Now the saved person must give his time, his talents, and his material things, and preach this gospel of salvation to the souls that lie fallen in sin.

This book is arranged so that the Word in Luke chapters 7 through 10 may be examined through 'Biblical Exposition,' 'Questions and Answers,' and the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong. The Biblical Exposition divides each chapter into Part 1 and Part 2, examines the flow of the text and its central events in order, and helps the reader confirm the gospel of the water and the Spirit that appears in it. The Questions and Answers are arranged concisely around the main verses and themes, so that the reader may confirm again what he has examined in the Biblical Exposition. The sermons convey what this Word demands of us today. These are the call to receive the remission of sins by faith, the exhortation to hear the Word and bear fruit with patience, and the charge to deny self and to live as one who serves the gospel. The purpose of this whole course does not stop at piling up knowledge. It lies in helping the reader know Jesus

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rightly, believe the salvation He accomplished as his own salvation, and serve the gospel together with the church.

I hope that everyone who reads this book will, like the centurion, believe the written Word; like the woman who poured out the fragrant oil, love the Lord who saved him; and like the good field, bear the fruit of faith. I hope that when his own thoughts collide with the Word he will deny himself, and that he will preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls that have not yet been saved. I hope that the Holy Spirit will make him understand the Word, give him assurance in his heart of the fact that Jesus removed all our sins with the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and lead him to be united with the church and to be faithful to the gospel work that saves souls. ✉

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CHAPTER

7

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Luke Chapter 7

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 7 shows who Jesus is, with what kind of faith a sinner is saved, and how the life of a person who has received the remission of sins appears. Jesus is God, who heals disease and raises the dead by His word, and He is the Christ, who accomplished the righteous salvation of God together with John the Baptist.

1. The healing of the centurion's servant—faith and authority (7:1–10)

"Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant –ASV. And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 'for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.' Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, 'Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And

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I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, 'I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!' And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick."

General interpretation of the text

A centurion of the Roman army asks Jesus to heal his servant, who is sick and dying. Though he thinks that he is not qualified to receive Jesus in person, he confesses, *"Say the word, and my servant will be healed."*

The centurion understood the authority of Jesus through the chain of command in the army. Just as his subordinates move when he gives an order, he believed that Jesus could rule over disease by only speaking the word, without coming in person.

Jesus greatly praises the faith of this Gentile. This event shows the fact that the grace of God is open to the person who believes, beyond the national boundary of Israel. Here faith is not vague optimism but an attitude of trusting the authority and the power of Jesus.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—salvation begins from knowing and believing the word of God

In Luke 7:1–10 the elders of the Jews said that the centurion deserved to receive the help of Jesus because he loved the Jewish

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nation and had built them a synagogue. They put forward the centurion's good deeds as the ground. But the centurion himself did not put forward his own good deeds or qualification. He confessed that he was not even qualified to receive Jesus into his house.

The centurion believed that even if Jesus did not come to his house in person, his servant would be healed if He only spoke the word. It was because he knew that he too, as a man under authority, gave orders to his subordinates and they carried them out just so. He did not think of Jesus simply as a man who was good at healing diseases. He knew Him as the Creator God, who rules over all creation by His word, and as the Savior for whom Israel had been waiting.

The faith Jesus praised is not a faith that relies on emotional excitement or mystical experience. It is a faith that knows through the Word who Jesus is and what He has accomplished, and believes it in the heart.

When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He took upon Himself all our sins once and for all. And bearing those sins He was crucified and judged on the Cross, and He rose from the dead. Just as the centurion confessed, "*Say the word,*" a sinner too must clearly know and believe through the written Word how the Lord removed his sins.

2. The raising of the widow's son at Nain—compassion that overcomes death (7:11–17)

"Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother;

and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us'; and, 'God has visited His people.' And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region."

General interpretation of the text

As Jesus is entering the city of Nain, He meets the funeral procession of a widow's only son. In those days a woman who had lost both her husband and her only son could be placed in a very vulnerable position not only in emotional grief but also economically and socially.

It was not the widow who first asked for help. Jesus sees her and has compassion on her, and He brings her son back to life. Therefore the center of this event is not a person's faith but the compassion of Jesus, who first goes to the suffering person.

The people call Jesus *"a great prophet"* and say, *"God has visited His people."* This calls to mind the events in the Old Testament in which Elijah and Elisha raised dead children, but Jesus raises a dead man by His own word, not in the figure of a prophet who merely prays. Through this Luke emphasizes that the life of God and the power of salvation appeared in Jesus.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the Lord is God, who rules over death

In verses 11–17 Jesus met a funeral procession coming out through the gate of the city of Nain. The dead young man was the only son of a widow. To the widow who had lost her husband, the death of her only son was the greatest sorrow, which could not be resolved by human strength.

Though the widow did not first ask for help, Jesus saw her and had compassion on her. The Lord touched the coffin and said, *"Young man, I say to you, arise."* Then the young man who had been dead sat up and began to speak.

The only One who can command a dead person to arise and actually bring him back to life is God. This event shows that Jesus is not a mere prophet but the Creator God, who rules over life and death.

The problem of sin also cannot be solved by human strength. A person cannot escape the judgment of sin and spiritual death by his own good deeds and religious efforts. But Jesus took upon Himself our sins by His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so gave life to those who were bound by sin and death.

Even to the saints who have received the remission of sins, worries and problems that are hard to solve arise. At such a time they must not bear the problem alone and despair, but must pray to the Lord, who rules over life and every circumstance, and entrust it to Him.

3. The question of John the Baptist—*"Are You the Coming One?"* (7:18–23)

"Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' When the men had come to Him, they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'' And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.'"

General interpretation of the text

John the Baptist, who was in prison, sends his disciples and asks Jesus, *"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"*

John had testified of Jesus before, but the manner of Jesus' ministry may have been different from what he had expected. He had proclaimed that the Messiah would carry out a powerful judgment immediately, but Jesus was ministering centered on healing the sick, preaching the gospel to the poor, and showing compassion.

Jesus does not simply answer, "Yes"; He tells them to look at what He has done. The blind were seeing, those who could not walk were walking, lepers were being made clean, the deaf were hearing, the dead were being raised, and the gospel was being

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preached to the poor. This means that the age of the salvation of God prophesied in the book of Isaiah had begun through the ministry of Jesus.

The words *"Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me"* are an invitation not to reject Jesus, who works in a way different from one's own expectations. Faith is not fitting Jesus to one's own expectations but receiving Him as He actually shows Himself.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—John did not doubt Jesus

In verses 18–23 John the Baptist sent two disciples to Jesus and had them ask, *"Are You the Coming One?"* This question must not be interpreted as John the Baptist doubting Jesus or failing in faith.

John the Baptist had already baptized Jesus and had seen the Holy Spirit come upon Him. He had also testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Knowing in prison that his martyrdom was near, he sought to lead his disciples to Jesus and entrust them to Him. He had the disciples go directly to Jesus, see the works He was doing, and confirm that He was the promised Messiah.

Jesus answered that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, and the gospel is preached to the poor. This was the evidence that the work of the Messiah promised through the prophets was being fulfilled in Jesus.

Through this the disciples of John the Baptist had to see Jesus, who was greater than their own teacher. The true mission of John the Baptist was not to keep people bound to himself but to lead them to Jesus.

4. Jesus' assessment of John the Baptist (7:24–30)

"When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.' And when all the people heard Him, even the tax collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him."

General interpretation of the text

After the disciples of John had departed, Jesus does not rebuke John but assesses him as a figure greater than a mere prophet. He was the messenger of God, prophesied to prepare the way of the Messiah.

But Jesus says, *"He who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he."* This is commonly interpreted as pointing to his position in the history of salvation rather than as meaning that John's character or faith was lacking. For John was the one who prepared the fulfillment of the promise, but those who take part in the kingdom of God begun through Jesus experience that fulfillment more clearly.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—John was set up as the representative of mankind

In verses 24–30 Jesus said that John the Baptist was not a reed shaken by the wind. He was not a man who changed his words according to people's reactions or who sought the comfort of a palace. He was a faithful servant who delivered the Word God had entrusted to him and rebuked even the sin of the king.

Jesus testified that John was more than a prophet and the greatest among those born of women. John the Baptist was the representative of mankind, sent to connect the prophecy of the Old Testament with the fulfillment of the New Testament and to prepare the way of Jesus.

In the Old Testament the high priest laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed the sins of the people on to it. In the same way John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and passed the sins of all the people of the world on to Him. Through this baptism Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all mankind once and for all, and bearing those sins He was judged on the Cross, and He rose from the dead.

The people and the tax collectors accepted the baptism of John and acknowledged that the will of God was right. But the Pharisees and the lawyers, by refusing the baptism of John, also refused the will of God toward themselves. If the role of John the Baptist is left out, one cannot rightly know why Jesus received baptism and how He took upon Himself the sin of the world.

5. The generation that rejected the wisdom of God (7:31–35)

"And the Lord said, 'To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not weep.' For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by all her children.'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus points out the contradictory reactions of the people of that day. Of John, who lived an ascetic life, they said, *"He has a demon,"* and Jesus, who ate and drank with people, they accused of being *"a glutton and a winebibber."* This shows that the people did not fail to believe because there was not enough evidence, but that because of their own standards and prejudices they would not accept any way of God.

The words *"Wisdom is justified by all her children"* mean that the wisdom of God is revealed as right through its results and through the lives of those who have received it.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the wisdom of God is proved by the work He accomplished

In verses 31–35 Jesus compared the people of that day to children in the marketplace. Like children who do not dance though the flute is played and do not weep though there is mourning, they would not accept the word of God in whatever way it was delivered.

When John the Baptist lived a life of self-restraint in the wilderness, they slandered him, saying that he had a demon. When Jesus ate and drank with tax collectors and sinners, they slandered Him as a glutton and a lover of wine. The problem did not lie in the different manners of life of John and Jesus. It lay in the fact that from the beginning they had no heart to believe and follow the will of God.

But the slander of men cannot nullify the salvation of God. God sent John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by the baptism He received from John. Because of that sin He was crucified, shed His blood, and died, and He rose from the dead.

This is the wisdom that God determined in order to save people from sin. The wisdom of God is not mere knowledge but the power that actually completed the salvation of sinners. Those who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit testify that this salvation is right, and they show its fruit through lives of thanksgiving and service.

6. The sinful woman and Simon the Pharisee—remission and love (7:36–50)

"Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.' Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives

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sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'"

General interpretation of the text

A Pharisee named Simon invites Jesus to a meal. There a woman known in the city as a sinner comes in, wets the feet of Jesus with her tears, wipes them with her hair, and pours fragrant oil on them.

Simon thinks to himself that if Jesus were a prophet, He would know what kind of person this woman is. But Jesus, knowing his thoughts, tells the parable of the two debtors. One owed a large debt and the other a small debt, but neither of them had the ability to repay. The point is that if the creditor canceled the debts of both, the one who had more canceled would love him more.

Jesus contrasts the attitudes of Simon and the woman. Simon did not sufficiently show even the basic hospitality offered to a guest, but the woman expressed deep love and respect with her tears, her kisses, and her fragrant oil.

The words *"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much"* can hardly be taken to mean that the woman purchased remission by the act of love. As the following words, *"But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little,"* explain, her great love is a response to the great remission she had already experienced or accepted by faith. That is why at the end Jesus says, *"Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."*

Simon is outwardly a respected religious man, but he does not deeply recognize his own need and his own sin. The woman, on the other hand, is treated as a sinner socially, but she acknowledges her condition and relies entirely on the remission

of Jesus. This scene contrasts the religious attitude that judges people by their outward reputation with the grace of Jesus, who receives the person who repents.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—love is not the price of salvation but the fruit of grace

In verses 36–50 appear Simon the Pharisee and a woman known as a sinner. The woman wet the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with her hair, and she kissed His feet and poured fragrant oil on them. Simon, on the other hand, invited Jesus to his house but gave Him no water for His feet, nor a kiss, nor olive oil.

Looking at the woman's sin, Simon thought that he was more righteous than she. But Jesus told the parable of the two men who owed five hundred denarii and fifty denarii. There was a difference in the amount of the debt, but neither of them had the ability to repay. Unless the debt was canceled, both of them could only remain debtors.

Before God, both the person who has outwardly committed many sins and the person who has committed few are sinners who cannot resolve their sin by their own strength. A person cannot repay the debt of sin by his good deeds and religious acts. Jesus took upon Himself all sins by His baptism, paid the price of sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so resolved that debt.

The woman's tears and fragrant oil were not the price that bought the remission of sins. She believed that Jesus was the Savior who had remitted her sins, and because she knew how great a grace she had received, she loved and served the Lord. Jesus too said, *"Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."*

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The remission of sins is not obtained by a person's tears or devotion. One must first believe the fact that Jesus completely removed his sins by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Love toward the Lord and service for the gospel are the fruit of thanksgiving that appears after one has received the remission of sins.

Conclusion of Part 1—the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 7 proclaims

Luke chapter 7 shows that Jesus is God, who has the authority of the Word; the Lord of life, who raises the dead; and the Savior, who cancels all the debts of sinners.

God first sent John the Baptist as the representative of mankind. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins by the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which God completed with wisdom, justice, and love.

Like the centurion, we must know who Jesus is and believe the authority of His word. Like the widow of Nain, we must entrust to the Lord of life the problems that man cannot solve. We must not refuse with our own thoughts the way of salvation of God accomplished through John the Baptist and Jesus.

Also, like the man who had five hundred denarii canceled, we must know that we too were people who owed a debt of sin that we could not repay by ourselves. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in his heart the salvation Jesus accomplished does not boast of his own merit. Giving thanks to the Lord who saved him, he loves and serves the Lord, the gospel, and souls. ✉

Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

Jesus Christ, who gives life to sinners by His word

Introduction

In Part 1 above we looked at each passage of Luke chapter 7 side by side, from the general interpretation of the text and from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at what the words and the works of Jesus teach our faith and our lives.

The faith of the centurion, the compassion toward the widow of Nain, the answer given to the disciples of John the Baptist, the rebuke of the generation that rejected the will of God, and the remission of sins granted to the sinful woman are not separate events. All these events reveal that Jesus is the Savior, who has authority and life, and that a sinner is saved not by his own righteousness but by believing His word and His grace.

The expository sermon that follows faithfully traces the meaning of the text and examines how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind through His baptism and completed salvation through the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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The faith that believes the word of Jesus just as it is

"Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant –ASV. And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 'for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.' Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, 'Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, 'I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!' And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick" (Luke 7:1–10).

The centurion, who relied not on his own merit but on the authority of Jesus

After teaching the Word to the people, Jesus entered Capernaum. There was a certain centurion there. The centurion was a man who had the power to command soldiers, yet he did

not regard the servant who belonged to him as a mere possession. Luke records that servant as a servant whom the centurion loved. When the servant was sick and about to die, the centurion realized the fact that he could not save him by his own power or by the strength of the army.

The centurion heard the report about Jesus. He had heard the news that Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons, and preached the word of God with authority. His faith was not an optimistic confidence that arose without any ground. He heard what works Jesus had done, and through that report he believed that Jesus had the authority to rule over disease and death.

He sent the elders of the Jews to Jesus and asked Him to save his servant. Here, that he asked Him to save his servant means first of all that he asked Him to deliver the servant from a deadly disease. This event, in which He delivered the servant from the crisis of death, shows that Jesus is the One who rules over problems that cannot be solved by human strength, and what the faith that believes His word is like.

The elders of the Jews said that this centurion was deserving of help. He loved the Jewish nation and had even built them a synagogue. Although he was a man who belonged to a Gentile army, he respected the Jews and did good to them rather than oppressing them, and so the elders valued his merit highly.

But there is an important difference between the words of the elders and the confession of the centurion himself. The elders said that he was deserving, but the centurion confessed that he was not a man fit to receive Jesus into his house. Others saw his good deeds, but he saw his own lack before Jesus. Nor did he put forward the good deed of having built a synagogue and make a confident demand.

The humility of the centurion was not an attitude of degrading himself as a useless man. It was an attitude of

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knowing how exalted and how authoritative Jesus was and rightly acknowledging his own position. He knew that even though he was a commander in the army, he was not one who had claim over life and death. So he did not rely on his rank or his merit but relied wholly on the authority of Jesus.

"Say the word, and my servant will be healed"

The centurion did not think that his servant would be healed only if Jesus came to his house in person and laid His hand on him. He asked, *"Say the word, and my servant will be healed."* He believed that even though there was a physical distance between Jesus and the servant, it was no obstacle at all to the word of the Lord.

The reason he could have such faith was that he knew the relationship between authority and command. The centurion himself was a man who received the orders of his superior and at the same time a man who gave orders to his subordinates. When he commanded a soldier to go, that soldier went; when he commanded him to come, he came. A command displayed the authority of the one who gave it.

Through this principle the centurion understood the authority of Jesus. He believed that if his own command took effect on a soldier under him, the command of Jesus, the Son of God, would take effect even on disease. He believed that if Jesus commanded a disease to depart, the disease would depart, and if He commanded life, life would be restored. He acknowledged that Jesus was higher than disease and stronger than death.

Jesus marveled at this faith of the centurion. He did not say that it was because the man had built a synagogue for the Jews. Nor was it because he held a high position. What Jesus saw and

praised was only his faith, which acknowledged the word and the authority of Jesus just as they are.

The centurion did not first see his servant healed and then believe in Jesus. While the servant was still dying, he believed that the word of Jesus alone was enough. This is faith that believes the Word. It is not acknowledging after confirming the result with one's eyes; it is knowing who the One who spoke is and accepting that His word will surely come to pass.

When those who had been sent returned, the servant was already well. Jesus did not enter the centurion's house, and He did not lay a hand on the servant's body. But distance was no problem to the authority of Jesus. The word of the Lord did not return void, and just as He had spoken, the work of life appeared in the sick servant.

The faith of the centurion did not come out of strong emotion or positive thinking. It was not because the centurion strongly repeated the desire of his own heart that the servant was healed. He knew and believed who Jesus was and what authority was in His word. The center of true faith is not the emotion of the believer or the intensity of his conviction but Jesus Christ, the object of faith, and His word.

Faith is not deciding on the result one wants and then demanding that God bring it about just so; it is believing the word of God and entrusting oneself to His authority and His good will.

The faith that knows the word of salvation and believes it in the heart

Luke 7:1–10 shows how a person is to receive the salvation Christ accomplished, and it teaches that the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit must also be received with this same faith in the Word. It is not putting forward one's own good deeds or religious merit, but receiving in the heart the work of salvation of Jesus Christ, to which God has testified.

However many good things a person does and however great a work he does for the church, that work does not wash away the sin of his heart. That the centurion built a synagogue was a good thing, but that good deed was not itself the price that moved the power of Jesus. The ground on which a sinner is saved is not a record of attending church, or offerings and service, or his own good conduct, but the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ Himself accomplished.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of the world. And bearing those sins He went to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in the place of sinners; He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so completed salvation. This is the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished for sinners with the water and the blood.

A person can neither reenact what Jesus accomplished nor supplement it by his own effort. Just as the centurion confessed, *"Say the word,"* the sinner must receive the word of the gospel that God has written. It is believing in one's heart the word that Jesus took upon Himself all my sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and rose again and made me righteous.

This is different from a faith that cries out that it believes unconditionally without knowing the content. The centurion thought through his own experience about what authority is, and he rightly understood the authority of Jesus and believed. In the same way, the person who believes the gospel must also know through the Word and believe why Jesus received baptism, why

He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and why He rose again.

God does not remove sin by looking at how emotionally fervent a person was. He makes known through the gospel the work of salvation He has already accomplished in Christ, and He gives the remission of sins to the person who believes that word. Upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins the Holy Spirit comes, testifying that this salvation is true and leading him to live according to the word of God.

The faith of the centurion was not a faith that would believe only if Jesus were before his eyes. What he wanted was not a special sign or a mysterious experience either. He believed that one word from Jesus was enough. Today also a person must hold on to the word of the gospel recorded in the Bible rather than to visible phenomena or intense feelings.

This section shows that the word of Jesus is not a mere teaching but a word that has actual authority. At one word from Jesus a dying servant became well. In the same way, if Jesus has said that He removed all sins by His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, the sinner must not raise his own thoughts or feelings above that word.

The centurion was acknowledged by others as a deserving man, yet he laid down his own merit and relied only on the word of Jesus. The faith the Lord praised was not a faith that greatly puts forward one's own righteousness but a faith that greatly acknowledges the authority of Jesus. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit likewise does not claim that he has accomplished anything. Obeying the word that Jesus took upon Himself all his sins, was judged, and completed salvation, he lives as one who by that grace has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.

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The Lord of life, who stopped the procession of death

"Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us'; and, 'God has visited His people.' And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region" (Luke 7:11–17).

The Lord of life and the procession of death met at the city gate

After healing the servant of the centurion in Capernaum, Jesus went to a city called Nain. In the former case He healed by His word a sick servant who was far away; here He raised a young man who had already died and was being carried out for burial. Luke records these two events one after the other and shows the fact that the authority of Jesus reaches not only disease but death itself.

As Jesus was entering the city of Nain, His disciples and a large crowd were going with Him. But near the gate of the city He met an entirely different crowd. The crowd that followed

Jesus was entering the city with the Lord of life, but the funeral procession was carrying the dead young man out of the city. The procession of life and the procession of death met at the city gate.

The young man who had died was the only son of a widow. This woman had already lost her husband, and now she had lost her one and only son as well. The son would have been both a beloved member of her family and the last hope on which a woman who had lost her husband could lean and live. The death of her son was not only the death of one person but an event in which the future and the hope the widow had held on to collapsed together.

Many people of the city were joining in the funeral procession, but no one could raise the dead young man. People could share in the widow's sorrow and comfort her, but they had no power to turn death back. However much human beings love and help one another, in the face of the problem of life and death they cannot but reveal their own limits.

But Jesus met that procession. The text does not say that the widow went to Jesus and begged Him to save her son. She was only following her son's funeral procession, sunk in deep sorrow. Jesus saw the widow first and had compassion on her. The beginning of this event was not what the widow did but the compassion of the Lord, who looked upon a person who was suffering.

Jesus said to the widow, *"Do not weep."* This word of Jesus was the comfort of life from One who knew her sorrow and had compassion on her. It was because the Lord was about to remove the cause of death and give her son back that He said not to weep. The comfort of Jesus was not a comfort that ended in words alone; it was accompanied by the power to change the situation of death.

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"Young man, I say to you, arise"

When Jesus came near and touched the coffin, those who were carrying it stood still. The funeral procession that had been moving toward death came to a stop before the touch of Jesus. Death was dragging a man to the grave, but the Lord of life blocked that road.

Jesus did not ask anyone else for help, and there is no record that He prayed for the dead young man to be raised. By His own authority Jesus commanded, *"Young man, I say to you, arise."* An ordinary person cannot tell a dead man to arise. And even if he says it, the dead man cannot hear that voice and rise. But in the word of Jesus there was the authority of life that raises the dead.

Jesus called the dead young man as though He were speaking to a living person. In the words *"I say to you"* the direct and absolute authority of Jesus appears. Not even death could disobey the command of Jesus. When the Lord said to arise, the young man who had been dead immediately sat up and began to speak.

That the young man sat up and spoke was clear evidence that he had actually come back to life. A man who had died and was being buried actually recovered life, moved his body, and spoke. Jesus gave the young man back to his mother. He did not restore life only; He also restored the relationship between mother and son that had been cut off by death.

In this scene the power and the compassion of Jesus appear together. Jesus is not a cold person who has the power to raise the dead but turns away from human tears. Nor, on the other hand, is He One who has only a heart of compassion but no power to solve death. In Jesus there are both the love that has compassion on sinners and the power that solves sin and death.

When the crowd saw this event they were afraid and glorified God. They confessed that a great prophet had risen up among them and that God had visited His people. They realized through the ministry of Jesus that God had not forgotten His suffering people but had come to them.

But Jesus is not merely one of the prophets who received power from God and performed miracles. That the crowd called Jesus a great prophet was a meaningful confession within the range of their understanding at that time, but it was not a word that explained everything about who Jesus is. Jesus, who by His own authority commanded life to a dead man, is the Son of God, who came to this earth clothed in human flesh, and the Master of life.

The young man of Nain actually died and came back to life, but the life he received was physical life on this earth. He was able to live with his mother again, but he did not receive a body that would never die on this earth. This event shows that Jesus rules over death and that He is the Lord of life, who will save sinners from eternal death.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit, which brought us to life from sin and death

Every person has not only the problem of the death of the body but also the problem of eternal judgment because of sin. A person may cure a disease of the body and extend life a little, but he cannot remove the sin of his own heart or save himself from the judgment after death. Just as the many people of Nain could weep beside the widow but could not raise the young man, human good deeds and religious effort also cannot deliver a sinner from eternal death.

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But Jesus came to this earth to solve the problem of sin and death. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And bearing those sins He went to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in the place of sinners. He was buried and rose again on the third day, overcoming sin and death and opening for us the way of eternal life.

The young man of Nain rose from the dead at the command of Jesus, but Jesus Himself entered into death while having taken our sin upon Himself, and then came back to life. The revival of the young man is a sign that showed the authority of life that Jesus has, and the resurrection of Jesus is the event in which He overcame sin and death and completed salvation. Because of the resurrection of Jesus, the hope of eternal resurrection is given also to the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

To believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not stop at simply acknowledging that Jesus is able to perform miracles. It is receiving in one's heart the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all my sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John, paid the price of my sins on the Cross, and rose again and made me righteous. Upon the person who believes this gospel and has received the remission of sins the Holy Spirit comes, and He seals that person as a child of God.

The Holy Spirit makes the heart that was dead in sin live as a heart that hears and believes the word of God, and He leads the saved person to live in newness of life. The believer who has received the remission of sins may also fall sick on this earth and may weep in the face of the death of one he loves. But those tears are not tears of eternal despair. For he believes that Jesus overcame death and rose again, and that He will raise His people again on the last day.

The event in which Jesus raised the young man of Nain is a sign that revealed that He is the Master of life. God has promised to give the remission of sins and eternal life to the person who believes in Christ and to raise him with an imperishable body on the last day.

Until she met Jesus, the widow could do nothing in the face of the death of her son. But Jesus first saw the woman, who seemed to have no strength even to ask for help, and came near to her. This makes us consider the fact that salvation does not begin from the ability of man but from the compassion of God. It is not that the sinner first sought God and made the way of salvation; it is that God had compassion on the sinner and sent Jesus Christ.

A sinner receives the remission of sins by hearing and believing in his heart the gospel of the salvation that Jesus accomplished by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. He must lay down his own works and righteousness and receive the authority of Jesus, who raises the dead, and the righteousness of God that He completed.

When Jesus touched the coffin, the procession that had been going toward death stopped. Today also the gospel of the water and the Spirit stops the person who is going toward sin and judgment. It makes him realize his own sin, makes him look at the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John and the fact that He paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and makes him believe in the risen Lord and obtain eternal life.

Jesus saw the tears of the widow and raised her dead son and gave him back to his mother. In the same way the Lord did not turn away from man, who lay under sin and death. He Himself came clothed in a human body, took upon Himself our sins by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose

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again. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and obtains the hope of the resurrection by which he will live with the Lord forever beyond the death of the body.

Jesus, who testified of Himself by the work of salvation

"Then the disciples of John reported to him concerning all these things. And John, calling two of his disciples to him, sent them to Jesus, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?' When the men had come to Him, they said, 'John the Baptist has sent us to You, saying, 'Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?'' And that very hour He cured many of infirmities, afflictions, and evil spirits; and to many blind He gave sight. Jesus answered and said to them, 'Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard: that the blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them. And blessed is he who is not offended because of Me.'" (Luke 7:18–23).

John the Baptist sent his disciples to Jesus, the Coming One

The disciples of John the Baptist reported to John all the things Jesus had done. Here *"all these things"* includes healing the servant of the centurion by His word and raising the dead son of the widow of Nain. In the word of Jesus there was authority to drive out disease, and there was also power to give life to a dead man.

At this time John the Baptist was shut up in prison for having rebuked the sin of Herod. He could not go to Jesus freely, but through his disciples he was hearing news about the ministry of Jesus. John sent two of his disciples to Jesus to ask, *"Are You the Coming One, or do we look for another?"*

"The Coming One" refers to the Christ whom God promised to send in order to save His people. Therefore the question John sent was meant to have his disciples see and hear for themselves that Jesus was truly the Savior sent by God. This is the most essential question concerning the identity and the ministry of Jesus.

It was not because John the Baptist had grown weary of life in prison and doubted Jesus that he sent this question. He had already baptized Jesus and passed the sins of mankind on to Him, and he knew and believed that Jesus was the Son of God and the Coming One.

John the Baptist was the one who had already baptized Jesus. He prepared the ministry of Jesus and testified that Jesus was mightier than he. Moreover, in the words that follow, Jesus acknowledges John the Baptist as one who is more than a prophet, not as a reed shaken by the wind. The word in which Jesus testified that John was more than a prophet also clearly shows that John the Baptist was not a man who failed in faith.

John the Baptist had this question asked in order to lead his own disciples to Jesus and to hand over his ministry to Him. The point is that he wanted the disciples of John not to stop at hearing only their teacher's words but to see the ministry of Jesus for themselves and believe that He is the Christ. John the Baptist knew that he himself was not the center but that Jesus was the center.

John the Baptist did not make an answer out of his own thoughts but sent his disciples to Jesus. It was so that his

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disciples might see the ministry of Jesus for themselves and hear His word, and know and believe that Jesus was truly the Coming One. John the Baptist did not keep people bound at his own side but led them to Jesus Christ.

"Go and tell John the things you have seen and heard"

The two disciples of John came to Jesus and delivered the question they had received just as it was. Jesus did not stop at simply answering, "I am the Coming One." At that very hour He healed people who were suffering from diseases and afflictions, set free those who were possessed by evil spirits, and gave sight to many who were blind. And He told the disciples of John to report just what they themselves had seen and heard.

The answer of Jesus was an answer given not by assertion alone but through actual ministry. The blind saw, those who could not walk walked, lepers were cleansed, those who could not hear heard, and the dead were raised. Things that cannot be done by human strength actually happened through Jesus.

These works show that Jesus is One who does not turn away from human suffering. Jesus was not One who regarded only the soul of man as important and had no interest in the suffering of the body. He had compassion on the sick, He set free those who were pressed down by evil spirits, and He raised the dead and gave them back to their sorrowing families.

The miracles of Jesus are signs that show, together with the fact that He solved physical problems, that He has the authority to rule over sin and death. The ultimate purpose for which Jesus came did not stop at extending the life span of man for a little while on this earth; it was to save sinners from sin and eternal death.

That the blind saw, that lepers were cleansed, and that the dead were raised are events that actually happened. At the same time all those events reveal the authority of salvation of Jesus, who fully restores a broken person and gives life to the dead.

The last thing emphasized in the answer of Jesus is the fact that *"the poor have the gospel preached to them."* As much as the healing of disease and the revival of the dead, the preaching of the gospel to the poor was important evidence showing that Jesus is the Coming One. The gospel was not obtained only by those who had money and position, learning and religious merit. It was delivered without discrimination even to those who were regarded in the world as of no account.

Jesus actually went to people who were poor and shut out and preached the gospel to them. At the same time, the person who receives the gospel is one who admits his spiritual poverty—that within himself there is no power and no righteousness with which to solve sin. The person who thinks that he is righteous of himself and lacks nothing does not feel the need of a Savior, but the person who knows his own sin and helplessness receives the gospel as good news.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit, which John the Baptist and Jesus accomplished

The ministry of John the Baptist also was precisely the work of leading people to this Jesus. John cried out to the people to repent, and he baptized Jesus so that He might fulfill the righteousness of God. By the baptism He received from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of all people once and for all.

John the Baptist was not merely a man who performed a

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religious rite of immersing people in water. He was used in the work of salvation of God, baptizing Jesus so that the sin of mankind would pass on to Jesus. And he testified to the people that Jesus, who took upon Himself the sin of the world, is the Lamb of God and the Christ.

That John sent his disciples to Jesus in Luke chapter 7 also turns people's eyes in the end not to John himself but to Jesus. The disciples of John were not to hold on only to the fame of their teacher; they were to come to Jesus, see the works He was doing, and hear His word. The right ministry of John the Baptist was not to keep people bound as his own disciples but to make them believe in Christ.

The miracles Jesus performed testified that He is the Son of God and the true Savior. The Lord, who opened the eyes of the body, healed sick bodies, and raised the dead, opens the spiritual eyes of sinners by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, washes away their sin and makes them righteous, and gives them eternal life.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, and bearing that sin He went to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in the place of sinners. And He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so completed salvation. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection are the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which rescues sinners from sin and eternal death.

Jesus, who gave sight to the blind and raised the dead, also had the power to take upon Himself and remove all the sins of all people once and for all. If disease and evil spirits and death obeyed the authority of Jesus, then His work of salvation—by which He said that He would be judged on the Cross for the sin of mankind He had taken upon Himself by baptism and remove it—was also accomplished completely. Therefore the person

who believes the power of Jesus must also believe in his heart the remission of sins that He accomplished by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit admits his own spiritual poverty and receives the righteousness that Jesus accomplished. He does not try to live well and thereby remove his sin; he believes the word that Jesus took upon Himself all my sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross. Upon the person who by this faith has received the remission of all his sins the Holy Spirit comes, and He gives him new life.

Jesus said, *"Blessed is he who is not offended because of Me."* To be offended is to reject Jesus on the ground that He is different from the figure one had expected. People could expect a strong political leader or an immediate judge, but Jesus preached the gospel to the poor and came near to the sick and to sinners.

John the Baptist was shut up in prison, but Jesus acknowledged the ministry entrusted to John and clearly testified to the disciples he had sent that He Himself was the Coming One. Jesus was accomplishing the work of salvation that solves the problem of all sin and death.

The signs Jesus performed testify that He is the Lord of life and salvation, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life to the person who believes. Even in hardship the believer believes that Jesus is the Savior and holds on to His word and to the completed gospel.

That Jesus received baptism from John and died on the Cross may look different from what people expected, but it was through that very baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that God saved sinners.

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The disciples of John the Baptist went to Jesus and saw and heard for themselves. Today we cannot go to that place in the body, but through the testimony of the apostles recorded in the Bible we see and hear the works Jesus did. Through that Word we believe that Jesus is the Coming One and the Savior, who removed all sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Luke 7:18–23 teaches us not to judge Jesus according to our own expectations but to see what He actually did and believe. Jesus healed those who were suffering, raised the dead, and preached the gospel to the poor. And by taking upon Himself all the sins of all people once and for all through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and then rising again, He completely revealed that He is truly the Coming One and the Christ, who saves all sinners.

Accept the will of salvation that God has determined

"When the messengers of John had departed, He began to speak to the multitudes concerning John: 'What did you go out into the wilderness to see? A reed shaken by the wind? But what did you go out to see? A man clothed in soft garments? Indeed those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts. But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.' And when all the people heard Him, even the tax

collectors justified God, having been baptized with the baptism of John. But the Pharisees and lawyers rejected the will of God for themselves, not having been baptized by him. And the Lord said, 'To what then shall I liken the men of this generation, and what are they like? They are like children sitting in the marketplace and calling to one another, saying: 'We played the flute for you, And you did not dance; We mourned to you, And you did not weep.' For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man has come eating and drinking, and you say, 'Look, a glutton and a winebibber, a friend of tax collectors and sinners!' But wisdom is justified by all her children.'" (Luke 7:24–35).

John the Baptist, the messenger sent by God and the representative of mankind

After the men John the Baptist had sent departed, Jesus explained to the crowd what kind of man John was. From prison John had sent men to Jesus to ask, *"Are You the Coming One?"* Jesus clearly testified before the people that John was not a man without faith or a failed prophet, but the messenger sent by God and one who is more than a prophet.

That Jesus repeatedly asked, *"What did you go out into the wilderness to see?"* was a word that made the people look back on what they had expected from John. Countless people had flocked to the wilderness where John was working. But the people had not gone out to see a mere spectacle or an unusual religious man. Through John they heard the word of God, which pointed out their sin and prepared the way of Christ.

The words *"A reed shaken by the wind?"* mean that John

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was not a man who changed his words according to people's responses or according to circumstances. John did not compromise the truth while watching the faces of those in power. He was shut up in prison after rebuking even the sin of Herod, but he did not change his message in order to be acknowledged by men. John's circumstances were unstable, but the mission God had entrusted to him remained unshaken.

If we look only at the fact that John was shut up in prison, his ministry may seem to have failed. But the work of God cannot be judged by how comfortably a minister lived, how long he worked, or how high a position he rose to in the world. John worked for a short period and was shut up in prison, but he faithfully carried out the mission of preparing the way of Christ.

Jesus then asked, *"A man clothed in soft garments?"* Those who are gorgeously appareled and live in luxury are in kings' courts, but John lived simply in the wilderness. John's greatness lay not in his outward manner of life but in his faithfully carrying out the Word and the mission entrusted to him as the messenger sent by God.

The sincerity of a person who preaches the gospel is revealed not by his appearance and his wealth, his social position and his religious reputation, but by what he preaches and of whom he bears witness. A true servant of God does not gather people's attention to himself but testifies of Jesus Christ and the salvation He accomplished.

Jesus called John *"more than a prophet."* If the other prophets prophesied from afar about the Christ who was to come, John directly prepared the way by which Christ would come and testified of Jesus to the people. He exalted Jesus, who was coming after him, rather than displaying himself. The ministry of John was not to gather people's attention to himself but to turn their hearts to Jesus Christ.

Through John the Baptist all sins passed on to Jesus

Especially when seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the ministry of John cannot be considered apart from the baptism of Jesus. John proclaimed repentance to the people, and at last he baptized Jesus in the Jordan River. That Jesus received baptism from John was not repentance because He had sin; it was a work for fulfilling the righteousness of God. By receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind, the sinless Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of all people once and for all.

The baptism the people received from John and the baptism Jesus received from John each had a will that God had determined. The baptism the people received was a baptism of repentance by which they admitted that they were sinners before God and prepared themselves to welcome Christ. The baptism Jesus received, on the other hand, was the work of salvation in which the sinless Son of God took upon Himself the sin of mankind and fulfilled the righteousness of God.

The baptism a believer receives today is a confession of the faith that Jesus took upon Himself all my sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so saved me. The remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are received when one believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart.

Jesus said, *"Among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist,"* because John the Baptist was the messenger sent by God, the representative of mankind, the last prophet of the Old Testament, and the high priest. He was entrusted with the mission of preparing the way of Christ and of baptizing Jesus and passing the sins of mankind on to Him.

John the Baptist baptized Jesus as the representative of

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mankind, and through that baptism all the sins of all people passed on to Jesus once and for all. After baptizing Jesus, John testified of Him as the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world. Through this ministry the way of salvation was opened, by which Jesus removes all sins by the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

When Jesus said, *"He who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he,"* He was comparing the position of John, the representative of mankind in the flesh, with the spiritual standing of the person who has been clothed with the righteousness of God and become a child of God by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. John was the greatest among those born of women, but the person who has been clothed with the righteousness of God and entered the kingdom of God by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit has become a child of God, and so in the kingdom of God he is greater than John.

John prepared and testified of the salvation that would be accomplished by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection. But the born-again believer believes that completed salvation and receives the remission of all his sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift. Therefore the word that even the least in the kingdom of God is greater than John does not compare personal merit or worldly greatness but shows the greatness of the grace and the standing received within the completed gospel.

The people who accepted the will of God and those who rejected it for themselves

All the people and the tax collectors, because they had already received the baptism of John, heard the word of Jesus and *"justified God."* That they justified God means that they

acknowledged that God was right in judging them to be sinners, and that the way of salvation He had spoken of, telling them to repent and welcome Christ, was also right.

The tax collectors were treated as sinners by the people of that day. But they accepted the judgment of God that they were sinners and humbled themselves before the word of repentance that John preached. The starting point at which a sinner is saved lies not in making excuses that he has no sin but in acknowledging that the word of God is right and that his own judgment is wrong.

On the contrary, the Pharisees and the lawyers did not receive the baptism of John. They knew the Scriptures and led religious lives, but they did not agree with the judgment of God that they were sinners. That they refused the baptism of John was not simply a matter of not choosing one religious rite; it was the refusal of the will of God, who would bring them to repentance and lead them to Christ. That is why the text says that they *"rejected the will of God for themselves."*

For a person to receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he must first lay down his own righteousness. If he thinks that he has lived a good life, that he has religious zeal, and that he is better than others, it is hard for him to accept why Jesus had to receive baptism and take upon Himself sin and die on the Cross. Only the person who admits his own sin and helplessness can receive in his heart the fact that the baptism and the Cross of Jesus were salvation for him.

Jesus compared the people of that day to children sitting in the marketplace. The children complained about their friends, who did not dance though the flute was played and did not weep though there was mourning. This shows a stubborn generation that would not receive the word of God in whatever way He spoke.

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When John the Baptist proclaimed repentance in a restrained and strict manner, the people accused him of having a demon. On the contrary, when Jesus ate and drank with people and came near to tax collectors and sinners, they accused Him of being a glutton and a lover of wine. They disliked the strict John, and they disliked Jesus, who embraced sinners, as well. The problem lay not in the ways of John and of Jesus but in the hearts of the people, who would not receive the word of God.

The ministry of John, like mourning, urged people to realize their sin and repent. The ministry of Jesus, like the sound of the flute, delivered the joy of salvation to sinners. The person who refuses repentance dislikes John, and the person who will not receive grace accuses even Jesus. In the end they did not fail to believe because there was no way that suited their taste; they did not believe because in whatever way it was delivered, they had no heart to obey the will of God.

That the people called Jesus *"a friend of tax collectors and sinners"* was an accusation, but in that word an important truth of the gospel is contained. Jesus came near in order to save sinners from that sin and from judgment. The tax collectors and sinners who admitted their own sin found it easier to receive the grace of Jesus than those who claimed to be righteous.

By receiving baptism in the Jordan River, Jesus took upon Himself the sins of sinners, and bearing those sins He went to the Cross. By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross He received the punishment of sin in the place of sinners, and He was buried and rose again on the third day and overcame sin and death. The water of baptism, the blood of the Cross, the death, and the resurrection are not events separated from one another but one complete gospel that God accomplished in order to save sinners.

The Pharisees and the lawyers who refused the baptism of

John did not refuse John's person only. They refused even the way of Christ that John prepared and testified to. Today also, if a person speaks only of the Cross of Jesus and does not believe why He received baptism from John, he cannot fully believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus took upon Himself sin by baptism, He was able to bear that sin and be judged on the Cross.

The words *"Wisdom is justified by all her children"* mean that the saving wisdom of God is shown to be right through the people who receive His word. The person who belongs to the wisdom of God receives the proclamation of repentance by John and believes the salvation of Jesus Christ. That faith bears fruit in his life as well and reveals the fact that God is right.

Today also, those who reject the truth take issue with the appearance and the manner of the one who delivers it rather than with its content; if he strictly points out sin, they say that he has no love, and if he comes near to sinners, they accuse him of not being holy. But if a person only goes on evaluating the Word God has sent according to his own taste, he falls into the same stubbornness as the children in the marketplace. What matters is not whether the word suits my mood and my expectations but whether it rightly delivers the will of salvation of God.

The fruit of love is borne from the grace of the remission of sins

"Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him

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weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.' Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'" (Luke 7:36–50).

The woman who was a sinner believed in her heart in Jesus as her Savior

A Pharisee invited Jesus to a meal at his house. Since Jesus

later calls him *"Simon,"* we can know that this man's name was Simon. He had enough interest to invite Jesus to his house, but he was not a man who had received Jesus as his own Savior. Though he had brought Jesus near, he did not believe in his heart who He was.

Into that place came a woman known in that city as a sinner. Luke introduces this woman as a person whom everyone knew as a sinner. This woman came to Jesus knowing that she was a sinner who could only perish before God.

Knowing that Jesus was in Simon's house, the woman came with an alabaster flask of fragrant oil. If she had been conscious of people's eyes, entering the house of a Pharisee would itself have been frightening. In that house there were people who would condemn her, and there were neighbors who knew what kind of person she was. But the woman regarded going to Jesus as more important than people's judgment.

The woman went behind Jesus and stood at His feet and wept. When her tears wet the feet of Jesus, she wiped them with the hair of her head, kept kissing His feet, and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Her tears, her kisses, and her fragrant oil were an expression of love offered in thanksgiving for the grace of having believed in her heart in Jesus as her Savior and received the remission of all her sins.

Jesus said to the woman, *"Your faith has saved you."* What saved the woman was not her tears, her fragrant oil, and her devotion, but the faith that received into her heart Jesus, who had taken upon Himself all her sins, as her Savior.

Simon watched the woman's actions and judged Jesus in his heart. He thought, *"This Man, if He were a prophet."* The thought was that if Jesus were truly a prophet of God, He would have known that the woman touching Him was a sinner and would not have let her come near.

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Jesus knew both the past and the present of the woman. At the same time He knew even the heart of Simon, who said nothing outwardly. Simon thought that he saw through the woman's sin, but the One who was actually seeing the hearts of all men was Jesus.

Simon thought that if he came into contact with a sinner he too would become unclean. But Jesus is the Savior, who Himself takes upon Himself the sin and the uncleanness of a sinner and makes him clean. Jesus came near in order to save sinners from that sin and from judgment.

He canceled the debts of both men, who had nothing with which to repay

Jesus told Simon the story of two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii and the other owed fifty denarii. There was a great difference between the debts of the two, but they had one decisive thing in common. It is the fact that neither of them had anything with which to repay.

The man who owed five hundred denarii could not repay by his own strength, and the man who owed fifty denarii could not repay either. This shows the fact that though the shape and the degree of sin that appears outwardly may look different from person to person, no one can repay the debt of sin by his own works and effort. Both the person who is respected in the world and the person who is pointed at as a sinner are without the ability to repay the price of sin before God.

What removed the debt was not the effort or the good deeds of the debtors. The one who had lent the money canceled the debts of both. To cancel a debt is for the creditor to remove the debt of a person who has no ability to repay. It is not the sinner

who removes his own sin; it is God who removes sin by the grace of salvation.

Seen on the level of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this cancellation represents the salvation Jesus accomplished for sinners. A person cannot repay the debt of sin by his prayers and tears, his good deeds and religious life. That is why the Son of God came to this earth clothed in a human body.

Jesus had already received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. By that baptism He took upon His own body all the sins of all people once and for all. The sins this woman had committed throughout her life, and also the sins of pride and unbelief that Simon was hiding behind his outward appearance, passed on to Jesus within the baptism He received.

Bearing the sins He had taken upon Himself by baptism, Jesus went to the Cross and shed His blood and died. He received in the place of sinners the death and the judgment that are the wages of sin. And He was buried and rose again on the third day, overcoming sin and death and completing salvation. In this way the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, the death, and the resurrection are the work of salvation in which God Himself repaid a debt that sinners could not repay.

At the time this event took place, the Cross and the resurrection of Jesus had not yet come to pass. But Jesus had already taken upon Himself all the sins of all people once and for all by the baptism He received from John, and He was the Son of God, who would certainly complete salvation by the Cross and the resurrection. Therefore Jesus had the authority to declare the remission of sins to the woman who came to Him believing in Him.

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The faith that has received the remission of sins bears the fruit of love and thanksgiving

Simon invited Jesus to a meal, but he did not even properly show the basic hospitality that honors a guest. Jesus said that Simon had given Him no water for His feet, had not kissed Him, and had not even anointed His head with olive oil. Outwardly Simon ate together with Jesus, but in his heart he did not hold Him precious.

The woman, on the other hand, wet the feet of Jesus with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head, did not cease kissing His feet, and anointed them with fragrant oil. What Simon lacked was not simple courtesy. He did not realize who Jesus was and how greatly he himself needed Him. Because the woman believed how absolutely necessary a Savior Jesus was to her, she responded with love and thanksgiving.

The word Jesus spoke, *"Her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much,"* means that the woman received the remission of sin by believing in her heart in Jesus as her Savior, and that her faith and thanksgiving were shown in her great love. In the parable Jesus told, too, the debt was canceled first, and afterward love appeared. Love is not the price of the remission of sins but the fruit borne from the faith that has received the remission of sins.

Simon regarded himself as a person with a small debt of about fifty denarii and thought that he was more righteous than the woman. He considered that he did not need much remission. But what matters in the parable of Jesus is the fact that whether fifty or five hundred, neither had anything with which to repay. Simon too was a sinner who needed God to cancel his debt, just as the woman did.

If a person looks at another's sin and thinks, "I am not like

that person," he comes to stand in the same place as Simon. Looking only at the sins he himself has not committed, he fails to see the pride and greed, the hatred and unbelief within his heart. A difference in the kind of sin does not make one righteous before God. Every person needs Jesus Christ, who will save him.

When Jesus said to the woman, *"Your sins are forgiven,"* those who sat at the table with Him thought, *"Who is this who even forgives sins?"* This question reveals who Jesus is. The authority finally to remit sins belongs to God. That Jesus declared the remission of sins shows that He is not a mere prophet but the Son of God, who came to save sinners.

Today the content of that faith has been revealed even more clearly within the salvation Jesus completed. It is believing in one's heart the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all my sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins in my place on the Cross, and rose from among the dead and became my eternal Savior. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The person who has received the remission of sins admits his own wrongdoing and desires to live according to the will of the Lord, who saved him. The woman did not come to Jesus because she loved sin; she came because she loved Jesus, who had saved her from her sin. The remission of sins and the grace of salvation one has received give birth to a life of loving and following the Lord.

Service and offerings, preaching and sacrifice are the fruit of thanksgiving that comes out of the grace of salvation received without price. The Lord sees not only the actions that appear outwardly but also the heart and the faith out of which those actions come.

The peace Jesus spoke of is not simply a feeling in which the heart becomes comfortable. It is the peace in which a person who

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had become an enemy of God because of sin has received the remission of sins and been reconciled to God. The condemning eyes of people might continue, but because the Son of God had declared, *"Your sins are forgiven,"* the woman no longer needed to live bound by people's judgment.

When a person looks at his past sins and failures, he comes to condemn himself endlessly. But the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit must look not at his own feelings but at the salvation Jesus accomplished. Because Jesus took upon Himself all my sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John and paid the whole price of them on the Cross, there is no debt of sin remaining before God.

This section contrasts the heart of Simon, who condemned a sinner, with the heart of the woman, who believed the grace of the remission of sins. Though Simon had Jesus near, he could not see his own sin, but the woman admitted her sin and came to Jesus. Simon judged another person, but the woman believed in her Savior. In the end the one whom Jesus declared to be saved was not Simon, who held a high religious position, but the woman, who believed in Jesus in her heart.

We must look not at the woman's tears and fragrant oil but at the faith that gave birth to those actions. We must believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus removed all my sins once and for all by the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. The person who by that faith has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit does not serve the Lord driven by a sense of duty and by fear, but out of thanksgiving for the grace that first loved and saved him comes to love the Lord, serve the gospel, and live in peace. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 7

[Question] 1. What events and teachings does Luke chapter 7 contain?

Luke chapter 7 records the faith of the centurion, who believed the word and the authority of Jesus; the event in which Jesus raised the dead son of the widow of Nain; the word He gave to John the Baptist and to his disciples; and the faith and the love of the woman who was a sinner and poured out fragrant oil. These events show that Jesus is the Savior, who rules over disease, death, and sin, and that the person who believes His word receives grace.

First, in Capernaum Jesus healed the servant of a centurion, who was sick to the point of death. Though the centurion humbled himself, saying that he was not worthy to receive Jesus, he believed that if Jesus only spoke the word, his servant would be healed. Jesus marveled at his faith and said that He had not seen such great faith even in Israel. This shows that true faith is humbling oneself and relying wholly on the word and the authority of Jesus.

Second, in the city of Nain Jesus had compassion on a widow who had lost her only son, and He commanded the dead young man to arise. When the young man came back to life, the people were afraid and glorified God, and they confessed that God had come to His suffering people. This event reveals that Jesus has compassion on the person who is sunk in sorrow and that He is the Master of life, who rules even over death.

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Third, John the Baptist sent his own disciples so that they might confirm for themselves the word and the ministry of Jesus and come to Him. Jesus told them to report to John just what they had seen and heard of the works He had done. *"The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised, the poor have the gospel preached to them" (Luke 7:22)*. These works show that Jesus is the promised Savior. Then Jesus testified that John was one who is more than a prophet and the messenger of God who had been sent to prepare the way of the Lord.

Fourth, in the house of a Pharisee a woman who was a sinner wet the feet of Jesus with her tears, wiped them with the hair of her head, and anointed them with fragrant oil. Through the parable of the two debtors, Jesus taught that the person who knows that he has received great remission loves more deeply. The woman knew that she was a great sinner and believed the remission of sins that Jesus gives, and out of thanksgiving for that grace she served Jesus with great love. Simon the Pharisee, on the other hand, did not deeply realize his own sin and the grace he needed, and so he did not treat Jesus fittingly.

Luke chapter 7 shows how true faith toward Jesus appears. The centurion believed the word and the authority of Jesus; the people of Nain gave glory before the power of God, who gives life; John the Baptist led his own disciples to Jesus; and the woman who was a sinner believed the grace of the remission of sins and served Jesus with love. We too must not place the ground of our faith in our own righteousness or in our feelings, but must know through the written Word who Jesus is and what He accomplished, and believe it in our hearts.

[Question] 2. In Luke 7:2–3, whom did the centurion send to Jesus for the sake of his beloved servant, who was sick and about to die?

When his beloved servant was sick and about to die, the centurion first sent some of the elders of the Jews to Jesus.

"And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant –ASV" (Luke 7:2–3).

Although the centurion was a commander in the Roman army, he did not regard his sick servant as a mere possession or subordinate. He loved the dying servant, and in order to save him he sought help from Jesus. The elders of the Jews came to Jesus and said that the centurion loved the Jewish nation and had even built them a synagogue, and they earnestly begged Him to grant his request.

The elders of the Jews spoke of the centurion's good deeds, but the centurion himself did not put them forward and make a demand of Jesus. He humbled himself so far as to consider that he was not worthy even to have Jesus come into his house. He also believed that even if Jesus did not come in person but only spoke the word, his servant would be healed. He believed the fact that the authority of Jesus is not limited by place or distance.

We must also clearly distinguish the order that appears in the text. The people the centurion sent first were some of the elders of the Jews, and the people he sent again when Jesus was going to his house were his friends. Therefore the ones sent first, which this question asks about, are some of the elders of the Jews.

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[Question] 3. In Luke 7:9, how did Jesus assess the faith of the centurion?

When Jesus heard the words of the centurion, He marveled at him, and He said to the crowd that followed Him that He had not found such great faith even in Israel.

"When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, 'I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!'" (Luke 7:9).

The centurion did not regard himself as a man worthy to come before Jesus. But he believed that even if Jesus did not come to his house in person and only spoke the word, his servant would be healed. Because he knew that in the army subordinates moved at a single word of command, he believed that the word of Jesus had the authority to make even disease obey.

The centurion did not place the ground of his faith in his own qualification or good deeds. Nor did he say that he would believe only after first confirming a miracle before his eyes. He knew who Jesus was and what authority was in His word, and he received the word of Jesus just as it was. Jesus greatly praised the faith with which he thus humbled himself and relied wholly on the word and the authority of the Lord.

Today we too come to know through the written Word the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and thereby took upon Himself our sin, was judged for that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead and accomplished our salvation. To receive this word as a truth more certain than one's own thoughts or feelings and to believe it in one's heart is faith like that of the centurion.

[Question] 4. In Luke 7:16, how did the people react when they saw Jesus raise the son of the widow of Nain?

When Jesus raised the dead young man and gave him back to his mother, all who saw that sight were afraid and glorified God. They said that a great prophet had appeared among them and that God had come to His people.

"Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us'; and, 'God has visited His people.'" (Luke 7:16).

The fear the people felt does not mean merely the terror that arises when one sees a frightening thing. As they watched a man who had been dead sit up and speak at the word of Jesus, they were astonished and filled with awe before the power of God, which surpasses human ability. They did not regard this work as the power of man but gave glory to God.

But Jesus is not simply one of the prophets who received power from God. Jesus commanded the dead young man directly to arise, and according to His word the young man came back to life. Jesus, who makes even death obey, is the Master of life and God the Creator, who rules over the life and the death of man.

Therefore the right attitude toward this event is, like the people, to fear the power of God and give glory to God. At the same time we must not think of Jesus merely as a great prophet but must know and believe Him as the Lord, who rules over death and gives life.

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[Question] 5. In Luke 7:26–28, what kind of man did Jesus say John the Baptist was?

Jesus said that John the Baptist was one who is more than a prophet, and the messenger of God who was sent ahead of Him to prepare His way. He also said that among those born of women there is no greater prophet than John.

"But what did you go out to see? A prophet? Yes, I say to you, and more than a prophet. This is he of whom it is written: 'Behold, I send My messenger before Your face, Who will prepare Your way before You.' For I say to you, among those born of women there is not a greater prophet than John the Baptist; but he who is least in the kingdom of God is greater than he.'" (Luke 7:26–28).

The earlier prophets prophesied of the Savior who was to come and of His way, but John the Baptist came to this earth as the fulfillment of that prophecy. He came ahead of Jesus, turned the hearts of the people back to God, and directly prepared the way by which Jesus would come. He also did not seek his own glory but testified of Jesus to the people and led them to come to Him.

That Jesus said John was the greatest among those born of women was not because his personal merit or his position in the world was high. John the Baptist was born into the priestly family of Aaron and took up a priestly mission, and as the representative of mankind whom God had appointed, he baptized Jesus. Jesus received baptism from John and thereby took upon Himself the sin of the world, was judged for that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead and accomplished salvation. In this way John was the messenger of God, who took part in Jesus' work of salvation and prepared the way of the Lord.

The word *"He who is least in the kingdom of God is greater*

than he" is not meant to lower the mission and the faith of John the Baptist. Since Jesus received baptism from John and thereby took upon Himself the sin of the world, and after receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross rose from the dead, the kingdom of God has been opened to those who believe that righteousness. Therefore this word does not mean that John is outside the kingdom of God; it shows how great the salvation and grace are in the kingdom of God that was opened through his ministry.

[Question] 6. In Luke 7:36, who was the man who invited Jesus to his house?

The man who invited Jesus to his house was Simon the Pharisee. Luke 7:36 introduces him as *"one of the Pharisees,"* and in verse 40 that follows, Jesus calls him Simon.

"Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat" (Luke 7:36).

"And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.'" (Luke 7:40).

Simon invited Jesus to a meal at his house, but he did not fully show the courtesies of hospitality that Jesus pointed out. He did not give Him water to wash His feet, he did not receive Him with a kiss, and he did not even anoint His head with olive oil. His attitude shows that although he received Jesus into his house, he did not deeply realize in his heart who Jesus was and what grace he himself needed.

Jesus told the parable of the two men who owed five hundred denarii and fifty denarii, and taught that the one who has had

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more canceled loves more. Because Simon regarded himself as a righteous man and thought that he was better than the woman, he did not deeply realize the fact that he too urgently needed the grace of the remission of sins. The woman, on the other hand, knew that she was a great sinner and believed the remission of sins that Jesus gives, and so she served Jesus with thanksgiving and love. The love of the woman was not a merit for obtaining the remission of sins but a fruit of thanksgiving for the remission of sins received by faith.

[Question] 7. In Luke 7:37–38, how did the woman who was a sinner act toward Jesus in the house of Simon?

A woman known in that city as a sinner learned that Jesus was eating in the house of Simon the Pharisee, and she came with an alabaster flask of fragrant oil. The woman went behind Jesus and stood at His feet and wept, and she wet His feet with her tears and washed them with the hair of her head. Then she kissed the feet of Jesus and anointed them with the fragrant oil.

"And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil" (Luke 7:37–38).

The woman came to Jesus even in a place where Pharisees were present together. Since she was a woman known in that city as a sinner, it was a place where she could have been conscious of people's gaze, but the woman regarded going to Jesus as more

important than the opinion of others. The woman believed that Jesus was the Savior, who remits her sin, and came to Him.

Her action of wetting the feet of Jesus with her tears and washing them with the hair of her head reveals a heart that humbles itself. In the action of kissing the feet of Jesus and anointing them with fragrant oil, deep thanksgiving and love toward Jesus are contained. The woman did not honor Jesus with words alone; she served Jesus with the fragrant oil she had and with her own body. The faith of the woman appeared as the action of coming near to Jesus and as love.

The woman did not buy the remission of sins or obtain salvation by these actions. At the end Jesus said that it was not her deeds but her faith that had saved her. The tears and the fragrant oil and the love of the woman were the result of believing the remission of sins that Jesus gives, and they were the fruit of faith that appeared out of thanksgiving for the grace she had received.

[Question] 8. In Luke 7:39, what did Simon think of Jesus when he saw what the woman who was a sinner did to Him?

When Simon saw the woman who was a sinner touching the feet of Jesus, he thought in his heart that if Jesus were truly a prophet, He would have known who and what manner of woman it was who was touching Him—that is, that she was a sinner. Seeing Jesus accept the actions of the woman, he doubted that Jesus was a prophet.

"Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching

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Him, for she is a sinner.'" (Luke 7:39).

Simon thought that if Jesus were a prophet, He would recognize the identity of the woman who was a sinner and would not let her touch Him. Therefore he judged that Jesus accepted the actions of the woman because He did not know the fact that she was a sinner. In the thought of Simon there was not only judgment toward the woman but also doubt toward Jesus.

But it was not that Jesus did not know what kind of person that woman was. Jesus knew the fact that the woman was known as a sinner, and He knew even the thought Simon had not expressed in words. The reason Jesus told the parable of the two debtors immediately after Simon thought in his heart was that He already knew his judgment and his thought.

That Jesus received the woman who was a sinner was not because He regarded sin as of little consequence. Jesus is the Savior, who came to this earth to save sinners from sin. The woman knew her own sin and her need of salvation and came to Jesus in faith, but Simon, busy judging the woman and Jesus, did not realize the fact that he too needed the grace of the remission of sins.

[Question] 9. In Luke 7:40–46, through what parable and what comparison did Jesus awaken Simon from his mistaken thought?

Jesus told the parable of the two men who owed five hundred denarii and fifty denarii, and He directly compared the attitude of Simon and of the woman who was a sinner toward Him, and so awakened Simon from his mistaken thought. The amounts of the debts of the two men were different, but neither had the ability to repay; and after their debts were canceled, the one who

had had more canceled loved the one who had canceled the debt more.

"And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil" (Luke 7:40–46).

The two debtors of whom Jesus spoke reflect the figures of Simon and of the woman. Simon regarded the woman as a great sinner, distinguished himself from her, and considered himself more righteous than she. But the man who owed five hundred denarii and the man who owed fifty denarii were the same in that neither could repay his debt himself. In this way, both the person whose sin appears outwardly in a large measure and the person who thinks he has lived comparatively uprightly are people who cannot repay the debt of sin by their own strength before God.

Then Jesus specifically compared the actions of Simon and of the woman. Simon did not give Jesus water to wash His feet, but the woman wet the feet of Jesus with her tears and washed them with the hair of her head. Simon did not kiss Jesus, but the woman did not cease kissing the feet of Jesus. Simon did not even anoint the head of Jesus with olive oil, but the woman

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anointed the feet of Jesus with fragrant oil. This difference does not mean only that the woman kept courtesy better than Simon. Because the woman deeply knew the grace of the remission of sins she had received, she served Jesus with great love.

The love of the woman was not a merit that made her sin disappear. Just as the two debtors did not repay their debts themselves but the one who had lent the money canceled the debts of both, so the remission of sins is not something a person obtains by his own works but something he receives by faith as the grace that Jesus gives. The tears and the kisses and the fragrant oil of the woman were not a price for obtaining the remission of sins but a fruit of thanksgiving and love for the grace received by faith. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Know the word of salvation with your reason and believe it

< Luke 7:1-10 >

"Now when He concluded all His sayings in the hearing of the people, He entered Capernaum. And a certain centurion's servant, who was dear to him, was sick and ready to die. And when he heard concerning Jesus, he sent unto him elders of the Jews, asking him that he would come and save his servant. And when they came to Jesus, they begged Him earnestly, saying that the one for whom He should do this was deserving, 'for he loves our nation, and has built us a synagogue.' Then Jesus went with them. And when He was already not far from the house, the centurion sent friends to Him, saying to Him, 'Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof. Therefore I did not even think myself worthy to come to You. But say the word, and my servant will be healed. For I also am a man placed under authority, having soldiers under me. And I say to one, 'Go,' and he goes; and to another, 'Come,' and he comes; and to my servant, 'Do this,' and he does it.' When Jesus heard these things, He marveled at him, and turned around and said to the crowd that followed Him, 'I say to you, I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel!' And those who were sent, returning to the house, found the servant well who had been sick."

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The faith of the centurion, who held on to the Word

When we read today's passage, a centurion appears. A centurion is, just as the word says, a commander who has a hundred men under him. A commander of ten has ten men under him, and a commander of a thousand has a thousand men under him. Among the men this centurion had, there was a servant he especially loved, and that servant fell sick and came near to death.

This man was not an Israelite but a Roman. As a Roman he had come to the land of Israel and was working as a centurion—in today's terms, something like a company commander—and he was very favorable toward the nation of Israel. He accepted the culture and the faith of Israel and believed in the LORD God, he lived in harmony with the people of Israel, and he even built the synagogue of that town—a chapel, in today's terms—with his own money. So the people of Israel also liked this man very much.

Because the centurion was so pained on account of his dying servant, some elders of the Jews received his request and went to Jesus and begged Him. This man must certainly be helped; this man loves our nation and has even built us a synagogue; please come and save his servant. So Jesus went along with them, and on the way the centurion sent friends and said, *"Lord, do not trouble Yourself, for I am not worthy that You should enter under my roof" (Luke 7:6)*. You are so exalted, Lord—how could I presume to receive You? *"Say the word, and my servant will be healed" (Luke 7:7)*. I also am a man placed under authority, but there are soldiers under me, and when I say go, they go, and when I say come, they come. So, Lord, only speak the word. Then he will be healed.

Jesus heard this and marveled at him, and He praised him, saying that He had not found such great faith even in Israel. A Roman who was not even a Jew had such faith. And when those who had been sent returned to the house, the servant was already well.

The centurion, who believed the authority of the Lord

What kind of faith was the faith of the centurion? It was faith that believed the power and the authority of Jesus. Seeing Him raise the dead, open the eyes of the blind, and cast demons out of those who were possessed by demons, he knew and believed that the Messiah for whom Israel had been waiting had come and that this was the very One; that He is the only begotten Son of God and the Savior of mankind; that He is not a mere man but God, who came clothed in human flesh to save man from sin; and that He is the Creator, who made all things in the universe.

The Lord is the Creator, who made all things in this universe. It says, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3)*. That Creator came to this earth as the Savior clothed in human flesh. He came to save us from sin, from judgment, from destruction, from hell. Would such a One not be able to heal a single disease? The centurion had that kind of faith, that kind of knowledge—that if He only spoke the word, his servant would be healed.

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Only when we receive and believe according to the written Word do we receive the remission of sins

Since the centurion had his faith acknowledged like this and actually had his desire fulfilled, what about you and me today? Are you and I Jews? Are we Israelites? We are people of our own country. Seen according to the flesh, we too are Gentiles. Just as this centurion held Roman citizenship, we too are people of a Gentile nation. But how do we too know the Lord? We too believe that the Lord is the Son of God, who was born through the body of a woman in order to save us human beings from sin, the Savior, the Creator, and God, who has power and authority.

If we believe so, then even though the Lord has not come before our eyes and spoken to us directly, He speaks through this Word, and He speaks through His servants, that He has removed all the sins of our human race. The Lord said, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. It means that if a person has even the tiniest speck of sin, he goes to hell. But the gift of God—the present our Lord has given us—is the blessing of receiving the remission of sins by receiving and believing in Jesus Christ as Savior, and eternal life, the eternal blessing that follows together with the remission of sins.

According to the law of God we are people who must go to hell. That is why the One who made all things in the universe came to this earth clothed in human flesh to save you and me. He came and received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and rose from the dead and saved us. That is what is recorded in this Bible. Just as the centurion said, "Only speak the word," the Lord has recorded in this Bible that He took your sins upon Himself and removed them all; so if we receive and

believe this written Word, we receive the remission of sins. When that happens, we come to have exactly the same faith as the centurion.

In this age we do not see Jesus before our eyes, nor does He appear in our dreams, nor do we feel Him with our emotions when we pray. Even though nothing is seen with the eyes and nothing is heard with the ears and nothing is felt in the emotions, the disciples recorded everything the Lord did when He came to this earth. The Lord came to this earth for you, and because He had compassion on you, lest you should go to hell, He received baptism from John in order to have your sins passed on to Him, and He was hung on the Cross and died in the place of you and me, and rose from the dead and became our Savior. He said that if we only believe this we obtain salvation—and the question is whether you can believe it.

The faith that realizes with the reason and believes with the heart

The Lord asks us, "Do you believe in Me? Do you believe that I have saved you from sin? Do you believe that when I received baptism from John, I had your sins passed on to Me and took them all upon Myself? Do you believe that three years after that I was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin in your place, accomplished all your salvation, and rose again?" This is what He asks. Before this Word we must think, using our reason, and when we realize that the Word is true, we must receive it. If we receive it, our emotions also move as time passes. But moving only according to the emotions without following the reason is not whole. If it is recorded in the Word that the Lord did so in order to save you and me, the question is whether

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you believe it. That is precisely salvation.

The one who believes without seeing, the one who believes without feeling, the one who uses his reason and receives the word of the Lord—that is the one whose faith is good. That is precisely faith like that of the centurion. It is believing the authority of God, the word of God, the truthfulness of God. It is believing that He has truly saved you and me. Knowing first by using the reason and believing with the heart—that is true faith. When we do that we are saved, and when we do that our faith is not shaken. Even when we fall into weakness because we are lacking, we can know that the Lord saved someone like me, and therefore we can give thanks in faith.

Faith is believing on the basis of facts. When we explain faith we often take a train as an example. In the old days there were locomotives that burned coal. Passenger cars are attached behind the locomotive and people ride in them. If the coal is not burned and the engine is not started, can that train go? It cannot. Just as a train cannot go without a locomotive, however complete the shape of the train may be, our faith starts from knowing and receiving and acknowledging the word of God. If we do not have the knowledge that Jesus is the Son of God and the Creator, who made all things in the universe, we cannot believe in Jesus as our Savior. If a mere man had saved us, that would not be salvation.

Jesus is in His very nature God, but He did not assert Himself; because He had compassion on you and me, who had become lumps of sin bound for hell, He lowered Himself for a while. He was born on this earth clothed in human flesh through the body of a woman, and for thirty-three years He lowered His own level. And He received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him and took them upon Himself, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead, and so accomplished all that work and saved us. He lowered Himself only for those thirty-three

years; before that and after that He is the Judge, God, who created all things in the universe, and the Almighty. When little nephews and nieces come to your house, do you not lower yourself to their eye level and play with them? In that way Jesus lowered Himself for a while in order to become our Savior. So if we know who He is and believe the work He accomplished on this earth, if we believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we obtain salvation. We must know and believe.

Hear and learn the Word step by step

Religious people who have no faith weep and wail and squeeze out their emotions, and they pray as a shaman trembles, shouting words no one can understand. In the house behind mine, there was a man possessed by a demon. He was a man nearly two meters tall, and every morning he would put on white clothes like the ones a shaman wears and run about shouting. At first I thought he was a man who was mentally ill, but when he was around, the air was chilly.

One day at dawn I misread the time, and in the dark I opened the door without thinking and was about to go down the stairs when something felt eerie. I turned around, and there was that man spreading out his arms toward me and doing that thing. In the darkness of dawn his white clothes were fluttering, and for a moment my hair stood on end and I thought my heart would stop. When I came to myself, the man was coming a step at a time to threaten me. So I stood my ground and cried out in my heart: In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command you, Satan, depart. In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command you, demon, come out of that man. Then the man, after making as if to threaten me, hesitated and backed away and went down the stairs.

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After that he never came up again. When a person possessed by a demon is confronted head-on in the name of the Lord, that is the end of it.

Even among people who look perfectly normal there are many who are held captive by demons. Even if a demon is cast out, if the person does not acknowledge and believe the Lord, the demon comes back in bringing more demons, and the last state of that man becomes worse than the first. So believing the Lord and knowing about the Lord is important. If a person knows and believes and himself resists the devil, the demons will surely depart. Because people know demons well and acknowledge them while they do not know or acknowledge Jesus, the devil works within them.

Real faith is faith that believes the authority of the Lord. What kind of One is the Lord? He is God, who made all things in this universe, the world of the galaxies, and who made this earth and the sea and everything. The One who made you and made your parents and your ancestors is Jesus. Because His own people had fallen into sin and were bound for hell, He came to save His people from their sins. We must have that knowledge. It says, *"My people are destroyed for lack of knowledge" (Hosea 4:6)*. Without knowledge we are destroyed. That is why we must be deeply rooted in the Word and must hear and learn the Word step by step. We must not try to believe only with our emotions.

Just as when the centurion says to his subordinate "Go," he goes, and when he says "Seize him and bring him," he seizes him and brings him, so if the Lord says that He took our sins upon Himself, then He took them upon Himself; and if He says that He bore our sins and was nailed to the Cross and received all the judgment of sin, then He received it; and if He says that He died and rose again and became our Savior, then He became our Savior. The Lord does as He wishes—is He One who asks

us before He acts? Because the Lord loves you and me, just as He promised, He was born on this earth through the body of a woman; and when He became thirty years old He received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him and took them upon Himself, and He was hung on the Cross and received all the judgment of sin and died in our place, and He rose from the dead and became our Savior. If we believe that and acknowledge that fact before we die, we obtain salvation. Just as He said, *"Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5),* we receive the remission of sins, become righteous, obtain eternal life, become people of God, and become workers of God.

True faith is discerning right and wrong by the Word

We must desire to have faith like that of the centurion—faith by which we are saved through knowing and receiving and acknowledging the word of God. I ask you not to rely on your emotions. I originally studied Calvinist theology, and I do not want things like speaking in tongues. In the old days I too was a person who spoke in tongues. My tongue would twist and tongues would come out, and I bit my tongue as many as three times to make it stop. What good is doing such a thing? Looking at the word of God, and using the reason to see whether it is so or not, and receiving it if it is certain—when we receive this Word, we come to receive the Lord. Because I have that kind of faith, I hold our services centered on the Word.

But there are many pastors who appeal to the emotions. There are also churches that beat drums and sound instruments loudly to stir up the atmosphere. Do you know why drums are beaten in war? They are beaten to excite people. When people

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hear the sound of the drums their hearts pound and they become excited, and they go out and fight without even knowing that they may die. If we believe in Jesus in excitement, can we meet Him? We cannot. If we believe with the emotions, that faith does not last long. After about five or ten years the bottom of it is completely exposed. It is because of that kind of faith, which follows only the emotions, that Christianity has collapsed like this today. Real faith is believing according to the Word. Using the reason to discern according to the Word whether a thing is right or not, and then believing—that is true faith. That is faith like the centurion's, faith that builds a house on the rock, faith that receives the remission of sins before God, faith that obtains eternal life, faith that receives blessing.

When a person becomes angry, he loses much. We must be slow to anger. Moreover, in believing in Jesus as Savior, emotion is absolutely not needed. We must believe calmly, according to the word of God. The Lord is the One who created all things in the universe and the One who came to save us from sin, and if the Lord says, "Be healed," the person is healed. It is because there is power in the word of the Lord. We too must have that kind of faith. Then even while we work we can freely meditate on the Word and have fellowship with the Lord, and we can live the life of a disciple of the Lord.

Only when we know our own true nature and believe are we not shaken

When I believed in the Lord, I believed knowing that I was one who was going to hell. But when I look at many people, they do not know that they are going to hell; they simply believe knowing only that they are sinners. In fact, even if a person has

only a little sin, he goes to hell. Because I believe the word of God, I believed that since I had sin, I would go to hell because of this sin. So whenever I preached the gospel I said it countless times: that the wages of sin is death, and that if a person has sin, he goes to hell.

When Jesus was baptized He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. That by receiving baptism from John, Jesus had all our sins passed on to Him, and was hung on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead and became our Savior—that is the fitting thing that fulfills all righteousness. Yet there are those who do not acknowledge that sin passed on to Him at His baptism. We must believe the Word. Those who do not acknowledge the Word, those who rely on their own emotions instead of the Word, have no salvation. Everyone who acknowledges the word of God and holds on to the Word is saved, lives the life of a worker, and lives a life of blessing.

I hope that our saints and all the saints throughout the country will likewise use their reason and hold on to the Word and believe and obtain salvation. Salvation has come to all who believe. And after that we go on living the life of faith. As we go on with the help of those who have gone before us, though we do not know now, we will come to know later. Later you will come to know how great a truth that Word you received is, and how the Holy Spirit within you leads you. Can a newborn baby know who its parents are and how it should live? It knows nothing. That is why the church is necessary.

To leave the church is death. Leaving the church is exactly the same as cutting off one's food. We must be led, we must be protected, and we must be united together. That is precisely the way to live and the way to receive blessing. It is not that the church becomes unnecessary after we are saved; it is absolutely

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necessary. It is absolutely necessary, just as a family is necessary after you are born into this world. Even though you have received the remission of sins, if you lose the church, the devil will seize you and press you down. He will never leave you alone. It is because you have been saved. So I ask you to give thanks. I also give thanks. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Entrust your cares and anxieties to the Lord in faith

< Luke 7:11-17 >

"Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us'; and, 'God has visited His people.' And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region."

Entrust your anxieties through prayer

These days I have several things I must do, but they are not things that come about quickly; they are things I must wait for, and so they are hard as well. Even so, since it works out if I wait in faith, I am waiting while I prepare. Just as all things draw back in winter and then, when spring and summer and autumn come,

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flowers bloom and fruit is borne, so I hope that now, having planned everything and prayed and prepared, we will bear much fruit and receive blessing and give glory to God.

As we prepare our work, there are also things that make us anxious. There is the anxiety that if it rains too much a landslide may occur on the hill behind our workplace, and there are anxieties that arise between people. Nor can these things be avoided just because we are anxious about them. When we become anxious we must pray, and we must pray that God will protect us. There are also many things that trouble the mind. But whenever we make our hearts new—make them new by faith that believes in the Lord—we can follow the Lord well without any hindrance.

There are also people who hate us and oppose us and look down on us and come at us to shake us. According to the thoughts of the flesh anger rises up, but nothing is solved that way. What is the purpose of God? It is the salvation of souls. Ultimately it is to bless the person who opposes us, the person who persecutes us, and to save that soul. Since that is the purpose, we must do everything with our focus there. That is why it is hard. How hard it is to endure and bear a loss in some part while knowing full well what is happening! But only so is the will of the Lord ultimately accomplished. He told us to love our enemies—does it go well? With the mouth it goes, but with the heart it often does not go well. If no interest of ours is at stake we can love even an enemy, but when our interest is at stake it keeps not going well. Even so, since the Lord told us to love, that is right. As the saying goes, where our money goes our heart goes; so we must try to love, even by continually treating them well and doing them good.

The Lord, who met the widow of Nain

When we look at today's passage, Jesus entered a city called Nain. Nain has the meaning of "beautiful, pleasant." As Jesus was entering the city, a funeral procession was coming out from inside the gate. They were carrying the body of a dead man out to bury him in the graveyard outside the city. Behind it a woman was following, wailing aloud. It turned out that the one who had died was this woman's only son, a young man.

Jesus saw the woman and had compassion on her and told her not to weep, and when He touched the coffin, the bier stopped. And then Jesus said, *"Young man, I say to you, arise" (Luke 7:14)*. Then the one who had been dead sat up in the coffin and spoke, and there was a scene in which he and his mother embraced each other and rejoiced together. Since it happened on the road, all the people around saw it. The people were afraid and glorified God, saying that this was truly something that no one but God could do.

Anxiety and groaning that come from a righteous work are good

As we live our lives there are many problems. Even in the midst of joy there are things that make us groan, things that make us worry, and many things that make us anxious. When some things go well it may seem that we can boast, but in fact how many things happen around us that we cannot solve by our human strength! So we cannot live in this world only joyfully; at times we groan and we are anxious. Even while we live the life of faith, if we cannot follow the leading of the Holy Spirit, it is a cause for groaning. It would be good if the work of God also

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went well just as we thought, but that alone is not the answer, and so God allows these things and thereby refines our faith, teaches us to pray, and teaches us faith.

You and I also have things that make us groan and things that make us anxious, like this widow of Nain. But if we take this problem and go before the Lord, if we meet the Lord, it is solved. This word tells us that however many problems there may be, if we take them before the Lord, they are solved. Yet we are often holding those problems in our arms and grieving alone. The Lord says to us, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)*. He is telling us that when we are anxious we should go before the Lord and pray. He is telling us to entrust it to the Lord, saying, "I have such and such a problem; please solve it beautifully, Lord." He is telling us to lay that problem down before the Lord and to believe in that Lord.

There is no one now who lives without anxiety. But anxiety and groaning that come from a righteous work, a right work, are good. It is because they come to bear beautiful fruit. But anxiety that comes from the greed of one's own flesh is not good.

We learn faith through being refined

I know that this world, this earth, is suffering much from natural disasters and is falling into great hardship because of the economy. Among the places where we live and work there are also places that can suffer damage from natural disasters. There are places that are dangerous when it rains much. Nothing has happened yet, but there are things that make us anxious. Of course, when it is dangerous we must avoid it. And when we see people hating us and opposing us and persecuting us for no

reason, looking down on us and coming at us to shake us, anger rises up according to the thoughts of the flesh; but since nothing is solved that way and we must overcome evil with good, I think about how we might solve this beautifully and learn faith as well. I even wonder whether the Lord is doing this in order to change us and make us holy. Since nothing profitable comes from getting angry, even when I am angry I get angry only for a moment, and if I can, I try not to get angry at all.

Our situation is like that of the widow living in Nain. This widow too lost everything when the son who was her all died, but she met Jesus and received His compassion and had this problem solved. If we do the same, will we not also have our problems solved? We were people who could not but go to hell, but we received the remission of sins by believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and having all our sins passed on to Him, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and by rising again. Is it not that the Lord allows such problems to us, for the growth of our faith, so that we may bring our problems to the Lord and have them solved, learn true faith, and live bearing the fruit of righteousness and the fruit of right works? If everything we wanted according to the flesh came about just as we wanted, would we live the life of faith properly? Would we not become proud and arrogant? I know that the Lord does what is fitting. By all means I ask you to take all your anxieties to the Lord and pray and have them solved.

Because we are weak, we must hold on to the Lord

There are also things that make us anxious in the work we do. There is the anxiety of what we will do if others copy what

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we have made with great effort and come at us. It may be asked why we should be anxious about something that has not yet come upon us, but the times have changed, and there is no longer such a thing as preparing a little and gaining a little. Since other people prepare more, we too must prepare more and only barely gain—that is the age we have come to. So it is impossible not to be anxious. And so, because we are anxious, we pray; and whenever we gather we must pray; and we must prepare well in advance. We must take that problem to the Lord. I want the Lord to help us. And I believe that the Lord will help us. He has helped us until now, and He will help us in the future as well.

But if our hearts grow slack and we do not look to the Lord, if we do not have the faith that takes our problems to the Lord and holds on to Him and asks Him to solve them, we are people who cannot but groan at any time and cannot but fall. It is because we are weak. We must not be arrogant. There is no telling when or how the world will change. When the credit ratings of various countries fall and the economy is shaken, the effect on our country is also great. Countless people can be left penniless, and countless companies can close their doors. So we must be anxious about what should make us anxious, and pray.

The faith that believes in God

If there is anyone among you who says, “I am bound for hell, but I cannot believe in God,” you should think about it realistically. Suppose you were falling off a cliff and were caught on a branch halfway down the face of it. Suppose there were no one to help you, and you could not stay there, and the branch were making a sound as if it were about to break. Whom would you call on? Does it solve anything to call on your parents?

Does calling on a friend, or on the president, do any good? In such a situation the only One who can save you is God.

God exists. But although God exists, if you do not believe in God in your heart, then in your heart there is no God. If you believe, then God is in your heart. When you are truly in danger, who will protect you and bless you? God. Who is blessing our gathering now? God. That we have the ability to think is also something God has given.

God exists. If God did not exist, we would not exist. They say that if the distance at which this earth is set from the sun were only a little farther, we would freeze to death, and if it were only a little nearer, we would burn to death. And who is it that has set this heavy mass of an earth in space and is turning it? A man finds it hard even to lift something with a crane, but God has set this heavy thing in space and is turning it. Could it be done by anyone but God, by any power but the power of the Almighty? If we think about it only a little, we can know it immediately.

When we look closely, the affairs of men are all faith. We make a call believing with certainty that when we speak on this side of the telephone, we are heard on the other side. Why is family good? Because there is faith that my family loves me, and within that we live showing all our faults. Without that faith we could not do so. Just as we believe our parents in that way, we must believe God. Why did God give us parents? It was to show us indirectly that God is such a One. There are many creatures, like the salmon, that lay their eggs and die immediately; but for man He gave parents, and thereby He teaches us that there is the love of God and teaches us faith that believes in God.

We have things that make us anxious, both things that make us anxious personally and things that make us anxious as a church. Let us take all of them to the Lord in prayer. Let us tell

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the Lord our petitions—that He would save even the souls of those who make things hard for us, that He would protect and bless our workplaces and the work we do, and that He would give health and faith and the fullness of the Holy Spirit to all the workers and to all His people—and let us entrust our cares and anxieties to the Lord in faith. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Young man, arise

< Luke 7:11-17 >

"Now it happened, the day after, that He went into a city called Nain; and many of His disciples went with Him, and a large crowd. And when He came near the gate of the city, behold, a dead man was being carried out, the only son of his mother; and she was a widow. And a large crowd from the city was with her. When the Lord saw her, He had compassion on her and said to her, 'Do not weep.' Then He came and touched the open coffin, and those who carried him stood still. And He said, 'Young man, I say to you, arise.' So he who was dead sat up and began to speak. And He presented him to his mother. Then fear came upon all, and they glorified God, saying, 'A great prophet has risen up among us'; and, 'God has visited His people.' And this report about Him went throughout all Judea and all the surrounding region."

The desire of the widow of Nain

Recorded here is the account in which, in a city called Nain, our Lord met a widow who was weeping because of the death of her only son, and had compassion on that widow and raised her only son, the young man, back to life. Our Lord said that all men must seek the Lord and meet the Lord, and that only then are all the problems of living solved, including the hard problems of life, the problem of sin, and the problem of eternal life.

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This widow of Nain had only one son, and that only son had died and was being carried out on a bier. If we put ourselves in the heart of this widow, how miserable and bitter and grievous it would be! While on this earth she had set her hope upon her one and only son; she had no husband, and she lived looking only to that one son, and now that son had died. As his neighbors put him in a coffin and carried him out of the city to bury him, how the widow must have wept in that procession, how desperate she must have been! And if this widow had not met Jesus and had buried that son, how deeply the nail would have been driven into her heart for the rest of her life!

Our Lord has spoken clearly. It is that all men must meet our Lord. This widow of Nain met Jesus, and when Jesus touched the coffin of her only son and said, *"Young man, I say to you, arise" (Luke 7:14)*, this young man arose. Truly, if this woman had not met Jesus, the life of this widow of Nain would have become a failed life. But Jesus was entering Nain, and this funeral bier was going out through the city gate, and so they met each other. Because this woman met Jesus, all the problems of her life were solved.

All of us live with problems like the death of the only son of this widow of Nain. There is no one without problems. Whether it is the problem of the sin of one's own soul or the problem of one's family, we may say that life is in fact lived in the midst of problems. Among us also there are people who, like the widow of Nain, met Jesus and had the problems of their lives solved. But in this world there are many people who have not yet met Jesus. Such people must meet Jesus.

Our Lord is the Jesus who resolves the hardest problems of life and fulfills all their desires. That is why all men must meet Jesus. If we do not meet Jesus, the problems of life are not solved. There are many people who have not yet met the Lord and are

living in suffering and grief in the midst of many problems of one kind or another. I ask you to look carefully at whether you actually have such a problem or not. In fact, every one of us has such problems. Is it only the widow of Nain who has grief, and only this widow who has cause to weep? Because those who are born on this earth are born with sin, if they die without having solved the problem of sin, they will feel a grief greater even than the death of their own son.

Because Jesus is God

The Jesus this widow met on this earth was God the Creator, who made the world. This Jesus touched the coffin of the only son of the widow of Nain and said, *"Young man, I say to you, arise" (Luke 7:14)*, and this young man who had died actually came back to life and was held in the arms of the widow. There is no one but God who can command a dead man to arise like this. There is no one but Jesus. This Jesus is the One who made this world. In Genesis it says, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)*. The God here is precisely Jesus. It was this Jesus who raised the son of the widow of Nain.

We must know and believe who Jesus is. And we must know and believe that this Jesus is One who has such power. The words here, that they were carrying out a dead man, may not be easy to understand nowadays. Nowadays, when a person dies, we carry him in a hearse. But in the old days they made a coffin of wood, put the body in the coffin and covered it, and then built a house decorated with flowers on top of the bier, and strong men carried it on their shoulders from both sides. In front, one man would call out mournfully, "Once I go, when will I return?" and those who carried the coffin would answer after him. When

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you hear the voice of the man calling out in front, tears come of themselves.

Suppose that a real funeral bier were passing by the place where we now live. Behind the bier people follow, weeping bitterly. When a young man has died, would that dead man come back to life because someone stepped forward and said, *"Young man, I say to you, arise"*? There is no one but Jesus who can speak like this. In this world there is no one but Jesus who will raise the dead and judge this world and judge the wicked and sinners and give us the remission of sins. Only Jesus could speak this word, and only Jesus had such power.

This young man arose. Let us imagine that moment. The coffin is opened, and the young man who had died sits up and suddenly speaks. The Bible does not record what this young man said when he arose, but since it says that he spoke, seeing his mother weeping he probably said, 'Mother, why are you weeping? Do not weep.' And among the people of the town there must have been some who looked at that young man and were so astonished that they nearly fainted.

On this earth there is no one but Jesus who can solve the problems of our lives. There has been no god in this world who has said so boldly to a dead man, "Arise." There has been no leader of any religion who has done so either. Only Jesus, only God, can speak like this. Because we have met Jesus, our problems have been solved. In our lives there are problems that, like those of this widow of Nain, we can by no means solve ourselves. If we bring all such problems before Jesus, they are all solved. We must know this. They say there are many gods in this world, but the only true God is God. God, who made the heavens and the earth and all things in the universe—apart from that God there is no true God.

The mysterious world of God

The Bible says that God made all things in this world and in the universe. Do you know how beautiful all things in this world and in the universe are? Measuring by the beauty of this world, I can understand a little how beautiful the kingdom of heaven is. On this earth there are many beautiful things. There are the flowers on the mountains; there is the beauty and the majesty of the natural rocks in the canyons, their clearness and cleanness and freshness. The subtle and mysterious forms of the animals, the sight of birds raising their young, and especially scenes filmed under the water—we see them now and then on television. When we see them, the world of God is truly so mysterious that we cannot but say that God made it.

In the sea there is everything that is on the land. Just as there is grass on this earth, there is grass in the sea as well. But it is so mysterious and beautiful that when we look into this sea, we can understand a little how good a place that kingdom of heaven is which God has said He will give us. The world God made is that beautiful and that mysterious. It is mysterious beyond what man can put into words.

Let us look at the world God has made. Let us look at the eye of a man. Inside the eye there is an aperture, and when we look at some object this automatic aperture narrows and widens and focuses precisely. When something like dust tries to come in from above, the eyelashes make the eye close in an instant. When rain falls from above, the eyebrows become eaves, and most of the water clings to the eyebrows and runs off to the side. Then, so that the water that overflows from there cannot come directly into the eye, the eyelashes again become a protective screen. In the eye there is also an opening of a spring from which tears come out. When we see such things, it is so wonderful and

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so mysterious. When we look at the world under the water, it is also so mysterious. Who is it that made those mysterious things under the water? It is the very Jesus who is speaking here.

Jesus said to the dead young man, “Arise,” and he arose. When Jesus made this universe in the beginning, He said, “Let there be light,” and there was light; He said, “Let there be water,” and there was water; He said, “Let there be plants,” and there were plants; He said, “Let there be fruit trees,” and there were fruit trees; He said, “Let there be birds that fly in the sky,” and there were birds; He said, “Let there be fish in the water,” and there were fish; He said, “Let there be animals,” and there were animals. And God made man out of the dust. The Bible records that God first made the man Adam out of the dust, and that He made the woman by taking a rib from the man.

God, the One who solves

Nowadays there are even people who think that a woman can live apart from a man. But what does the Bible say? God said to the woman, *“Your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you” (Genesis 3:16)*. To desire is a stronger word for love. It means that God gave the woman such a heart, that she should desire her husband and want to live under her husband’s rule. The One who gave us such a heart, and who made that wondrous world under the sea and the mysterious world on the land and in the sky, all things in this universe, is precisely God. That God came to this earth clothed in the form of a man in order to save you and me. He is precisely Jesus. About two thousand years ago that Jesus met the widow of Nain and raised the son of the widow of Nain. He solved all the problems of the widow of Nain.

Today also Jesus is the One who solves all the problems of our lives. Jesus is still alive today, and He is God, who fulfills the desires of those who seek the Lord and tell God their desires and believe His word. We must meet Jesus. We must take our problems and go before Jesus and meet Him. This is precisely what all of us are to do. Whether a person has sin or has received the remission of sins, everyone who has a problem must take that problem before Jesus and have it solved. Jesus received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, and bearing those sins He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again, and so accomplished the gospel of the water and the Spirit and solved the greatest problem of our lives, the problem of sin. We need this Jesus. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Admit that you are a sinner bound for hell, and believe now

< Luke 7:36-48 >

"Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet

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with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.' Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.'"

The woman who poured the fragrant oil and Simon the Pharisee

While Jesus, who had been invited to the house of a Pharisee, was eating, a certain woman came in with very costly fragrant oil and poured it on the feet of Jesus and kissed them. This woman was a woman notorious in that town. She was a woman so known as a sinner that everyone acknowledged it. That woman came and wet the feet of Jesus with her tears and washed them with the hair of her head, and poured on the fragrant oil. The Pharisee who had invited Jesus thought within himself that if this man were a prophet, He would have known what kind of sinner this woman who was touching Him was.

Jesus knew that heart and spoke in a parable. *"There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?" (Luke 7:41–42)* When Simon answered, *"I suppose the one whom he forgave more,"* Jesus said, *"You have rightly judged."* And He turned to the woman and said to Simon, *"Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has*

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washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head" (Luke 7:44), "Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (Luke 7:47).

Because the people of Israel eat leaning back with their legs stretched out, this woman could easily wash the feet of Jesus. And because Israel is a desert land and much dust clings to the feet as one goes about, when a guest comes, water for washing the feet is always brought out first. But this Pharisee did not even give Jesus water for washing His feet, nor did he pour on His head the olive oil that was so common. The fragrant oil this woman poured out, on the other hand, was, as the scholars say, a very costly oil that could be bought only by spending the whole of a man's wages for a year of work. Anointing with oil was originally something only a king, a priest, and a prophet were qualified to receive; and since Jesus is the King of kings and the High Priest and the great Prophet of heaven, He is One who is worthy to receive the anointing. It amounted to a contest of thought between the Pharisee, who had a legalistic faith, and Jesus, who had come to save sinners; and Jesus explained the two of them, this woman and the Pharisee, by likening them to the two debtors who owed five hundred denarii and fifty denarii.

The one who has had much debt canceled loves much

This Word is something that happened long ago—what has it to do with us? Of course it was recorded in order to give us benefit. We all alike believe in Jesus as our Savior, do the work that pleases the Lord, and serve in the work of upholding the gospel. And yet one person says, "I have done this much; what

more do you want?" Another person works with all his strength and keeps taking on work, and if only the work of God goes well, he gives thanks and rejoices in his heart. One person works with the heart of an owner, and another works with the heart of a hired hand. Why is it that while we all alike believe in Jesus, our hearts are each so different? That is what I want us to think about.

It is this. This woman, just as it is recorded in the Word, was a notorious sinner. She was a woman who had committed many sins. Yet she loved Jesus much. It is just as He said, that the one who has received much remission of sins loves much. When we believe in Jesus, there is a difference in the intensity of love between the person who has believed simply saying, "Jesus is my Savior," and the person who admits and believes, "Without You, Jesus, I am utterly lost; as I am, I am a sinner who cannot but go to hell; I am not just an ordinary sinner but certainly one who is going to hell." The person who says, "I am a sinner, yes, but not a sinner of the sort who goes to hell; I am an ordinary sinner, and so I do believe in Jesus as my Savior," does love Jesus, but loves Him little.

Then whom does Jesus love? It is the person who confesses: I am a sinner who cannot but go to hell, but the Lord came as my Savior and met me and saved me; I cannot forget that grace; however much I serve, I cannot boast that I have served much; the love He has given me is so great; my time and my health are all things God has given, and there is nothing for me to put forward merely because I served with a part of them. Such a person, even as he serves and follows the Lord, has absolutely nothing to boast of in himself. Even if he boasts at some point, he realizes that he has nothing to put forward, and rather he becomes sorry before God. It is because the Lord moved my heart that I love the Lord; I can never love the Lord more than the Lord loves me.

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Only the one who truly knows that he is a sinner bound for hell is saved

On this earth there are indeed many people who believe in Jesus. Countless people of many denominations believe in Jesus as their Savior. Jesus is our Savior, and He has completed the work of saving us from sin. But the problem is on our side. Though people believe in Jesus, there is a difference between the one who has been saved and the one who has not. If we truly acknowledge God and acknowledge the word of God, we come to the verdict that we are people who cannot but go to hell. We come to acknowledge that this verdict is not the least bit exaggerated.

Many of us believed in Jesus before we came into this church, which preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But whichever denomination they believed in, those who admitted the fact that they were going to hell and then believed in Jesus are truly rare. They do believe in Jesus, but they do not go so far as to think that they are going to hell; it is about at the level of, "Since I commit sins I am a sinner, and since Jesus is the Savior I believe in Him." That is why there are many people who believe in a religious way. Such people, even while they believe in Jesus, do not stand in the rank of those who have had much debt canceled. They tend to believe in Jesus half-heartedly, to keep a safe distance, and to live half-heartedly. Have you ever thought that you would go to hell because of your sins? Have you ever thought that you were one bound for hell? You may think that all I do the moment I open my mouth is talk about sin.

But though a person believes in Jesus as his Savior, if he is careless he can believe as though he were believing a religion. He believes, "I am one who cannot but go to hell because of my sins, but Jesus saved me; I believe the blood of the Cross too"—

and yet even though he has believed like that, sin simply remains. Because he sins every day, that sin does not go away. But one day he meets a church that preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and when he hears this Word, he finds that Jesus has saved him completely. The person who knew that he was bound for hell, the moment he comes to know this, receives eternal remission of sins once and for all by faith. He obtains salvation once and for all. But the person who did not know that he was one going to hell, even though he believes in Jesus as his Savior, becomes like the one who had little debt canceled. Because he thinks of himself as one who has committed only a little sin, he accepts the remission of sins only as much as he himself has thought. That is why salvation does not come upon him and the Holy Spirit does not come upon him.

Let us look at the reality. The Bible says, *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)*. It also says, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. This death does not speak only of the death of the human body. It is hell. It speaks of being destroyed forever, being cursed forever, of that suffering in which one suffers in the fire and yet does not die. Upon whom does that death come? It comes upon the person who has sin. Since by the one man Adam's sinning many became sinners, all men are destined to go to hell. And yet, while we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we are not thinking that we ourselves are bound for hell. That is why, though we believe in Jesus, in the end there is no Holy Spirit in our hearts and we are not saved from sin. Did not the Lord say that there are many who say, "Lord, Lord," and yet are not saved? That is precisely this case.

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On the Lord's side it is completed, but on our side there is something to prepare

On the Lord's side He has accomplished our salvation completely. But on our side the preparation is not made. What preparation is not made? It is that although we do have sin, we are not thinking that we are going to hell. We say that we are sinners, yes, but that we have not committed sins that would send us to hell. Dear fellow believers, I ask you to know the fact that even if a person has not committed a single sin, he was born with the destiny of going to hell. We were born through our parents as the seed of sin, and if with that sin we are judged according to the law of God, it is hell. Apart from believing in the Lord there is not one single person who will not go to hell.

Suppose a bus comes at a certain hour and minute. That is fixed exactly. But because we did this and that on our side and went out five minutes late, the bus had already gone by. The bus came and kept its promise, but because the preparation was not made on our side, we did not catch that bus—it is exactly the same. Do you know how many people there are in this world who believe in Jesus and yet are not saved? It is so even among pastors. The preparation on their own side is not made.

Thus all righteousness was fulfilled

I told you before. I did believe in Jesus, but there was sin in my heart. I was bound for hell, and though I heard the news that the blood of the Cross had saved me and believed it, there was still sin. In the Old Testament He promised to remove sin so that it would be as white as snow, and in the New Testament He said, "It is finished"; it was not that I did not believe in Jesus as my

Savior—so why was there sin in my heart? Because the wages of sin is death, I knew that I would go to hell because of my sin. So I searched the Bible and compared, and I set out a lexicon of the original languages and compared everything in English and in Chinese characters. I said that even if I knew nothing else, I had to know this one field; but there was no one who taught me this truth. Even when I asked those who were said to be excellent and searched through books, they could not answer me. So I prayed. God, please save me. I have sin, and so I am going to hell. I was a sinner before I believed, and after believing there is still sin—so what good is believing?

But I thought that there must certainly be something in the scene where Jesus received baptism from John. *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Why did Jesus receive baptism from John? What does *"all righteousness"*—in the original, dikaiosune (δικαιοσύνη)—speak of? What does this phrase *"thus"*—in the original, houtos (οὕτως), meaning that it cannot be done except in this way—mean? Then one day the light of understanding was turned on. Ah, this was it. Just as in the Old Testament the priest laid his hands on the sacrifice and passed sin on to it, so in the New Testament John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and thereby passed sin on to Him. My sin passed on to Him here. All the sins of mankind passed on to Him. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had all the sins of mankind passed on to Him, and He was nailed to the Cross and said, "It is finished," and He rose from the dead and became our eternal Savior. That is what I came to know. And so I was saved by faith. From all the sins that could only send me to hell, I received eternal remission of sins by faith.

And so when I look at you, I am truly grieved. It is so easy—why does it not happen? What the Lord taught me is that it is

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because they do not know that they themselves are bound for hell, because the preparation on their own side is not made, that though they believe in Jesus they are not saved, and so they are like that. Those who believe and yet go back and forth over whether they are saved or not are all such cases. When you first believed in Jesus as your Savior, did you receive Jesus in a state of admitting that you were one going to hell? There are many who did not. Such a person, though he has believed in Jesus for a long time, is not saved.

When we acknowledge the law of God, we become sinners

If you are a sinner, you go to hell. Whether you go this evening or fifty years from now, you will certainly go. That is the law of God. God has written in His verdict that if a person has sin, He will send him to hell. In Revelation it says that there is a Book of Life, and that all whose names are not written in the Book of Life are judged. What must be done for one's name to be written in the Book of Life? Does it work to offer a bribe? Does it work to give much money? Does it work to serve zealously? There is only one way. It is for you to admit that you are a sinner who cannot but go to hell. It is simple. Admitting that one is a sinner does not come about through experience; it comes about by accepting the law of God. If a person is not saved, he is a sinner, a seed of evildoing, and he has the qualification for hell. He obtained that certificate already when he was born.

Therefore I ask you to admit that you are a sinner bound for hell, and to believe in the Lord and come before Him. If you go out in a state of not being one who is bound for hell, saying, "I have committed a few sins; my conscience troubles me, so

please remove these sins," the meeting does not take place. A sinner must go before Jesus to be saved. One who cannot but go to hell must go before the Lord to be saved. The Lord said that He did not come to call the righteous but to call sinners. In the religions of this world, how many righteous people there are and how many who have lived good lives! Such people, who put forward their own righteousness, are not saved. Jesus came to save sinners who are going to hell. It is said that to those who try to enter the kingdom of God by their own goodness, Jesus rather becomes a stone of stumbling.

Are you fundamentally a sinner or not? Are you one bound for hell or not? Only the person who admits that he was one bound for hell, and that without the Lord's salvation he is one bound for hell, can receive the salvation the Lord gives. Even if a person believes in Jesus, if he says that he was not one bound for hell, he is not saved. That person may believe in Jesus and live a religious life for a while in this world, but he cannot go to heaven, and he cannot become a worker for the righteousness of God. We must not think of Jesus as we think of ourselves. Jesus is great, He is perfect, He is almighty. He is One who knows everything about us. He is One who knows even when and what sin we will commit and what we will put on airs about.

Believe now, in the present tense

Therefore I ask you to acknowledge it to the Lord in your heart even this evening. Look back on your own state when you first believed, and consider whether at that time you really received the Lord knowing that you were a sinner bound for hell; and if that is not so, then this evening confess it in the present tense: "Lord, I am truly one bound for hell, and yet have You

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not saved me like this? I believe." Then the Lord will meet you and will keep you forever. If we have not been saved, the problem is on our side; on the Lord's side He has saved you and me perfectly.

If I am one going to hell and the Lord saved me, then I have had much debt canceled. It is because I have been saved from sins that would send me to hell. But if I say that I am not one bound for hell but only one who committed sins because I was a little lacking, and that He saved me from that, then I have had little debt canceled; I am thankful, yes, but thankful only to a certain degree, not thankful unto death. The intensity of love is different. What kind of person do you want to be? You will want to be a person who has had much debt canceled.

Believing in the Lord is always believing in the present tense. It has been a long time since I was saved, but I always speak in the present tense. I was one bound for hell, but the Lord saved me by the gospel of the water and the Spirit; and so I believe; and so I have no sin; and so I am happy. I hope that you too will be prepared and become those who believe. In a state where the preparation is not made, however much one believes, it is of no use. That is why there are many who believe in Jesus but few who are saved. But God, desiring that within this church every one of you without exception should be saved, has caused this Word to be preached.

You may say, "I have believed in Jesus for a long time; if I admit it now, will not everything I have believed until now become nothing?" It is far better to admit it and believe even now. Tear down with your own hands what you have built up until now. What you did in love for God, though you did not know well, God will know. Let us all together, just as God desires, think with our reason that we are complete sinners, sinners who cannot but go to hell; let us acknowledge that if the

law of God says so, then so it is; and let us be saved by faith. The gospel we already know completely. You have only to believe it yourselves. Try being saved and living. You become happy. There is a great difference between having the Holy Spirit in one's heart and not having Him.

What is true self-respect? The person who loves and honors and fears God, when God says no, tears himself down in an instant. There are also people who made things hard for us and left. But since the Lord told us to bless those who persecute us, we pray that they too may prosper. If someday they too were to come back saying, "What I did was too much; I am truly one bound for hell because of my sin," and were to ask us to receive them because they believe the gospel, could we refuse to receive them? If they come back and are saved while the very people inside here have not yet been able to admit that they are complete sinners and are saying, "I have never committed such a sin; I am different from those people," how galling that would be! So let us on our side first prepare a heart of faith. I ask you to make the preparation God desires. Even in a brief moment at this hour you can prepare. By saying, I am a sinner. I am one bound for hell.

Dear fellow believers, do you need the Lord? Does the Lord love you? Did He come to save you? He came two thousand years ago. And did He save you? He saved you. Do you believe it? If with a sincere heart a person admits that he is a sinner, and truly acknowledges that he is one going to hell, and sincerely receives and believes the gospel, that is how he is saved. I ask you not to put it off. I ask you to believe at this hour. For going to hell, much sin or little sin makes no difference. Even if there is only a little sin, one goes to hell. The person who has committed much sin and the person who has committed little—if there is sin, it is hell for them all. So on our side too, how clear our own situation is! Since we, who could only go to hell, have

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been saved, we come, as those who have had much debt canceled, to love the Lord much. Today, admit that you are a sinner bound for hell, and believe now. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

We receive the love of God through faith

< Luke 7:36-50 >

"Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My

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feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.' Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'"

Our Lord said, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. This age in particular is an age in which we must live by faith. It is an age in which we cannot possibly live except by faith. Before the Lord, we must live only by faith that believes in God.

What a woman who was a sinner did to Jesus

When we read the Word, Jesus came to eat in the house of a certain Pharisee. Now in that town there was a woman who had been branded a sinner and was notorious. Having heard the news that Jesus was eating in the house of the Pharisee, this woman came with an alabaster flask of fragrant oil and stood behind Jesus at His feet and wept, and she wet His feet with her tears and washed the feet of Jesus with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and poured on the fragrant oil.

What this woman did to Jesus, who had entered the house of the Pharisee, was an exceedingly strange thing. If that woman had been an ordinary woman, there would have been no problem at all and it would not have been a strange thing. It may not be easy for us to understand, but the Jews eat leaning back at the

table. Therefore it was possible for her to take hold of the feet of Jesus as He was eating and wet them with her tears and wash them with the hair of her head. But the problem was that this woman was not an ordinary woman but a sinner well known in the town. When this woman did such a thing before Jesus, the Pharisee who had invited Jesus was harboring the thought in his heart, 'If this man were really a servant of God, He would know that the woman who is laying her hand on His body is a sinner.'

Jesus saw through the inner heart of that Pharisee and spoke. "There were two men; one owed a debt of five hundred denarii and the other a debt of fifty denarii. Since neither had anything with which to repay, the one who had lent the money canceled the debts of both; which of the two will love the one who canceled their debts more?" Jesus asked Simon. Simon answered, "The one who had the greater debt canceled will love him more," and Jesus said that his judgment was right. And He turned to the woman and said to Simon, *"Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil" (Luke 7:44–46)*. He then said, *"Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little" (Luke 7:47)*, and to the woman He said, *"Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48)*.

Five hundred denarii and fifty denarii

When Jesus came into his house, this Pharisee who had invited Jesus did not even draw water for washing His feet.

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Among the Jews it is basic courtesy, when a guest comes, to draw water for washing his feet before he enters the room. But the Pharisee, though he had invited Jesus to his house, did not even give Him water for washing His feet. Though he had invited Him, he regarded Him very lightly. And then a woman came in and wet the feet of Jesus with her own tears and wiped them with the hair of her head and washed them clean.

What Jesus said to the Pharisee means this: 'You and this woman also—both of you are sinners before God. You are upright in conduct and so are one who has committed little sin, like the man who owed a debt of fifty denarii, and this woman is one whose sins have been greatly exposed, like the man who owed a debt of five hundred denarii. But which of you loved God more, and which of you received the love of God?' That is what He was saying. On the side of Jesus He canceled the debts of both these men. He canceled the debt of the man who owed fifty denarii and also of the man who owed five hundred denarii. It means that on God's side He has removed the sins of all men.

But on man's side there are those whose conduct is more lacking and those whose conduct is less lacking. There is the difference that the person who thinks he has committed little sin asks for little to be remitted, and the person who has committed much sin asks for much to be remitted. But before God, neither the one who has committed little sin nor the one who has committed much can repay the debt of sin by himself. Even a farthing's worth of sin sends a man to hell, and having committed much sin also sends him to hell; so before God it is the same. Since He said, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, there is no one at all who can pay the price of any sin by himself. Because a man has only one life, if he suffers death that is the end of it; so on our part we could not solve the problem of sin before God by ourselves.

But on God's side He remitted all that sin. Because God does not look at the weight of sin but looks at sin itself, on His side He completely remitted every sin. This is the mercy of God. When we live before God it is exactly like this parable. Rather than comparing with one another before God who has committed more sin, whether we have committed a small sin or a great sin, we have all received the remission of every sin by believing in the Lord. It is because on the Lord's side He has remitted every sin of ours. We are saved by faith.

The person who thinks he has committed little sin, while giving thanks that he was saved by believing in Jesus, can put forward his own righteousness in the area in which he considers himself not to have sinned, and at times he even boasts of how uprightly he lives before God. And there is another kind of person who, though he has received the remission of sins, suffers all the more because of his own lack and weakness. But whether one commits much sin or little, whether it is this woman or the Pharisee, the remission of sins is received by believing in the Lord, by believing in the redemption of the Lord. By believing in the Lord we receive the remission of sins and become righteous, and by faith we also receive the help of God.

A world in which we cannot live except by faith

In Habakkuk also He said, *"The just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4)*. Habakkuk speaks of how harsh this world is and how sin abounds. But even in such a situation, the just can live only by believing in God. In Romans also He said, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. Though all men have sinned and are perverse lives that sin until they die, they become righteous by believing in Jesus Christ; and even after becoming

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righteous, by believing in God they can escape from every weakness and live by faith, and by faith they come before God and receive blessing—that is what it means.

We have been saved. After being saved, there are those who live well before God and those who are lacking and those who are weak, but in fact they are all about the same. Yet the reason we can live is that we believe. We live by believing in God. Even though we have been saved, if we do not believe in God we cannot live. In terms of what has been canceled, we may be seen as those who have had five hundred denarii canceled. The person who has had his debt canceled while thinking that he has committed little sin will think that he owed a debt of fifty denarii before God. But as he lives on, he will certainly come to owe a debt of five hundred denarii. He will do wrong before God. At such a time we can live only when we have faith that believes the fact that God has truly taken every sin upon Himself, whatever it may be. It is because Jesus received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, and bearing that sin He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and He rose from the dead and completed our salvation. We live by the faith that believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

There are also brothers and sisters who, though the Lord has saved them, cannot live the life of the church because they commit so much sin. ‘Because I am so wicked, church life does not suit me. It is better to give up early.’ Such a person has been saved, but after being saved he is not living by believing in the Lord. To live by faith is to believe and go forward saying that though I am like this, the Lord has saved me, and therefore I stand before the Lord without shame. By going forward in faith we come to receive more blessing from God, to bear the fruit of faith, and to live a life that gives much glory to God. But looking at one’s own wickedness and giving up on oneself and

abandoning faith is wrong before God.

This age is an age in which we cannot live unless we live by faith. It was so in the age when the prophet Habakkuk lived, when the Old Testament was almost ending and it was several hundred years before Jesus Christ would come. It was an age in which the law of God could not possibly be kept. And yet the prophet Habakkuk said that the just shall live by his faith. It means that if we believe in God, even in such a situation we can have every sin canceled, and we can live before God by faith, and by faith we can receive the help of God. It means that it cannot be done by one's own works.

In this age in which we now live, to live according to the word of God is so very different from the current and the trend of this age. Since there is much to be seen and much that is heard, it is impossible to live keeping the Word entirely. The only way we can live in this age is faith alone. To believe—whom do we believe in? We believe in God. We believe in God the Father and Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit, our Lord. Though we are lacking, we can live by faith. 'Lord, though I am this lacking, You have remitted all my sins. Lord, I believe in You.' Going forward strongly in faith like this, we run the race by faith, bear the fruit of faith, fight the fight of faith, and live praying the prayer of faith.

Faith that believes the fact that the Lord is my Savior, the One who removed all the sins of my lacking self, the One who saved me so perfectly that I can never again become a sinner even though I am lacking, and that the Lord is God, who helps me—that faith makes us live. Therefore we must live by faith. We cannot keep the written Word entirely, but we must live keeping the faith that believes that the Lord has removed all our sins, and the faith that God helps and blesses us, who have become the children of God.

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The woman who received the remission of sins by faith

This woman who was notorious in the town also came before Jesus by faith. Jesus was eating leaning back at the table, and the Pharisees were sitting there in a row. What kind of people were the Pharisees? They were people so good at hypocrisy that when there was dung on the road as they went along, they would cover their faces with their sleeves and shout, *"Unclean! Unclean!"* and turn back and go by a road without dung. They claimed that they might have small faults, like the man who owed a debt of fifty denarii, but that they absolutely never committed great faults.

But the reason this woman could come before Jesus in that place full of Pharisees and pour fragrant oil on the feet of Jesus, wash the feet of Jesus with the hair of her head, and wet the feet of Jesus with her own tears, was that she believed: 'This One is my Savior, and the One who took upon Himself all my sins through the baptism He received from John; He is the very Messiah who was said in the Old Testament to be coming; He is the Son of God and God Himself; and He is my Lord and my Savior, who blesses me.' That is why this woman could come before Jesus and wash His feet and love Jesus. This woman is a woman who received the remission of sins through faith, and one who received the love of God through faith.

The remission of sins we received, we also received through faith; and the love of God we receive, we also receive through faith. Although we have received the remission of sins, if we go before God not by faith but by works, someday we will stumble over the stone of our own works and fall. But if we go forward by faith, though we are lacking, we can come before God at any time and be clothed with the love of God. Faith that believes that

God is my Savior, that He is my God, who helps me and blesses me, is what makes us receive the blessing of God and live.

What is it that makes us live? What makes my soul and my body live is precisely faith that believes in God, that faith that believes in the Lord. In this age we must live by faith. In that age long ago also they lived by faith. Jesus looked at this woman and said that the one who has received little remission of sins loves little, and that her love was much; and to say that her love was much is to say that her faith was great. This woman truly had great faith. Whatever others said, she looked only ahead and came forward believing in the Lord. And so this woman received grace, and Jesus Himself said, *"Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48),* and clothed her with the grace of the remission of sins. That this woman received the remission of sins, she received by faith.

Faith makes us live

Even after we have been saved and become righteous, the one way we can live in this world is faith that believes in God. It is not believing in our circumstances or our condition or our weakness or anything around us; we can live only by believing in God. How often we are discouraged, and how often we are bound by our circumstances and bound by our weakness and bound by ourselves! What is it that can set us free from all this weakness and from every curse? It is believing in our Lord. Faith is what sets us free from curse, from oppression, from shackles, from weakness, from evil.

By faith we can please God. If we believe in the Lord, spiritual problems are solved. If we believe in the Lord, despair turns into hope and hope comes to be. If we believe, we receive

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help and actually receive blessing. If we believe, we can become workers who please God. If we believe in God, we can save souls. By faith we preach to souls and save them, by faith we receive blessing, and we live the life of faith. The life of a Christian is faith at the beginning and faith to the end. To live a life woven through with faith is the life of a Christian.

What makes us live now and will also make us live on in the future is faith that believes in God. I believe in God. In hard times and in difficult times and in anxious times, I believe in God. I ask you also to believe. Do not be satisfied with having only been saved; since you have been saved and have obtained new life, you must believe in God in order to maintain this life. Only if we believe do we live. Only if we believe can we live receiving all that God has given. Even though we have been saved, it will not do if we do not live the life of faith.

Could we have become righteous except by faith? If we had not believed in Jesus we could not have become righteous. And after becoming righteous, if we do not believe in God we cannot live. We absolutely cannot. Satan the Devil, who left us alone before we received the remission of sins, once we have received the remission of sins goes about like a roaring lion seeking whom he may devour, striking us here and there and persecuting us. Therefore we live by faith. If we believe, we come to live. Since we received the remission of sins by faith, I ask you now to live the rest of your life by faith, bearing much fruit and receiving much blessing, and so to go before the Lord. I want our Lord to pour down such blessings of faith fully upon the church of God and upon you. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Have the faith that believes with the heart

< Luke 7:36-50 >

"Then one of the Pharisees asked Him to eat with him. And He went to the Pharisee's house, and sat down to eat. And behold, a woman in the city who was a sinner, when she knew that Jesus sat at the table in the Pharisee's house, brought an alabaster flask of fragrant oil, and stood at His feet behind Him weeping; and she began to wash His feet with her tears, and wiped them with the hair of her head; and she kissed His feet and anointed them with the fragrant oil. Now when the Pharisee who had invited Him saw this, he spoke to himself, saying, 'This Man, if He were a prophet, would know who and what manner of woman this is who is touching Him, for she is a sinner.' And Jesus answered and said to him, 'Simon, I have something to say to you.' So he said, 'Teacher, say it.' 'There was a certain creditor who had two debtors. One owed five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. And when they had nothing with which to repay, he freely forgave them both. Tell Me, therefore, which of them will love him more?' Simon answered and said, 'I suppose the one whom he forgave more.' And He said to him, 'You have rightly judged.' Then He turned to the woman and said to Simon, 'Do you see this woman? I entered your house; you gave Me no water for My feet, but she has washed My feet with her tears and wiped them with the hair of her head. You gave Me no kiss, but this woman has not ceased to kiss My

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feet since the time I came in. You did not anoint My head with oil, but this woman has anointed My feet with fragrant oil. Therefore I say to you, her sins, which are many, are forgiven, for she loved much. But to whom little is forgiven, the same loves little.' Then He said to her, 'Your sins are forgiven.' And those who sat at the table with Him began to say to themselves, 'Who is this who even forgives sins?' Then He said to the woman, 'Your faith has saved you. Go in peace.'"

God, who seeks one lost soul

God is even now seeking each and every lost soul. When God meets such a lost soul, He gives salvation, and He rejoices over that soul.

When we look at the Word we read today, Jesus was invited to the house of a Pharisee, and a woman who was known in that town as a sinner came to Jesus with fragrant oil in an alabaster flask and stood behind Jesus at His feet and wept, and she wet His feet with her tears and washed them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet and poured on the fragrant oil. But exactly the opposite of this notorious woman, the Pharisee who had invited Jesus to the meal did not do so.

Seen from the side of God, the reason Jesus Christ came to this earth was to save the lost souls who, if left alone, could only be destroyed and, belonging to the devil, could only be cursed, and could only go to hell.

The purpose for which Jesus came to this earth

What we must take greatest care over and engrave on our hearts is the fact that Jesus Christ truly came to this earth to save lost souls. That Jesus Christ came to this earth was not that He came to obtain glory or to display His own power. The purpose for which God came is only one. He came in order to save lost souls from sin and give them eternal life and take them to His own kingdom, and in order to set them free from slavery to Satan and deliver them from the devil.

If the purpose for which Jesus Christ came was to save sinners from sin, then we too must set the focus of our life of faith on saving lost souls. Rather than making the church great on this earth, or dressing up our outward appearance so as to be admired and respected by people, if Jesus Christ came to save one lost soul after another, then in keeping with that intent we too must set the focus of our life and our faith on the purpose of preaching the gospel to lost souls.

I believe that being able to serve this Lord is a very great blessing. I believe that there is no blessing greater than this blessing. I think and believe that the blessing of being saved is the greatest blessing, and that this blessing of being able to serve the Lord is the second greatest. The more I think about how I can serve such a Lord, the more thankful I am. As I begin this day also, I give thanks before God for the grace He has given of being able to serve the Lord; and I am seized with the thought of how, if opportunity arises in various countries in the future, I may preach the Word and the gospel and save lost souls; and because of that my heart is glad.

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Jesus, who is for the one who admits in his heart that he is a sinner

This woman who had been branded a sinner brought an alabaster flask and poured that fragrant oil on the feet of Jesus, and stood at the feet of Jesus and wept and wet His feet with her tears and washed them with the hair of her head and kissed His feet. Jesus truly came for people like this. This woman is one who knew well the reason Jesus came to this earth and who believes that this Jesus came and saved her. She is one who believes that it is so great a glory that Jesus came to this earth, and that she too received great glory through that Jesus. And she was one who knew and believed what a great sinner she was and how surely she could only be destroyed apart from Jesus.

On God's side He came to this earth to save one lost soul, but on man's side there must be faith that believes that apart from Jesus one can only die. If that were not there, there would be no need to believe in Jesus, and even if one believed, one would believe in a religious way. One would have become a religious person like this Pharisee, who says he believes in God while slandering Jesus and slandering and despising such things as eating food without washing the hands and the feet. But this woman is one who knows her own condition exactly. She is one who knows and believes that she is not merely a little lacking but one who can only die because of her sin before God.

On man's side one must know what kind of person he himself is. Those who obtain salvation before God must be those who admit that, if they were judged according to the law of God, the written word of the Law, they are sinners who would enter the unquenchable fire of hell; and they must become those who admit in their hearts and realize in their hearts and believe in their hearts and follow in their hearts that apart from Jesus they

can only be destroyed, and who thankfully believe in that salvation Jesus Christ has given. On this earth, among the people who believe in Jesus, there are many who do not believe in their hearts in Jesus as their Savior and do not admit in their hearts that they are beings who can only go to hell.

To put it in a common way, of the whole hundred percent of Christianity, ninety-eight percent do not truly admit in their hearts that they are ones bound for hell; there are many who believe simply because they like Jesus, because this religion is the most correct religion and is a religion that looks respectable among many religions. There are many who believe in Jesus in order to live a cultured life, a religious life of a high level—working six days and resting on the seventh day, going to church with a Bible under the arm as husband and wife together, and resting on the Lord's Day and going out sightseeing. But the person who comes before Jesus and truly receives the remission of sins is not such a person.

Some people, however, know that they are bound for hell and know that apart from the salvation Jesus has given them they can by no means obtain salvation, and they come out of that religion and come before Jesus Christ and believe in their hearts that Jesus Christ, by water and blood, saved a sinner like themselves from every sin, and follow Him in their hearts, and give thanks in their hearts, and serve Him in their hearts. Jesus received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, and He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again—that is, by water and blood—He saved us from every sin. Today we also are exactly like this woman who poured the fragrant oil on the feet of Jesus and washed them with the hair of her head. To such people God has given the salvation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has given eternal life. He said, *"Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (Luke 7:50)*. This content may

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be called a doctrine, but faith never stays in doctrine alone. Serving the Lord is absolutely not a theory, and being saved before the Lord is absolutely not a theory. It is not a doctrine and not a theology; this is truth, and it is real, and it is faith.

The faith that believes with the heart

This woman obtained salvation by believing in Jesus Christ. This woman was one who was too ashamed to be able to stand face to face before Jesus. The Jews eat sitting half reclined at the table as if lying down, and this woman went around to the feet of Jesus, and there she let her tears fall and poured the fragrant oil on the feet of Jesus and let down the hair of her head and washed the feet of Jesus with that hair. Because she knew and believed that the Lord had come to this earth for her and had come to save a sinner like herself, she poured the very costly fragrant oil on the feet of Jesus and washed them with the hair of her head. This faith is the most precious thing, and it is not some theory or doctrine.

When we look within Christianity today, doctrine is exceedingly prevalent. There are those who make a noise about what they do not even know while claiming to lecture on philosophy or various branches of learning. Of course, in religion or philosophy there is a certain thread, and if a person grasps that thread he is acknowledged in that field. But this faith is believing that, though one could only go to hell, Jesus came to this earth and saved him by water and blood—believing that the Lord has saved you and me. This is precisely belief, and faith, and life, and being born again, and obtaining eternal life. Because this is reality, this woman acted as she did.

But what about the Pharisee? This man was only judging and

sneering, thinking within himself, 'If that man were a prophet, He would know what kind of person this woman who is touching Him is, that she is a notorious sinner in this town.' But how did Jesus speak? He said that if two men owed debts of five hundred denarii and fifty denarii and both had no ability to repay and both had their debts canceled, the one who had had more canceled would love that master more. Though I came to your house, you did not even draw water for washing My feet or pour on olive oil; but look at this woman. Has she not brought costly fragrant oil in an alabaster flask and poured it out? Is she not, before the Lord who came to save her, truly feeling thankfulness in her heart and believing in her heart and making the confession of faith in her heart? In that way Jesus rebuked this Pharisee.

However much longer the Lord may let me live, I cannot forget that salvation the Lord has given. There were many times when I was busy with work and could not think of it much and was buried in my work, but that the Lord saved me I can never forget forever. I want to go out and seek the souls that are lost in the sight of God and preach the gospel to those souls. All of us must become such people.

As we go on living the life of faith, do we perhaps become merely theoretical people? Our life of faith must start from truly thinking in our hearts of the grace the Lord has given and giving thanks. It means that faith must begin from the thanksgiving and the faith and the desire to give glory to the Lord that well up out of the salvation one has received. If it is not that, it becomes a form and it is nothing. I hope that our hearts will truly become pure, and that our hearts will be soaked in the salvation the Lord has given so that thanksgiving wells up. I hope that, like this woman, we will become hearts that love Jesus fervently and give thanks in our hearts without being conscious of the eyes of others.

In this world there are many people who look proper and

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upright. But when we come to know, they are all the same. It is because people put on much hypocrisy that they look different. It is because the hearts of men are not faithful before God that they play the hypocrite. When Jesus looks at them, it is rather this Pharisee who commits more sin. How great a sin it is to put on hypocrisy! And yet the Pharisee thought that he was better than this woman.

Let us look at this woman, who believed and followed in her heart with sincerity. The Pharisee and this woman were enemies to each other, and yet she came into that Pharisee's house and wept at the feet of Jesus and poured oil there and let down the hair of her head and washed His feet. She was already a woman well known in the town—would she not know that she would be disgraced before people? Would she not know that she would be rebuked and reviled by the Pharisee? She knew it all. Yet this woman who came seeking Jesus is one who truly and sincerely believes in her heart in Jesus as her Savior. That is why she was not afraid of other people's attention or glances.

Because she truly and sincerely believed in her heart that she had received the remission of all her sins through Jesus Christ, the sneering of the Pharisee did not weigh on her. If, when we serve the Lord, we are conscious of the sneering of people and are afraid of it, that is not faith. If we truly believe in our hearts that the Lord has removed all our sins, what does it matter if we are looked down on? If we truly believe in the Lord in our hearts, we go on following the Lord without being conscious of the eyes of others, giving thanks and loving and preaching the gospel of the Lord according to the Word by that faith. And we live acknowledged before the Lord, having fellowship with the Lord and receiving the love of the Lord. I know that our faith too must become such faith.

If we ask what the greatest sin within the life of faith is, not

believing is the greatest sin. That one's conduct is lacking is all right. But that sin of not believing is the greatest sin. His behavior comes out as it does because he does not believe; thanksgiving does not come because he does not believe; and he has to watch the eyes of others in following the Lord because he does not believe. But if we are truly those who have received the remission of sins and truly believe in the Lord, then when we see and hear the word of the Lord, and if it becomes glory to the Lord, we must run forward in faith even though we are sneered at by people. Such things as failing to testify of the gospel because we have no faith, and acting faithlessly because we have no faith—these we must cast away. That is a great sin. Through it we come to commit exceedingly many sins.

If we truly and sincerely believe in our hearts—if we truly believe in our hearts in the Lord as our Savior and follow Him—then the standard of the eyes of the people of the world is not what matters; we must follow according to the word of the Lord as the Lord leads. And we must testify. That is faith and the life of faith. Being shaken every day because we have no faith, being cursed because we have no faith, causing trouble every day because we have no faith—these are not what the Lord desires. The Lord desires that we prosper. If we would prosper, we must have faith. It means that we must believe in God.

Faith grows in the heart

Like this woman, we must believe sincerely, believe with the heart and follow with the heart. Believing and following with the heart is different from knowing theoretically. It is not merely knowing with the head, saying, 'Who does not know such a formula?' but truly responding with the heart when we hear the

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Word, and if there is something that has not been settled in the heart, believing again with the heart and firming up our faith. Honestly, how many things are there that have not yet been settled in our hearts! In fact, apart from this one faith by which we were saved, how many things are there that have not yet been settled! And yet can we say that the Word is not worth hearing and that it is the same sermon every day? Even while we hear the same Word, our hearts come to be turned more and more toward faith that believes the word of God, toward believing and following with the heart.

Knowing with the head is not all; when the heart keeps being firmed up with faith, that faith grows. In order for that to happen we must keep hearing the Word and must have fellowship among the righteous. As we hear the Word, our own soul and heart must be changed into faith that believes the word of God, and that Word must become your faith. If we have received the remission of sins, that is how it must be.

This woman is truly a woman who displayed great glory before God. This woman is, in a word, a woman who put the hypocrisy of the Pharisee to shame. How did Jesus speak? To the woman He said, *"Your sins are forgiven" (Luke 7:48)*. This is what He was saying: the one who has had much canceled loves much and the one who has had little canceled loves little; you love Me little and therefore do not believe in Me wholly, but this woman believes in Me wholly; because she loves Me much, she is not conscious of your eyes and follows Me with her heart, and that is why she has come before Me now and is doing this. And Jesus said to this woman, *"Your faith has saved you. Go in peace" (Luke 7:50)*.

Faith means that one obtains salvation by believing with one's own heart. One must admit in his heart that he is a sinner, one who is lost, and one bound for hell, and must also receive in

his heart the salvation the Lord has given. One must know that he is one who is lost and one who cannot do without believing in the Lord, and must believe in the heart that Jesus came to save him and accomplished salvation, and must also know that he has been saved. All of this must take place in the heart. What has been received in the heart is faith, and what has not been received in the heart is not yet faith.

That is why, although we have been saved, we still need the church, and because our hearts must grow in faith, we need the life of faith. Some people say, 'If I have received the remission of sins and have no sin, then I no longer need to go to church.' Such a person has not yet believed with the heart. If we think only theoretically, it seems that once we have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins once and for all, there is no need to go to church. But the person who truly believes with the heart and follows the Lord comes to church because he has received the remission of sins. Because I, who have received the remission of sins, am righteous, I come to the church of the righteous, the church of God. Because I have received the remission of sins I must hear the Word, and my heart must come to the faith that believes the word of God and keep pressing on. And so I must become a person whose measure of faith has grown, one who leads others and shares with others. We must become instruments that serve the Lord, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so that through one person—oneself—countless people may receive the remission of sins. Because there is such a mission, we do not miss the meetings but hear the Word every day and serve and follow the Lord.

If this woman had only received the remission of sins and it had ended there, it would have been nothing. I believe that this woman truly followed and testified of the Lord with her heart. I

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want both myself and you, while we live on this earth, truly to believe and give thanks and follow the Lord with our hearts. I want the parts that have not yet been settled in the heart to be settled by faith so that we follow, and I want us to become those who obey the command of the Lord, though we are lacking. I hope that we will lay down our exalted hearts and thoughts and become those who live the life of faith with the heart. Serving the Lord until now, I feel that there are truly many things in which I am lacking. But that I believe and follow with my heart is certain. For the rest of my life also, though I am lacking, I want to believe with my heart and follow the Lord. I want my heart to be changed so that I become a person of faith and a person in whom the Lord takes pleasure. Those who have consecrated themselves to become servants of the Lord must have hearts that are laid down toward this world. Since they have consecrated themselves to live entirely with the Lord and to become servants of the Lord, it must be so in the heart; and the saints also must be so in the heart.

Have you received the remission of sins? If so, I ask you to check once how much of that faith is truly within your heart. Knowing which parts have been built up by faith and which parts have not, those parts must be filled as we hear the Word every day. Just as we are born again through the water and the Spirit, so also faith grows in the heart as the Holy Spirit gives understanding through the Word. We must hear every day. I ask you not to be slack about gathering together. By all means come to the meetings and hear the Word, and in that time of hearing the Word, I ask you truly to believe with your heart. Then later you will see that you have become a person of faith. Just as the body is harmed if one does not eat meals on time every day, so when we hear the Word steadily we will later realize that we have become people whose faith has greatly grown.

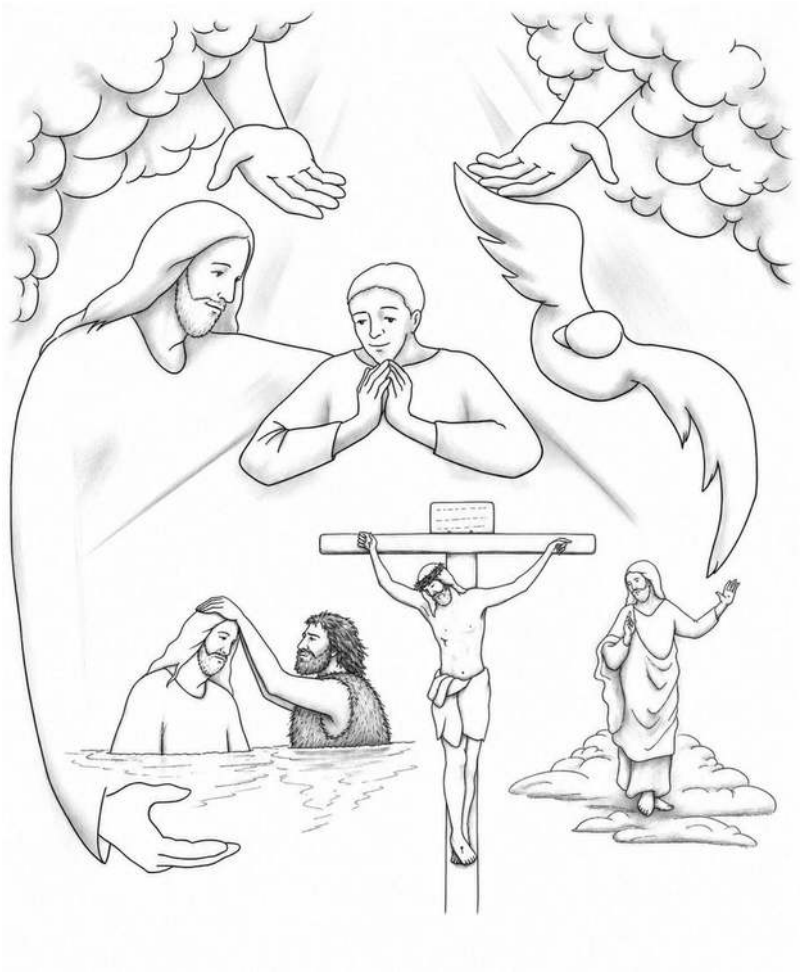
A person, when there is too much to look at, sometimes loses the way home while looking about. That is precisely the sheep that has lost its way. Only when we run the race by faith, only when we live with a goal set, do we live a life that is worthwhile without wasted labor. I ask you to believe and follow the Lord with your heart. I hope that the faith of your heart will grow. ✉

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CHAPTER

8

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Luke Chapter 8

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 8 shows how we must hear and believe the word of God, and what change and fruit appear in the person who has believed that word. It also reveals that Jesus is God, who rules over nature, evil spirits, the disease of sin, and even death, and the One who has completely saved sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The women who helped the ministry of Jesus (8:1–3)

"Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus goes through many cities and villages with the twelve disciples, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God. Luke also introduces the women who served the ministry of Jesus at this time.

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Among them were Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven demons had gone, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and several other women.

These women experienced healing and restoration through Jesus and served Jesus and His disciples with their own property. Considering the social circumstances of that day, the fact that Luke recorded the names and roles of these women carries great meaning. They were not mere peripheral figures but members of the community of disciples who actually took part in and supported the ministry of Jesus.

This shows the fact that people of many kinds take part in the ministry of the kingdom of God, beyond the divisions of men and women and of social background.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The person who has received the grace of salvation serves the gospel

Jesus went through many cities and villages with the twelve disciples, proclaiming the kingdom of God and the gospel. Several women who had been healed of diseases and set free from evil spirits also followed Jesus and served the Lord and His disciples with their possessions.

These women did not offer material things and labor in order to obtain salvation. Because they had first received grace from the Lord, they took part in the ministry of the gospel out of thankfulness. The life of faith does not stop at saying with the lips that one believes; it goes on to serving the Lord with one's life out of thanksgiving for the grace of salvation received.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of all mankind upon Himself, received the judgment of sin

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on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who knows this salvation, believes it with the heart, and receives the remission of sins comes to use the material things, the time, and the strength given to him for the gospel and for souls.

2. The parable of the sower and the heart that hears the Word (8:4–15)

"And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.' When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!' Then His disciples asked Him, saying, 'What does this parable mean?' And He said, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' 'Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having

heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus tells the parable of the seed falling on four kinds of ground.

First, the seed that fell by the wayside is trampled and the birds devour it. Second, the seed that fell on the rock sprouts but withers for lack of moisture and root. Third, the seed among the thorns cannot grow properly, choked by the thorns. Fourth, the seed that fell on the good ground grows and bears much fruit.

Jesus explains that the seed is *"the word of God"*. The four kinds of ground represent the different responses of those who hear the Word.

The person like the wayside hears the Word but cannot receive it. The person like the rock receives it with joy but leaves when trials come. The person like the thorns bears no fruit because of cares, riches, and the pleasures of the world. The person like the good ground receives the Word with an honest and good heart and bears fruit with patience.

This parable is not a story meant simply to classify four kinds of people. It asks the one who hears the Word, 'With what heart am I hearing the Word?' Luke especially emphasizes the life that holds on to the Word and bears fruit with patience rather than a momentary reaction.

When the disciples ask the meaning of the parable, Jesus says that to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God has been given to the disciples.

It will not do to understand these words only as meaning that Jesus deliberately kept people from being saved. A parable

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conveys the truth easily and at the same time exposes the state of the hearer's heart. To the person who humbly seeks its meaning it opens the truth more deeply, but to the person whose heart is closed it can remain a mere story.

Therefore the core lies not simply in whether one heard the Word, but in whether one heard it with a heart that seeks to understand and follow it.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We bear fruit only when we hear the Word, keep it, and endure

In the parable of the sower, the seed is the word of God. Even when people hear the same word, the results differ according to the state of the heart.

The heart like the wayside does not realize its need for the Word, and so the devil takes the Word away. The heart like the rock hears the Word with joy but does not let it take deep root in the heart, and so retreats when temptation comes. The heart like the thorns, even though it has heard the Word, has its heart stolen by the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life, and so does not bear whole fruit.

The good ground is the person who hears the word of God, keeps it in his heart, and endures. He clearly knows and believes the word of the gospel that Jesus took all sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose from the dead. And even after receiving the remission of sins, he puts down roots in the Word and in the church, endures trials and hardships, and bears the fruit of preaching the gospel to other souls.

Fruit is not a merit that buys salvation. It is the result of faith

that the person first saved by the word of life bears out of thankfulness for the grace received.

3. The parable of the lamp—a life that reveals the word it has heard (8:16–18)

"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him."

General interpretation of the text

It is the parable that a person does not light a lamp and cover it with a vessel or put it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand. A lamp is meant not to be hidden but to light up its surroundings.

Connected with the preceding parable of the sower, it means that the person who has truly received the word of God must reveal that word in his life. What is hidden comes to be revealed in the end.

The words *"take heed how you hear"* are also important. It is the warning that if one responds to the word of God with an open heart, one gains deeper understanding and fruit, but if one hears and does not follow, one can lose even what one thought one knew.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must reveal the light of the gospel and examine how we hear

A lamp is not lit to be covered with a vessel or hidden under a bed. It is set on the lampstand so that those who come in can see the light. In the same way, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a word to be kept hidden but the light of salvation that must be made to shine to the whole world.

Jesus told us to examine how we are hearing the Word. We must not judge the Word by our own thoughts or select only the parts we need. In particular, if we speak only of the Cross of Jesus and leave out the baptism He received from John the Baptist, we cannot rightly know how sin passed on to Jesus.

The person who hears the Word as the word of God and keeps it in his heart comes to know the gospel more clearly. On the contrary, if one pushes the Word away with one's own thoughts and desires, one comes to lose even what one thought one knew.

The saint who has received the remission of sins must not hide the light of the gospel but shine it on other souls.

4. The true family of Jesus (8:19–21)

"Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him by some, who said, 'Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.' But He answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.'"

General interpretation of the text

The mother and brothers of Jesus come to Him, but they cannot come near because of the many people. Jesus says, "*My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it*".

These words do not mean that Jesus disregarded or denied His family in the flesh. Jesus was speaking of the new family relationship formed within the kingdom of God.

Those who hear the word of God and do it form one community beyond origin and blood. These words also connect with the conclusion of the preceding parable.

The true disciple is the person who does not stop at hearing the Word but puts it into practice in his life.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Those who hear the Word and do it are the family of the Lord

Jesus did not disregard His family in the flesh. Through this event He taught who the true family is within the kingdom of God. He said that those who hear the word of God and do it are His mother and brothers.

To do the Word does not mean completing one's salvation by one's own works. It is first to believe with the heart the salvation God has accomplished, and then, following that faith, to be united with the gospel and the will of God.

Those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins become one family of God beyond the bloodline of the flesh. They do not live each for himself alone but join their hearts, bodies, time, and possessions together to

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serve the work of preaching the gospel. The church of God is the spiritual family in which saved saints live united in the gospel.

5. Calming the windstorm (8:22–25)

"Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.' And they launched out. But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. But He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, 'Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!'"

General interpretation of the text

While Jesus and His disciples were crossing the lake by boat, a great windstorm arose. The boat was filling with water and was in danger, but Jesus was asleep. When the disciples woke Jesus, He rebuked the wind and the waves and made them calm.

This event shows that Jesus has the authority to rule the natural world. Since in the Old Testament it is God who is described as ruling the sea and the storm, this event raises an important question about the identity of Jesus.

The disciples were with Jesus and yet were seized with fear. Jesus asks, "*Where is your faith?*" Rather than simply condemning the emotion of fearing danger, these words urge

them to trust, in the midst of crisis, the authority of Jesus who is with them.

The disciples ask, *"Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!"* This question runs through the whole of chapter 8. The events that follow show its answer ever more clearly.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—In the windstorm we must rely on the almighty Lord

A fierce windstorm came even to the disciples who were in the boat with Jesus. When the boat was filling with water, the disciples were afraid as though they would die. But when Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves, they immediately became calm.

The fact that even the wind and the waves obey His word shows that Jesus is not a mere teacher but the Creator God. Jesus is the Savior who saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the Lord who rules the church and the lives of the saints.

Just as the boat met the windstorm, hardship can come to the church of God and to the lives of the saints. If at that time we look only at the circumstances before our eyes and at human methods, we forget the fact that the Lord is with us. The greater the affliction, the more the saint must pray to the almighty Lord and ask for His help, relying on the word of the Lord rather than on his own thoughts.

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6. Restoring the demon-possessed man (8:26–39)

"Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!' For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he

might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.' And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him."

General interpretation of the text

In what appears to be a Gentile region across the lake, Jesus meets a man who had long been held captive by demons. He wore no clothes and lived not in a house but among the tombs, and even when people bound him he broke the bonds. This shows that he was in a state of complete destruction—physically, mentally, and socially.

The demons reveal their name as *"Legion"*. It means that many demons were ruling that man. When the demons, having received the permission of Jesus, enter the herd of swine, the swine drown in the lake.

There are several interpretations of the details of this event, but its clear center is that Jesus completely subdued the evil spirits and restored one man to wholeness. The man who had lived violently among the tombs now sits at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind.

The people of that region, seeing this change, fear rather than rejoice and ask Jesus to leave. Economic loss, or terror at a supernatural event too great to bear, may have been at work.

The restored man wants to follow Jesus, but Jesus sends him back home to tell what God has done. He becomes a witness who tells in his own region what Jesus has done.

Not every disciple is called in the same way. One person leaves and follows, and another returns to the place of his own life and testifies.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The person saved from the power of evil spirits becomes a witness of the gospel

The demon-possessed man of the Gadarenes could not live at home and wandered among the tombs. People bound him with chains and shackles but could not control him. Human rules and religious effort could not solve his fundamental problem.

The wretched state of this man shows the spiritual condition of man, who is under the power of sin, lust, and evil spirits and yet cannot escape by his own strength. Human teaching and resolutions can suppress the outward appearance for a while, but they cannot remove the sin of the heart.

But when Jesus commanded the demon to come out, the man came to sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. By taking our sins upon Himself with His baptism, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, Jesus has saved us from the power of sin, Satan, and destruction.

The saved man wanted to be with Jesus, but the Lord told him to return home and tell the great things God had done. The saved saint also must live as a witness of the gospel, telling his family and neighbors the work of the Lord who delivered him from sin and destruction.

7. Healing the woman who suffered from a flow of blood (8:40–48)

"So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to

come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, 'Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' But Jesus said, 'Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.' Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, 'Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.'"

General interpretation of the text

When Jesus returns, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, comes and pleads with Him to heal his twelve-year-old daughter, who is dying. While Jesus is going to his house, a woman who has suffered from bleeding for twelve years secretly touches the border of His garment.

In the legal and social environment of that day, continual bleeding would have placed the woman in a state of ceremonial uncleanness. It is very likely that she suffered not only bodily disease but also social isolation and economic hardship.

The woman believed that she would be healed if she touched the garment of Jesus, and the bleeding stops immediately. Jesus asks who touched Him. This can be understood not as ignorance

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of the facts, but as an act meant to bring the hidden woman out before the community.

Jesus does not rebuke her but calls her *"Daughter"* and declares that her faith has saved her. She is not only healed bodily but publicly acknowledged in her restoration and sent away in peace.

It is fitting to understand the woman's faith not as an attitude of believing that some magical power resided in the garment of Jesus itself, but as trust in the power and mercy of Jesus, to whom she entrusted herself in her despair.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Only Jesus solves the source of sin that keeps flowing out

The woman who suffered from the flow of blood was in pain for twelve years but could not be healed by any. This flow of blood shows the spiritual condition in which a person cannot stop, by his own effort, the sin that keeps flowing out of his heart.

People try to remove the sins of the heart with prayers of repentance, good deeds, offerings, and religious labors, but such acts cannot solve the source of sin. Just as the woman could not be healed by any other method, the sinner cannot obtain the remission of sins by his own merit.

The woman believed that she would be healed if she touched the border of the garment of Jesus, and the moment she touched it, the flow of blood stopped. Many people were surrounding Jesus, but the one who touched Him by faith was this woman.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself once and for all every sin we commit throughout our whole life. And He received the judgment of sin

on the Cross and rose from the dead. When we know this righteous work of salvation and believe it with the heart, the flow of sin stops and we obtain the remission of sins and peace before God.

8. Raising Jairus's daughter (8:49–56)

"While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, 'Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.' But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, 'Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.' When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, 'Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, 'Little girl, arise.' Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened."

General interpretation of the text

While Jesus is speaking with the woman who had the flow of blood, the news arrives that Jairus's daughter has died. But Jesus says to Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well"*.

Jesus enters the house of Jairus and says that the girl is not dead but sleeping. Rather than an expression denying actual

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death, this means that before Jesus, death has no eternal dominion. It is because He will raise the girl as one wakes her from sleep.

When Jesus commands, *"Little girl, arise"*, the girl's spirit returns and she rises at once. Jesus tells them to give her something to eat. This concrete instruction shows that the girl really regained bodily life, and shows the attentive care of Jesus.

Jairus was a socially respected ruler of the synagogue, and the woman with the flow of blood was a marginalized person whose name is not even recorded. But Jesus answers them both. The grace of the kingdom of God makes no discrimination by social position.

Moreover, Jairus's daughter was twelve years old, and the woman had suffered from her disease for twelve years. Through this number Luke sets side by side the years one person had lived and the years another person had suffered.

Jesus rules over both long suffering and sudden death.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus gives life to the soul dead in sin

When the news came that Jairus's daughter had died, people thought all hope was over. But Jesus told Jairus not to fear but to believe. Even while people ridiculed Him, the Lord took the child's hand and commanded her to arise, and the child's spirit returned and she rose at once.

Jairus's daughter could not come back to life by herself, and she had no good deeds or merit to offer Jesus. Jesus went to her Himself and gave her life. This shows the work of God coming first to the person dead in sin and bestowing the grace of salvation.

Jesus did not give us an incomplete salvation dealt out little by little. By taking upon Himself, with His baptism, all the sins of our whole life once and for all, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, He gave us the grace of eternal salvation.

The saved saint is not a person who follows the Lord conditionally in order to gain some reward. He is a person who remembers the grace that already brought him to life out of sin and death and serves the Lord and the gospel with thanksgiving.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 8 conveys

The flow of Luke chapter 8 begins with hearing the word of God and continues to the saved person serving and preaching the gospel.

The word of God is the seed of life and the lamp that lights up the darkness. Jesus is the Creator, who rules the wind and the sea; He casts out evil spirits; He heals the disease of sin that man cannot solve; and He is the Lord of life, who raises even the dead.

This Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead. We must not rely on our own good deeds and religious efforts but clearly know this gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe it with the heart.

After receiving the remission of sins, we must keep the Word in our hearts, endure, and be united with the church. We must rely on the Lord even in the windstorm, tell the work of salvation He has done for us, and bear the fruit of serving the gospel and souls with what we have received from the Lord. ✉

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Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

The word of God that gives life and freedom

Introduction

In Part 1 above we looked at each passage of Luke chapter 8 side by side, from the general interpretation of the text and from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at what the attitude of hearing and believing the word of God and the authority of Jesus teach our faith and our lives.

The women who served the ministry of Jesus, the parable of the sower, the words about the lamp and the true family, and the events in which He ruled the windstorm, the demons, disease, and death are not stories separated from one another. All these words reveal the fact that Jesus is God, who gives the word of life, and that He gives salvation, freedom, and life to the person who hears and believes that word.

The expository sermon that follows faithfully traces the meaning of the text and examines how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took upon Himself the sin of mankind with His baptism and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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The grace of salvation leads on to a life of serving the gospel

"Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance" (Luke 8:1–3).

The people who were with Jesus, who preached the gospel of the kingdom of God

The word *"afterward"* is an expression that follows the preceding event, in which the woman who had many sins came to Jesus, received the remission of her sins, and returned in peace. The preceding passage showed the fact that the person who has received the grace of the remission of sins comes to love Jesus, and this passage shows the life of the women who, having received grace from Jesus, actually follow and serve Him.

Jesus did not stay in one place but went through every city and village. He visited not only the large cities where many people gathered but also the small, inconspicuous villages. The gospel of God is not something needed only by socially important people or by people with much religious knowledge. It is the news of life needed by everyone—city and country, rich and poor, man and woman, the famous and the nameless.

The central content Jesus preached was *"the kingdom of God"*. The kingdom of God does not mean simply some place a

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person enters after death. It includes the person who was under the rule of sin, the devil, and death receiving the salvation of God and coming into His reign. Jesus is the King who came to save sinners, to make them the people of God, and to bring them into the eternal kingdom.

The text says that Jesus went *"preaching"* the kingdom of God and bringing *"the glad tidings"* of it. The gospel is the good news that Jesus saves sinners who cannot enter the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is not a kingdom that can be obtained by human good deeds or religious merit but a kingdom entered by believing the righteousness that Jesus Christ accomplished.

By the time of Luke chapter 8, Jesus had already received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The Son of God, who has no sin, received baptism from John, the representative of mankind, and so took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. This baptism is the important starting point of the saving ministry in which Jesus preached the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Bearing the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, Jesus went to the Cross and shed His blood and died. On the Cross He received the judgment of sin and death in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame sin and death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by the baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection, is the true gospel that brings sinners into the kingdom of God.

When Jesus went through every city and village, the twelve disciples were with Him. Jesus did not handle everything alone and show the disciples only the results; He took them with Him so that they would hear, see, and learn the gospel of the kingdom of God. The disciples experienced at close hand the words and deeds of Jesus, His heart of compassion for sinners, and His life

of preaching the gospel.

The fact that the twelve disciples were with Him also shows that the preaching of the gospel is not carried out as the heroic activity of one person. Jesus trained His disciples so that they would testify of the gospel even after He ascended. They were the ones who would testify to the world what gospel Jesus had preached and how He had saved sinners.

The women who had received grace served the Lord with their substance

The twelve disciples were not the only ones who were with Jesus. The women who had been set free from evil spirits and healed of diseases were also with Him. In the society of that day the names and roles of women were often not recorded as important, but Luke left the names of Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Susanna in concrete detail. They were not spectators of the ministry of Jesus but people who followed Him and actually supported the preaching of the gospel.

Mary Magdalene was a person who had been set free from seven demons. She could not escape from the bondage of the demons by her own strength, but Jesus cast out the demons and set her free. After receiving grace from the Lord, Mary Magdalene followed Him and served the ministry of the gospel with her possessions.

The event in which Mary Magdalene was set free from seven demons shows that Jesus is stronger than the power of the devil. Man cannot overcome the power of sin, the devil, and death by himself, but Jesus is the Son of God, who subdues all those forces. That Jesus saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit did not end with forgiving sin; it is the work of delivering

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us from the rule of the devil and making us the people of God.

Jesus healed the sick, cast out demons from those who were demon-possessed, and delivered them from bondage and suffering. In this way, those who had received grace directly from the Lord did not forget that grace but followed Jesus and His disciples and served the work by which the gospel of the kingdom of God was preached.

Joanna is introduced as *"the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward"*. Chuza was a steward who managed the property and affairs of Herod. Joanna, who lived in a household connected with the palace, also received grace from Jesus, followed Him, and served the ministry of the gospel with her possessions. The gospel brought together, in the one Lord, not only Mary Magdalene, who was set free from severe spiritual suffering, but also people who had lived in social environments different from hers.

What mattered to Joanna was not her husband's position or the social environment she belonged to. She knew the grace she had received from Jesus and used her possessions to serve Him and His disciples. More precious than worldly standing was the life that believed the grace received from the Lord and served the gospel.

About Susanna nothing is recorded except her name. But the fact that a person's name appears only once in the Bible does not mean that her service was small. A life that offered what it had for the gospel of the kingdom of God is remembered by God, even if it is not widely known to people.

Luke says that besides the three whose names are recorded there were *"many others"*. In the ministry of the gospel there are far more people who serve without a name than people whose names are known. Not everyone becomes a preacher or stands before people, but each person can take part in the preaching of

the gospel according to the gifts and circumstances he has received.

These women, it says, *"ministered unto them of their substance" –ASV*. Here *"them"* refers to the disciples who went about with Jesus. For Jesus and His disciples to go through many cities and villages preaching the gospel, there had to be practical provision—food and lodging, travel and the necessities of daily life. The women used their own property to fill such needs.

This word shows that the idea that the preaching of the gospel is a spiritual work and therefore needs no material help at all is mistaken. Preaching the Word is a spiritual ministry, but the people who carry it out must eat, sleep, and travel. For the gospel to be preached widely, there must be not only prayer and the Word but also practical service such as time and labor, places and finances.

The life after receiving the remission of sins is the life of faith

The order shown in the text is clear. The women first received grace from Jesus and were saved from their diseases and from the bondage of demons, and out of thankfulness for that grace they served the Lord and His disciples with their possessions. The salvation received from the Lord came first, and the life of serving the gospel out of thankfulness for that salvation followed.

It is the same with believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not that a person obtains the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by offering much wealth and working hard at church affairs. When a person believes with the heart the salvation that Jesus accomplished—taking all sins upon Himself with His

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baptism, being judged on the Cross, and rising again—he receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The person who has received the Holy Spirit comes to treasure the Lord who saved him and to want His gospel to be preached to other people as well. So he uses the time and talents, the health and material things he has, for the gospel. Such service is not a transaction to buy salvation but an expression of thanksgiving for the salvation already received free of charge.

The expression *"their substance"* makes us consider that everything we have was originally given by the Lord. Our bodies and strength, our thoughts and time, our material things and circumstances have all been entrusted to us by the Lord. The person who has received the remission of sins serves the Lord's gospel and the workers of the gospel with what he has received from the Lord.

The church must first clearly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, so that people may receive the remission of sins. The saint who has received the remission of sins serves the gospel with his body, his time, and his possessions out of thankfulness for the grace received from the Lord. In this way, when the grace of salvation is believed in the heart, thanksgiving and service toward the gospel also appear in one's life.

The service of these women was the practical ministry needed for Jesus and His disciples to go through many cities and villages preaching the gospel. The person who preaches the Word and the person who supports that work with his possessions, his body, and his time are not serving different gospels. All are joining their strength together for the one gospel and serving the Lord.

In the text, people of different social backgrounds appear

together. The disciples who had been fishermen, Mary Magdalene who had been set free from seven demons, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and many women whose names are not recorded followed the one Lord. In Jesus Christ, worldly position and one's past do not determine a person's worth. Those who believe the same gospel and serve the same kingdom of God form one community.

Mary Magdalene did not live in hiding because of her past. After being saved by Jesus she followed Him, and later she appears also at the scenes of the Cross, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus. Salvation transforms the person who lived bound to the shame of the past into a witness and worker of the Lord. Joanna, too, is mentioned again in Luke chapter 24 among the women who reported the news of the resurrection to the apostles.

That these women followed Jesus was not merely a matter of expressing some gratitude after receiving physical help. They believed who Jesus was—the One who had changed their lives—and joined their hearts to the gospel of the kingdom of God that He preached. Before the act of offering material things, their hearts were first connected to Jesus and the gospel.

Today also, the ways of serving the gospel can differ from person to person. One person can preach the Word, another can pray, another can offer finances, another can provide places and skills, and yet another can care for believers who are in hardship. What matters is not that everyone does the same work, but that all take part together, within the gifts and circumstances each has received, so that the gospel of Jesus may be preached.

The life of faith is not a matter of speaking religious words only during worship hours. It is a life that believes how Jesus removed my sins, and that out of thanksgiving for that grace uses the time and possessions of daily life for the gospel. One's

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workplace and family, talents and property can also become instruments that serve the gospel of the kingdom of God.

Before our service, Jesus first came to us and saved us. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took all my sins upon Himself once and for all, and bearing those sins He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and He rose again on the third day and so completed my salvation. The person who believes this grace and receives the remission of sins follows the Lord and serves the gospel with thanksgiving.

This passage shows the fact that the gospel of the kingdom of God is not conveyed by the Word alone but spreads widely through the practical service of those whose hearts are joined to that gospel. Jesus preached the gospel, the disciples went along with Him, and the women who had received grace supported the ministry with their possessions. Their roles differed, but all were connected within the gospel of the kingdom of God.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus saved us with the baptism He received from John, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection—receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit. And he comes to want to serve so that other souls may also hear this gospel, not using what has been given him for himself alone. Salvation is not the price of service, but the grace of salvation truly received bears the fruit of thanksgiving, love, and willing service.

When the gospel takes root in the heart, fruit is borne

"And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 'A sower

went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.' When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'" (Luke 8:4–8).

The word of God is the same seed, but the results differ according to the field of the heart

When Jesus went through every city and village preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God, people flocked from many towns and formed a great multitude. Many people heard the word of Jesus, but not all who heard the Word received it in the same way. With the parable of the sower, Jesus taught the fact that even when the same word is preached, different results appear according to the heart of the one who hears it.

This parable does not end at verses 4–8. In verses 11–15 that follow, Jesus Himself explained directly that the seed is the word of God and that the four kinds of ground represent the different hearts that hear the Word. The seed that fell by the wayside, on the rock, and among the thorns did not bear fruit, but the seed that fell on the good ground received the Word, kept it, and bore fruit with patience.

The sower sowed one kind of seed. He did not sow a different seed by the wayside and a specially better seed on the good ground. The same word of God was preached to all people, but the results differed because the hearts that received the seed differed.

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The word of God has in it the life that saves a person from sin and makes him bear the fruit of faith. But if the Word cannot enter the heart, or cannot take deep root, or is blocked by the cares and desires of the world, it does not bear fruit. Abundant fruit is borne in the good ground that receives the word of life into the heart, believes it, and keeps it to the end.

It is the same with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. Bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and He was buried and rose again on the third day. The salvation accomplished by the baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection is complete, but if a person does not receive the word of this gospel into his heart, that salvation does not appear as the effect of faith.

The wayside, the rock, and the thorns lose the Word and bear no fruit

The first seed fell by the wayside. A road is hard because people keep treading on it as they pass. The seed could not enter the soil but lay on the surface, and so it was trampled by people and the birds of the air came and devoured it.

The second seed fell on the rock. Because of the shallow covering of soil the seed sprang up quickly, but it could not put down deep roots. Receiving no continual supply of moisture, it soon withered away.

The third seed fell among thorns. A sprout came up from the seed, but the thorns grew up with it. Because the thorns took away the sunlight and nourishment and choked its strength, the grain could not grow properly and bear fruit.

Jesus explained the wayside as the person who does not receive the Word into his heart and so is robbed of it by the devil, the rock as the person who does not take root in the Word and so retreats in time of temptation, and the thorns as the person who is blocked by cares, riches, and the pleasures of the world and so bears no fruit. This passage surveys the difference of the three fields of the heart, and the text that follows examines their meaning in detail.

The good ground receives the Word, keeps the faith, and bears fruit a hundredfold

The fourth seed fell on the good ground. The seed entered the soil, took root, grew, and bore fruit a hundredfold. The good ground had the conditions needed to receive the seed and let its life grow.

The good ground does not mean that a person has had an originally good and righteous heart from birth. In every person's heart there are the stubbornness like the wayside, the self-made thoughts like the rock, and the cares and desires of the world like the thorns. The good ground is the heart that acknowledges this state of itself before the word of God, lays down its own thoughts and its own righteousness, and receives and believes as it is the word God has given.

The person like good ground accepts God's judgment when God judges him to be a sinner. He acknowledges the fact that he cannot remove his sins by his own works and that the salvation of Jesus Christ is absolutely necessary for him. And he receives into his heart the word that Jesus removed all his sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Thus the starting point of becoming good ground is to throw

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away one's own righteousness and believe the righteousness of God. It is not that one is saved by forcibly polishing one's heart into goodness. It is allowing the word of God to expose one's sins and thoughts, humbling oneself before the Word, and receiving the salvation Jesus accomplished.

The good ground is the heart that hears the Word, believes it with the heart, and then keeps that word. It holds in the heart the gospel that Jesus took all my sins upon Himself with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Even when trials and hardships come, it does not throw the Word away, but keeps the faith until the day the Lord comes and lives united with God and the church.

The good ground also bears fruit *"with patience"*. One cannot reap a hundredfold harvest the day after sowing the seed. Passing through rain and wind, cold and heat, the seed takes root, the stalk grows, and the fruit ripens. The life of faith likewise is not completed in an instant without trials and hardships.

Patience is the faith that believes that the things God has spoken will surely come to pass and endures to the end. The person who has received the remission of sins holds the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart, keeps hearing and believing the Word even in hardships and trials, and does not retreat from the place of serving the gospel. The person who thus keeps the faith and endures bears fruit at last.

The hundredfold fruit begins with believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of sins, and becoming the people of God. The person who has received the remission of sins does not live for himself alone but lives for the people who do not yet know the gospel and for the souls who need him. Through a life of preaching the gospel to them, nurturing them with the Word, praying, and serving, he bears the abundant fruit of faith.

One person preaches the gospel to many souls, and another serves over a long time so that one soul may receive the remission of sins and grow in faith. Yet another supports the preaching of the gospel with prayer, material things, talents, and service. When all live for other souls in the place entrusted to each, the fruit of the gospel keeps spreading.

When one person believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart and becomes good ground, it does not end with that person's salvation. He preaches the gospel to another soul so that that soul receives the remission of sins, and as that soul preaches the gospel to yet another person, the hundredfold fruit appears. To live the rest of one's life for those who are needier than oneself and who need the gospel is the precious fruit borne in the good ground.

When Jesus had finished the parable, He cried out, *"He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"* Everyone had physical ears, but not everyone understood and received the meaning of the Word. The hearing ear is the heart that does not hear the word of God as mere information or an interesting story but receives it as the word addressed to its own soul.

Hearing the Word many times does not automatically make one good ground. Even a person who has attended church for a long time and has much Bible knowledge can have a heart like the wayside or the rocky ground if he receives only the words that agree with his own thoughts. Conversely, even a person hearing the gospel for the first time can become good ground if he acknowledges that the word of God is right and receives it with his heart.

Therefore, when we hear the Word, we must examine our own hearts rather than judge others. Before sorting people out, saying, "That man is the wayside, and that man is the thorny field," we must look back at whether we are shutting our hearts

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tight before the gospel, whether we are reacting only emotionally, and whether cares, riches, and pleasures are blocking the Word.

When we discover stones and thorns in our own hearts, we must acknowledge before the word of God that stubbornness and those self-made thoughts, those cares and desires. We must keep hearing the Word in the church, be united with the saints, and hold the gospel of the water and the Spirit firmly in our hearts. When we receive and believe the word of God, the stones and thorns of the heart are removed, and the heart is changed into good ground and bears fruit.

The life that makes fruit is in the word of God. Yet the good ground receives the seed of life into the heart, lets it take deep root, keeps the Word, and endures, and so bears fruit. God saves sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He establishes the person who believes that gospel as a child of God and a worker of the gospel and makes him bear abundant fruit.

What a person must do is not push the seed away with his own righteousness and stubbornness but receive the word of life. We must believe with the heart the word that Jesus took all my sins upon Himself with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross in my place, and rose from the dead and became my Savior. When this gospel takes root in the heart, we receive the remission of all sins, receive the Holy Spirit, and come to bear the fruit of faith following the leading of the Spirit.

The person who keeps the gospel bears fruit with patience

"Then His disciples asked Him, saying, 'What does this parable mean?' And He said, 'To you it has been given to know

the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' 'Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Luke 8:9–15).

The mysteries of the kingdom of God and the seed of life

When Jesus told the parable of the sower, the disciples asked Him what it meant. It is not that the disciples came to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God because they understood everything from the beginning. They too did not know the meaning of the parable, but they acknowledged that they did not know, and came to Jesus and asked. The starting point of understanding the word of the kingdom of God is not the pride of thinking one already knows, but the heart that wants to learn before the Word.

The many people also heard the parable of Jesus, but they did not ask its meaning as the disciples did. Hearing the same word, one person draws near to the Lord wanting to know its meaning, and another hears it as no more than an interesting

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story and goes away. That the sound of the Word reached one's ears and that the Word entered the heart and became faith are two different things.

Jesus said that to the disciples it had been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God. The truth of the kingdom of God is not something a person discovers by himself because he is intelligent or has much religious knowledge. Only when God gives the Word and reveals its meaning can one know it. Therefore the person who has come to understand the gospel should not boast of his own intelligence but give thanks for the grace of God, who made him know the truth.

Jesus said that to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God had been given to the disciples, but that to those who close their hearts and cling to their own thoughts the parable remains only a story, so that seeing they do not see and hearing they do not understand. The parable exposes a person's heart. The person who loves the Word comes to the Lord to learn its meaning, but the person who clings to his own thoughts sees without seeing and hears without understanding.

Jesus explained the core of the parable very clearly. He said, *"The seed is the word of God"*. The seed does not mean human philosophy or a moving story, the authority of a religious leader or human zeal. It means the word of God, which saves sinners and gives life.

Just as life is contained in a small seed, so that when it is planted in the ground a sprout comes up, grows, and bears fruit, so the word of God has in it the life that gives life to a person's soul. But even though the seed itself has life, if the ground does not receive it, it cannot bear fruit. The word of the gospel has the power to save sinners, but if a person does not believe that word with the heart and rejects it, he cannot enjoy the benefit of that salvation.

The center of the word of God is the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished for sinners. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. And bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame sin and death. This baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection are the core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The wayside, the rock, and the thorns lose the Word and bear no fruit

The wayside of verse 12 is ground hardened by people continually treading on it. Because the seed cannot enter the soil and stays on the surface, the birds easily devour it. In the same way, the person whose heart has hardened with his own thoughts and stubbornness, his excuses about sin and his religious pride, does not receive the Word into his heart even when he hears it.

Even the person by the wayside is not a person who never heard the Word at all. Jesus clearly said, *"the ones who hear"*. He heard the Word with his ears and was exposed to explanations of the gospel, but he did not receive that word as the matter of his own salvation. He only judged and criticized the Word; he did not acknowledge before the Word that he was a sinner, nor believe the salvation of Jesus.

At this point the devil takes the Word away from the person's heart, lest he believe and be saved. What the devil fears most is that a person hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believes it, and receives the remission of sins. Even if he makes a person religious or makes him do many good deeds, as long as he keeps

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the person from believing the one fact that Jesus solved all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, he can keep that person under sin.

The one on the rock in verse 13 receives the Word with joy when he hears it. Judging by the first reaction alone, it looks like very good faith. At first he hears the gospel, rejoices, and makes new resolutions, but Jesus said that his heart has no root.

When one realizes the gospel that all one's sins have disappeared, joy arises, but that joy must lead on to faith rooted in the Word. What matters is to believe with the heart, on the ground of the Word, why Jesus received baptism, why He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and how His death and resurrection solved all one's sins.

To have no root means that one has not received the Word into the depths of one's heart. Because of the feelings and the atmosphere of the moment he received the Word favorably, but he did not set his own thoughts and the standard of his life on the word of God. Therefore, when temptation strikes and he suffers loss because of the gospel or is blamed by people, he easily turns away.

Jesus said that the person on the rock received the Word with joy and believed for a while, but fell away in time of temptation because he did not take root in the Word. Even the person who has received the remission of sins loses his faith and dies spiritually if he leaves the word of God. Therefore we must not stay in the first joy of having heard the gospel but take deep root in the word of God and keep the faith to the end.

That the seed on the rock withered for lack of moisture speaks of faith dying because it receives no supply of the word of truth. Even after being born again, only when we keep hearing and receiving the word of God within the meetings of the church are the stones of the heart picked out and faith deeply rooted.

The thorny ground of verse 14 is ground where the seed does sprout and grow to some extent. But because the thorns grow together with the seed, the strength of the grain is choked and it cannot bear fruit to maturity. Jesus interpreted the thorns as the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life.

The cares of this life mean worry about what to eat and how to live ruling the heart, pushing out the word of God, and making one rely on the safety of the world and one's own calculations more than on God.

Riches mean wealth and the satisfaction it gives. When wealth becomes the master of the heart, one comes to think of even the gospel and the life of faith as means of obtaining material gain. To gain wealth one puts off the word of God, and one makes possessing more in the world the purpose of life rather than believing and serving the gospel.

Pleasures mean setting the enjoyment the flesh and the world give at the center of life. When pleasure rules the heart, one comes to feel the spiritual word burdensome, and pursuing only what pleases oneself right now rather than what pleases God, one loses interest in the gospel.

Cares, riches, and pleasures look different from one another, but they have in common that they bind a person's heart to this world. The poor person has his heart stolen by cares, and the rich person has his heart stolen by wealth and pleasures. What matters is not how much or little one possesses but what is ruling the heart.

The problem of the thorny ground is not that the Word did not enter at all. It is that the person heard the Word but also cultivated other desires together with it. If we leave the word of God and the cares and greed of the world to compete inside the heart, in the end what we think of more often and treasure more comes to rule the heart. As a result the word of the gospel is

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pressed down by the thorns, and faith dies and bears no fruit.

The good ground hears the Word, keeps it, and bears fruit with patience

The good ground of verse 15 is the person who hears the Word with *"a noble and good heart"*. All people are sinners by nature and are not born as good ground. The noble and good heart is the heart that honestly acknowledges its own evil before the Word and receives as it is the salvation God has spoken.

The person with a good heart does not claim that he is not a sinner. He acknowledges that he has no righteousness with which to escape the judgment of God, and receives the salvation Jesus accomplished. He believes the word as it is—that Jesus took his sins upon Himself with His baptism, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation with the resurrection.

The good ground does not stop at hearing the Word but keeps it. This means not letting go from the heart the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished, and believing the word of God more than one's own feelings even when emotions change and circumstances become hard.

Whenever the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is shaken because of his own insufficiency and weakness, he does not make his own feelings and works the standard of salvation but returns to the righteousness Jesus completed. He holds on to the word that Jesus removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and lives by faith with the help of the Holy Spirit.

The good ground also bears *"fruit with patience"*. Just as fruit is not borne the day after the seed is sown, the fruit of faith

does not all appear at once. After hearing and believing the Word, we must keep the gospel while passing through trials and hardships, people's misunderstandings and the temptations of the world. Patience is believing the salvation the Lord accomplished and the word of His promise, enduring every trial, and keeping the faith until the day the Lord comes.

The fundamental fruit of salvation is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of all sins, and receiving the Holy Spirit. The life that keeps that faith, loves God, serves the gospel, and preaches the gospel to the souls who have not yet received the remission of sins so that they too may be saved leads on to the hundredfold fruit.

Before this word of the four fields, we must examine how our own hearts are receiving the word of God. We must look back at whether, even while thinking we have already believed the gospel, our heart toward the Word has hardened, whether we are seeking only emotional joy, and whether the cares, riches, and pleasures of the world are filling our heart.

The person who hears the Word must also remember the fact that the devil's interference actually exists. After hearing the gospel, we must not pass over its content lightly, but confirm it again through the Scriptures and believe it with the heart. If there is a part we do not understand, we must ask the Lord like the disciples and seek the answer within the Word. What is needed is not a proud mind that pretends to know, but a humble mind that wants to learn the truth.

The person who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit must sow the seed with patience, unshaken by immediate reactions. Since the One who makes life grow is God, the preacher must convey accurately and sufficiently the baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection.

This word in the end asks how we will hear and receive the

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word of God. The heart like the wayside is robbed of the Word; the heart like the rock retreats in the face of temptation; and the heart like the thorns is blocked by the cares and greed of the world. But the heart like the good ground hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believes it with the heart, keeps that word, and endures, and so bears the fruit of salvation and of faith.

The person who hears the Word and does it is the family of God

"'No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.' Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him by some, who said, 'Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.' But He answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.'" (Luke 8:16–21).

Faith that has received the Word is revealed in life like a lamp

This word is closely connected with the parable of the sower that comes before it. Jesus explained that the seed is the word of God, and said that even when people hear the same word, entirely different results appear according to the state of the heart.

The heart like the wayside is robbed of the Word; the heart like the rock receives it with joy for a moment but cannot overcome temptation; and the heart like the thorns fails to bear fruit because of the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. The good ground, on the other hand, hears the Word, keeps it, and bears fruit with patience.

Therefore the word about the lamp in verse 16 is not a new theme separated from the preceding parable. It means that for the person who has truly received the word of God, that word does not stay only inside the heart but appears like light. Just as the seed that fell on good ground grows and bears fruit, the truth received into the heart comes to be revealed through faith, words, and life.

A person lights a lamp in order to light up the darkness. If one lights a lamp and then covers it with a vessel or hides it under a bed, the purpose of lighting the lamp disappears. The lamp must be set on the lampstand so that those who come into the house can see its light. The gospel of God is the same. The purpose for which God has made the truth of salvation clear is not to have it hidden away again but to have those in the darkness of sin and death see its light.

The lamp is the faith that has come into being by receiving the word of God, and that faith is revealed through one's life and the preaching of the gospel. It is not good deeds coming from man that become the light of salvation; the word of the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished is the light that gives life to people. The works of the believer and his preaching of the gospel are the fruit that appears from the faith that has received that word into the heart.

Jesus had already received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The Son of God, who has no sin, received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind,

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and so took the sin of the world upon His own body, and bearing that sin He went on to the Cross and shed His blood and died. And He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame the power of sin and death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which moves sinners from darkness into light.

When Jesus spoke this word, the work of the Cross and the resurrection had not yet been accomplished. But Jesus, having taken the sin of mankind upon Himself through His baptism, was going toward the Cross. Afterward He completed salvation with the blood and death of the Cross and the resurrection, and the disciples received the power of the Holy Spirit and came to preach the light of this gospel to the whole world.

The person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins must not cover this light of salvation with a vessel. Hiding the gospel for fear of people's blame, blurring the truth for fear of losing worldly gain, or shutting one's mouth with the thought that it is enough for oneself alone to be saved—these are the same as putting the lamp under the bed. God causes other souls also to see the light through the person who has believed the gospel.

The person who reveals the gospel does not display his own piety or knowledge but shows the salvation Jesus accomplished. He testifies not "how righteous and admirable I am" but the fact that "Jesus saved a sinner like me with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection."

Verse 17 is the word that the faith hidden in the heart is revealed in the end through one's life and fruit. The mysteries of the kingdom of God that had been hidden in the parable were also revealed openly to the whole world through the death and resurrection of Jesus and the preaching of the gospel by the disciples.

At the same time, the heart with which each person treats the word of God is also revealed in the end. Outwardly all seem to hear the same word, but time makes plain who believes the Word with the heart and keeps it, who received only a momentary impression, and who throws the Word away because of the cares and greed of the world. It is like the way the ground on which the seed fell is confirmed through the fruit.

Faith and fruit differ according to how one hears the Word

Therefore Jesus said in verse 18, *"take heed how you hear"*. It means that what matters is not simply hearing many sermons but with what heart and faith one hears. If one hears the Word and receives only the parts that fit one's own thoughts, or seeks only emotional comfort, or has the proud attitude of already knowing, that word cannot take root in the heart.

With the gospel of the water and the Spirit also, knowing many terms and being able to explain doctrines does not in itself mean one has received it into the heart. One must receive with the heart the fact that the baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection are the righteousness of God that has solved all my sins. Laying down one's own works and righteousness and relying on the salvation Jesus completed is the attitude of hearing the gospel rightly.

In the words *"whoever has, to him more will be given"*, the one who *"has"* does not mean the person who has worldly wealth or position. It refers to the person who has received the word of God into his heart, believes it, and keeps it. To the person who receives the Word humbly, deeper understanding and faith are given, and that word bears richer fruit in his life.

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Conversely, the one who does *"not have"* is the person who has not actually received the word of God into his heart and yet thinks he has faith and understanding. Even with a religious career and Bible knowledge, if he does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart, he does not possess true life. If he repeatedly rejects the Word, even the knowledge he thought he had loses its saving power and remains an empty religious notion.

The person who receives the word of God receives more of the Word and of faith and bears fruit, but the person who does not receive the Word into his heart is robbed even of what he thought he knew. Therefore the life that keeps hearing and receiving the Word within the meetings of the church keeps the faith and makes it grow.

Those who hear the Word and do it are the true family of the Lord

From verse 19 the mother and brothers of Jesus appear. Because a great crowd surrounded Jesus, they could not come near Him. Someone told Jesus that His mother and brothers were waiting outside to meet Him. An ordinary person, on hearing that his family had come, would immediately have made the people step back or prepared a special place for his family.

But Jesus said, *"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it"*. Jesus declared as His true family the spiritual relationship of hearing the word of God and doing it, rather than the bloodline of the flesh.

A person is born into fleshly relationships—parent and child, or brother and sister. But becoming the family of God is not determined by the bloodline of the flesh or the family one comes

from. A child is not automatically saved because his parents believe, nor does being born into a pastor's family automatically make one a citizen of the kingdom of God. Each person must hear the word of God's salvation and believe it with his own heart.

The person who hears the word of God and does it first believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. He believes with the heart the word that Jesus took all my sins upon Himself once and for all with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and saved me by rising again.

The faith that does the Word does not stay in words alone. It appears as the fruit of offering one's heart, body, time, and possessions for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel, and of praying, working, and serving together with the saints.

The family of God serves the gospel united with the church, each according to the gifts and circumstances he has received. Faith that believes with the heart appears in prayer, labor, and service, and works together so that the work of God may be accomplished.

If a person says he is saved and yet turns away from the work of God, it is hard to call him the family of the Lord. Jesus clearly said that those who hear the Word and do it are His family. True faith appears, even in insufficiency, in the act of being united with the church and serving the work of the gospel together.

Those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins become one family even though their origins and stations differ. It is because theirs is a relationship formed not by the bloodline of the flesh but by the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. Believers who have

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received the same Spirit accept one another as brothers and sisters, share hardships together, and shine the light of salvation on those who do not yet know the gospel.

The believer loves his family in the flesh and cares for them responsibly, and yet treasures still more the eternal family who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and do the work of God together, more than the bloodline of the flesh.

Today too, people may think they are in a close relationship with God because they were born into a Christian family or have attended church for a long time. But Jesus looks at how one hears and receives the word of God rather than at fleshly relations or religious career. Without believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, one cannot receive the remission of sins by relying only on the outward relationships of the church.

Before this word we must look back at how we are hearing the word of the gospel. We must examine whether we hear the Word as a tool to confirm our own thoughts, whether we avoid the uncomfortable word and receive only the comforting word, or whether we receive it with the heart because God has spoken it. The heart like good ground humbles its own thoughts before the Word, believes the gospel, and keeps that faith with patience.

People's eyes and one's reputation, the greed and cares of the world, and the fear of rejection cover the lamp of the gospel. When God gives the opportunity, the believer must boldly and clearly convey the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Luke chapter 8 verses 16–21 connect three themes into one: the lamp, the attitude of hearing, and the family of God. The person who has rightly heard the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes it with the heart, treasures it in faith, and reveals it with his life. That person becomes the family of God not by the merit of his own works but by believing the baptism

of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection, and, led by the Holy Spirit, he lives shining the light of salvation on other souls as well.

Believe in Jesus, who is greater than the windstorm

"Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.' And they launched out. But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. But He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, 'Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!'" (Luke 8:22–25).

This event took place after Jesus had taught the parable of the sower and the word about the lamp. Jesus had said that the person who hears the word of God, keeps it, and bears fruit with patience is the good ground. Now, on the boat, the disciples meet a test in which they must believe, in an actual situation, the word they had heard. Hearing the Word and relying on that word in a crisis are connected to each other.

We must believe the word He spoke: "*Let us cross* over to the other side of the lake"

Jesus first said, *"Let us cross over to the other side of the lake"*. The plan to cross by boat did not begin with the disciples;

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it began from the word Jesus gave. The disciples got into the boat following the word of Jesus, but on that way they met the windstorm. What the disciples had to believe was not the windstorm before their eyes but the word of Jesus, who had said He would lead them to the other side.

Jesus fell asleep while the boat was crossing the lake. This shows that Jesus came to this earth as true God and at the same time true man. Because Jesus put on a human body, He experienced weariness and hunger and also slept. But the fact that the body of Jesus was asleep did not mean that the authority of God had disappeared.

When the windstorm came down on the lake, the boat began to fill with water. The crisis of the disciples was not imagination or exaggeration but real danger. But a greater problem than the real danger was that fear ruled their hearts and made them forget the word Jesus had spoken and His authority.

Among the disciples there were men familiar with boats and with the conditions of the lake. But even their experience and skill could not control the windstorm. The knowledge and experience a man has are helpful in ordinary situations, but before the limit that man cannot control, they cannot become his savior. This event shows in whom we must believe in a situation that cannot be solved by human ability alone.

The disciples came to Jesus and cried out, *"Master, Master, we are perishing!"* Their cry revealed the lack of faith that had forgotten the word Jesus had spoken and been overwhelmed by the windstorm before their eyes. Even while they were with Jesus, they looked at the windstorm as greater.

Jesus had said, *"cross over to the other side"*, but the disciples said, *"we are perishing"*. The word of Jesus pointed to their crossing over, but the disciples' judgment stopped at their dying in the middle of the lake. Faith is not pretending that

danger is invisible; it is seeing the word and the authority of Jesus as greater than the danger.

Even the wind and the waves obey the word of Jesus

After Jesus awoke, He rebuked the wind and the waves. The wind and the waves heard the command of Jesus and ceased immediately, and the lake became calm. Jesus did not use any instrument or perform a long ritual. When He commanded with the Word, nature obeyed Him.

This event shows that Jesus is not simply an outstanding teacher or prophet but God, who rules over nature. A prophet asks God for power, but Jesus commanded the wind and the waves with His own authority. Not only demons and disease but even the wind and the water obeyed the word of Jesus. The fact was revealed that the created world is under His authority.

After calming the windstorm, Jesus asked the disciples, *"Where is your faith?"* Jesus did not only ask why they were afraid; He asked where their faith was. This question awakens them to the fact that what matters is not the claim that they have faith, but where they placed that faith in the actual crisis.

For a moment the disciples' faith was held captive by the state of the boat and their own experience rather than by the word of Jesus. Watching the water come into the boat, they forgot the fact that Jesus was with them. Faith is not saying "I believe in the Lord" only in peaceful circumstances; it is relying on the Lord even when what is before one's eyes seems to contradict the word of God.

True faith is not a power by which a person produces the results he wants with his own thoughts, but knowing who Jesus is and believing His word and His authority. The disciples were

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not to be certain of death as they looked at the windstorm, but to believe in Jesus, who rules even the wind and the waves.

The almighty Jesus has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The truth revealed most clearly in this event is the fact that Jesus, who commands the wind and the water and makes them obey, is the Creator God. That authority which rules nature testifies that Jesus is the almighty Savior, who can save us from sin and death.

The authority of Jesus revealed in this event makes clear why we must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus is the Son of God, who makes even the wind and the waves submit. That very Jesus took all my sins upon Himself once and for all with the baptism He received from John. The baptism of Jesus is not a mere religious ceremony but the righteous work of God for saving sinners, because the One who received it is the sinless Son of God.

Bearing the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, Jesus went on to the Cross and shed His blood and died. It was not because He lacked power that the Lord of power, who could calm the wind and the waves with one word, was hung on the Cross. To take upon Himself the judgment that had to fall on sinners, He gave up His own life willingly.

When Jesus died on the Cross, in the eyes of the disciples all hope must have seemed to be over. Just as the disciples expected death when Jesus was asleep in the boat, so in the face of the Cross people could think of death as the final defeat. But Jesus rose again on the third day and overcame even death. The Lord who ruled the wind and the waves is the Savior who also

overcame the power of sin and death.

The faith of the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not based on his own feelings or circumstances. It is based on the word of God, that Jesus took all sins upon Himself with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and completed salvation with the resurrection. Whether circumstances are peaceful or the windstorm rages, the salvation Jesus completed does not change.

The most fundamental windstorm that the believer faces is not the mere hardship of living but the problem of sin, judgment, and death. Man cannot calm this windstorm with his own good deeds and prayers and religious efforts. But Jesus removed all sins with His baptism and the blood of the Cross, and solved with His death and resurrection the judgment that sinners were to receive. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit can stand boldly before God on the ground of this completed salvation.

The person who has received the remission of sins stands firm on the salvation Jesus completed. Even when disease and economic hardship, conflicts in relationships and persecution rage, no windstorm can nullify the remission of sins and the eternal life that Jesus accomplished. The person who believes in the risen Jesus has the hope of the eternal resurrection, which overcomes even death.

After the windstorm became calm, the disciples, on the contrary, feared Jesus and marveled. At first they were afraid because of the windstorm, but now they felt a holy fear before the authority of Jesus, who made even nature obey. They asked one another, *"Who can this be?"* The most important question of this event is not how the windstorm arose but who Jesus is.

If we think of Jesus only as One who gives help when things are hard, the center of our faith ends up staying in our own

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problems. When the problem is solved we give thanks, but when it is not solved we come to doubt Jesus. But when we believe Jesus as the Creator and as God, who saved sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, Jesus Himself, rather than whether the problem is solved, becomes the center of our faith.

When we meet a crisis, it is necessary to cry out to Jesus as the disciples did. We must not stay in fear and complaint, but look to the Lord who has already spoken and completed salvation. Prayer is not a matter of forcing through my own will; it is relying on the almighty Lord and entrusting the heart to His will and His word.

This passage sets the faith of the disciples not on the size of the windstorm but on the word and the authority of Jesus. Jesus is the Creator God, who rules the wind and the waves with the Word, and the Savior who has completely saved us from sin, judgment, and death with the baptism He received from John, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection.

Therefore the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit must believe the word Jesus has spoken and the salvation He has completed more firmly than the situation before his eyes. The Lord who fulfilled the word *"Let us cross over to the other side of the lake"* holds us, the saved, and leads us to the end on the way of serving the gospel. True faith is a life that knows and believes Jesus, who is greater than the windstorm, and holds on to His word in every situation.

Jesus, who sets free the person bound by Satan

"Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. And when He stepped out on the land, there

met Him a certain man from the city who had demons for a long time. And he wore no clothes, nor did he live in a house but in the tombs. When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!' For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned. When those who fed them saw what had happened, they fled and told it in the city and in the country. Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid. They also who had seen it told them by what means he who had been demon-possessed was healed. Then the whole multitude of the surrounding region of the Gadarenes asked Him to depart from them, for they were seized with great fear. And He got into the boat and returned. Now the man from whom the demons had departed begged Him that he might be with Him. But Jesus sent him away, saying, 'Return to your own house, and tell what great things God has done for you.' And he went his way and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him" (Luke 8:26–39).

Jesus had rebuked the windstorm and the waves and calmed

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them. The disciples, seeing even nature obey the word of Jesus, asked, *"Who can this be?"* The event that took place in the country of the Gadarenes presents another answer to that question. Jesus, who rules the wind and the waves, is the Son of God, who commands and casts out even unclean spirits.

Jesus and His disciples passed through the windstorm and arrived at the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee. The way was not blocked by the storm, and they reached the other side of the lake just as Jesus had said. The first person to meet Jesus there was not a socially respected figure but a man who had long been held captive by demons.

The power of sin and evil spirits drives a person to the tombs and to destruction

This man was from the city, but he could no longer live a normal communal life. He wore no clothes, could not dwell in a house, and lived among the tombs. He was cut off from family and neighbors, and even his human dignity had been destroyed. Though alive, he was wandering among the tombs, the space of the dead.

People tried to keep him bound with chains and shackles. But even the chains and shackles could not break the power of the evil spirits that held him captive. Human outward control and force could only suppress a person's behavior; they could not set free the soul held captive by the power of Satan.

The wretched state of the demon-possessed man shows our spiritual condition before we received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The sinner is dragged along by the sin and greed that come out from within him and yet cannot overcome them, and bound by false religion

and the desires of the world, he wounds his own body and soul. Human strength or religious doctrine cannot break the sin of the heart and the bondage of evil spirits.

The Bible testifies that this man was actually held captive by unclean spirits, and that the demons recognized Jesus, spoke, and submitted to His command. This event shows the fact that only Jesus can save the human being placed under the rule of sin and evil spirits.

When the demon-possessed man saw Jesus, he cried out and fell down before Him. Out of his mouth came the words *"Jesus, Son of the Most High God"*. While the disciples were still asking, *"Who can this be?"* the demons knew who Jesus was. But merely knowing the identity of Jesus accurately does not become saving faith.

The demons called Jesus the Son of God, yet they said, *"What have I to do with You?"* They did not love Jesus or rely on Him as their Savior. They only knew His authority and feared the judgment. Therefore, knowing the doctrines about Jesus accurately and calling His name must be distinguished from believing with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Before a single word of Jesus every demon submits

Jesus had already commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. Jesus did not fight the demon on equal terms or perform long incantations and rituals. He commanded as the Son of God, and the demons had to submit to that authority. The center of this event is not a special method of casting out demons or any human ability but the absolute authority of Jesus.

Jesus asked him, *"What is your name?"* The answer *"Legion"* indicates that many demons had entered that man. A power of

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evil too strong for one person to bear had seized him, but even all those demons could exercise no strength before a single word of command from Jesus.

The demons begged Jesus not to command them to go out into the abyss. This means that even the demons knew that a final judgment awaited them and that the authority of that judgment belonged to Jesus. Satan and the evil spirits are not beings with eternal power. They cannot act as they please beyond the permission of God, and they are creatures that will be judged at the appointed time.

On the mountain nearby a herd of many swine was feeding. The demons asked Jesus to let them enter the swine, and when Jesus permitted them, they came out of the man and entered the herd of swine. The demons could not enter even the swine without the permission of Jesus. This fact shows that even the activity of Satan does not stand outside the sovereignty of Jesus.

The herd of swine that the demons entered ran down the steep place and drowned in the lake. This scene shows that the essence of the evil spirits lies not in giving life but in destroying it. The demons drove the man out of his home and community, destroyed his body and mind, and dragged him toward the place of death. Jesus, on the other hand, set the man free and returned him to a whole life.

Those who fed the swine saw what had happened and ran to the city and the country and told it. When the people came out and looked, the man who had been demon-possessed was sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. He had become completely different from what he was before. That he was clothed shows the restoration of the dignity he had lost, and that he was in his right mind means the restoration of his destroyed personality and judgment.

The fact that he was sitting at the feet of Jesus is also

important. To sit at the feet of Jesus is the posture of a disciple who hears and learns His word. This man was not content merely to have escaped from the demons; he stayed close to Jesus, who had saved him. True restoration does not end with release from oppression but goes on to a new relationship with Jesus.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit saves the sinner and establishes him as a witness of the gospel

Verse 36 records that the eyewitnesses told the people how this man had been saved. This event, in which Jesus set the demon-possessed man free and restored him to wholeness, shows the work of the Lord, who completely saves the sinner held captive by the power of sin, Satan, and destruction, with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Just as people could not cure this man even with chains, so the regulations of the law and religious ceremonies alone cannot remove sin from a sinner's heart. By resolving and controlling himself, a person can to some degree change his outward behavior. But he cannot completely solve by his own effort the problem of the sins he has already committed and of the sin that keeps coming out of his heart.

Jesus came to this earth to save sinners from sin and judgment. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took all my sins upon Himself once and for all, and bearing those sins He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the punishment of sin in our place. And He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame the power of sin, death, and Satan.

Satan accuses people on the ground of sin and tries to hold them captive with the fear of death. But the person who believes

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of all his sins becomes righteous in Jesus Christ. Since Jesus has paid the price of sin in full, he does not need to defend his own works before the condemnation of Satan. He can stand against it by faith in the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished.

The person who has received the remission of sins receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The unclean spirit oppresses, isolates, and destroys a person, but the Holy Spirit leads him to believe in Christ and to a right mind and life within the word of God. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the saved person and leads him to resemble Jesus Christ and live in love and truth.

The people of the town, even seeing the restored man, did not welcome Jesus. They were seized with great fear and asked Jesus to leave their region. Even those who saw the miracle with their own eyes did not all come to believe. A sign shows the authority of Jesus, but if the heart rejects the truth, one can see an amazing work before one's eyes and still not receive Jesus.

Today too, when the gospel shakes people's familiar values and way of life, they can ask Jesus to leave. They may say they are interested in the remission of sins and eternal life, and yet not want their own greed and religious pride to be exposed. When believing in Jesus affects their possessions, their relationships, and the direction of their lives, they can find the gospel burdensome.

On the other hand, the man who had been set free from the demons begged to be with Jesus. The reaction of the town's people who asked Jesus to leave and that of the man who wanted to follow Him stand in sharp contrast. The person who has received grace wants to be with the One who saved him. The person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins also delights to hear the word of Jesus and to follow Him.

But Jesus did not grant the man's request; He sent him back home. Following Jesus does not always take the form of leaving one's family and hometown. One person is sent far away, and another receives the mission of returning to the place where he lived and testifying of the gospel there. What matters is not serving the Lord in the way one wants but obeying in the place the Lord has entrusted to him.

Jesus said, *"tell what great things God has done for you"*. Testifying of the gospel is not boasting of how admirably one has changed. It is telling how God saved one's own self, whom no one could cure. The center of a witness is not his own resolution or merit but the great things God has done.

The restored man went back and proclaimed throughout the whole city what great things Jesus had done for him. Jesus told him to tell what God had done, and he proclaimed what Jesus had done. This shows that Luke does not separate the ministry of Jesus from the work of God. Jesus is the Son of God, who performs the salvation of God.

Satan holds on to a person's sin and greed, draws his soul away from God, and drives it toward destruction. Therefore the person who has received the remission of sins must dwell in the word of God and in the church, give thanks to the Lord who saved him from every sin and from the power of evil spirits, and live serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus did not turn away from the one man who wandered among the tombs. People could find no way except to keep him bound, but Jesus broke his bonds and restored his dignity, his relationships, and his mission. The gospel does not end with forgiving the sinner; it establishes him as a child of God and a witness of the gospel.

Luke chapter 8 verses 26–39 contrast the power of evil that destroys with the authority of Jesus that restores. The demons

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stripped a man naked and drove him to the tombs and the wilderness, but Jesus clothed him, made his mind whole, and had him sit at His feet. And He sent the man who had been an outcast back to his family and neighbors and made him a witness of the gospel.

The most important question for us is not how strong demons are but who Jesus is. Jesus is the Son of God, who rules the wind and the waves, demons, sin, and death. He has completely saved us with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit is not seized by fear but comes to testify boldly, in the place of his life, of the great things Jesus has done.

Believe with the heart the salvation Jesus has accomplished

"So it was, when Jesus returned, that the multitude welcomed Him, for they were all waiting for Him. And behold, there came a man named Jairus, and he was a ruler of the synagogue. And he fell down at Jesus' feet and begged Him to come to his house, for he had an only daughter about twelve years of age, and she was dying. But as He went, the multitudes thronged Him. Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, 'Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' But Jesus said, 'Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.' Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she

came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, 'Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.'" (Luke 8:40–48).

After setting free the demon-possessed man in the country of the Gadarenes, Jesus returned again to Galilee. The Gadarenes had feared and asked Jesus to leave, but the multitude in Galilee had waited for Him and welcomed Him. Yet not all of the multitude who waited for and welcomed Jesus had the same faith. This event shows the fact that surrounding Jesus and relying on Him by faith are two different things.

Out of the multitude, Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, came to Jesus. He managed the synagogue and held a respected position in the religious community, but in the situation where his only daughter, twelve years old, was dying, his position and authority were no solution at all. He fell down at the feet of Jesus and earnestly begged Him to come to his house.

In the preceding event, the man who had been captive to demons sat at the feet of Jesus after he was restored. This time Jairus, a ruler of the synagogue, fell down at the feet of Jesus. Their social positions and circumstances differed, but both were people who needed the authority and grace of Jesus. Before Jesus, the high and the low, the person whose name is known and the person whose name is not even recorded, are all beings in need of salvation.

Jesus heard the plea of Jairus and set out toward his house. Many people surrounded Jesus and pressed against Him. For Jairus time was desperately short. In the situation where it seemed his daughter would die if Jesus were delayed even a little, an unexpected event occurred.

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The flow of blood that had not stopped for twelve years ceased at once by the power of Jesus

In the crowd there was a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years. The daughter of Jairus was twelve years old, and this woman had suffered from her disease for the twelve years of that child's lifetime. On one side a life that had grown for twelve years was dying, and on the other side a life was being drained away in twelve years of bleeding. Both were placed in desperate states from which human strength could not deliver them.

A flow of blood is a disease in which blood keeps flowing. In the pain of bleeding that would not stop, this woman was worn out in both body and mind. The Gospel of Mark records that she had suffered many things from many physicians and had spent all that she had, yet was no better but rather grew worse. In the place where every human method had come to an end, this woman heard the report of Jesus.

The woman came from behind Jesus and touched the border of His garment. She believed that Jesus could heal her disease. The Gospel of Mark testifies that the woman believed in her heart, *"If only I may touch His clothes, I shall be made well"*. Her touch was the expression of faith that relied on Jesus as her only Savior.

When the woman touched the border of His garment, her flow of blood stopped immediately. The disease that no method had solved for twelve years was ended in a moment by the power of Jesus. It was not that the symptoms of the disease were temporarily relieved; the source of the flowing blood was healed. The fact was revealed that the saving power of Jesus is not limited by human limits or by the length of time.

The crowd that surrounded Jesus and the woman who touched Him by faith were different

Many people were surrounding Jesus and pressing on Him. Yet Jesus asked, *"Who touched Me?"* To the eyes of Peter this question sounded strange, because many people were in physical contact with Jesus. But Jesus distinguished between the accidental contact of the crowd and the touch that came from the woman's faith.

This scene shows the difference between a religious life that seems close to Jesus and the faith that believes in Jesus with the heart. Many people can attend church, sing hymns, and read the Bible. But if a person carries on only outward religious activity without knowing what the gospel of the water and the Spirit is, he can remain in the same state as the crowd that surrounded and pressed on Jesus.

Faith, on the other hand, is knowing who Jesus is and what He has accomplished, and relying on Him with the heart. The woman with the flow of blood believed that the power to heal her was in Jesus. Today the sinner must believe with the heart the fact that Jesus has solved all his sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Jesus knew that power had gone out from Him. The power that healed the woman's disease came not from the garment but from Jesus. Many people touched His body, but the saving power came upon the woman who believed and relied on who Jesus is.

That Jesus asked, *"Who touched Me?"* was in order to have the hidden woman come out before the people and make known what had happened to her. The woman could have been healed secretly and disappeared, but Jesus met her personally and publicly confirmed the fact of her restoration.

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The woman, seeing that she could not hide, came trembling and fell down before Jesus. She told before all the people why she had touched the border of His garment and how she had been healed immediately. This confession was not a price paid to receive healing. She had already been healed, and she testified to the grace that had been bestowed on her.

This order is important in the gospel as well. It is not that a person is saved by confessing his sins at length or giving an impressive testimony. Jesus first completed salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and a person receives that completed salvation by faith. After believing the gospel, he comes to confess with thanksgiving and faith what God has done for him.

Jesus called the woman *"Daughter"*. To the crowd she was a sick woman whose name was not even known, but Jesus called her by an intimate name. He did not condemn or keep at a distance the person who had long suffered from her disease, but received her into grace.

Jesus said, *"your faith has made you well"*. The power that healed the woman was in Jesus, and the woman received that power by faith. When she believed that only Jesus could heal her, not relying on her own strength and methods, the power of the Lord came upon her.

When we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the source of sin dries up once and for all

The event in which the woman with the flow of blood was healed shows the work of salvation in which the sinner believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of all his sins. Just as the woman's blood flowed again even

when she wiped it away, the person before being born again could not completely remove the sin of his heart even though he sinned every day and offered prayers of repentance. Human effort is only like wiping away for a moment the blood that has flowed out; it cannot dry up the source.

For twelve years the woman received no complete cure from anyone. In the same way, human good deeds and prayers of repentance, fasting and devotion, and religious zeal cannot remove the source of sin. The person who tries to wash away his own sins with human righteousness cannot but keep wiping away sin and yet live on as a sinner again. The problem of sin is solved only by the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished.

Jesus had already received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. With that baptism He took all the sins of all people upon His own body once and for all. And bearing those sins, He went to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in our place. He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

Just as the source of the flow of blood dried up once and for all by the power of Jesus, when we believe with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection, all sins disappear once and for all. It is not that a person removes his sins little by little over long years; by believing the salvation Jesus has already accomplished, he receives the remission of all his sins once and for all.

The fact that Jesus took the sins of all people upon Himself and was judged on the Cross has effect for the person who believes. It is not that faith completes the work of Jesus or supplements what is lacking in it. Salvation has already been fully accomplished by Jesus. Faith is receiving the salvation God

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has accomplished as one's own salvation.

Many people hear about the gospel and say they know Jesus. But just as the woman passed through the crowd and touched Jesus by faith, each person must receive as his own the salvation Jesus accomplished. The faith of one's parents, the tradition of the church, and the faith of a pastor cannot save me in my place. We must not stop at the general knowledge that "Jesus removed the sin of the world," but believe that all my sins too passed on to Him and that their judgment is finished.

In the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins the Holy Spirit dwells and leads him to live according to the will of God. Just as the woman whose source of bleeding had dried up did not come to Jesus in order to return to her diseased state, the born-again person does not live loving sin but gives thanks for the grace of the Lord who saved him and comes to serve the righteousness of God and the gospel.

Jesus said to the woman, *"Go in peace"*. Because Jesus acknowledged her faith and publicly declared her restoration, she no longer needed to hide in fear. She could return to a new life relying on the word of the Lord.

To the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a peace more fundamental than this is given. If sin remains, one cannot but fear the judgment; but when we believe that Jesus removed all sins with His baptism and the Cross, we enjoy the peace of reconciliation with God. This peace is not a feeling produced when everything in the world goes well; it comes from the word of God that the judgment of sin is finished.

This word gives hope also to the person who lives hidden because of long suffering. Even in illness and wounds, shame and fear that no one else recognizes, Jesus does not turn away from the person who comes to Him by faith. He knows even the touch of one person hidden in the crowd, and He meets that

person personally.

Jesus healed the woman who had suffered from her long disease, called her *"Daughter"*, confirmed her faith, and sent her away in peace. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit also receives the remission of all his sins through the baptism of Jesus, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection, and becomes a child of God. And in the assurance the Holy Spirit gives, he comes to live in peace, giving thanks for the salvation God has accomplished.

Jesus, who rules over death, gives the hope of the resurrection

"While He was still speaking, someone came from the ruler of the synagogue's house, saying to him, 'Your daughter is dead. Do not trouble the Teacher.' But when Jesus heard it, He answered him, saying, 'Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well.' When He came into the house, He permitted no one to go in except Peter, James, and John, and the father and mother of the girl. Now all wept and mourned for her; but He said, 'Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping.' And they ridiculed Him, knowing that she was dead. But He put them all outside, took her by the hand and called, saying, 'Little girl, arise.' Then her spirit returned, and she arose immediately. And He commanded that she be given something to eat. And her parents were astonished, but He charged them to tell no one what had happened" (Luke 8:49–56).

Jesus heard the plea of Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, and was going to his house to heal his dying daughter. But on the way He met the woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years. Jesus not only healed that woman but called

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her out before the people and said, *"Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace"*.

For the woman with the flow of blood, the stopping of Jesus was the time of salvation, but to Jairus it must have seemed that the time in which his daughter could be saved was being delayed. Because Jairus knew that his daughter was dying, every moment must have felt precious.

While Jesus was still speaking to the woman with the flow of blood, someone came from the house of Jairus and said, *"Your daughter is dead"*. What Jairus had feared most had become reality. It was not merely that the illness was grave; it was the news that life had already departed.

That person said, *"Do not trouble the Teacher"*. He thought that while the daughter was alive Jesus might perhaps heal her disease, but that after she had already died there was nothing even Jesus could do. He saw Jesus as an able teacher, but he did not know Him as the Lord of life, who rules even over death.

Judged by human experience, his words are reasonable. People think that a living person can be treated, but that for a dead person nothing more can be done. Human knowledge and ability stop in the face of death. But the authority of Jesus does not end at the boundary of possibility that people have drawn.

"Do not be afraid; only believe"

When Jesus heard it, He immediately said to Jairus, *"Do not be afraid; only believe"*. Jesus did not leave Jairus to sink into despair. He gave him the word he had to hold on to ahead of the news of death. What was visible was death, but the word of Jesus carried an authority greater than that death.

The words *"only believe"* tell Jairus to believe in Jesus, who

can bring even his dead daughter back to life. It was not that Jairus had to work a miracle by his own strength; he had to receive the word of Jesus, who rules life and death. Since Jesus had said, *"and she will be made well"*, Jairus had to believe that promise.

Faith is not self-suggestion that denies the reality of death. The child had really died. The people knew that the child had died, and verse 55 testifies that *"her spirit returned"* and she arose. Faith is not insisting that the child had not died; it is relying on the authority of Jesus, who can raise even a dead child.

After Jesus arrived at the house, He took with Him only Peter, John, and James, and the father and mother of the child. He did not make a public event to display His power to many people. He performed the work of bringing life back before the necessary witnesses.

Inside the house, people were weeping and mourning for the child. The sorrow of the parents who had lost their young only daughter and of those close to them was very great. But Jesus said to them, *"Do not weep; she is not dead, but sleeping"*.

Jesus said that the child was sleeping because He would soon raise her from death. To people, death was an irreversible end, but to Jesus, the Lord of life, it was something He could undo, raising the child as one wakes her from sleep.

The people heard the word of Jesus and ridiculed Him. Their judgment about the fact that the child had died was not wrong. What they did not know was the identity and the power of Jesus. Because they believed that death was the final authority, they regarded the word of Jesus that He would raise the dead as an impossible story.

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When He said, "*Little girl, arise*", her spirit returned

Jesus took the child by the hand. It was not that He came under the rule of death; Jesus, who is life, gave life to the dead child. The power of death could not overcome the life of Jesus.

Jesus said, *"Little girl, arise"*. There was no incantation or long ritual, nor did He ask any other power for help. The Gospel of Mark records that Jesus said, *"Talitha, cumi"*, which means, *"Little girl, I say to you, arise"*.

At a single word of Jesus the child's spirit returned, and the child rose at once. This word clearly shows that the child had actually died and come back to life by the life-giving authority of Jesus. Even death obeyed Jesus, who had commanded the wind and the sea, demons and disease.

The child did not recover gradually; she rose at once. The Gospel of Mark records that the girl arose and walked. The child who had been dead recovered life and could move her own body. The word of Jesus had the power actually to raise the dead.

Jesus commanded that the child be given something to eat. This shows that the child had come back to life in a real body. Even after doing the great work of raising the dead, Jesus attentively cared for the child's hunger and everyday needs.

The child's parents were greatly astonished. It was natural to be astonished, since the only daughter who had died rose before their eyes and came to eat food. But the center of this event is not the astonishment of the parents or the size of Jairus's faith. The center is the authority of Jesus, who commanded life to the dead.

It was not the faith of Jairus that produced the power to bring the child back to life. The power was in Jesus alone. Jairus believed not in his own works or merit but in Jesus, who rules even over death, and in His word. Salvation likewise is not

obtained by human merit; it is received by believing what Jesus has accomplished.

Jesus charged the parents to tell no one what had happened. Jesus did not raise the child in order to gain people's popularity or enthusiasm for miracles. He bestowed the grace of life on the child and the family who could do nothing in the face of death.

Jesus has brought us, who were dead in the disease of sin, to life forever

Jairus's daughter shows the state of all people, who could not but die forever from the disease of sin. Even while alive in the body, a person is placed under sin and judgment before God. However much one piles up prayers of repentance and good deeds, almsgiving and religious merit, one cannot remove the sin of the heart or bring oneself to life out of spiritual death.

Just as the dead child could not rise by herself, the sinner cannot produce spiritual life with his own works. Just as Jesus went to Jairus's daughter and gave her life, God first came to the sinner and saved him from sin and death. Salvation began not from human ability but from the compassion and grace of God.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took all the sins of all people upon His own body once and for all. He received over to Himself all the sins of a whole lifetime, which a person commits from birth to death. And bearing those sins, He went to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving all the judgment of sin in our place.

Jesus was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame sin and death and completed our salvation. The person who believes with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from

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John, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection, receives the remission of all the sins of his whole life once and for all and is moved from spiritual death into life.

Jairus's daughter did not obtain life by doing good deeds or building up merit before Jesus. The child was dead and could do nothing, but Jesus went to her Himself and brought her to life. In the same way, it is not that the sinner made the way of salvation by his own effort; Jesus Himself came to this earth and completed salvation.

The event in which Jairus's daughter rose from the dead shows that Jesus is the Lord of life, who rules over sin and death. Jesus Himself took our sins upon Himself, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so became the ground of eternal salvation. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit obtains, in the risen Jesus, eternal life and the hope of the final resurrection.

The salvation Jesus accomplished is not an incomplete grace dealt out little by little every day. Jesus took all our sins—past, present, and future—upon Himself once and for all, and gave us completely the grace of eternal salvation that we need for our whole life. Even when the believer sees his own weakness, he can hold on to the fact that the salvation Jesus accomplished does not change.

That the person who has received the remission of sins follows the Lord is not a condition for obtaining what he wants in the future. Because Jesus has already saved me from every sin and from death with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, he follows the Lord out of thankfulness for that grace. The praise, service, and devotion of the saved person are the fruit that comes out of the eternal grace already received.

Even when hardships and discouraging things happen to us,

the salvation Jesus accomplished does not change. If we look only at our own insufficiency we are discouraged, but when we look at Jesus, who took upon Himself all the sins of our whole life and gave us eternal life, we give thanks again and gain strength to live by faith.

Luke chapter 8 verses 49–56 show the fact that even death, which is the end for man, is not the end for Jesus. When Jesus said, *"Little girl, arise"*, the spirit of the child who had died returned and she rose at once. This Lord of life saved sinners with His baptism, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the fact that Jesus took all my sins upon Himself once and for all with the baptism He received from John, paid the full price of those sins on the Cross, and rose again and brought me to life forever. By that faith he receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and he comes to give thanks to the Lord, who bestowed on him the grace of eternal salvation, and to love and follow Him. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 8

[Question] 1. What central events are recorded in Luke chapter 8, and what do these events show concerning Jesus and faith?

Luke chapter 8 records the events in which Jesus proclaimed the kingdom of God and preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and revealed who He is through the Word and through miracles. The parable of the sower, the calming of the windstorm, the saving of the demon-possessed man in the country of the Gadarenes, the healing of the woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years, and the raising of the dead daughter of Jairus form the center. These events show that Jesus is the Son of God, who teaches the Word with authority and rules over nature, demons, disease, and death, and that man must respond to that word by hearing and believing it.

Through the parable of the sower Jesus explained the different hearts of those who hear the word of God. The seed that fell by the wayside, on the rock, and among thorns bore no fruit, but the seed that fell on the good ground yielded a crop a hundredfold. *"The ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15)* The words about the lamp that follow and the words about the true family of Jesus reveal the same meaning. The Word must not end with being heard; it must be manifested in a life that believes it with the heart, keeps it, and puts it into practice.

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Finally, the woman with the flow of blood, who had not been healed by anyone for twelve years, was healed by touching the border of the garment of Jesus in faith, and Jesus said that her faith had saved her. Even when the news came that the daughter of Jairus had died, Jesus said, *"Do not be afraid; only believe, and she will be made well" (Luke 8:50)*, and raised the dead child. Even disease and death, before which man sees no way, could not block the authority of Jesus.

The center that binds all these events together is Jesus and faith. Jesus not only proclaims the Word; He is the Savior, who rules nature, demons, disease, and death with the Word. Furthermore, Jesus received baptism from John and took our sins upon Himself once and for all, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved those who believe from sin and death. Therefore we must not be people who hear the Word for a moment and pass on, but people who believe it with the heart, keep it, bear fruit with patience, and, thankful for the grace received, serve the Lord and tell that grace to others.

[Question] 2. In Luke 8:2–3, who were the women who accompanied and served in the preaching journey of Jesus?

The women who accompanied the preaching journey of Jesus were Mary Magdalene, out of whom seven demons had gone, Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, Susanna, and many other women whose names are not recorded. They were not people who merely followed Jesus and the twelve disciples around; they served them with their possessions and helped the work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

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"And certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance" (Luke 8:2–3).

The text records that the women who had been set free from evil spirits or healed of diseases served Jesus and His disciples with their possessions. The fact that seven demons had gone out of Mary Magdalene is stated, but from what diseases or hardships Joanna and Susanna were each restored is not recorded. Their service was not a price paid to obtain grace but the fruit of thanksgiving for the grace they had already received. They used the possessions God had given them to help the travels and the daily life of Jesus and His disciples, and they actually took part in the work of the gospel of the kingdom of God being preached in many cities and villages.

The reason these women followed and served Jesus is that they had first received love and grace from Him. Jesus had looked upon the women who were oppressed by evil spirits or sick and had restored them, and they, having received that grace, followed Him. Furthermore, Jesus received baptism from John and took our sins upon Himself, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved those who believe from sin and death. The person who knows the love received from the Lord serves Him not by compulsion or by calculation of profit and loss, but follows Him with thanksgiving and love.

[Question] 3. In Luke 8:4–8, what parable did Jesus tell the great multitude?

Jesus told the great multitude the parable of the sower. One man sowed seed, but the results differed according to where the seed fell. The seed that fell by the wayside was trampled and the birds devoured it; the seed that fell on the rock sprang up but withered because it lacked moisture. The seed that fell among thorns was choked as the thorns grew up with it, and the seed that fell on the good ground sprang up and yielded a crop a hundredfold.

"And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.' When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'" (Luke 8:4–8).

In this parable the seed is the word of God, and the four kinds of ground on which the seed fell refer to the different hearts of those who hear the Word. These are not four separate parables but four kinds of ground within the one parable of the sower. The same seed was sown, but the same result did not appear in every ground. The problem was not that the seed lacked the power of life, but that the hearts and responses with which that word was heard and received differed.

Jesus received baptism from John and took our sins upon Himself, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved those who believe from sin and

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death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is also conveyed to a person's heart like the seed of life. We must not treat this word as one piece of religious knowledge among many, or rejoice over it for a moment and throw it away. We must acknowledge what we are before the Word, believe with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished, and become the good ground that keeps that faith and bears fruit with patience.

[Question] 4. In Luke 8:5 and 12, what does the passage explain happened to the seed that fell by the wayside?

The seed that fell by the wayside was trampled by people, and the birds of the air came and devoured it. Jesus explained this scene as a parable of the person who has heard the word of God but has not received it into his heart. Just as the birds in the parable devoured the seed, the devil took the Word away from their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved.

"'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it" (Luke 8:5).

"Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved" (Luke 8:12).

Jesus did not say that the person by the wayside is a person who did not hear the Word. He clearly heard the Word. But because he did not believe the Word with his heart and treasure it, the devil took that word away. Therefore the mere fact of having heard the words of the Bible or knowing the content of the gospel does not mean that faith has been formed. One must receive the Word as the word of God concerning one's own sin

and salvation, and believe it with the heart.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word of God that Jesus received baptism from John and took our sins upon Himself, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us from sin and death. If we regard this word as merely one religious teaching among many, or only know it with the head and pass on, it cannot take root in the heart. We must acknowledge that we need the remission of sins and salvation, and believe with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Therefore, when we hear the Word, we must not let it flow past with indifference or receive only the parts that agree with our own thoughts. We must humble our hearts before the word of God, treasure the word we have heard in our hearts, and respond with faith. We must become not a hard heart like the wayside but a heart like the good ground, which receives the Word, keeps it, and bears fruit.

[Question] 5. In Luke 8:7 and 14, why did the seed that fell among thorns fail to bring fruit to maturity?

The reason the seed that fell among thorns failed to bring fruit to maturity is that the thorns that grew up with it choked its strength. Jesus explained the thorns as the cares, riches, and pleasures of this life. Even though the Word was heard, the heart was taken captive by the cares of the world, by wealth, and by the pleasures of the flesh as life went on, and so the Word failed to bear fruit fully.

"And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it" (Luke 8:7).

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"Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity" (Luke 8:14).

The cares of this life are the heart that worries excessively about what to eat and drink and how to live in this world, and so keeps one from believing in God. Riches refer to the case in which wealth, and the heart that seeks to gain and rely on it, come before the word of God. Pleasures are the heart that chases the enjoyments of the flesh and puts off the will and the word of God. When these things occupy the heart, the strength to live according to the word grows weaker and weaker even while one hears it.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word that Jesus received baptism from John and took our sins upon Himself, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us from sin and death. Even if we have heard this gospel, if the worry about how to live in the world, the greed for wealth, and the pleasures of the flesh rule the heart, the grace received from the Lord cannot appear as fruit in our lives. We must believe with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished, and overcome our cares with the faith that God cares also for our lives.

Therefore we must not leave the cares, riches, and pleasures of the world to grow in our hearts. We must keep hearing the word of God, receive it into the heart, and keep that word by faith. When we trust God more than we worry about what to eat and drink, and put the will of the Lord before wealth and pleasure, the Word is not pressed down but bears fruit with patience.

[Question] 6. In Luke 8:8 and 15, how abundant a crop does the passage say the seed that fell on the good ground yielded?

Jesus said that the seed that fell on the good ground sprang up and yielded a crop a hundredfold.

"But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.' When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!'" (Luke 8:8).

Jesus also explained directly what heart the good ground refers to.

"But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15).

Therefore the good ground does not mean simply a person of gentle character or of favorable natural conditions. It refers to the heart that does not pick over the word of God according to its own thoughts, but acknowledges what it is before the Word and receives it by faith. And the person who treasures the word he has heard in his heart, does not throw it away even when temptations and hardships strike, and keeps it with patience is like the good ground.

The hundredfold crop means that the power of life in the word of God appears as abundant fruit in a good heart. It does not end with hearing the Word; it is believing that word and receiving salvation, keeping the faith, and bearing fruit as far as serving the gospel with one's life. Together with the fact that only the good ground bore fruit, it shows that bearing fruit requires the patience that believes the word of God and endures to the end.

At the center of the word we must receive stands the salvation Jesus accomplished. Jesus received baptism from John

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and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. When we receive this gospel of the water and the Spirit as the word of God that is more right than our own thoughts, and believe it with the heart, we receive the remission of sins. And when, after being saved, we keep hearing and keeping the word of God with patience, faith grows and leads on to the abundant fruit of serving the gospel.

[Question] 7. In Luke 8:22, after telling the parables of the sower and of the lamp, where did Jesus say He and His disciples should go?

Jesus got into a boat with His disciples and said that they should cross over to the other side of the lake.

"Now it happened, on a certain day, that He got into a boat with His disciples. And He said to them, 'Let us cross over to the other side of the lake.' And they launched out" (Luke 8:22).

The lake spoken of here is the Lake of Galilee. Verse 22 records the place Jesus told His disciples to go to as *"the other side of the lake"*, and verse 26 identifies the place where the boat arrived concretely as *"the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee"*.

"Then they sailed to the country of the Gadarenes, which is opposite Galilee" (Luke 8:26).

While the boat was crossing the lake, a windstorm came down and the boat was filling with water. The disciples were afraid that they were perishing, but Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves and calmed them. And He asked the disciples, *"Where is your faith?"* This event shows that hardship can arise even on the way of following the word of Jesus to cross to the other side,

but that Jesus was with His disciples and is the One who rules even the wind and the water.

We too, when we meet hardship while following the word of Jesus, must not look only at the circumstances before our eyes and be afraid. Jesus, who was in the same boat with His disciples, calmed the wind and the waves and led them to the other side of the lake. We must have not the faith that demands that everything be done according to our own will, but the faith that relies on the word Jesus has spoken and goes with Him.

[Question] 8. In Luke 8:23–25, why did the disciples wake Jesus when the boat met the windstorm and was in jeopardy?

The disciples woke Jesus because the windstorm came down on the lake and the boat was filling with water, and they thought they were in danger of dying.

"But as they sailed He fell asleep. And a windstorm came down on the lake, and they were filling with water, and were in jeopardy. And they came to Him and awoke Him, saying, 'Master, Master, we are perishing!' Then He arose and rebuked the wind and the raging of the water. And they ceased, and there was a calm. But He said to them, 'Where is your faith?' And they were afraid, and marveled, saying to one another, 'Who can this be? For He commands even the winds and water, and they obey Him!'" (Luke 8:23–25).

The act of asking Jesus for help was not itself wrong. The problem lay in the fact that the urgent situation seized their hearts, so that they failed to hold by faith to the fact that Jesus was in the same boat with them and the fact that He had first said they should cross to the other side. So, after calming the wind

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and the waves, Jesus asked, *"Where is your faith?" (Luke 8:25).*

When Jesus rebuked the wind and the waves, the windstorm ceased and the lake became calm. Seeing this, the disciples were afraid and marveled at who Jesus could be, that He commands even the winds and water and they obey Him. This event shows that Jesus is not merely a teacher who teaches the Word but the One who has the authority to rule even nature. The disciples were not only delivered from danger; they came to think again about who this One in the boat with them is.

We too, when we meet what is too hard for us, may be afraid and ask the Lord for help. But we must not stare only at the problem before our eyes until we forget even the word Jesus has spoken. We should tell the Lord our situation, yet believe the fact that He is with us and knows all our circumstances. We must engrave on our hearts the question about faith He asked the disciples, and trust the word of Jesus more than our fear.

[Question] 9. In Luke 8:28–32, when Jesus commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man, what did the demon-possessed man cry out, and what name did the demon answer?

From the mouth of the demon-possessed man came a cry calling Jesus the Son of the Most High God, asking what he had to do with Him, and begging Him not to torment him. When Jesus asked his name, the demon answered, *"Legion"*.

"When he saw Jesus, he cried out, fell down before Him, and with a loud voice said, 'What have I to do with You, Jesus, Son of the Most High God? I beg You, do not torment me!' For He had commanded the unclean spirit to come out of the man. For it had often seized him, and he was kept under guard, bound with

chains and shackles; and he broke the bonds and was driven by the demon into the wilderness. Jesus asked him, saying, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' because many demons had entered him. And they begged Him that He would not command them to go out into the abyss. Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them" (Luke 8:28–32).

But the fact that the demons spoke knowing the identity and the authority of Jesus cannot be called saving faith. Their words were not a confession of faith that would trust and follow Jesus, but a plea put forward in fear of His authority, that He would not torment them. Knowing about Jesus and believing in and following Him are not the same.

Jesus cast the demons out of the man whom even chains and shackles could not restrain. The many demons that had seized him and driven him into the wilderness could not defy the command of Jesus. Afterward the people saw the man out of whom the demons had gone sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. This shows that in the word of Jesus there is the authority to rule the evil spirits and to restore the person who had been suffering.

[Question] 10. In Luke 8:30, when Jesus asked his name, what did the demon inside the demon-possessed man answer?

When Jesus asked his name, the demon answered, *"Legion"*. This was because many demons had entered that man.

"Jesus asked him, saying, 'What is your name?' And he said, 'Legion,' because many demons had entered him" (Luke 8:30).

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But however many demons had entered, they could not defy the command of Jesus. The demons begged Him not to command them to go out into the abyss, and even entering the herd of swine required the permission of Jesus. More important than the fact that the demons were many is the fact that all those demons were under the authority of Jesus.

After the demons had gone out, the man's appearance was clearly different from before.

"Then they went out to see what had happened, and came to Jesus, and found the man from whom the demons had departed, sitting at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. And they were afraid" (Luke 8:35).

The man who had once been held captive by many demons came to sit at the feet of Jesus, clothed and in his right mind. The text does not go on calling him by the name *"Legion"*. He appears as one person, restored, set free from the power of the demons by the word of Jesus.

Therefore we must not define a person only by the suffering he undergoes or the bondage he is in. Even the many demons that had seized that man could not defy the command of Jesus. We must believe in the authority of Jesus, who rules the powers of evil and delivers the suffering person and makes him whole.

[Question] 11. In Luke 8:32–33, where did the demons that came out of the demon-possessed man enter, and what happened after that?

The demons that came out of the man received the permission of Jesus and entered the herd of many swine feeding on the mountain. Then the herd ran down the steep place into the lake and all drowned.

"Now a herd of many swine was feeding there on the mountain. So they begged Him that He would permit them to enter them. And He permitted them. Then the demons went out of the man and entered the swine, and the herd ran violently down the steep place into the lake and drowned" (Luke 8:32–33).

The demons did not come out of the man and enter the swine at their own will. They first begged Jesus to permit them to enter the herd of swine, and only after Jesus permitted them did they come out of the man and enter the swine. Taken together with the fact that they had earlier begged Him not to send them into the abyss, we can see that the demons were under the command and the permission of Jesus.

What deserves more attention in this event is the fact that one man who had long been held captive by many demons was set free from that power by the word of Jesus. People could not hold him even with chains and shackles, but the many demons could not defy the command of Jesus. The demons had to come out of the man, and even entering the herd of swine was something they had to ask the permission of Jesus for.

When we read this event, we too must look at the authority of Jesus rather than give excessive attention to demons or mysterious phenomena. However many demons were holding that man captive, they could not defy the word of Jesus. We must believe in Jesus, who delivered the suffering man from the power of the demons and made him whole, and rely on His word.

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[Question] 12. In Luke 8:43–48, who was the person who touched the border of Jesus' garment on the way to the house of Jairus and was healed immediately?

The person who touched the border of the garment of Jesus was a woman who had suffered from a flow of blood for twelve years and could not be healed by anyone.

"Now a woman, having a flow of blood for twelve years, who had spent all her livelihood on physicians and could not be healed by any, came from behind and touched the border of His garment. And immediately her flow of blood stopped. And Jesus said, 'Who touched Me?' When all denied it, Peter and those with him said, 'Master, the multitudes throng and press You, and You say, 'Who touched Me?'' But Jesus said, 'Somebody touched Me, for I perceived power going out from Me.' Now when the woman saw that she was not hidden, she came trembling; and falling down before Him, she declared to Him in the presence of all the people the reason she had touched Him and how she was healed immediately. And He said to her, 'Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace.'" (Luke 8:43–48).

At that time many people were surrounding Jesus and pressing on Him. Peter too thought it strange that Jesus asked who had touched Him when the multitudes were thronging and pressing Him. But Jesus distinguished between the bodies that brushed against Him in the crowd and the act of the woman who touched Him in faith. The power of Jesus reached the woman, and the flow of blood that had not stopped for twelve years stopped immediately.

The woman, knowing that she could no longer hide, came trembling and fell down before Jesus. And she made known

before all the people for what reason she had touched the border of His garment and how she had been healed immediately. Jesus did not rebuke the woman but said, *"Daughter, be of good cheer; your faith has made you well. Go in peace" (Luke 8:48)*. What healed the woman was not the fabric itself but the power of Jesus, and the woman touched it believing that Jesus could heal her.

Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so accomplished our salvation. Just as Jesus made the woman's flow of blood stop immediately, the person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the solution of the problem of sin at its root, once and for all. We receive the remission of sins not because we have piled up merit with good deeds, but because we believe with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The one who has patience obtains the fruit

< Luke 8:1-16 >

"Now it came to pass, afterward, that He went through every city and village, preaching and bringing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God. And the twelve were with Him, and certain women who had been healed of evil spirits and infirmities—Mary called Magdalene, out of whom had come seven demons, and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance. And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.' When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!' Then His disciples asked Him, saying, 'What does this parable mean?' And He said, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' 'Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the

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word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience. 'No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light."

In this Bible passage the work of the Lord appears. The Lord came to this earth and cast out demons from those who were demon-possessed, healed the diseases of the sick, and saved those who were suffering because of sin from their sins. And those who served the Lord on this earth were precisely the people who had been healed in this way.

Concerning these women the Scripture says, *"and Joanna the wife of Chuza, Herod's steward, and Susanna, and many others who provided for Him from their substance" (Luke 8:3)*. Those who served the Lord were, in the end, those who had been saved by the Lord from the devil, from disease, and from sin. This means that those who had been saved by the Lord served the Lord.

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The good ground is the one who bears fruit with patience

The Lord told the parable of the sower. When the sower went out and sowed, some seed fell by the wayside, some fell on the rock, some fell among thorns, and some fell on the good ground. Among these four fields, who is the one who bears fruit? The Lord said in verse 15, *"The ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience."* The good ground refers to the one who receives the word of God with a good heart, believes that word and keeps that faith, and endures with patience and forbearance and so bears fruit.

That is so. Even if one has received the word of God and received the remission of sins, only the one who endures with patience like this is the one who bears fruit. Without patience there is no bearing of fruit.

It is so with all of nature as well. When autumn comes and the wind and rain have blown, if you go to some rice paddies, the rice stalks lie completely flattened as if wild animals had romped through them. The rice endures all of that—sometimes hail falls as well—overcomes every kind of hardship, and then receives the autumn sunshine. Even when the sun does not shine much, it still receives that sunshine whenever it can, and so it bears fruit. Then at the end, when the owner reaps the rice, it becomes sound grain, and by bearing much fruit it makes the owner glad and is used preciously by the owner.

It is so with us the righteous as well. However good the field may be, and though one hears the Word and believes, only the one who keeps that faith and bears and endures bears fruit. You and I wait for the day of the Lord's coming, believing that it will come to pass just as the word of the Lord says, waiting like this.

In the Scriptures we see that as the Lord was going to a certain town with His disciples, a procession was approaching, carrying the body of a dead man. Behind it a woman was following, weeping, and that woman was a widow. Her only son had died, and the widow was following the bier, holding on to it and weeping; and when the Lord saw her and told the dead man to arise, the dead man sat up and even spoke. The Lord raised the dead man and gave him back to the widow. This is what the Lord did when He came to this earth. The deaf, the blind, the lame, those with withered limbs, those with leprosy, the demon-possessed—the Lord met such people and healed them all.

That is possible because He is the Lord. We have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, and we know that the Lord is God Himself. Jesus received baptism from John and took all the sins of the world upon Himself, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of those sins and died, and rose again from the dead. If we believe this gospel, we receive the remission of sins and receive salvation. We do believe in this Lord and believe in God, but how great that faith is in our hearts is revealed as we hear the word of God and, as the years pass, go through many hardships in the long life of faith. As we do so, our faith becomes firm and solid and grows into true faith. Only then do we come to know from the heart that it is because He is the Lord that He can do such things and that the power of the Lord is great, and the faith that He truly is the Lord comes to be born in our hearts.

The Lord has need of it—the Lord, who directs all things

The Lord did such works on this earth and also spoke the

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word, and does that word not finally come to pass just as He said? As I said last Sunday as well, the Lord told His disciples that when they entered a certain village they would find a colt tied there, and that they should loose it and bring it. He said that if the owner said anything, they should tell him that *"the Lord has need of it."* Just as Jesus had said, when the disciples went in and were about to loose the colt and bring it, the owner really asked them so, and when the disciples said, just as the Lord had told them, *"the Lord has need of it,"* the owner gave up the colt.

The Lord knows all things and directs all things. Because He is the Lord, He knew that such a thing would happen when they went there, and so He told them to say, *"the Lord has need of it."* And that man did not resist but said that since the Lord would use it, they should take it. Everything comes to pass according to the work of the Lord.

We are living in this world. And there is a real reason why we who live in this world need patience. What does our Lord say to us who have received the remission of sins, and to all the people of this world? He said that in this world natural disasters will come, wars will break out, plagues will spread, a third of the trees will be burned up, and after that the Antichrist will appear. He said that at the end, those who believe and those who do not believe will be divided, that those who do not believe will persecute those who believe and the work of martyrdom will take place, that the world will be utterly ruined and the Antichrist will appear and work. Did He not promise that when that time comes, the Lord will come and take His bride just as He said, and after taking her, will completely devastate this world, remove the first earth and the first heaven, and give us a new heaven and a new earth?

The Lord promises, and He fulfills according to the word of that promise. It is those who believe precisely this, endure every

hardship with patience, and wait with patience, who bear fruit. Ultimately they become those who live receiving all the blessings of the Lord according to His will. What we need is patience. What is absolutely necessary for those who have received the remission of sins? Patience. Believing the word the Lord has spoken and bearing and enduring—that is patience. We must have such enduring faith.

What you and I need is the patience that hears the word of God and believes it, and endures every hardship with the faith that it will come to pass according to that word. We need a heart and a faith that bear and endure. The Lord called this the good field and the good ground. Therefore, for you and me ultimately to become the good ground, we must become those who endure. However much one becomes a believer, believes the word of God, serves the Lord, and lives well, without enduring faith one cannot fulfill the will of the Lord.

Do not be discouraged, but become coworkers who endure

Every week our overseas coworkers send in testimonies by e-mail, dozens of them from many countries. Among them are testimonies of salvation and testimonies of daily life and of faith. Now in those testimonies of daily life and of faith, stories of their disappointment appear. It is because when they preach the gospel to their friends, the friends do not receive the gospel, and even when they do receive it, they do not rejoice much over it.

In the case of one sister, her husband even helps her with the proofreading work; and after she believed the gospel she wanted to preach it, and the Holy Spirit, too, was working, so she asked her husband whether he had a mind to preach the gospel, and he

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answered that he had no such mind. So she is disappointed over that, and she sends such news by e-mail. In fact it is not a strange thing at all.

One coworker in Bhutan says he is so lonely and weary, and even asks us to arrange for a sister in our country who has received the remission of sins to be able to work together with him. With his office work piled up like a mountain, he still preached the gospel to a close childhood friend. The friend heard the gospel and said that when he got a job and received his first paycheck, he would treat him generously. But when he invited him to his house, he did not invite this coworker alone but invited all his Hindu friends as well. So he says he is so disappointed and distressed and lonely.

If we were mature in faith, we would rather take it this way: it is well that he invited those friends; let us go and eat and keep company with them, and it would be good to confirm the gospel to him once more. But that this friend, though he heard the gospel, invites his Hindu friends together means that he cannot distinguish the gospel from other religions. So the coworker's heart is distressed, and he says it pains him that he could not save his friend. Such things happen all the time. Being rejected—told never to come again, never even to call again—being driven out with "Who are you?"—are these things one or two? He is going through it for the first time, and so he finds it hard.

So we must fellowship with them much. They must really become those whose faith grows and who endure. We too must become those who endure. We work ourselves to exhaustion preaching the gospel, but when we pass over one ridge there is another ridge. As it is with the affairs of life, so in the life of faith there is ridge after ridge. We think this should be enough, but when that work is finished there is more work, and more work again. So we find it hard, but ours must become an enduring faith.

It seems the Lord will come right away, but He does not come right away either.

Dear fellow believers, we must have patience. The thought may arise that since we have served the gospel to some degree by now, it might be all right to loosen the belt of our heart a little. But if we loosen the belt, it is the end. What falls apart falls apart in a moment.

While we have been working hard until now, the spreading of the gospel has been taking place on an enormous scale. It is by no means easy for our coworkers scattered all over the world to preach the gospel to the people they know in their own villages and lead them to receive the remission of sins. Still, how good it is when they preach the gospel and someone receives the remission of sins! The joy of meeting one to one, preaching the gospel, seeing someone receive the remission of sins, and then seeing him come to church, hear the Word, grow, and be nurtured—that joy is beyond words. It is only that it is not easy, and so such cases are not many. Even so, many people now visit our website every week; those who download e-books or request paper books number in the thousands; and dozens of people from many countries send in testimonies. That testimonies of salvation come in from overseas is truly a tremendous thing.

The work God is doing through us is enormously great. Where is there anyone who can go out into the whole world and preach the gospel, and have dozens of testimonies come in every week? Where is there such an organization? God said that one soul is more precious than the whole world, and we are now doing an enormously great work. We are doing a work indescribably greater than our effort, and receiving great blessing.

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Above all else, keep your heart

Of course, serving the Lord is hard, and at times we want to rest. Resting is good. But if we rest wrongly and play wrongly, we become ill instead. If we play to our heart's content and then try to work again, our heart is not settled and the work does not take hold in our hands. For that reason there are many people who, unable to gather their heart, cannot work for the rest of their lives. When we play, money gets spent as money does, and when we try to copy everything others do, we cannot afford it, and in the end it even happens that a person turns into a robber. Therefore, above all things we must keep our heart. The Scripture says, *"Keep your heart with all diligence" (Proverbs 4:23)*.

Whether one works at a job, or is a righteous person, or is any of the workers, one must keep one's heart, and keeping the heart is not easy. When the righteous are gathered together, the heart is kept of itself, but when we are apart, the heart is hardly kept at all. Our ministers and district leaders could not gather for a while after the retreat ended. Because we spent much time at the retreat, there is much work of revising and translating documents, and the sisters are also laboring hard to fill that gap.

Now is the time to sow the seed

Dear fellow believers, now is the time for us to sow the seed. When we sow seed, we take it by the handful and scatter it over the furrows of the field. When we stretch the hand forward and open the palm, the seed spreads wide. Then, when we cover it roughly with soil with a hoe, the rain comes and sprouts come up from it. Now is the time to sow the seed. When we have sown

the seed, the Lord makes it seep into people's hearts when the time comes. There are some into whom it has not yet fully seeped, and there are many into whom it has already seeped.

Then, when the last time comes and circumstances no longer allow us to sow more seed, the Lord has a way of making that seed sprout. Just as a grain of wheat falls to the ground and dies and is buried in the soil and bears much fruit, there is a way He makes the seed already sown in abundance sprout, and that is tribulation. He causes natural disasters and fearful calamities to come upon the whole world. When that happens, the seed people have been carrying in their hearts comes back to life, because it is a matter concerning their own life. When calamity comes and the life of the flesh is as good as dead already, and a person asks where his soul is now to go and realizes there is no one but God, then it is decided whether he believes or does not believe. At that time each one diligently confirms what he knows and what he has, and all who will believe come to believe, and all who will not believe do not. That is called the last harvest.

Therefore we must endure. Now is the time to sow the seed. So we sow the seed unchangingly. Even now, thousands of people download e-books and request paper books every day, and more than thirty thousand people come to our website every day. Because now is the time to sow the seed, we are not discouraged. With patience we bear and endure and wait. We endure with the heart that when time passes and the time the Lord desires comes, the Lord will accomplish this work. A person usually feels that if he has done something to some degree, that should be enough. But the point from which the Lord sees is on a different level from man's plans. The Lord's plan is great, and man's thoughts are narrow. Therefore we must bear and endure, looking to the great plan of the Lord. If we bear and endure, someday, when the time comes, the Lord will

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accomplish all these works. Until then we must endure.

Become people of faith who endure every hardship by faith

As you know well, the wayside field refers to the one who does not receive the word of God. That the seed fell on the rocky field, that is, on the rock, refers to the one who receives the word of God with joy but has no root and falls away. We must set our hearts on the church of God—on God, on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, on the work of God. The root here means the heart. But when a person sets his heart not on God and His word, the church of God, the saints, and the words of the servants of God, but on some other place, he dries up. He received the remission of sins and his sins were removed, but because he no longer mingles his heart with the righteous and has no fellowship with them, he dies. He ends up with nothing to do as well.

What kind of person is the thorny field? He is the one who received the word of God but worries about his own life while he lives in this world. He is the one who worries how he will live, what he will eat, what he will drink, and the one who chases only the day-to-day pleasures of the flesh. Such people all die in the end.

How many people receive the remission of sins! How many people received the gospel of the water and the Spirit and were glad! But how many were there who held on to the word of God and endured? People with the seed sown on the wayside field, the rocky field, and the thorny field—how many such people were there in our overseas missions and here at home? Did they live? Did they not all die? They all died. Why did they die? They died because they did not set their hearts on the word of God—

because they did not set their hearts on the church and the word of God and the work of God.

Therefore the Lord said that the good ground is the one who receives the Word with a good heart and keeps it by faith and bears and endures. We must endure. You must endure, and I must endure too.

The Lord will surely make the new heaven and the new earth just as He said. The Lord has removed your sins and mine and given the Holy Spirit as a gift in our hearts. With the baptism Jesus received from John, He took all our sins upon Himself, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and died, and rose again, and so delivered us from sin. By believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit we have become the children of God and the workers of God. We are now serving the gospel and also bearing much fruit. Because we are sowing the seed, even if the fruit does not show much now, because we sow the seed there is hope someday.

But if it seems we are only ever sowing seed, the joy drains out of the heart and we grow so weary and worn. If a farmer only sowed seed every day and the fruit did not appear right away, how could he farm? In actual farming, the seed sown all sprouts within a week, or within a month at the latest. But in spiritual farming it takes neither a week nor a month nor a year; sometimes we must wait ten years, and for some things longer still. Only then does a sprout barely come up. What comes up quickly comes up quickly, but what comes up late sometimes comes up only after fifty years. That does not mean the Lord will come after fifty years. This world too, just as the Lord promised, will change in a moment and be ruined in a moment. When natural disasters come, everything is ruined, and however far science advances, it cannot cope. Therefore we must have patience. We are people who do spiritual farming, people who

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sow the seed. Only with patience can we live.

Dear fellow believers, we must keep our hearts. God is One who tests our faith. So I do not worry when someone says this or that. It must be tried; it must be tested. Whether at home or overseas, if there is anyone who harbors only wayward thoughts and the mind of the flesh, or who has a dark scheme, I say: rather, accomplish that intent; do as it is in your heart. The Lord also gave Judas the piece of bread, and when Judas, having eaten it, was about to go out to accuse Jesus and hand Him over, He said, *"What you do, do quickly" (John 13:27)*. He was saying that if it was a thing he was going to do anyway, he should do it quickly. The Lord knew it all.

What would the Lord desire of us all? That we become people who have enduring faith—people of faith who bear and endure and, with the faith that it will come to pass according to the word of God, endure every hardship. That is exactly what the Lord wants. I want to say this word to our overseas coworkers and our coworkers at home, and to you, brothers and sisters. And I say it to myself as well. Bearing and enduring, I believe that it will surely come to pass according to the word of the Lord. I believe that if we bear and endure according to the word of the Lord, it will surely be fulfilled. I believe that all the things the Lord promised us and spoke to us will be fulfilled, and that the things we pray for, the Lord will also fulfill for us. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The fruit of faith and its reward

< Luke 8:4-10 >

"And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.' When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!' Then His disciples asked Him, saying, 'What does this parable mean?' And He said, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.'"

Today I would like to share the Word with you on the question of what the reward of believing in Jesus is. The result of the faith that believes in Jesus is salvation. Then, when we believe in Jesus and receive salvation, what does the result become? We obtain and possess the kingdom of God. That is, we do not only receive salvation but come to obtain the kingdom of God.

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That means, then, that for those who have not received the remission of sins there is no kingdom of God. Instead of the kingdom of God they come to obtain the kingdom of Satan.

The parable of the sower

Our Lord spoke in Luke chapter 8 about these four fields of the heart in a parable. That He spoke in a parable means that He spoke by way of example. A certain farmer went out to sow seed and sowed.

He said, *"some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it"*. The seed fell on the road, was trampled by people, and the birds devoured it, and so it bore no fruit. In this world the servants of God and the saints sow the seed of this gospel of salvation. They sow the seed quite evenly on everyone—on the main road and in the alley, in the palace or in a hut, on the highly educated and the little educated alike. But among them, what was sown by the wayside was all trampled by people and lost, and the birds came and pecked it up. That the birds came and pecked it up means that Satan the devil came and pecked it up.

The reward of salvation is the kingdom of God

Evangelists sow the seed of the gospel in this world, but truly many seeds are sown in vain and fail to become fruit. The seed of this gospel of salvation, by which one can obtain the kingdom of God, is being sown even now, but with many people it all comes to nothing.

This gospel of salvation is the truth, and the seed has the

power of life, so that it must sprout and grow and blossom; how then has it come to nothing like this? It is because people's hearts are not prepared. That is, it is because people do not know the reward that results from believing in Jesus and have no interest in it. To believe in Jesus is to receive salvation from sin and to come to possess the kingdom of God as one's own kingdom, but they have no interest in this kingdom of God.

That the seed was sown by the wayside means that the ground is very hard. Because many people have trodden over it, its outer surface, and even its depths, have been packed down hard, so very hard. It means that people have no interest in salvation, the reward that comes from believing in Jesus. On this spring day we gather in the chapel and worship. You believe in Jesus, and Jesus has remitted your sins abundantly, as abundantly as one who has had a debt of five hundred denarii canceled. Then what is the result of receiving the remission of sins and living the life of faith, coming to church on this warm spring day, worshiping, singing praises, and making offerings?

We have already received salvation. The result of coming here and worshiping after receiving salvation is that we come to possess the kingdom of God. It is said that to believe in Jesus is to receive salvation. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took all the sins of the world upon Himself, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of those sins and died, and rose again from the dead. By believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit we receive the remission of sins and receive salvation. The result of receiving salvation like this and living the life of faith is obtaining the kingdom of God and receiving the reward.

If there were no reward for all this life of faith after receiving the remission of sins, our gathering and living the life of faith would be truly meaningless and pointless. To us who have

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received the remission of sins God has given the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God is the place where all the trees bear fruit in every season, where there is no lack, where there is all abundance and love and joy and glory, and where we live happily with our Lord forever. That is the kingdom of God, and we come to obtain such a kingdom.

But the seed that fell on the wayside field was all picked up and eaten by Satan and his demons. This person had no interest in believing in Jesus and his heart was not prepared, and as a result he failed to receive salvation. When the evangelists sowed the seed of the Word, people's hearts were not prepared; they felt no need; they did not know the reward of believing in Jesus and had no interest; and so they failed to receive this salvation.

The seed that fell on the rock—faith without root

Concerning the second field, He said in verse 6, *"Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture"*. If we believe in Jesus, we should think about what the result of believing in Jesus is and what we obtain, and go forward toward that goal; but this person does not do so and just believes religiously. The seed fell on the rock, and at first it budded and put out a sprout and grew, but because there was no moisture it withered and died. Our Lord said that it died because it had no root. It failed to become whole fruit.

We must also think about the reward that results from believing in Jesus, and put the root of our heart down deep into the word of God. We must search the word of God deeply to see what more there is after we receive salvation, and find in the word of God the answer to why we must live the life of faith and why we must come out to church on this warm spring day. But

this person just stopped there, thinking, “So if I believe in Jesus my sins disappear; so this is what it is to be saved.” Because he stops there, he has no hope, no purpose, and no reward, and so even while living the life of faith he dies.

And so he quits the life of faith, quits hearing the Word, quits the hope of the kingdom of God, and loses all the blessings and promises that the word of God speaks. The reward that results from living the life of faith to the end is obtaining the kingdom of God. To obtain that kingdom of God, to keep one’s faith to the end, one must put the root of this word down deep into one’s heart. One must search deeply within the Word—whether one will live the life of faith to the end, what is wise, what one loses and what one gains—but this person has no interest in that.

He received only the remission of sins, was content with the state of having no sin, and stopped there, and did not believe the word of promise given after that. So the life of faith becomes meaningless and he cannot carry it on. The result is that the tree withered and died because there was no moisture; that there was no moisture means that it died because there was no word of God. The result of our believing in Jesus is salvation, and to those who have received that salvation God said He would give the kingdom of God as a gift. Receiving salvation is precious, but possessing the kingdom of God is a still more precious thing.

If a plant must grow to the end and bear fruit, but instead of bearing fruit it grows a little and then dies, what use is it? If we know only that we have received the remission of sins and then simply die because we have no root in the Word, does not dying become the same as saying we were never born? If one believes in Jesus and yet does not possess the kingdom of God, one has believed in Jesus in vain, and believing or not believing brings the same result. Therefore, if we have received salvation, we must maintain that salvation until the day the Lord comes, until

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the day I go before God.

If there were no reward even after receiving the remission of sins, people would try to find a reward elsewhere. If one believes in Jesus and yet does not obtain the kingdom of God as the reward, one tries to find a reward on this earth, and when that reward does not come, one comes to have the heart not of a debtor but of a creditor who has lent. When one has no interest in the kingdom of God and no faith that one will finally obtain the kingdom of God, one tries to get a fleshly reward in the wrong places. If one gets such a reward one feels one has received something, and if not, one feels one has not, and is always empty; and so coming to church and living the life of faith becomes like coming to collect money.

Therefore we must not become like that seed that fell on the rock. There are plants that, though they fall on a rock, put down roots hard, squeeze into the crevices of the rock, suck in the dew with those roots before the sun rises and store it, endure the sunlight, and by any means corrode the rock into soil and do not die. We who have received salvation must also live the life of faith and believe the word of God with obtaining the kingdom of God as our aim, until we obtain the kingdom of God as our reward. But the person without root tries to receive his reward on this earth, and so becomes emptier still.

This second field also failed to become a whole plant; it grew a little, bore no fruit, and died. It means that he received salvation but failed to bear the fruit of salvation and lost that faith. Those who received the remission of sins but do not come to church, who, now that they have received salvation, do not set their aim on the kingdom of God but demand their reward from other things, lose their salvation in this way. There are people who, though they have heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit from us, say the life of faith is meaningless, complain that

we always repeat the same words, say that other words are all good too, and go out to just any church. When we meet them a little later, we see that they have no fruit of salvation, that their salvation is not whole, and that they have lost their discernment, saying this is salvation and that is salvation too.

What fails to become fruit is like that word which said it would have been better if he had not been born. Jesus said of Judas that it would have been good for him if he had not been born. If one had simply not known Jesus, one would have lived on and gone to hell; but if one believed in Jesus, tasted the heavenly gift once, and thought one had received salvation, and then quit in the middle and lost even one's faith, one has lost that salvation and can bear no fruit. Why does the Bible speak of four fields? The wayside field was finished when the birds ate the seed, but what fell on the rock had moisture enough to sprout and grow and become a plant, and then died midway. The first did not believe in Jesus at all; the second believed in Jesus but died because he did not hear the word of truth, the pure word. Then he is the same as the one who did not believe, so we must not become a faith like this second field.

The seed that fell among thorns—the cares of the world

Third, He said in verse 7, *"some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it"*. The seed fell and sprouted, but the thorns grew up with it, choked its strength, cast their shade, and killed it. These thorns are the cares of the world—how shall I live in the world, what shall I eat, what shall I drink; if I am to get ahead and succeed in the world, I must not live the life of faith—such cares of the world. Feeling that

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believing in Jesus will not make him happy, loving the world too much and taking the world's side, he kills with his own hands the seed planted in him.

Even after receiving the remission of sins we think about what we will eat, what we will drink, what we will wear. But between living in this world with the remission of sins and living without coming to church with the remission of sins, there is no difference as far as eating and living are concerned. The person who does not come to church and works desperately to make money even on Sunday, and the person who comes to church on Sunday, worships, rests, and works from Monday to Saturday within the bounds God allows—there is no difference between them in eating and living. Rather, the one who rests one day a week and comes on the Lord's Day and hears the Word is better off. If a person never hears the word of God and only frets and fusses over making money, when God does not give His blessing, how could he become rich?

People worry about the world and think that way, recalling the saying, 'Going to church like this, it is hopeless to become a great man; he who does as others do can never be more than others.' That is man's fleshly thought; God is not so. It says, *"He gives His beloved sleep" (Psalm 127:2)*. God gives His reward to those who fear God and desire to receive their reward before God.

In the mountains there are many thornbushes; have you ever seen a pretty plant growing among those thickets wither yellow and die? It died turning yellow because the thornbushes took the light for themselves with their leaves and blocked the plant beneath from receiving it. This is precisely what it is to kill the word of God's salvation planted in oneself while worrying, 'What will my flesh eat, and how shall I live happily?'. We hope you will not kill this word of salvation planted in you. Your body

must assist so that your spirit may live by hearing the word of God. Then your spirit prospers, and only when your spirit prospers do all things go well and your body stay strong. This third field too was a truly unhappy one.

The good ground—the heart that receives the Word

The fourth was very good ground. In verse 8 He said, *"But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!"* Good ground is a field that is deep black and fertile, with a soft cushion into which a falling seed can be buried, and able to hold the rainwater when it rains. The field that can receive the word of God when it hears it is the good ground.

This good ground is your heart that receives the word of God. It is the heart that receives and believes whatever is the word of God, and seeks to receive every reward from the word of God. I hope you will have such a heart.

A life lived for others

What does this good ground do? It does the work of bearing fruit. In John chapter 21 we see that Jesus went to Peter and asked him three times, *"do you love Me?"* and said, *"when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish"*. The result of the life of faith for us who have received the

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remission of sins is obtaining the kingdom of God and receiving that reward.

Now the reward we are to receive is already fully settled; then in what direction, and for what, shall I live this life of faith? Jesus said to Peter, *"but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish"*—then for what must we live? We who have received salvation must live for those who are worse off than ourselves. There are many who have not yet received the remission of sins but will receive it, so we must live for such people. Even if you do not wish it, if someone needs you and wants you to become his leader, you must go and become his leader and live for those worse off than yourselves.

I think of it this way. When our books come out, we deliver them to all the people of the whole world, so that there is no one who does not know this gospel of the water and the Spirit. When that is done, I thought I would no longer feel the need to carry on the life of faith, to serve as a pastor, and to preach, and so I wanted to finish by delivering the gospel to all and fold everything up. But it is not yet the time for the Lord to come, and there are still many in this world who are to receive the gospel and many who need me. Then I thought about what I must live for and what meaning I should hold.

But as I was thinking that way, this word came to mind: *"another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish."* That is, it means becoming a person who lives for the needs of others. So I looked around to see whether there were people who needed me. I went to the hospital, went visiting, and met brothers and sisters and many souls. I admit that in this world there are many people better than I and many who do not need me. But I know that in this world there are many people who need you and me. For those people I simply live on—that is what it means.

For the people who need us

He said that the good field yielded good fruit a hundredfold. What is the good work? Is it not living for the people who need me? I have already received salvation, and the reward of its result is the kingdom of God. Then, after receiving salvation, for what must our saints and the servants of God live? They must live for the people who need them. If I live only for myself, once things are furnished to a certain degree there is nothing more to do; but if I live for the people who need me, I am so busy and there is so much to do—and that is the good work.

We must become the seed that fell on good ground, people who bear fruit a hundredfold. If one person preaches the gospel to a hundred people, leads them to receive the remission of sins wholly and to receive the kingdom of God as their reward, and nurtures them so that they grow well, will not those hundred multiply severalfold again? If one person becomes a person of good faith who has a good field, how abundant will that fruit become? If we live not for ourselves but for others, we bear fruit a hundredfold and the will of God is fulfilled, and the result is that we receive the kingdom of God as our reward and also lead many people to receive the kingdom of God as their reward.

We must truly know for what purpose we are to live the life of faith. Hearing the gospel does not make everyone a good field. The other three fields were all bad fields, and their seed in the end died, and to die means to have believed in Jesus in vain. The first field was finished from the start, and the second and third fields believed in Jesus and did receive salvation, but that salvation was not whole, and they failed to become fruit and gave up midway. It happens through the cares of the world, through not living the life of faith, through not living for others, through not obeying the word of God.

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Therefore I hope you will become saints with the faith that truly bears fruit and receives the kingdom of God as the prize, and become the workers and servants of God. It is not over with simply being saved. The good field bore fruit a hundredfold. There are many in this world who are to hear the gospel from you, many who are worse off than you. For those people we must live, must carry on the life of faith, and must also sacrifice.

Which field of faith are you among these four? Are you not perhaps the field that fell on the rock? You have received salvation—but have you put your roots down into the word of God, and are you firmly believing and holding this word? Are you a person who, for the people who need you, keeps your place to the end even when it is hard and wearisome and troublesome, and goes to them and serves them and delivers the Word to them and prays for them? Are you a person who lives not for those better than you but for those worse off than you?

We must become the good field—the field that carries on the life of faith to the end, keeps the faith to the end, and bears fruit to the end. Not everyone who has believed in Jesus goes to heaven, and having received the remission of sins does not of itself mean keeping that faith to the end. For us to keep the faith to the end, we must look toward receiving the kingdom of God as our reward and become, to the end, a refuge for those worse off than ourselves. That is precisely the good field, and its result is receiving the kingdom of God as the reward. All the rest are thrown into the fire—is not dead grass used for fueling the fire?

Since we have received salvation, we must become the good field and live a selfless life. Living for those worse off than I, living to lead those not yet saved to be saved—this is the Christian life and this is your faith and mine. Among us there are also those who fail to become the good field, becoming the second field or the third field and quitting midway; it was so

even among the workers of God and among the saints, and the result is to be burned in the fire and appointed the portion of the hypocrites.

Dear fellow believers, we saints must comfort one another, strengthen one another, and pray for one another. We must not say it is good with just ourselves, but pray again for those not yet saved and become the grain of wheat of God. He said, *"unless a grain of wheat falls into the ground and dies, it remains alone; but if it dies, it produces much grain"*. We must live the rest of our lives for the people who need us. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Faith that bears good fruit

< Luke 8:4-18 >

"And when a great multitude had gathered, and they had come to Him from every city, He spoke by a parable: 'A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold.' When He had said these things He cried, 'He who has ears to hear, let him hear!' Then His disciples asked Him, saying, 'What does this parable mean?' And He said, 'To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.' 'Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God. Those by the wayside are the ones who hear; then the devil comes and takes away the word out of their hearts, lest they should believe and be saved. But the ones on the rock are those who, when they hear, receive the word with joy; and these have no root, who believe for a while and in time of temptation fall away. Now the ones that fell among thorns are those who, when they have heard, go out and are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity. But the ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience.

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'No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him.'"

The parable of the four fields of the heart

When we look at the Word, the people of every town came out to Jesus and formed a great multitude. Jesus spoke of the four fields of the heart through the parable of the sower. *"A sower went out to sow his seed. And as he sowed, some fell by the wayside; and it was trampled down, and the birds of the air devoured it. Some fell on rock; and as soon as it sprang up, it withered away because it lacked moisture. And some fell among thorns, and the thorns sprang up with it and choked it. But others fell on good ground, sprang up, and yielded a crop a hundredfold." When He had said these things He cried, "He who has ears to hear, let him hear!" (Luke 8:5–8).*

Jesus spoke of the four fields through the parable of the sower and then said, *"The ones that fell on the good ground are those who, having heard the word with a noble and good heart, keep it and bear fruit with patience" (Luke 8:15)*. In fact, God wants us to bear the fruit of faith. What would God require of us? After we have been born again, He would want our faith to bear fruit and to become fruit fit for God to receive. But when we look at these four fields, not all of them are so.

Among the four fields, He limited the bearing of fruit to the

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fourth, the good ground, alone. It means that the remaining three grounds all failed. What our God desires of us is that your faith and mine bear fruit and become good fruit, and that we live keeping the faith until the day the Lord comes. I hope that we hold on to the faith until the very day and hour the Lord comes, and become saints and servants of God who bear fruit like the seed that fell on the good field. I hope to become so myself, and God also wants us to become so.

If we are to become so, we must think about what our problem is, and how we should live and how we should believe. What kind of ground is the good ground? Ground with few stones, not made of clay alone but well blended with sandy soil so that it holds water well, with plenty of manure mixed in so that farming goes well—that is good ground. The ground refers to your heart and mine. The good ground is the heart that receives the word of God as it is. The faith that receives any word—the word that profits me, the word that rebukes me, the word that warns me, whatever word it is—and bears fruit by faith: this is the good field and the good heart. I truly wish that you and I would become such hearts. But is that how it really is?

The wayside field, the rocky field, and the thorny field

There are indeed cases where a person's heart is a good field from birth, but if an earthquake strikes, even a good field can turn into a rocky field. What matters with a good field is maintaining it. Being a good field is no guarantee that thorns and thistles will not spring up. At any time the stones can multiply, and the soil can be washed away. The wayside field is a heart that has not been plowed, on which the seed was sown, and so

the devil took the Word away. It speaks of the heart of the person who has not yet come to believe when we preached the gospel to him, and who, when someone comes and says it is not so, treats it as though it had never been.

The second, the rocky field, heard the Word, but it is said that it sprang up and withered because it lacked moisture. It means it died because it received no supply of water, that is, of the word of the truth of God. This is spoken of those who have left the church. It speaks of the person who was born again but leaves the church, and so does not hear the word of God, and his faith dies, and he ends up becoming a person of the world.

The third was the thorny field. The sprout came up, but the thorns choked its strength and it could not grow. It says, *"are choked with cares, riches, and pleasures of life, and bring no fruit to maturity"*. All three of these fields can exist in you and me. Even a person who has received the remission of sins can come to have a heart like the thorny field as he lives through this world. The worry about what to eat and what to drink, and the heart that falls into the pleasures of the world and chases the world—these can perfectly well arise. He has received the remission of sins, but when he considers the road ahead, it seems there is no way to live. Moreover, if he attends church his time is taken; he must come out every Lord's Day; there are many meetings—how is he to live? Worrying like this, he can end up giving up his faith. It is a thought that comes from having no faith. It may be hard to feed and clothe oneself by one's own strength, but if we believe in God, God feeds us and clothes us and gives us work to do, gives us time to come to church, lets us hear the Word, and gives our bodies rest. If we believe in God, God grants us all these things.

But because a person has no faith that believes in God, the worry arises of how he is to live in the world, and because of

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that worry there are people who give up the life of faith and whose faith dies. Honestly, though you and I are now out at church, the things that happen in the second field and the third field can perfectly well happen in our own lives. As we live on, we may meet trials and hardships and come to a point where we are pressured to betray the Lord, and we may be tempted. Just as a plant cannot take root and dies for lack of water when there is a great rock in the soil, so even after being born again there are countless cases of people meeting the temptation—"If you stop going to church, I will send you abroad to study; I will buy you a car; I will transfer this house and this land to your name"—and their faith dying like the second field.

A good field is not made from the beginning. It is made by lifting out the stones that are in it, clearing away the thorns and thistles, spreading manure, receiving the word of God and believing it so that the sprout comes up, and letting that sprout shoot out so that nothing else can grow. Only by passing through the road of the second field and the third field and becoming a good field does one become a field that bears fruit. You and I will also have such things ahead of us, and perhaps they have already been.

If such things have not yet happened, Satan the devil will use them to tempt you, bring you into trials, and bring you the worry of how you are to live in the world. But all of this can be overcome by faith, and by faith we can become a good field. The conclusion is faith. Within the church of God we must be saved by faith, live by faith, enjoy in abundance by faith our food and drink and everything, become the workers of God by faith, and become the good field that bears fruit by faith, people who reap a great harvest. Our being born again is important, but if, after being born again, we fail to carry our faith to the end, all the way until we go before the Lord, that may be the more miserable

thing. We must keep this faith until the day the Lord comes, and become those who by faith do the many works of God and bear much fruit. According to whether or not there is in the heart the faith that believes in God, one can become a good field, or one can become a thorny field and a rocky field.

The good field is the one who bears fruit with patience

After we are born again, if we have faith, we overcome every trial by faith and live without dying. If we believe in God, we do not betray or forsake the Lord because of the riches and cares and pleasures of this world. It says: the one who hears the Word and bears fruit with patience. We must have faith. We must believe in God. Our God has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He has remitted all our sins, thick as the mist, making them as white as snow, removed them cleanly, and saved us.

And our Lord said, *"you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)*. He also promised to become our Shepherd and to give us everything we ask. He promised to be with us always and to bless us, and He said He would give us the blessing of the Millennial Kingdom and of eternal life, so that we would live in the eternal kingdom of heaven.

The good ground is the one who hears the Word, keeps it, and bears fruit with patience. It is receiving all this word of God into the heart, believing it, keeping it, and bearing fruit. Holding this faith until we go before the Lord, holding the faith until the Lord comes and standing before Him—this is precisely the fruit. What has God given to you and me?

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Seeing what the Scriptures say about eternal life, I pictured in my heart how great a thing it is to live forever. Just as the word says, *"You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of Me" (John 5:39)*, for the one who believes in Jesus Christ, the one who is born again, there is eternal life. All the things of this earth appear for a moment and disappear, and man, just as the word says, *"it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*, faces the judgment after death. Those who do not believe live in torment forever, but to those who believe in Jesus Christ and have received the remission of sins, God has given life that never dies, forever. God has given something tremendous, and we have received something tremendous.

God also spoke of our being persecuted. Just as the word says, *"the time is coming that whoever kills you will think that he offers God service" (John 16:2)*, in the last days people will seize us and kill us, thinking that it is a work of serving God. That a man should kill a man and consider it devotion to God—what a fearful thing. Because He said such things will happen in the last days, I believe they will surely happen. When I think that we may even be martyred, it is dreadful. But do not be afraid. The Lord went on to say that when people hand us over to the rulers, we should not worry beforehand about what we will say; the Holy Spirit will put the words to say into our mouths and give us wisdom. At that time He gives us all the words with which to answer and all the strength to endure, so that even if we are seized and killed, we do not die in cowardice. God makes us go like Deacon Stephen, full of the Holy Spirit, seeing the door of heaven opened, seeing Jesus Christ at the right hand of God the Father, as we go.

It was so in the days of the early church as well. He said that when we are tempted, He gives the way of escape and the

strength to bear it. I have seen the word that God will give us the Millennial Kingdom, and the word that we will suffer tribulation, and the word that if we believe in God and pray we receive all things, and the word, *"seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)*. I receive and believe all those words. The faith God desires is faith that bears fruit—holding the faith to the end, overcoming every trial, standing against Satan the devil, receiving the word of God, winning the victory by faith, and standing by faith. The conclusion is faith, and God delights in fruit-bearing faith and wants us to become people of such faith. I truly hope that you and I will hear the Word, receive it, keep it, and become those who bear fruit. The one who hears the word of God, keeps it, endures, and bears fruit is the one who has faith.

Only by receiving the Word does one become a good field

The Word continues, *"No one, when he has lit a lamp, covers it with a vessel or puts it under a bed, but sets it on a lampstand, that those who enter may see the light. For nothing is secret that will not be revealed, nor anything hidden that will not be known and come to light. Therefore take heed how you hear. For whoever has, to him more will be given; and whoever does not have, even what he seems to have will be taken from him" (Luke 8:16–18)*. We truly must have faith. Only when we hear all the word of God and have faith can we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people and become workers of the gospel.

If you and I are to bear good fruit, we must keep on hearing and receiving the word of God. To become good ground, we must receive the Word. Only when we gather at every worship

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time and meeting time, hear the Word, receive it, and believe it can we pick out the stones in the rocky field. Your heart and mine can turn into a rocky field and a thorny field at any moment. That is why the meetings are enormously important. If we are to keep the faith and bear fruit until the day the Lord comes, we must not miss the meetings and must hear the Word by all means. Whether we understand it or not, whether we like it or not, if it is the word of God and the will of God, we must receive it. Only then are the stones of the heart removed, and the thorns and thistles—that is, riches and the cares of the world—removed. Only when we receive the Word does faith arise.

The one who has faith receives more of the Word before God. When the one who has the faith that receives the word of God does not miss the meetings and keeps coming to church and hearing the Word, he comes to have more faith, receives more, and in the end bears fruit. If we desire the fruit of faith, we must come out at the worship times and meeting times the church of God has appointed and hear the Word. Even though we have received the remission of sins, it will not do to stop hearing the Word. Only by hearing the Word does faith grow, and only so can we pull out the thorns and thistles and gravel from the heart. We must not neglect the meeting times. Come what may, we must become those who hear the word of God, think on it, believe it, learn it, and abide in the word we have been assured of, and so become those who bear good fruit. And so, preaching the gospel, we must meet the Lord on the day of His coming and give Him glory.

We must become those who bear fruit. In the life of faith we must pull out the stones with the faith that believes the word of God; I hope you will not be those who keep the stones as they are and cannot overcome the trials. I hope you will become possessors of the faith that overcomes trials with the faith that

believes the word of God. We must not sink into how I might live happily in this world—riches and pleasures and cares, how to build my own happiness. If we believe the word of God, we can do the work of God within God and receive the blessings, both spiritual and physical, and every happiness God gives. But we must not set God aside and think in a worldly way, according to our own thoughts, that our happiness lies over there; we must not betray Christ that way. We must not become those who fail to bear fruit. You and I must become those who bear the fruit of faith.

After receiving salvation and living like this, if we quit in the middle, how bitter a thing would that be? I want us not only to preach the gospel until the day the Lord comes but to live holding the faith. Believe all the word of God. Then the Word will remove the stones and the thorns and the thistles for you. But if you do not believe the Word, the stones and the thorns and the thistles will crush the seed of the Word planted in you and kill it.

Believe the word that is in the Scriptures. Believe that Jesus Christ has become your Savior and mine. Believe all the words He has spoken. If we believe, we become a good field and a field that bears fruit. Our God, in order to make us a good field, a fruit-bearing field, has given us the faith that believes in Jesus Christ, the faith of the saved, and the faith that believes all the word of God. I give thanks to God, who has given us this faith. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Those who serve the gospel are our family

< Luke 8:19-21 >

"Then His mother and brothers came to Him, and could not approach Him because of the crowd. And it was told Him by some, who said, 'Your mother and Your brothers are standing outside, desiring to see You.' But He answered and said to them, 'My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it.'"

We pray that the Lord will protect this nation, protect the economy as well, and guard and keep our business, the preaching of the gospel, and our health, and ward off and keep us from every danger and natural disaster. We ask Him to enlarge the site of our tent and bless us. But faith must be held in a fitting way. To those who have not even received the remission of sins, some preach sermons telling them not to worry about anything, that God protects them in everything—but with what would He protect those who have not received the remission of sins? What would He guard for them, and what would He bless?

At times some pastors of the world preach to their church members like this: that they must stake everything on constructing the chapel and serve the Lord with all their strength; that the older people do not do it well; that they ought truly to serve the Lord with all their strength and look for His blessing,

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and yet many fail to do so. But I do not think that way.

If a person who is not born again gives much offering to the church and sells all his property and offers it to the church, he ruins his own life. When a born-again person does the work of God and serves God, God provides for his food, clothing, and shelter—at the least He lets him live without falling into debt—and lets him live doing righteous and worthwhile work. But if a person who is not born again sells all his property to invest and offer it toward building an enormous chapel, he comes to ruin. Without money one cannot attend a church of the world. The church of God one can attend without money, if only one serves the gospel, but the churches of the world are not so.

In fact, in a certain place there is a pastor who says that a chapel must be built large for the next generation. They say they will build it enormously large—but who is to pay all that money? The church members must sell their houses and sell their land and pay it all. The land price alone would run to hundreds of billions of won, and laying the foundation and raising the frame alone would take hundreds of billions of won more; how much more would it take to complete it and furnish the interior? It is not right to make people who are not born again sell their property and offer it.

"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it"

Our Lord carried on His ministry, speaking about the four fields, healing the sick, and raising the son of the widow of Nain. In the midst of this, the brothers of Jesus came with His mother Mary. They tried to come near to Jesus, but a great crowd had surrounded the Lord and was listening to the Word, so they

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could not come near. Then someone told Jesus that His mother and His brothers had come to meet Him and were standing outside.

Ordinarily, someone like us, if his mother had come, would have said he would finish the word he was sharing, asked her to wait a little, and then met her. But Jesus said on the spot, *"My mother and My brothers are these who hear the word of God and do it" (Luke 8:21)*. With His own mother right before His eyes, come to meet Him, and His brothers come to meet Him, He asked the people around, who is My mother and who are My brothers and who is My family, and said that these people who hear the word of God and do it are My mother and My brothers and My sisters and My family.

The family of God are those who hear the Word, believe it, and do it

In fact, as we do this ministry, there are people who hear the gospel and receive the remission of sins. There are those who receive the remission of sins imperfectly, then do the work of the Lord and later receive the remission of sins wholly—there are many kinds of people. But who really is the family of God? If one has heard the word of God one must believe it and do it; the person who believes it and does it—only such a person is the family of God. They are the same family, the same people, the workers of God.

If we have only received salvation and do not do the work of God, it is hard to say we are the family of God. If we say we believe in God and are the people of God, then at the least, those who hear the word of God, believe it, follow it, and are united, working together so that the work of God is accomplished on

this earth—these are the family of God. If you consider yourselves the people of God and the family of God, the question is whether you are now believing in God and His word, having received the remission of sins, and joining your hearts, offering your bodies and your time, and doing the work of God. If you are doing so, you can become one family of the Lord, the people of the Lord, and the citizens of the kingdom of the Lord. If not, you are not the family of the Lord.

Now the Lord said that even though His parents in the flesh had come and His brothers had come, it made no difference. We too have received the remission of sins and have families in the flesh, but a person who does not want to do the work of God at all can hardly be said to believe in God, and can hardly be called one of the people of God. If a person truly believes with the heart, it shows in his actions. How could believing with the heart fail to show in action? If I am a believer, it is only natural that, insufficient though I am, I live for God, pray for the work of God, regard this as being done for the kingdom of God, offer my hands and feet and time, serve the Lord, and do the work of God. Because this is the word of the Lord, we must think it over deeply and engrave it on our hearts.

Why we call one another brother and sister in the church

Who is your family? You and I, who are doing the work of God within this church, are one another's family. We are one family. If we do not do the work of God, who is the people of God and who is the family of God? Since we do the work of God all together, we are the same brothers and sisters. That is why we call one another brother. Does not calling someone brother

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mean we have shared blood? Does it not mean we are the same family? That is why we call one another Brother and Sister.

If we were not the same family, how could we call one another brother? We would have to say Teacher, or the president of a company, or Madam, or attach some very high title. As we work within the church we also hold offices, and lest the people of the world misunderstand, we also address one another by office; but essentially we are the same family. That is why we call one another Brother and Sister. We have believed the word of the Lord and received salvation, and we are those who do what God desires, offering body and heart—so we are the family of God. Therefore, when we address one another, we may use the office as well, but I know it is right to call one another by the most fundamental names, Brother and Sister.

Everything we do is the work of God

After we have received salvation, is the work we do the work of the world, or the work of God? The work you and I do is the work of God. All of it is the work of God. It is to do the work of God, to do worthwhile work, that we now pray, offer body and heart, and offer our time to work. Because all this work is the work of God, we do it with our hearts in it.

If this work were not the work of God but the work of some individual, who would do it? There would be no one to do it. Because it is the work of God, because it is the will of God, because we are the people of God, we do it. When a family runs a business, do not all the members of that household pitch in and help? Since we are the people of God, we all pitch in together on the business of God. I am truly thankful. Living on this earth, if this were not the work of God, who would keep at one work like

this without growing weary of it? Because it is the work of God we continue it, do the work of expanding it, and think ahead and prepare in advance. If it were not the work of God, we could not do this.

The true fulfillment of a life that serves the gospel

We are now carrying on overseas missions. How pleased God must be! Among the many people overseas there are those who have known Jesus wrongly and believed wrongly. Their history of faith has continued from their ancestors for more than 1,500 years, yet nothing had touched their hearts and it did not even seem to make sense; but when they receive our books, it is hard to describe how gladly they receive and believe them.

If we have sin, we go to hell. If someone is called a sinner, it is exactly right to say he is one bound for hell, because the result of sin is hell. But the Lord has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus received baptism from John and took all the sins of the world upon Himself, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment of those sins and died, and rose again from the dead. If we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins and receive salvation. The one bound for hell needs a Savior, and the Lord has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—how could we not believe? If a person truly knows that he is going to hell, the only way out of it is to believe in the Lord.

John the Baptist came six months ahead of Jesus and laid the ground so that the people of Israel could receive Jesus as their Savior. Telling them to repent, he said, *"Brood of vipers!"* and rebuked them sternly—not to say with their lips only that they were the people who believe in God, but to act like the people of

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God, and to throw away their idols—and so he laid the ground. So there are many who heard the preaching of John the Baptist, received his rebuke, turned, and believed in Jesus as their own Savior. In the same way, you too must lay the ground after being born again within this church.

After we are born again we must serve the Lord. In serving the Lord, can we serve with words alone? Can we do it with prayer alone? We must offer our bodies and serve. To do that we must learn the work of the Lord. Doing the business of God together, we must also learn skills and become practiced. So in whatever field, we must serve the Lord, serve in union, and do this work as we are directed. Only then can we live on the blessing God gives, and only then can we continue to carry out the business of God. We work in order to preach the gospel.

It says, *"whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. What is the work that is for the glory of God? The preaching of the gospel. The pastors of the world say that raising up workers of God means becoming people very necessary and useful to the world. But that has nothing to do with it. The person who serves in union in serving the gospel of God and brings benefit to it—that person is the one who lives for the glory of God.

Even if I became president in this world and worked diligently at the affairs of the nation, that would be diligence in the nation's affairs and would have nothing to do with the work of God. But if, holding the office of president, I did work that benefited the gospel, that would be doing the work of God. However much one helps the poor of the world, God says that is only to display your own goodness and has nothing to do with Him. God's purpose is exactly one: the Lord has saved you and me, who were bound for hell because of sin, with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and there are still many who have not

been saved and stand outside the fence, many who cannot enter the kingdom of heaven. His purpose is that we deliver this gospel to them as well. That is the Lord's purpose and the Lord's will. We must do that work in union. And it is not something done in a day or two; it must be done until the moment our breath gives out.

And if we did not do this work, I wonder what we would live for. If He had not entrusted such work to us, I wonder what joy there would be in living in this world. If one earned ten billion won a year, would there really be fulfillment in it? If one earns much money, one spends much, and it would be pleasant enough. One would strut about with one's shoulders squared. But would there be true fulfillment? Would there be real satisfaction in the heart? If we have received salvation, we are not satisfied because we earned one billion or ten billion won a year; we know how to be satisfied in this—that we can live this worthwhile life in which God delights, the work that truly saves other people, the life lived not for myself but so that others may prosper. Apart from this there is no true satisfaction. We often speak of the value of life. It is the question of whether your life and mine are truly living a life of value, or living only for ourselves. It is because we live a life of value that we are as happy as we are. Truly, I am thankful and thankful again that He has entrusted this work to us.

That the workers gather often is not in order to eat and play. It is to work together, to consult together, and to decide the things that must be decided. Over the telephone, opinions cannot go back and forth sufficiently; good proposals need to be laid out together and discussed fully, and that does not work well by phone. That is why we gather. Just as you work, the workers too must work.

I am one of the people of God and of the family of God. You

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also are the people of God and the family of God. If we have received salvation and do the work of God, offering body and heart and time, I believe we are surely the people of God and the family of God. I believe that our God will bless and keep us who have become His people and His family. ✉

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CHAPTER

9

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Luke Chapter 9

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 9 reveals who Jesus is, and shows the fact that Jesus is the Messiah who goes toward the Cross, and the way of the disciple who follows Him. In particular, from verse 51, as Jesus goes toward Jerusalem, an important turning point of the Gospel of Luke begins.

1. The sending out of the twelve disciples (9:1–6)

"Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. And He said to them, 'Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece. 'Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.' So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus gives the twelve disciples power and authority to subdue demons and to cure diseases, and sends them out to

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preach the kingdom of God. The power of the disciples did not come from themselves but was received from Jesus.

The instruction not to prepare a staff, a bag, bread, money, and the like for the journey means, in that special sending of that time, to trust the provision of God and the hospitality of people.

The disciples were to stay in the house that received them, and in the region that did not receive them they were to shake off the dust from their feet. This is a symbol, not of retaliation, but of not forcing the gospel and leaving the responsibility for the rejection with those people.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must preach the kingdom of God with the authority the Lord has given

Jesus called the twelve disciples, gave them power and authority to control demons and to cure diseases, and then sent them out to preach the kingdom of God. The disciples did not minister because their own abilities were special; they could minister because Jesus gave them the authority.

The word not to rely on a money belt, a bag, bread, and the like is also the word that makes us abandon the thought that we can do the work of God only when we have many human means. Material things and human labor are also needed in preaching the gospel, but they are not the power that saves souls. The power that saves sinners lies in the gospel Jesus accomplished and in the blessing of the Lord.

The kingdom of God that the disciples preached is not the work of establishing a new political kingdom in the world. It is the work of making the person who was under the power of sin and Satan know the salvation of Jesus, receive the remission of

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sin, and serve God as King. The word that saints must preach today is also the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection.

2. Herod, who wondered who Jesus was (9:7–9)

"Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. Herod said, 'John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?' So he sought to see Him."

General interpretation of the text

Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, hears the rumors about what Jesus has done and is confused. People said that John the Baptist had risen, or that Elijah or one of the old prophets had appeared.

Herod wonders who this person is who does such things when he himself killed John the Baptist, and he seeks to meet Jesus. But his interest was closer to anxiety and curiosity than to faith and repentance.

The question "Who is Jesus?" is the central question of the whole of chapter 9, and the answer is presented later through the confession of Peter and the voice of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We cannot know Jesus only by hearing rumors about Him

Herod heard the rumors about what Jesus had done. Some said that John the Baptist had risen; others said that Elijah or one of the old prophets had appeared. Herod, too, wondered who Jesus was.

But the curiosity that wants to see Jesus and knowing and believing Jesus as the Savior are different things. Herod did not receive the word that John the Baptist preached, and killed him. And while he showed interest in the power of Jesus, he did not turn from his sin and seek the word of salvation.

Even today, one may hear many stories about the name of Jesus, His miracles, and the Cross, and yet not know why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist. To know Jesus rightly, we must not stop at rumors or religious common knowledge but know how He took our sins upon Himself and removed them.

3. The feeding of the five thousand (9:10–17)

"And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, 'Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here.' But He said to them, 'You give them something to eat.'

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And they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. Then He said to His disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of fifty.' And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them."

General interpretation of the text

When the apostles return and report all that they have done, Jesus seeks to withdraw with them privately. But when the multitude follows, He receives them, speaks about the kingdom of God, and heals the sick.

When the day begins to wear away, the disciples propose sending the multitude away to get food, but Jesus says, *"You give them something to eat"*. When Jesus blesses the five loaves and two fish and has them distributed, all eat their fill and twelve baskets are left over.

This event shows the fact that Jesus cares not only for the spiritual needs of people but also for their physical needs. The disciples are not the source of the supply; they play the role of delivering to the people what Jesus gives. It also calls to mind God, who gave the manna in the wilderness, and the abundant feast of the kingdom of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The blessing of the Lord fills up the lack of man

Jesus intended to give rest to the disciples who had finished their ministry and returned. But when a great multitude followed, He received them, taught them the kingdom of God, and healed the sick.

When the day was ending, the disciples proposed sending the multitude away so that each might get something to eat. All the disciples had were five loaves and two fish. By human calculation it was impossible to feed five thousand. But when Jesus blessed them, all the people ate their fill and still twelve baskets were left over.

This event does not mean that man does not need to make any effort. The disciples brought what they had to Jesus and distributed to the multitude what the Lord had blessed. Saints who serve the gospel must also offer the material things, the time, and the abilities entrusted to them. But they must believe that the One who brings the fruit is the Lord.

The five loaves and two fish also show the state of the soul, which cannot live on the food of the flesh alone. The true food that gives life to the soul of a sinner is the word of the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished.

4. The confession of faith of Peter, the prediction of suffering, and the life of taking up the cross (9:18–27)

"And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, 'Who do the

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crowds say that I am?' So they answered and said, 'John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God.' And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.' Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.'"

General interpretation of the text

When Jesus asks who the crowds say He is, the disciples answer John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets who has risen. But Peter confesses Jesus to be *"the Christ of God"*.

The confession of Peter was right, but he had not fully understood the mission of the Messiah. Jesus says that He must be rejected by the religious leaders, be killed, and rise on the third day. The suffering of Jesus is not a failure but the way included in God's plan of salvation.

The person who wants to follow Jesus must deny himself and take up his own cross daily. This does not mean to hate oneself; it means not to make one's own desires the highest standard of

one's life but to acknowledge Jesus as one's Master.

Even if one gains the whole world, if one loses oneself, there is no profit at all. As for the word that there are some who will not die before they see the kingdom of God, the common interpretation is that in the near context it points to the event on the Mount of Transfiguration that follows.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus is the Christ, who saves us

People thought of Jesus as John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets. But Peter confessed Jesus to be the Christ of God. Jesus is not one of many prophets; He is the Savior whom God sent, and the Son of God.

Following this confession, Jesus said that He would be rejected and killed and then rise on the third day. The Christ that people of that day expected was a strong king who would politically liberate Israel. But Jesus came as the Christ who suffers to save sinners.

Jesus had already taken the sins of all mankind upon Himself when He received baptism from John the Baptist. Therefore His death on the Cross was not a failure that befell Him unexpectedly. It was the work of salvation in which He received in our place the judgment of the sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism. Jesus completed salvation by dying on the Cross and then rising from the dead.

Jesus then told those who wanted to follow Him to deny themselves and take up their own cross daily. When a sinner receives salvation, he must deny the thought that he can be saved by his own goodness and religious righteousness. He must rely only on the righteousness that Jesus accomplished.

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Even after receiving the remission of sin, self-denial must continue. We must deny not only our own excellence but also our deficiency and weakness, and follow the word of the Lord. One's own cross is not a price paid to obtain salvation; it is the hardship that the person who has already been saved bears in the course of following the gospel.

5. The event on the Mount of Transfiguration (9:28–36)

"Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!' When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus takes Peter, John, and James and goes up on the mountain to pray. While He prays, His appearance changes and His robe shines brightly, and Moses and Elijah appear.

Moses represents the Law, and Elijah represents the prophets. The two men talk about the 'departure' that Jesus will accomplish at Jerusalem. Since this expression can mean the Exodus, it suggests that the death and resurrection of Jesus are a new exodus that delivers people from sin and death.

When Peter says that he will make three tabernacles, a voice is heard from the cloud: *"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"* Jesus is not one of many prophets but the Son of God, and the disciples must hear His words not only about the glory but also about the Cross.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—On the Mount of Transfiguration, too, the center of salvation is Jesus alone

When Jesus prayed on the mountain, His appearance was transfigured and His robe became white and radiant. This reveals that Jesus is not a mere man but the glorious Son of God. It also shows the hope that saints who have received the remission of sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit will also rise in the future and put on glorious bodies.

At that time Moses and Elijah appeared and spoke about the decease that Jesus would accomplish at Jerusalem. Moses represents the Law. The Law makes man realize that he is a sinner, but it cannot remove sin.

Elijah makes us think together of John the Baptist, who came

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in the New Testament with the spirit and mission of Elijah. John the Baptist prepared the way of Jesus and, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and passed the sin of the world on to Him. Jesus had to carry that sin to Jerusalem and receive the judgment of the Cross.

Peter said that he would build three tabernacles for Jesus, Moses, and Elijah, but God said to hear the words of Jesus. The center of salvation does not lie in the Law or in any man; it lies in Jesus, the Son of God. Yet to know Jesus rightly, we must also know the role of the Law, which makes us realize sin, and the ministry of John the Baptist, who passed sin on to Jesus.

6. The healing of the demon-possessed boy and the second prediction of His suffering (9:37–45)

"Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, 'Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.' Then Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.' And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 'Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the

hands of men.' But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying."

General interpretation of the text

Coming down from the mountain, Jesus meets an only son who is severely tormented by a demon. The disciples could not cast out the demon, but Jesus rebukes the demon, heals the boy, and gives him back to his father.

This event shows the fact that even though the disciples had received power, they could not exercise that power independently of Jesus. A disciple must always rely on Jesus. Also, the person who has experienced the glory on the mountain must come down to the reality where suffering people are, and serve them.

While people are amazed at the power of Jesus, Jesus says again that He will be delivered into the hands of men. The disciples did not understand that word and were even afraid to ask about it. They accepted the glory and the power, but they did not understand the fact that the way of the Messiah passes through suffering and the Cross.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—More than the miracles, we must know the salvation contained in the suffering of Jesus

At the foot of the mountain, a father suffering because of his demon-possessed only son was waiting for Jesus. The disciples could not heal that boy, but Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit,

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healed the boy, and gave him back to his father.

Jesus, who had revealed His glory on the Mount of Transfiguration, saved at the foot of the mountain a person seized by the power of an evil spirit. This shows that Jesus is the glorious Son of God and at the same time the Savior who came to the person under the power of sin and Satan.

While people were amazed at seeing the power of Jesus, the Lord spoke again of His being delivered into the hands of men. The disciples were amazed at the miracle but did not realize the word of the Cross. Faith is not a matter of seeking only visible power. It is knowing why Jesus had to suffer and die. He received the judgment of the Cross because of our sins, which He had taken upon Himself with His baptism.

7. The teaching on who is the greatest and on the exclusive heart (9:46–50)

"Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, 'Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.' Now John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.'"

General interpretation of the text

The disciples dispute over who among them is the greatest. Jesus sets a little child beside Him and says that whoever receives such a child in His name receives Him and the One who sent Him.

In those days a little child was a being with almost no social status or power. Therefore, the great person in the kingdom of God is not the one who lords it over others but the one who receives and serves those who are regarded as low and unimportant.

John says that they stopped someone who was casting out demons in the name of Jesus because he did not follow along with them. Jesus tells them not to stop him. The disciples must not think that their own group monopolizes the work of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The person saved by grace cannot exalt himself

Even though Jesus had spoken of His suffering, the disciples argued over who among them was the greatest. Jesus set a little child beside Him and taught that the person who receives the little one is the great person.

The person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sin cannot boast of his knowledge, his office, or his labors. He himself was also a person who could not solve his sin with his own strength, and he was saved only by the righteousness of the Lord. The great person in the kingdom of God is not the one who exalts himself but the one who humbles his heart and serves weak souls.

John tried to forbid someone who was casting out demons in

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the name of Jesus because he did not go along with the disciples. But Jesus said not to forbid him. This does not mean that every teaching is right. It is the word to abandon the exclusive heart that hastily opposes another person only because he does not belong to one's own group. We must clearly keep the truth of the gospel, but we must not condemn others in order to exalt our own group and position.

8. The rejection by a Samaritan village (9:51–56)

"Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?' But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' And they went to another village."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus firmly resolves to go up to Jerusalem. This is an important turning point in the Gospel of Luke; Jesus goes forward to fulfill the will of God even though He knows that suffering and death are waiting for Him.

On the way, a Samaritan village does not receive Jesus. The long conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans and the fact that Jesus was heading for Jerusalem formed the background of the rejection.

James and John propose commanding fire to come down from heaven and destroy them, but Jesus rebukes the two disciples and goes to another village. The disciples tried to judge the people who had rejected Him, but the way of Jesus is not the way of retaliation and coercion but the way of patience and salvation.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus went the way of salvation before judgment

As the time for His ascension drew near, Jesus firmly resolved to go up to Jerusalem. Rejection, suffering, and the Cross were waiting in Jerusalem. But the Lord did not avoid that way, in order to receive the judgment of the sin of mankind, which He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, and to complete salvation.

When a village of Samaria did not receive Jesus, James and John wanted fire to come down from heaven and destroy them. But Jesus rebuked the disciples. The way the Lord was going at that time was not the way of immediately retaliating against the sinners who rejected Him; it was the way of being judged Himself in order to save even those sinners.

Saints who preach the gospel must not retaliate with temper and anger against people who reject the truth. While preaching the gospel clearly, we must have the heart of the Lord, who waits for that soul to receive the remission of sin.

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9. The cost of following Jesus (9:57–62)

"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'"

General interpretation of the text

When someone says that he will follow Jesus wherever He goes, Jesus says that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. On the way of following Jesus there are not only stability and success; discomfort, rejection, and uncertainty can follow.

Another person asks to be allowed first to go and bury his father. This may refer to an actual funeral, but it may also be an expression of delay, meaning that he will follow someday after waiting until his parent passes away. The point is not to keep putting off the calling of the kingdom of God.

Yet another person asks to be allowed first to bid farewell to his family. Jesus says that the person who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is not fit for the kingdom of God. This does not mean to disregard one's family; it means not to delay obedience out of lingering attachment to the past but to devote oneself to following Jesus.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The purpose of following the Lord must lie in preaching the gospel

At the end of Luke chapter 9, three people appear who would follow Jesus. To the first person Jesus said that the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head. We must not think that if we follow the Lord we will surely obtain the stability of the world and material success. Gaining the profit of the world must not become the purpose of following the Lord.

The second person asked to be allowed first to go and bury his father. Jesus told him to preach the kingdom of God. This is not a general command to disregard one's responsibility to one's parents. It is the warning that if one intends to serve the gospel only after settling all the affairs of the world, one will never preach the kingdom of God.

To the third person He said not to look back after putting his hand to the plow. If we keep looking only at the profit of the world and our former life while serving the gospel, we lose the direction of faith. The purpose of the person who follows the Lord must lie in the kingdom of God and the salvation of souls.

However, such devotion is not a condition of salvation. The remission of sin is not obtained by our sacrifice; it is obtained by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished and believing it with the heart. The life of a disciple is not a labor that buys salvation but the life that the person who has already been saved lives out of thankfulness for the grace.

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Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 9 conveys

The central question of Luke chapter 9 is "Who is Jesus?" Jesus is not merely a prophet who works miracles. He is the Christ of God; He is the Creator, the King who saves sinners, and the Lord who will judge the world at the end.

This Jesus took the sins of all mankind upon Himself once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. And carrying those sins, He was judged on the Cross and then rose from the dead. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it is the foundation for understanding the words of suffering, death, and resurrection repeated in Luke chapter 9.

A sinner must deny his own goodness and religious righteousness, and must know this salvation and believe it with the heart. After receiving the remission of sin, he must deny his own rightness and desires daily and follow the word of the Lord. He must not rely on his own strength and means but seek the blessing of the Lord; he must not seek to be exalted by people; and he must bear long with even the souls who reject him and serve them.

Luke chapter 9 does not end with being saved by believing the gospel. It teaches that the saved person must make the kingdom of God and the salvation of souls the purpose of his life and live as a person who preaches the gospel without looking back. ✉

Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

The way of the disciple who knows Christ and denies himself

Introduction

In Part 1 above we looked at each passage of Luke chapter 9 side by side, from the general interpretation of the text and from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at who Jesus is, and at what the way He went and the life of a disciple teach.

The sending out of the twelve disciples, the event of feeding the five thousand, the confession of Peter and the glory of the Mount of Transfiguration, the failures of the disciples, and the resolve toward Jerusalem are not stories separated from one another. All these words show the fact that Jesus is the Christ of God, who accomplishes salvation with His suffering, death, and resurrection, and that the disciple who follows Him must lay down his self-centered life.

The expository sermon that follows faithfully traces the meaning of the text and examines how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took the sin of mankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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Preach the kingdom of God with the gospel and the authority received from the Lord

"Then He called His twelve disciples together and gave them power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases. He sent them to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick. And He said to them, 'Take nothing for the journey, neither staffs nor bag nor bread nor money; and do not have two tunics apiece. 'Whatever house you enter, stay there, and from there depart. And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.' So they departed and went through the towns, preaching the gospel and healing everywhere" (Luke 9:1–6).

We must preach the kingdom of God with the authority received from the Lord

Until now Jesus had preached the gospel of the kingdom of God alone, healing the sick and setting free those who were demon-possessed. The disciples watched and learned the words and the ministry of Jesus at His side. Now Jesus called the twelve disciples together and sent them out directly to the villages. A disciple is a person who learns the Word at the side of the Lord and, at the same time, a person who is sent out to preach to others the gospel he has learned.

The twelve disciples did not begin the ministry on their own. Jesus called them, gave them power and authority, determined what they were to preach, and commanded where they were to go. The beginning, the content, and the authority of the gospel ministry all came from Jesus. A disciple is not a person who accomplishes his own will and honor but a person who carries

out the will of the Lord who sent him.

Jesus gave the disciples *"power and authority over all demons, and to cure diseases"*. Power is the actual strength to subdue demons and heal diseases, and authority means the qualification and the command Jesus granted for doing that work. The disciples were not people who possessed such power from the beginning. Since they had received it from Jesus, they could not boast of that power as their own.

The authority of the disciples was not an independent authority that replaced the authority of Jesus or competed with Him. They worked under the name and the command of Jesus. The demons and the diseases did not submit to the ability of the individual disciples; they submitted to the authority of Jesus, who had sent them. Therefore, whatever power may appear, a minister must not exalt himself but give all the glory to Jesus.

The signs of healing diseases and controlling demons that Jesus gave the twelve disciples revealed that the gospel of the kingdom of God they preached had come from the Lord. Today the Lord has given the saints who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit the power to heal with the gospel the souls bound by sin and evil spirits.

The church today must also have compassion on the sick, pray for them, and care for their practical needs. But it must not condemn a person who has not been healed as lacking faith, or show off a special power. The healing of the body depends on the sovereignty of God, and a miracle or power in itself is not evidence that confirms a person's salvation.

The purpose for which Jesus gave the disciples power and authority appears clearly in verse 2. He sent them *"to preach the kingdom of God and to heal the sick"*. The power was not for exalting the names of the disciples or astonishing people. It was for making known that the kingdom of God had come near

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through Jesus and for showing the compassion of God to those who suffer.

In the ministry of the disciples, the preaching of the Word and the healing of the sick were carried out together. The gospel does not turn away from the sufferings of reality, but the healing of the body is not its center. Even if a disease is cured, if sin and judgment are not resolved, no one can enter the kingdom of God; therefore, we must first preach the way for a sinner to obtain the righteousness of God and eternal life.

At the time Jesus sent out the disciples, the Cross and the resurrection had not yet taken place historically. The disciples preached that the kingdom of God had come near and that Jesus was the Savior whom God sent. The kingdom of God they preached was directed toward the salvation that Jesus would later complete with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and would cause to be testified to all the world by the Holy Spirit.

Jesus had already received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. With that baptism He had taken all the sins of all people upon His own body once and for all, and He was going forward toward the Cross. This sending and this preaching of the kingdom of God were also, in the end, directed toward the salvation Jesus would accomplish with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection.

Carrying the sin of mankind He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, Jesus was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died. He received the judgment of sin in our place, was buried, and rose again in three days, and so overcame sin and death. After this salvation was completed, the disciples received the power of the Holy Spirit and came to testify of the death and the resurrection of Jesus to all the world.

Therefore the gospel of the kingdom of God that the church must preach today is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that

Jesus completed. We must not speak only of the blood of the Cross while leaving out the baptism of Jesus, nor speak of the death of the Cross while leaving out the resurrection. We must preach in full the fact that Jesus took sin upon Himself with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and completed salvation with His resurrection.

The gospel preacher is not the one who washes away people's sins. He is a person who delivers with the Word the salvation Jesus has already accomplished. The authority to remit sin lies not in the character or the office of the preacher but in the gospel of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that Jesus accomplished. The hearer, too, must not worship the preacher but confirm and believe the word of God that he preaches.

We must rely on the blessing of the Lord who sends us rather than on human means

In verse 3 Jesus told them to take neither staff nor bag, neither bread nor money nor two tunics for the journey. This was a command by which, in this sending, the disciples were made to rely on the Lord who sent them rather than on material preparation. They were not to secure much baggage and funds and guarantees of safety before departing; they had to believe the word of Jesus and go out at once.

The core of this command lies in the preacher preaching the gospel without relying on human means and methods, believing the command and the provision of the Lord. In the latter part of Luke, Jesus said to prepare what was needed for the changed situation. Therefore all preparation must be used as a tool for serving the gospel under the will of the Lord.

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A preacher must carefully prepare transportation and lodging, safety and language, literature and finances. But he does not believe that the money and the organization he has prepared are the power that accomplishes the ministry of the gospel. The way, the supply, and the fruit of the gospel ministry are brought about not by human means but by the blessing of the Lord.

Nor is it wrong for the church and believers to provide lodging, food, and needed material things for the preacher. Jesus had the disciples enter a house and stay there. This was so that the disciples would minister while receiving the hospitality provided by a believing family. The one who preaches the gospel and the one who supplies what is needed can take part in the ministry of the gospel together.

In verse 4 Jesus said to stay in whatever house they entered and to depart from there. After staying in one house, the disciples were not to move from house to house because some house appeared that offered better food and more comfortable lodging. They were not to use the preaching of the gospel as an opportunity to raise their standard of living or to receive lavish treatment from people.

Staying in one house was also a matter of keeping the stability and the trustworthiness of the ministry. A preacher must not go around looking for wealthier and more influential people, discriminating between persons. He must minister simply and faithfully, being thankful for the hospitality of the person who first received him.

Ministers today also must not use the preaching of the gospel as a means of gathering wealth and receiving good treatment. The size and splendor of a ministry, its donations and its numbers, do not automatically guarantee the approval of God. What matters is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately and serving faithfully the people entrusted to us.

The servant who obeys the command of his Master preaches the gospel

In verse 5 Jesus said that when they left a city that did not receive them, they were to shake off the dust from their feet. Shaking off the dust from the feet was a solemn testimony that the responsibility for rejecting the word of God lay with those people and that they could not escape the judgment to come. Even after preaching the gospel clearly, the disciples had to leave those who refused to the end and go to other souls who would hear the Word.

The disciples did not subdue by violence or compulsion those who would not accept the gospel. The gospel is the word that testifies to the truth clearly and leads people to believe with the heart; it is not a means of forcibly ruling a person's heart.

A preacher must not display himself but deliver the content of the gospel clearly, so that people stand not before the preacher but before the word of God. The person who hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately and still refuses it to the end comes to bear the responsibility of rejecting the salvation God has accomplished.

If a person hears the word that Jesus has resolved all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and still clings to his own righteousness and religious stubbornness, he cannot receive the grace of salvation. Rejecting the gospel is not simply refusing the words of one preacher; when what he says agrees with the Scriptures, it becomes rejecting the salvation God has accomplished.

In verse 6 the disciples obeyed the command of Jesus and went out. They went through the villages, preaching the gospel everywhere and healing the sick. They did not merely say that they had received power and authority; they actually went where

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the Lord sent them. A true disciple does not stop at hearing the Word but obeys the mission he has received.

What the disciples preached was not their own experience and philosophy but the gospel they had received from Jesus. They did not change the content of the gospel to win people's interest, nor mix in the religious ideas in fashion at the time. The church today also must not hide sin and judgment to please people, nor preach the baptism of Jesus and the Cross incompletely.

The purpose of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lie in making people members of a particular organization. It lies in having sinners believe with the heart the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished, receive the remission of all their sins, and receive the Holy Spirit. The person who has believed the gospel becomes one of the people of the kingdom of God, the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart, and he in turn preaches this gospel to others.

The Holy Spirit does not make the believer a person who shows off his own power, but establishes him as a witness of Jesus Christ. Rather than boasting, "I have worked such power," the preacher must testify, "Jesus has resolved all your sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection." The gospel, not miracles, is the center; the name of the Savior, not power, is the center.

The church today must have compassion on the sufferings of the sick, pray for them, and care for their practical needs, and at the same time pour its strength into healing with the gospel of the water and the Spirit the souls bound by sin and evil spirits.

The preacher must not rely on material things absolutely, but neither must he despise them. Finances and facilities are tools for preaching the gospel, not the master of the ministry. We must not give up the gospel because money is lacking, nor does the

work of God automatically arise because money is plentiful. Believing the word of the Lord, we must use the resources entrusted to us honestly and wisely.

The person who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not the master of the gospel but its servant. The One who saves people is Jesus, and the One who makes the Word understood is the Holy Spirit. The preacher does not claim the results as his own merit, nor does he impatiently press people when they do not accept at once. He faithfully preaches the gospel entrusted to him and leaves the outcome to God.

The church today carries out this mission after the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection have been completed. Therefore, to preach the kingdom of God is to preach clearly the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The power that saves sinners lies not in human skill and organization but in the righteousness of God that Jesus completed.

Saints who have believed this gospel and received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit testify of the salvation Jesus has done, each in his own place and according to his own gift, in the home, the workplace, and the neighborhood. The church must bring together one another's gifts and possessions and serve so that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached to the end of the earth.

Go beyond the rumors about Jesus and believe His salvation

"Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again.

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Herod said, 'John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?' So he sought to see Him" (Luke 9:7–9).

Herod, who had not turned from his sin, heard the rumors of Jesus and was afraid

As the gospel of the kingdom of God and the work of healing spread to many regions through Jesus and His disciples, the news reached even Herod the ruler. But Herod did not rejoice when he heard the work of God; he was greatly perplexed. Even when people hear the same news, some believe and rejoice, while others fear that their sin and their power may be shaken.

"All that was done" does not refer to just one miracle. It includes the miracles and the teaching Jesus performed, His casting out demons and healing the sick, and the works the disciples did as they preached the gospel in each region. People talked widely about the name of Jesus and the things happening through Him.

Hearing this news, Herod was greatly perplexed. He did not rejoice at the ministry of Jesus or give thanks to God. As things he could not understand kept happening, he felt confusion and anxiety. Even when people hear the same gospel and the same work of God, some believe and rejoice, while others are perplexed, fearing that their sin and their power may be shaken.

John the Baptist rebuked the sin of Herod and cried out to him to turn back, but Herod put John in prison and finally killed him. So when he heard the rumor that John had risen, he became anxious, recalling the sin he had committed and the judgment. Knowing one's sin and fearing it is different from turning from that sin and believing in the Savior.

People made various conjectures about Jesus. Some said that

John the Baptist, who had died, had risen again; some said that Elijah had appeared; and others said that one of the old prophets had risen again. All acknowledged the special power of Jesus, but none of them knew exactly who He was.

We must know Jesus not by the thoughts of man but by the word of God

In these conjectures there was a mind that acknowledged Jesus as a spiritual figure above ordinary men. But seeing Jesus as one of the great prophets is entirely different from believing in Him as the Son of God and the Savior. Jesus is not John the Baptist come back to life, nor Elijah, nor one of the old prophets appearing again.

People tried to fit Jesus into the religious framework they already knew. When astonishing power appeared, they supposed that one of the famous prophets of the past must have come again. But Jesus cannot be placed in the same position as any prophet of the past. The prophets delivered the word of God, but Jesus is the Son of God, who came in the flesh to save sinners.

Today, too, there are many views about Jesus. Some call Him an excellent moral teacher; some, a religious leader who practiced love; and some think of Him as a powerful healer or social reformer. Even if such appraisals seem to respect Jesus, if one does not believe the salvation He accomplished, one does not believe the Jesus whom the Scriptures testify.

Jesus did not come merely to give people good lessons. He came to save mankind, who had become sinners before God, from sin and judgment. Therefore, to know who Jesus is, we must know together what He accomplished.

Herod asked, *"Who is this?"* The saving answer to this

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question is the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, who saved all sinners with the water and the blood. We must not stop at asking who Jesus is but know the ministry of His that the Scriptures testify and believe it with the heart.

Herod wanted to see Jesus, but seeing with the eyes is not faith. Later, even when he actually met Jesus, he did not repent but sought a miracle and despised Him. Today as well, if one looks only for miracles that will solve the problems of this life and does not believe how Jesus removed sin, one cannot reach saving faith.

Later in the Gospel of Luke, Herod finally saw Jesus in person, but he did not believe in Him as the Savior and sought a miracle. When Jesus gave him no answer, Herod, together with his soldiers, despised and mocked Him. What Herod wanted was not the word of the remission of sin but a miracle that would satisfy his curiosity.

Herod could behead John the Baptist, but he could not abolish the word of God that John the Baptist had preached. Though one witness was killed, the news of the kingdom of God spread all the more widely through the ministry of Jesus and the preaching of the disciples. The powers of this world can oppress and kill the preachers of the gospel, but they cannot stop the saving plan and the word of God.

We come to know Jesus rightly as the Savior when we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The mission of John the Baptist was not to hold people's eyes on himself but to testify of Jesus. As the representative of mankind, he baptized Jesus, passed the sin of the world on to Him, and testified of Jesus as the Lamb of God.

Herod killed the body of John, but he could not cancel the ministry God had accomplished through him. The fact that John the Baptist baptized Jesus, passed the sin of the world on to Him, and testified that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind remains unchanged forever.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took all the sins of all people upon His own body once and for all. The sinless Son of God received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and so fulfilled the righteousness of God that saves sinners. This is the core of the 'water' spoken of in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Carrying the sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, Jesus was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died. He received in His own body the judgment for the sins of all the people of the world. And He was buried and rose again in three days, and so overcame the power of sin and death and completed salvation.

People conjectured that Jesus was John the Baptist or an old prophet come back to life, but the One who would actually rise from the dead was Jesus. The resurrection of Jesus was not a revival returning for a while to the former life, but the resurrection that conquered death forever. Through His resurrection, the way of resurrection and eternal life was opened also to those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The rumors Herod heard were about the miracles and the power of Jesus. But rumors about miracles alone cannot make fully known the meaning of the salvation Jesus accomplished. The gospel does not end with the news that "an amazing man has appeared." It is the news that Jesus took sin upon Himself with His baptism, died on the Cross, and completed salvation with His resurrection.

To believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not to

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choose whichever of the many views about Jesus pleases one's heart. It is to accept as it is the Jesus whom the Scriptures testify. We must believe in Jesus as the Son of God and as the Savior who resolved all our own sins.

John the Baptist did not hold people's eyes on himself but testified of Jesus. The gospel preacher, too, must not let people exalt him or take interest in mysterious powers. He must make sure that the interest of "who is this man?" does not stay on the preacher but turns toward "who is Jesus, and what has He accomplished?"

Herod heard much information and even had the opportunity to meet Jesus, but a high position did not produce faith. Salvation is not obtained by power, knowledge, property, or religious position; it is received by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart.

Conversely, even a person with no name in society and no wealth can receive the remission of sin if he believes with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished. Salvation is not obtained by power, knowledge, property, or religious position. It is received by hearing and believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Herod was anxious because of his sin, but he did not come to Jesus and receive the remission of sin. A person may hide his sin or soothe his conscience with good deeds and repeated regrets, but he cannot remove sin itself. It is when we believe the fact that Jesus took sin upon Himself with His baptism and paid its price on the Cross that we obtain the peace grounded on the completed salvation.

Jesus did not merely cover up the sin of man; He took it upon Himself completely and was judged for it. He received sin passed on to Him with His baptism and paid the whole price of sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. The person

who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit obtains the true peace of conscience on the ground not of his own feelings but of the fact Jesus accomplished.

Today, too, people can hear much news about Jesus through sermons and books, videos and testimonies. Having much information does not produce faith. We must not remain at comparing people's claims and repeating the question "who is Jesus?" but confirm the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Scriptures testify, and believe it with the heart.

Believers, too, must look back and ask whether, while thinking they know Jesus well, they are limiting Him to an image that suits their own needs. We must examine whether we think of Him only as the One who heals diseases, gives wealth, and solves difficulties. Jesus is not a means of fulfilling our desires but the Lord who saved us from sin, judgment, and death.

Therefore we must not stop, like Herod, at hearing rumors about Jesus and feeling curiosity. We must acknowledge that we are sinners and believe the fact that Jesus took our sins upon Himself with His baptism in the Jordan River, received their judgment on the Cross, and rose again. When we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of all our sins, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and become the people of the kingdom of God.

Jesus, who feeds with the Word and with the food of life

"And the apostles, when they had returned, told Him all that they had done. Then He took them and went aside privately into a deserted place belonging to the city called Bethsaida. But when the multitudes knew it, they followed Him; and He received

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them and spoke to them about the kingdom of God, and healed those who had need of healing. When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, 'Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here.' But He said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. Then He said to His disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of fifty.' And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them" (Luke 9:10–17).

Jesus, who received the multitude that came to Him

The apostles who returned from their sending reported to Jesus what they had done. It was because the beginning, the power, and the fruit of the ministry had come from the Lord. Jesus intended to rest privately with the tired disciples, but when the multitude followed, He did not send them away but received them.

Jesus took the apostles and departed privately to a town called Bethsaida. The disciples, who had traveled through many regions preaching the Word and healing the sick, needed rest and time to collect themselves. Serving people is precious, but if the limits of body and heart are ignored, one becomes exhausted. Those who serve the gospel also need time to rest before the Lord and gain strength again from the Word.

But the multitude learned where Jesus had gone and followed Him. The plan of Jesus and the disciples to be alone was changed by the arrival of the crowd. Jesus did not treat the people who came to Him as a nuisance or send them away; He received them. He had compassion on the people who needed salvation and help rather than seeking His own comfort.

Jesus first spoke to the multitude about the kingdom of God. Then He healed those who needed healing, and when the day was ending, He also gave them food. Jesus did not divide a person into soul and body and care for only one side. While teaching the Word, He did not turn away from the diseases and the hunger of the body.

Yet through this order we can also see that the word of the kingdom of God is the center. Jesus did not merely feed the crowd; He first taught them the things of the kingdom of God. For man cannot live forever by the food of the body alone. Even if hunger is solved, if the problem of sin and judgment remains, no one can enter the kingdom of God.

When the day began to wear away, the disciples judged it impossible to feed five thousand in the deserted place and proposed sending the multitude to the villages. It was a humanly reasonable judgment, but though they had ministered by the power of the Lord until just before, before a new problem they calculated only the visible conditions. Believers, too, can forget the grace they have received and look only at the insufficiency of the present.

The judgment of the disciples was reasonable from a human point of view. Providing a meal in the deserted place for about five thousand people, counting only the men, looked impossible. But the disciples were the very people who had just received power and authority from Jesus, done amazing works, and returned. While preaching the gospel to others and healing their

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diseases, before a new problem set before themselves they again calculated only the visible conditions.

Believers, too, can speak of the power of God to others and yet, when they meet their own problem, calculate only the money and the ability they have. While remembering the grace received in the past, before the insufficiency of the present it is easy to forget who the Lord is. This event shows that much experience of ministry does not automatically complete one's faith.

When Jesus said, *"You give them something to eat,"* it did not mean that the disciples originally had such ability; it was the word that made them realize their limits and take part in the provision of the Lord. The disciples brought to the Lord the small amount of five loaves and two fish. Faith is not dressing up one's insufficiency but entrusting what one has into the hands of the Lord.

The disciples brought their insufficiency to the Lord as it was. Faith is not pretending that one's lack does not exist; it is admitting one's limits and entrusting what one has into the hands of the Lord. The five loaves and two fish were insignificant in the eyes of man, but when the Lord blessed them, they became the food that fed a great multitude.

Jesus did not tell the disciples to produce bread and fish that they did not have. He received the little they had. The work of God does not begin from human merit, but God gladly receives the small time, possessions, and gifts a person has and uses them in serving the gospel.

Therefore we must not do nothing on the ground that what we have is small. Though we cannot feed everyone, we can help one person; though we cannot go to every nation, we can preach the gospel to one person. The One who brings forth the results is the Lord, but the believer must offer in faith what has been entrusted to him.

We live not by human means and methods but by the blessing of the Lord

Jesus told the disciples to have the crowd sit down in groups of about fifty. The miracle of the five loaves and two fish was not accomplished in disorderly excitement. The great crowd sat down in order, and preparation was made so that the disciples could distribute the food.

After the disciples had seated the people according to the word of Jesus, Jesus received the five loaves and the two fish. Looking up to heaven, He blessed them, broke the loaves, and gave them to the disciples. Jesus gave thanks to God the Father and shared the received food with the people. He did not regard the little as insignificant but received it with thanksgiving.

When Jesus blessed it, the small amount of food became the food that fed a great multitude. The One who multiplied the bread was Jesus, and the ones who delivered it were the disciples. The church and the preacher, too, are not beings who produce salvation but servants who share the word received from the Lord.

Jesus gave the bread to the disciples to set before the multitude. The One who multiplied the bread was Jesus, but the ones who delivered it to the people were the disciples. The disciples were not the source of life but the channel of supply. The church and the gospel preacher also are not beings who produce salvation but servants who distribute to people the gospel received from Jesus.

The crowd did not merely taste a little; they all ate and were filled. The supply of Jesus was not given to only some people, nor did it run short in the middle. Everyone who came to Jesus ate enough. This event shows the creative power and the abundant compassion of Jesus.

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The abundant supply of Jesus shows that He is the Creator, who made all things, and God, who knows every need of man. The Lord cares also for our bodily needs, but the greatest blessing He intends to give us is the salvation that washes away all sin and gives eternal life. Saints believe the Lord more than their visible circumstances and live in His blessing.

After everyone had eaten, the leftover fragments were twelve baskets. This shows the fact that the supply of Jesus was abundant enough to eat as needed and still remain. Gathering up the leftover fragments also reveals that the food God had given was not carelessly wasted. Having received abundantly does not mean the material entrusted to us may be used irresponsibly.

The flesh and blood of Jesus are the true food that gives life to the soul

In the Gospel of John, after performing the sign of the five loaves and two fish, Jesus revealed that He Himself is the bread of life. The person who eats the bread of the body becomes hungry again and dies in the end, but the person who believes the salvation Jesus accomplished obtains the remission of sin and eternal life. The body of Jesus is the bread of life that gives life to sinners.

To give mankind eternal life, Jesus first received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. He took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body and went to the Cross bearing those sins. On the Cross He gave up His body and shed His blood and died, and so received the judgment of sin in our place.

And Jesus was buried and rose again in three days, and so overcame sin and death. The baptism of Jesus, the blood of the

Cross, His death, and His resurrection are the gospel of the water and the Spirit that gives the soul of man eternal life. Believing this gospel with the heart is the faith that eats the food of life.

To eat the bread of life is to believe with the heart the fact that Jesus took all our sins upon His own body by receiving baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all sins and obtains eternal life.

Today, too, a person may seek Jesus only as the One who solves material problems. He may follow Jesus while obtaining health and finances, success and comfort, and then leave when the desired results do not come. But Jesus is not merely the One who gives the bread of the body; He is the Savior who bore all our sins and gave us eternal life.

The words given to the disciples, *"You give them something to eat,"* give an important application to the church today as well. The church must not tell the hungry, the sick, and those in hardship only to listen to the gospel while ignoring their actual needs. It must use the possessions and time, the knowledge and skills entrusted to it to care for its neighbors.

This event teaches the faith that entrusts what is insufficient to the Lord, and together with it, the obedience that actually distributes what has been received. If the disciples had only held the bread, the crowd could not have eaten. When they set before the people what Jesus had given, the supply was delivered. The gospel, too, must not be kept only in the heart but delivered to those who have not yet heard it.

The person who has received the remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit shares with others the food of life he has received. The gospel does not diminish by being shared. Rather, more people believe the complete

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salvation of Jesus, obtain eternal life, and become the people of the kingdom of God.

We are not people who live by human means and methods, by money and wit alone. We have lived until now by the blessing of the Lord, and we will go on living by that blessing. Therefore we must not rely on our own strength but entrust even the little we have into the hands of the Lord, and share with our neighbors the word of life received from the Lord. We must ask in faith that God may bless us, the church, and the preaching of the gospel, and live obeying the words of Jesus, our Master.

Deny yourself and follow the Christ, who accomplished salvation

"And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?' So they answered and said, 'John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God.' And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.' Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost? For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words, of him the Son of Man will be ashamed when He comes in His own glory, and in His Father's, and of the holy

angels. But I tell you truly, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:18–27).

Jesus is the Christ of God, who accomplished salvation with His suffering, death, and resurrection

While praying alone, Jesus asked His disciples, *"Who do the crowds say that I am?"* Luke records that at every important turning point in the ministry of Jesus, He prayed. Jesus did not ask this question because He did not know people's appraisals. It was a question that made the disciples reveal who they knew Jesus to be, after seeing so many miracles and hearing the Word.

Earlier, Jesus had fed the great crowd with the five loaves and two fish. He had healed the sick, cast out demons, and raised the dead. Such rumors had reached even Herod, and Herod too wondered who Jesus was. Some said that John the Baptist had risen from the dead; some said that Elijah had appeared; and others said that one of the old prophets had risen again.

People appraised Jesus as a great prophet or a powerful religious leader, but they did not know Him rightly. Today, too, if one understands Jesus only as an excellent teacher or a sage who practiced love, one misses the core of the gospel. Jesus is the Son of God, who came to save mankind from sin and death.

Today, too, many people understand Jesus only as an excellent teacher, a sage who taught love, a social reformer who cared for the poor, or a religious leader who worked miracles. In such explanations some aspects of Jesus are contained, but the core of the gospel is missing. Who Jesus is becomes clearly revealed through how He bore the sins of mankind and accomplished salvation.

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After hearing the appraisal of the crowd, Jesus asked the disciples, *"But who do you say that I am?"* Knowing how other people think of Jesus is not enough. Salvation is not received by public opinion, by the faith of one's parents, or by the tradition of the church. Each person must believe with his own heart who Jesus is and what He has accomplished.

Peter answered, *"The Christ of God."* 'Christ' means the Savior whom God established and sent. Peter confessed that Jesus is not a mere prophet but the Christ whom God promised. This was a right confession concerning the identity of Jesus.

But Peter's saying the title Christ rightly and his fully understanding the method of salvation the Christ would accomplish are two different matters. The disciples easily expected that the Christ would restore Israel with power and receive glory in the world. A Christ who suffers, is rejected, and dies was still a figure hard for them to accept. That is why, right after hearing Peter's confession, Jesus explained what kind of Christ He is.

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day."* This word shows most clearly what kind of Christ Jesus is. The Christ of God is not One who avoids suffering and obtains power in the world, but the One who bears the sins of mankind, dies, and rises again, and so completes salvation.

The words *"be raised"* show that the death of Jesus is not something that happens only by accident or by people's plot. The religious leaders tried to reject and kill Jesus, but Jesus was not seized without knowing what would come upon Him. He went that way Himself in order to fulfill the will of God to save mankind from sin.

At the time Jesus spoke this word, He had already received

baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. That Jesus, who has no sin at all, received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, was not simply a display of humility or the performance of a religious ceremony. Through that baptism Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body and fulfilled all the righteousness of God.

Jesus bore the sins of mankind He had taken on and went to the Cross. The blood He shed on the Cross was the result of receiving in our place the judgment that is the wages of sin. The baptism of Jesus and the Cross are not events separated from each other. Because Jesus had taken sin upon Himself with His baptism, He received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and after shedding His blood and dying He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame sin and death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed.

Therefore the confession *"The Christ of God"* must not contain only knowledge about the name or the identity of Jesus. We must believe that Jesus is the Son of God, who took all my sins upon Himself with His baptism, paid the wages of those sins with the blood of the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed salvation.

We can follow the Lord only when we deny even our own rightness

After speaking of His suffering, death, and resurrection, Jesus said to them all, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."* What is important here is that Jesus first spoke of His own Cross and resurrection and then spoke of the disciple's cross.

The Cross of Jesus and the cross of the disciple are not

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identical. The Cross of Jesus is the Cross of salvation that atoned for the sins of mankind. That Cross could be borne only by Jesus, the Son of God, and no one can add anything to that work. The cross the disciple bears is the cross of obedience and sacrifice borne in the course of believing the salvation Jesus has already accomplished and following Him.

The word *"anyone"* shows that the way of following Jesus is not given to only a few special ministers. Everyone who believes in Jesus must lay down the thought that he is the master of his own life and follow Christ. Salvation is received freely, but the life of the saved person can no longer be a life for himself alone.

The life of faith starts from denying oneself. When receiving salvation, one must deny the thought that one can solve sin with one's own righteousness and merit, and believe the righteousness of God—that Jesus took all sins upon Himself with His baptism and completed salvation with the blood of the Cross and the resurrection. Even after receiving the remission of sin, one must deny one's own thoughts and righteousness and follow the word of the Lord.

Self-denial is not abandoning only wrong thoughts. Even the thoughts we are convinced are right and the plans that look excellent must be laid down if they differ from the Word. We must deny both the thought that we are superior and the thought that we are too lacking to do anything, and hold on to the righteousness and the guidance of the Lord.

A person can disobey the Lord not only because of wrong thoughts but also because of thoughts he is convinced are right. Peter, too, confessed Jesus rightly as the Christ, but he could not easily accept the word that the Christ must suffer and die. Even when the confession of faith is right, one can accept only the Jesus who fits one's own expectation and refuse the way of the Cross.

Luke records that one must take up his cross *"daily."* Self-denial does not end with one emotional resolution. The believer must choose every day between his own greed and fear, the world's recognition and the gospel. He must deny the heart that wants to hide the gospel to avoid loss, the heart that wants to alter the truth to be praised by people, and the heart that would put off the will of the Lord for its own safety, and follow Jesus.

To take up one's own cross is to bear in faith the hardships and sacrifices met in the course of following the Lord and the gospel. Not only when circumstances are good, but also when loss, persecution, and toil follow, we must think of the Lord first and obey His word. Denying oneself and following the Lord even in hardship is the practical life of faith.

Jesus said, *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."* The person who would keep his place and his safety in the world even by denying Jesus loses eternal life in the end, but the person who loses the world's recognition and profit, and if necessary even the life of the body, because of Jesus, obtains true life in God.

The remission of sin is not obtained by the merit of suffering much or sacrificing one's own life; it is received by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. The person who believes the fact that this salvation is more precious than the life of this world does not abandon the Lord to protect his own profit, but offers his life for the Lord and the gospel.

We must look to the life and the kingdom of God, more precious than the whole world

The words *"For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and is himself destroyed or lost?"* make us ask

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what is most precious to a person. Even if one gains all the wealth and power, honor and pleasure of the whole world, if he loses his own life they are of no use. Even if his life looks successful in the world, if he does not receive the remission of sin and loses the kingdom of God, he has lost the most important thing.

Jesus went on to say, *"For whoever is ashamed of Me and My words."* In those days the cross was not a glorious religious ornament but a shameful and cruel instrument of execution. To confess as the Christ the Jesus who had been rejected by people and had died on a cross was a matter that could bring the world's ridicule and persecution.

Today, too, one can accept the name of Jesus and yet be ashamed of His words. We must not hide or alter the gospel—that Jesus took all sins upon Himself with His baptism and accomplished the complete remission of sin with the blood of the Cross and the resurrection—for fear of people's reactions. We must preach it with love and wisdom, but we must not delete the essence of the gospel in order to be recognized by the world.

Now Jesus speaks as the Son of Man who will suffer and be rejected, but He will come again in the glory of His Father and of the holy angels. Jesus, who bore the Cross, is not One who was helplessly defeated. He rose again and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God, and on the last day He comes in glory as the Judge. The person who is now ashamed of Jesus and His words before people will have it revealed before Jesus on that day what choice he made.

Jesus said that there were some standing there who would see the kingdom of God before they died. The nearest fulfillment is the event of the Mount of Transfiguration that follows. The disciples saw in advance the glory hidden in Jesus, who would suffer and die, and learned that behind the Cross were the

resurrection and the glory of the kingdom of God.

Furthermore, the confession of believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit must appear in a life of following Jesus. The believer is not a person who completes salvation by self-sacrifice, but a person who, because he believes the salvation already completed, lays down the life in which he was his own master. He must choose Jesus and His word daily, and count the salvation of souls and the worth of the gospel more precious than the profit of the world.

Jesus is the Christ of God, who suffered many things, was rejected and killed, but rose again on the third day. He took all the sins of mankind upon Himself with the baptism of the Jordan River, received the judgment of sin with the blood of the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed salvation. The person who has received the remission of sin by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit daily denies his own excellence and deficiency, his rightness and wrongness, and lives following the word of the Lord. Though he may now meet hardship and loss on that way, he will at last see the Christ coming in glory and the kingdom of God.

The glory of the salvation of Jesus revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration

"Now it came to pass, about eight days after these sayings, that He took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. As He prayed, the appearance of His face was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem. But Peter and those with him were

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heavy with sleep; and when they were fully awake, they saw His glory and the two men who stood with Him. Then it happened, as they were parting from Him, that Peter said to Jesus, 'Master, it is good for us to be here; and let us make three tabernacles: one for You, one for Moses, and one for Elijah'—not knowing what he said. While he was saying this, a cloud came and overshadowed them; and they were fearful as they entered the cloud. And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!' When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen" (Luke 9:28–36).

The glory of Jesus with the Cross before Him

This event is directly connected with the words Jesus had spoken before it. Jesus had said that He must suffer many things, be killed, and rise again on the third day, and He had told the disciples to deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow Him. He had also said that there were some standing there who would see the kingdom of God before they died. That three disciples saw the glory of Jesus on the mountain about eight days later was an event in which He gave them a foretaste of that promise.

Jesus took Peter, John, and James and went up on the mountain to pray. Luke records that the alteration of the appearance of Jesus took place as He prayed. Jesus prayed to the Father at every important moment of His ministry, and in this scene as well He showed that the way He was going toward the Cross lay within the will of the Father.

The appearance of Jesus was altered, and His robe became white and glistening. This does not mean that Jesus became the

Son of God for the first time at that moment. Jesus is the Son of God from the beginning and the Lord of glory. The glory that had been hidden within His lowly form in the flesh was revealed to the disciples for a moment.

Ahead of this, Jesus would be rejected by people and nailed to the Cross. In the eyes of the disciples that death could look like defeat and disgrace. But the radiance of the Mount of Transfiguration showed in advance that the One going to the Cross is not a helpless victim but the Son who possesses the glory of God, the One who would pass through death and reveal the glory of the resurrection.

The appearance of Jesus revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration also shows the glory of the resurrection that saints who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit will put on in the future. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, saints who have received the remission of sin will also, when the Lord comes again, be transformed into spiritual bodies that do not decay and do not die, and enter the eternal kingdom of God.

Moses and Elijah testify of the salvation to be accomplished with the water and the Spirit

Moses and Elijah appeared in glory and talked with Jesus. Moses is the servant who received from God the Law and the law of sacrifice of the Tabernacle. The Law makes man realize his sin, and the law of sacrifice showed the way for a sinner to receive the remission of sin: the sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed his sin on to it, and the offering shed its blood and was judged. This word that Moses received reveals the foundation of the salvation Jesus would accomplish.

Elijah did the ministry of turning back to God the hearts of

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the people of Israel, who had fallen into idols. Jesus said that the ministry of Elijah, promised in the Old Testament to come, was fulfilled through John the Baptist. John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus and passed the sins of all the people of the world on to Him. Therefore Moses and Elijah, who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, testify that Jesus is the One who would completely fulfill the law of sacrifice of God and the promise of salvation.

Luke records that they spoke of *"His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem."* Here the decease is not a vague expression meaning simply leaving the world. It refers to the saving event in which Jesus would die on the Cross at Jerusalem and rise again, and so deliver sinners from the power of Satan and death.

The glory of Jesus and the Cross are not opposed to each other. His true glory does not lie in avoiding suffering and ascending the throne of the world; it is revealed in obeying the will of the Father, giving His life in the place of sinners, and overcoming death. The Mount of Transfiguration is not a scene that promises glory without the Cross, but a scene that shows in advance the glory that would be revealed through the Cross and the resurrection.

Jesus had already taken all the sins of mankind upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. That the sinless Son of God received baptism was not to wash away His own sin but to take over the sin of the world and fulfill the righteousness of God. The decease at Jerusalem spoken of on the Mount of Transfiguration refers to His going to the Cross bearing the sins He had taken on in that way.

Jesus received in our place the judgment of the sin of mankind by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He was buried and rose again on the third day, and so overcame sin

and death. Therefore the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that looks only at the glory of the Mount of Transfiguration. It is the gospel that believes together the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection.

Just as, in the law of sacrifice Moses received, the laying on of hands that passed sin on to the sacrificial offering was indispensable, so Jesus also took all the sins of mankind upon Himself once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and then rose again. The event of the Mount of Transfiguration, where Moses and Elijah talked with Jesus, shows that this salvation of the water and the Spirit was accomplished according to the promise and the plan of God.

Peter and those with him were heavy with sleep, and when they were fully awake they saw the glory of Jesus. This record conveys what the disciples actually experienced on the mountain. At the same time, it makes us think that only when we are awake before the word of God can we rightly see the glory of Christ and the meaning of the Cross. When a person is captive to his own expectations, he may want the power and the glory of Jesus while refusing to hear the Cross and the obedience of which He speaks.

When Moses and Elijah were about to depart, Peter said he would make three tabernacles. He may have wished that glorious moment to continue. But Luke makes it clear that Peter did not know what he was saying. Great human zeal does not mean an exact knowledge of the will of God.

Peter’s proposal took the form of setting Jesus, Moses, and Elijah side by side. But Jesus is not one of the great prophets. Moses and Elijah are also servants of God, but Jesus is the Son whom God sent, the Christ who would complete salvation. Man

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cannot place any religious figure or tradition in the same position as Jesus.

We must hear only the words of Jesus, the Son of God

When the cloud covered them, the disciples were afraid. Out of the cloud God said, *"This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!"* What the disciples needed was not to hold on to the scene of glory with their own thoughts but to hear the word spoken by the Son of God.

The command "*Hear Him!*" includes accepting the words of the prediction of His suffering and of discipleship spoken just before. The disciples had confessed Jesus as the Christ, but they could not easily accept the word that the Christ would suffer and die. God told them to believe the word of Jesus rather than their own expectations.

Today, too, people easily accept only the Jesus who fits their own wishes. They want miracles, prosperity, and glory, but they may refuse the word that points out sin and makes them abandon their own righteousness. But true faith is not fitting Jesus into one's own plans; it is hearing as it is the word of the salvation He accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and receiving it with the heart.

When the voice had ceased, only Jesus was seen. The Law that Moses received makes us realize sin; the law of sacrifice shows how sin is passed on and judged; and John the Baptist, who fulfilled the ministry of Elijah, passed the sin of mankind on to Jesus. And the One who actually took all that sin upon Himself, was judged on the Cross, and rose again is Jesus Christ alone.

A sinner is not saved by the merit of keeping the Law or by

religious experience. The fact of having seen an amazing sight does not itself remove sin either. When one believes the fact that Jesus took all my sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, paid the wages of those sins on the Cross, and rose again, one receives the remission of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The experience of the Mount of Transfiguration was not given so that the disciples would remain on the mountain. The next day they had to go down to the foot of the mountain, where suffering people and a faithless reality were waiting. The believer, too, must not hold only to gracious experiences and turn away from the sufferings of the world and of his neighbors. The person who has seen the glory of the gospel must carry that word down to the place of his life and serve the people who are in sin and suffering.

The disciples did not tell what they had seen until Jesus died and rose again. The glory of Jesus is fully revealed within the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that He took the sin of the world upon Himself with His baptism in the Jordan River, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Afterward the disciples testified to the world of this completed salvation and the glory of the resurrection.

This passage teaches that believing in Jesus as the Lord of glory and believing in Him as the Savior of the Cross are one. We must not speak of the glory of Jesus while leaving out His baptism and His Cross, nor speak of the Cross while forgetting the resurrection and the glory of the kingdom of God. The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies together of the lowliness of Jesus, who took sin upon Himself and was judged, and of the glory of His victory over death.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that all his sins have disappeared through the

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baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus. He does not put forward his own thoughts and religious experiences, but believes and follows the words of Jesus according to the command of God, *"Hear Him!"* He also believes that he will in the future be transformed into a spiritual body like the Lord's and take part in the glory of the kingdom of God, and he preaches the word of the remission of sin to those who do not yet know this gospel.

Jesus, who overcomes demons, sin, and death

"Now it happened on the next day, when they had come down from the mountain, that a great multitude met Him. Suddenly a man from the multitude cried out, saying, 'Teacher, I implore You, look on my son, for he is my only child. And behold, a spirit seizes him, and he suddenly cries out; it convulses him so that he foams at the mouth; and it departs from him with great difficulty, bruising him. So I implored Your disciples to cast it out, but they could not.' Then Jesus answered and said, 'O faithless and perverse generation, how long shall I be with you and bear with you? Bring your son here.' And as he was still coming, the demon threw him down and convulsed him. Then Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the child, and gave him back to his father. And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples" (Luke 9:37–43).

The Son of God, who came to the suffering at the foot of the mountain

On the Mount of Transfiguration the glory of Jesus was revealed, and the voice of God was heard saying to hear His word. But at the foot of the mountain were a boy tormented by a demon, a father in despair, and disciples who could do nothing. Jesus did not remain on the glorious mountain; He came down to the person who was suffering. This shows the love of the Son of God, who possesses the glory of heaven and yet came to sinners.

This scene shows why Jesus came to this earth. Jesus was the Son of God, who could have remained only in the glory of heaven, but to save human beings suffering under the power of sin and death, He put on the body of a man and came into the world. The glory revealed on the Mount of Transfiguration shows His original identity, but His coming down the mountain shows His love that sought out sinners.

When Jesus came down from the mountain, a great multitude met Him. Among them one man cried out, pleading with Him to look on his son. He said, *"He is my only child."* This boy was a precious son whom his father could exchange for nothing. But the father could do nothing while watching his beloved son suffer severely.

The father called Jesus *"Teacher."* We cannot know how fully he understood Jesus at this time as the Son of God and the Savior. But he knew that he could not save his son by his own strength, and he asked Jesus for help. The starting point of faith lies in acknowledging that one has no ability to solve the problem and in coming to Jesus.

The father said that when the demon seized his son, it made him suddenly cry out and convulsed him so that he foamed, and

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it departed from him only with great difficulty, bruising him. This boy could not escape from the power of the demon by his own strength. His father loved him but could not deliver him, and even the disciples of Jesus could not cast out the demon.

The Scripture clearly states that the suffering of this boy actually came from the work of an unclean spirit. When Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, the demon submitted to His command and left, and the boy was healed. This event shows the absolute authority of Jesus, stronger than the power of Satan and demons.

The failure of the disciples and the absolute authority of Jesus

The father had already asked the disciples of Jesus to cast out the demon. Jesus had earlier given the twelve disciples power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. The disciples had gone through many villages preaching the gospel and healing the sick, and had also experienced the work of subduing demons. But this time they could do nothing.

The disciples had past experience and the authority of ministry, but it was not a power that worked automatically at all times like their own possession. The authority to subdue demons did not originally come from the disciples; it was given by Jesus. The disciples could use that authority only when they relied on Jesus. Past successful experience cannot take the place of present faith and dependence.

This fact gives an important lesson to the church today as well. The church and its ministers do not have an independent power to save people. A long career of faith and office, a famous name, special methods of prayer, or loud shouting cannot in

themselves become the power that subdues evil spirits and saves sinners. The power belongs only to Jesus Christ, and the church must rely on His word and His gospel.

The name of Jesus is not an incantation for man to use; it is the name of the Savior, who overcame the power of Satan, sin, and death. The authority the Lord gives does not lie in showing off human ability; it lies in preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit and saving the souls that were enslaved to Satan.

Jesus rebuked the faithless and perverse generation. Here, faith is not strong emotion or positive self-confidence but trusting who Jesus is and what He has accomplished. The person who admits his helplessness and insufficiency and asks the Lord for help receives His compassion.

This rebuke was not a word condemning the suffering boy. It was a rebuke directed at the generation that did not recognize and believe the Son of God, including the disciples, who had seen the countless works Jesus did and still did not fully rely on Him. In the parallel passage, when the disciples asked why they could not cast out the demon, Jesus said it was because their faith was small.

Here, having no faith does not simply mean "I failed to think positively that things would go well." The faith the Scriptures speak of is not self-confidence or the intensity of feeling, but believing who Jesus is and what He has accomplished. However strongly one wishes and however emotionally convinced one is, if the object of faith is wrong, it is not scriptural faith.

Jesus said, "*Bring your son here.*" Though the disciples failed, Jesus does not fail. Even if a religious leader cannot solve the problem and one has been wounded in a church, that does not make Jesus powerless. We must not give up on Jesus because of the failure of men. We must go beyond people and institutions to Jesus Himself.

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Even as the boy was coming to Jesus, the demon threw him down and convulsed him severely. Coming near to Jesus did not mean the problem immediately grew quiet. Rather, a fiercer resistance appeared. But the situation appearing to grow worse did not mean the authority of Jesus had weakened.

A person, too, may feel more uncomfortable in heart as he hears the word of the gospel and discovers his own sin. When he hears the word that he is a sinner and must receive the judgment of God, fear and resistance can arise. But he must not run away from the Word. The exposure of one's sin is the process by which the need to come to the Savior becomes clear.

Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit. Jesus did not negotiate at length with the demon or fail several times. Before the command of the Son of God, the unclean spirit could only withdraw. What the disciples could not do, Jesus accomplished with His own authority.

Jesus rebuked and cast out the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. He brought complete restoration from the oppression of the evil spirit, the wounds of the body, and the suffering of the broken family. The salvation of the Lord is the work of restoring a person to a whole life lived in daily life and relationships, rather than making him an exhibit of power.

The greater salvation to which the sign of casting out the demon points

This event, in which Jesus rebuked the demon and saved the boy, reveals that Jesus is the Savior of mankind and almighty God. The signs and miracles Jesus performed did not have their purpose in astonishing people; they were signs that made known that He is the Son of God, who would save mankind from the

power of sin, Satan, and death.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. When the sinless Son of God received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, He took over all our sins—past, present, and future. Bearing those sins He went to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and on the third day He rose again and overcame sin and death.

Jesus said to rejoice not because the demons submit but because one's name is written in heaven. The greater and more fundamental blessing than being released from demons and healed of disease is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of all sins, and becoming a child of God.

The sure evidence of salvation does not lie in working mysterious powers or experiencing changes of the body. The person who believes the gospel—that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself with His baptism, paid the wages of those sins with the blood of the Cross, and rose from the dead—receives the remission of all sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and has his name written in heaven.

Just as Jesus accomplished what the disciples could not do, man's religion and good deeds, the works of the Law and repeated prayers of repentance cannot completely remove the sin in the heart or overcome the power of death. Rather than strengthening his own methods, a sinner must believe the salvation Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

But Jesus accomplished what man cannot do. He took all sins upon Himself with His baptism, paid the wages of those sins on the Cross, and shattered death with His resurrection. The sinner

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must not use his own methods more strenuously, but acknowledge his helplessness and believe with the heart what Jesus has accomplished.

People were amazed at the power of Jesus, but amazement itself is not saving faith. One can pursue mysterious experiences and miracles and yet not accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The purpose of a sign is to lead people to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Christ, who saves sinners.

The words at the end of verse 43, *"He said to His disciples,"* lead into the next passage. While everyone was amazed at the power of Jesus, He again tells His disciples that He will be delivered into the hands of men. Luke does not separate the majesty of Jesus from the Cross. The Son of God, who has authority over demons, will Himself stand in the place of sinners and suffer the Cross.

The Cross of Jesus was not a defeat suffered for lack of power. The One who could rebuke an unclean spirit with a single word went the way of suffering Himself to save mankind from sin. It was not that He could not come down from the Cross; He obeyed unto death to the end in order to pay in full the wages of our sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism.

Believers today must first learn from this passage the faith that comes to Jesus. When there are problems hard to solve, the suffering of children, and hardship in the family, we must not act as if we could solve everything by our own strength. We must acknowledge our helplessness and entrust every problem to almighty Jesus.

The gospel minister also must not act as if he had the power to change people. The preacher and the church are not the savior of sinners. They are only workers who preach the gospel. The One who removes sin from the heart of a person, gives the Holy Spirit, and grants eternal life is Jesus Christ alone.

In this way, Jesus did not turn away from us, who were under the power of sin and death. He took all our sins upon Himself with the baptism of the Jordan River, received the judgment of sin in our place with the blood of the Cross, and rose from the dead and accomplished complete salvation. What man and religion could not do, the Son of God has done. Therefore we must not rely on our own ability or mysterious experiences, but believe with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed.

Jesus, who was delivered up of His own accord and accomplished the salvation of sinners

"And they were all amazed at the majesty of God. But while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did, He said to His disciples, 'Let these words sink down into your ears, for the Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men.' But they did not understand this saying, and it was hidden from them so that they did not perceive it; and they were afraid to ask Him about this saying" (Luke 9:43–45).

Jesus, who spoke of the Cross while people were amazed at His power

Below the mountain, Jesus delivered the boy who had been seized by an unclean spirit and was suffering severely. The disciples could not cast out the demon, but Jesus rebuked the unclean spirit, healed the boy, and gave him back to his father. All the people who saw this were amazed at the majesty of God.

Here the people were amazed not merely because they had

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seen a marvelous sight. They saw Jesus accomplish with a single word what the disciples could not do. Through the sight of the power of the demon submitting before the command of Jesus and the badly injured boy being restored whole, the people saw the majesty of God that goes beyond human ability.

If Peter, John, and James saw the glory of Jesus on the Mount of Transfiguration, the crowd below the mountain saw the authority of Jesus delivering the suffering boy. On the mountain the glory of Jesus appeared, and below the mountain the power of Jesus appeared. In the eyes of the people, Jesus must now have looked like One who would keep displaying only victory and glory.

But at that very moment Jesus spoke to His disciples of His suffering. Luke records, "*while everyone marveled at all the things which Jesus did,*" and then immediately continues with the prediction of His suffering. At the moment people were admiring the power of Jesus, He said that He would be delivered into the hands of men.

This contrast is important. People had their hearts taken by the power that subdues demons and by miracles, but Jesus saw that the disciples had to know something more important than that. The ultimate purpose for which Jesus came to this earth did not lie in continually working miracles that astonish people. His purpose in coming was to take the sin of mankind upon Himself, receive the judgment of sin on the Cross, and complete salvation.

Jesus said, "*Let these words sink down into your ears.*" This means not to hear carelessly and pass on, but to engrave them deep in the heart and remember them. It means not to lose the word of Jesus, swept up in the cheers of the people and the excitement of miracles. They had to receive the word Jesus Himself spoke as more important than the visible power.

The disciples had heard the voice of God on the Mount of

Transfiguration. God had said that Jesus is His Son and His chosen One, and that they should hear His word. Now Jesus says that He will be delivered into the hands of men. The word of Jesus the disciples had to hear was not only the word of glory and power but also the word of suffering and the Cross.

People try to keep in their ears only the words they want to hear. They gladly receive words about blessing and success, health and the solving of problems, but they want to avoid words about sin and judgment, self-denial and the cross. But to know Jesus fully, we must receive the words about His suffering and death together with the words of glory.

Being delivered into the hands of men was not defeat but the way of salvation He took of His own will

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."* 'The Son of Man' is the expression Jesus used when referring to Himself. He who rebuked the demon and revealed the majesty of God will soon be delivered into the hands of men.

Jesus knew beforehand what would come upon Him. The betrayal of Judas Iscariot and the plot of the religious leaders, the mocking of the Roman soldiers and the death of the Cross did not happen by accident. Jesus knew all these things and yet did not avoid them. To fulfill the will of the Father to save mankind from sin, He went forward on that way Himself.

That Jesus was delivered into the hands of men does not mean that He was seized because He was weaker than men. Jesus, who a moment before had subdued an unclean spirit with a single word, is the Creator and almighty God. He gave up His own body of His own accord in order to pay the wages of our

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sins He had taken upon Himself with the baptism of the Jordan River and to save sinners.

Seen in the dimension of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus being delivered into the hands of men was the process of carrying to the Cross the sin of the world He had taken upon Himself in the Jordan River. Jesus has no sin, but by receiving baptism from John the Baptist He took all the sins of mankind upon His own body.

Bearing the sins He had taken on in that way, Jesus was delivered into the hands of men. He was interrogated and mocked, scourged, and then nailed to the Cross, where He shed His blood and died. This was not because Jesus Himself had sin, but to pay in our place the wages of our sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism.

If we look only at the Cross without the baptism of Jesus, it is not clear why the sinless One had to be judged. Because Jesus took the sin of mankind upon Himself in the Jordan River, He received the judgment of the sin of the world on the Cross. He received sin with His baptism, paid its price with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again on the third day and overcame sin and death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed.

In the eyes of people, Jesus being arrested and killed must have looked like defeat. The One who had subdued demons and healed the sick seemed to be seized by the hands of men and able to do nothing. But the Cross is not the event in which the power of Jesus disappeared; it is the event in which His saving power was revealed most completely.

Delivering one boy seized by a demon is amazing, but the Cross and the resurrection, which saved all the people of the world from the power of sin and death, are a still greater work. The miracle of healing the boy was a restoration that took place

on this earth, but the remission of sin accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection gives eternal life to those who believe.

We must deny our own thoughts and let the words of the Lord sink into our ears

The disciples did not understand the word of Jesus. Earlier, Peter had confessed Jesus as the Christ of God. On the Mount of Transfiguration they had seen the glory of Jesus, and below the mountain they had also seen His power subduing the demon. Even so, they did not understand the word that the Christ must be delivered into the hands of men and die.

The disciples held their own thought that the Christ would drive out their enemies with power and receive glory in the world. The word that the Christ of God would be rejected by people and killed did not fit their expectation. They had to deny their own thoughts and receive the words of Jesus, but they could not yet do so.

People tend to understand the word of the Scriptures according to their own expectations. If one first sets up the expectation that believing in Jesus will make everything go smoothly and bring success in the world, it is hard to accept the words about suffering and self-denial. If one understands Jesus only as a powerful being who fulfills one's own wishes, one cannot realize the gospel of the Cross.

That this saying was "*hidden from them so that they did not perceive it*" shows that the meaning of the suffering and the resurrection had not yet been opened to them. When Jesus, after actually dying and rising again, opened the minds of the disciples to comprehend the Scriptures, they came to know

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clearly the word that the Christ must suffer and rise on the third day.

Jesus had the disciples first keep the word in their ears even though they could not fully understand it at the moment. Later, when Jesus was arrested, died on the Cross, and rose again, the disciples would remember the words they had heard before. Even when we do not understand all the meaning of the word of God when we hear it, if we keep it in the heart, the Holy Spirit makes us realize its meaning when the time comes.

After Jesus rose again, He opened the minds of the disciples so that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then they came to understand the fact that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and the fact that the gospel by which the remission of sins is received in His name had to be preached to all nations. Only after the Cross and the resurrection were fulfilled did the meaning of the prediction of His suffering become clear.

Therefore we must not throw away even the word we do not understand, but keep it in our ears. When we receive the Word with the faith that God alone is right, without putting our own thoughts before the Word, the Holy Spirit, through the written Word, makes us realize the meaning of the salvation Jesus accomplished.

The disciples not only failed to realize the word; they were even afraid to ask Jesus about it. They were afraid before the word of death, so entirely different from the image of the Christ they had expected, and as a result they remained in a state of not knowing the meaning of the word, unable to ask the Lord.

A person can refrain from asking in order to avoid a fearful truth. It can be frightening to ask how great my sin is, what happens after death, and whether the gospel I believe is truly scriptural. For if one asks, one may have to lay down the

thoughts and religious convictions one has held until now.

But avoiding the truth without asking does not change the facts. Even if we do not think about sin and judgment, the problem of sin remains as it is. Even if we do not try to know the meaning of the baptism of Jesus and the Cross, man still needs the remission of sin. Even when afraid, we must come before the word of God, ask, and listen.

True faith is not insisting on one's own judgment to the end; it is denying one's own thoughts and receiving the word of God into the heart. Just as the thoughts of the disciples and the words of Jesus differed, when our thoughts and the Word differ, we must deny ourselves and believe what Jesus has said.

The crowd of verse 43 and the disciples of verse 45 stand before Jesus in different ways. The crowd was amazed at the miracle of Jesus, but the disciples did not understand the word of the Cross and were afraid. Being amazed and believing are different, and following Jesus at close hand and fully realizing the gospel are not automatically the same either.

Today, too, there may be many people amazed at miracles and healing, at the growth of churches and outward success. But if they do not believe the gospel—that Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself with the baptism of the Jordan River and removed all sins with the blood and death of the Cross and the resurrection—they have missed the central work of Jesus.

Jesus told the disciples, intoxicated with visible power and glory, to let the word of the Cross sink down into their ears. Today we must hear the same word. The center of faith is not special experiences, the solving of problems, or success in the world, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished to save sinners.

Jesus, delivered into the hands of men, is not One who was helplessly victimized. He is the almighty Son of God, and

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because He loved us He gave up His own body of His own accord. With the baptism He received from John in the Jordan River He took our sins upon Himself, received their judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed salvation.

Therefore the prediction of the suffering of Jesus is not a word about a sad fate but a word about the plan of God to save sinners. People handed Jesus over and nailed Him to the Cross, but through that very work Jesus saved us from sin and judgment. The Son of God, delivered into the evil hands of men, has given us eternal life.

This passage teaches us to keep in our ears the word of the Cross more than miracles. We must not fear and avoid the word we do not understand, but learn the meaning of the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and believe it with the heart. The Holy Spirit, through the written Word, makes us realize the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished, and gives the remission of sin and eternal life to the person who believes that gospel.

The great person in the kingdom of God serves the little one

"Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, 'Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.'" (Luke 9:46–48).

The disciples, who heard the word of the Cross and still disputed over their own greatness

Earlier, Jesus had said to His disciples, *"The Son of Man is about to be betrayed into the hands of men."* Jesus was speaking of His coming suffering and death, but the disciples did not realize that word and were even afraid to ask. Yet immediately afterward a dispute arose among the disciples as to who was the greater.

Jesus was speaking of the way on which He would be lowered, suffer, and die, while the disciples were thinking of places of honor and rank. Jesus was thinking of giving Himself up, but the disciples were thinking of how much more recognition each would receive than the others. This contrast shows that the disciples did not yet properly understand the way of the Cross and the principle of the kingdom of God.

The dispute of the disciples revealed that in their hearts there was the desire to compare themselves with one another and to exalt themselves. While Jesus was about to give Himself up for the glory of the Lord, the disciples were thinking of their own names and places.

Being a person who does the work of God does not automatically free one from such a heart. Even while preaching the gospel, praying, and serving, a person can want to be recognized as more important than others. He can compare sizes with others by how much he has labored, what office he holds, and how many people he influences. Outwardly he is serving God, but in his heart he can be building his own name and place.

Jesus completely changed the standard of greatness the disciples had. In the world, the person who commands, is served, and sits in the high seat is regarded as great, but in the kingdom of God the great person is the one who believes the Lord and

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lowers himself and serves for the glory and the will of the Lord.

Verse 47 says that Jesus acted, *"perceiving the thought of their heart."* Jesus did not only hear the words the disciples spoke outwardly; He knew even the thoughts moving in their hearts. Whether the disciples had disputed aloud or compared themselves inwardly, it could not be hidden before Jesus. The Lord knows when we speak humble words with the lips while desiring recognition and honor in the heart.

Therefore what matters in the life of faith is not putting on a humble expression or often speaking self-lowering words. A person can say before others, "I am nothing," and yet become angry when someone actually treats him as small. Even humble words can become a means of receiving praise and exaltation. Jesus looks at the center of the heart, not at the shape of the words.

Jesus did not only speak words of rebuke to the disciples; He took a little child and set him beside Himself. A little child in those days was not a figure to be considered in the disciples' competition for rank. A child was a dependent being without social position or power, without the ability to return honor or reward to anyone. The disciples wanted to stand beside influential and high people, but Jesus set beside Himself a little child who could claim no position at all.

That Jesus set the child *"by Him"* is very important. Jesus did not tell them to set the little one at a distance and pity him. By placing that child at His own side, He joined the child to Himself. It means that how one treats a little child, easy to despise, is directly related to how one treats Jesus.

Receiving the little one is receiving Jesus and God the Father

Jesus said, *"Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me."* Here, to receive does not mean merely greeting someone or showing kindness for a moment. It means accepting that person, respecting and caring for him, and making room for him at one's side.

Receiving *"in My name"* is also important. This is not merely telling us to care for children in order to become good people. It means receiving that child because of Jesus, knowing him as one whom Jesus counts precious, and receiving him with the heart that serves Jesus. Welcoming only people who can return profit to us is something the world can also do. To receive in the name of Jesus is to make room even for the person from whom no repayment can be expected.

Jesus said that receiving the little one is receiving Him, and that receiving Him is receiving God the Father, who sent Him. This reveals the deep union between Jesus and the Father and the relation of the sending. Since Jesus is the Son of God whom the Father sent, no one can claim to have received God while refusing to receive Jesus.

At the same time, this word shows that serving God cannot be separated from one's attitude toward the low and the weak. If a person says he loves God while despising little children and the poor, the sick and the powerless, his words and his deeds do not agree. Jesus set at His own side the little one whom people do not notice, and joined the act of receiving him to the act of receiving God.

At the end of verse 48 Jesus said, *"he who is least among you all will be great."* The great one in the kingdom of God is not the person who demands that others serve him. The person

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who lays down the thought that he deserves to be served, and who can serve others from a low place, is the great one.

The great person in the kingdom of God is not simply a person in a low place, but a person who guides, keeps, and actually serves others so that they live by right faith. The great person is the one who seeks the glory of the Lord, lives in line with the will of the Lord, and uses the grace and the gifts he has received to revive other souls.

Jesus, who came as One who serves and saved us

This teaching of Jesus appeared most completely in the life of Jesus Himself. Jesus is originally the Son of God and the Master of all things, but He came to this low earth to save sinners. The Lord did not seek to be served; to save the people under sin and death, He Himself became One who serves.

Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. That the sinless Jesus stood in the place of the baptism that sinners receive was not because He had sin. It was to take the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Jesus is the highest One, yet He was lowered even to the place of sinners.

Jesus taking the sin of the world upon Himself with His baptism was not an act meant simply to show an example of humility. It was the work of righteousness for actually saving sinners. Jesus bore all the sins He had taken on with His baptism, went to the Cross, and shed His blood and died. He received in our place the judgment that sinners must receive, and declared, *"It is finished!"*

The Cross of Jesus shows what kind of One is truly great in

the kingdom of God. The great of this world sacrifice others to preserve their own lives, but Jesus gave His own life to save sinners. People despised Jesus and nailed Him to the Cross, but through that very lowering the salvation of God was completed.

Jesus did not end in death; He rose again in three days. Jesus, who took sin upon Himself with His baptism, received the judgment with the blood of the Cross, died, and rose again, completely overcame the power of sin and death. God exalted Jesus, who had descended to the lowest place, and revealed that He is the Savior of all peoples and the Son of God.

This is the true lowering and exaltation seen in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus took the sin of mankind upon Himself with the water, that is, His baptism, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the saved person and leads him from a life of exalting his own name to a life of exalting the name of Jesus and serving others.

But it is not that a person receives the remission of sin because he has received the little one well and served humbly. Humility and service are not the condition of salvation but the fruit borne by the saved person. However much a person lowers himself and does good deeds, he cannot remove his own sins. First he must believe the salvation Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. True service begins in the person who has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by that faith.

Even without believing the gospel, outward kindness and service are possible. But if one makes those deeds one's own righteousness, another competition of size begins. If one boasts, "I have served more than that person," "I have been lowered

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further," "I have helped the poor more," even humility turns into a means of self-exaltation. The humility the Holy Spirit gives is not boasting of one's good deeds but acknowledging that all salvation and every good fruit have come from the grace of the Lord.

Within the church today, too, competition over who is greater can arise. A church with a great building, a church where many people gather, a church with abundant finances may be regarded as the greater church. A famous preacher and a person with high office may be thought the greater person. But the greatness Jesus sees is not determined by buildings and numbers, by office and fame.

The person who accurately believes and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and who cares for one soul in a place unseen by people, may be the great person before God. The teacher who nurtures little children with the Word, the person who visits sick believers, the person who faithfully bears work no one recognizes, the person who makes room for the poor and the powerless—these the Lord counts precious.

Therefore the church must accept little children and weak people as souls whom the Lord counts precious, and care for them with the Word and with love. Receiving and serving in the name of Jesus the person who has no power to repay and receives no attention from people is serving the Lord.

This word also makes us examine the consciousness of comparison in each of our hearts. We must look back at whether our heart is uneasy when another person is praised, whether we are jealous when someone who came later than we did is given an important task, and whether we feel hurt when people do not recognize our labor. When such a heart is found, we must not hide or rationalize it, but look again to Jesus, who bore even our sins and our pride.

We cannot make ourselves perfectly humble. But when we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart and receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we come to know what great grace we sinners have received. When we know that Jesus received even someone like me, washed away my sins, and made me a child of God, we can make room for others as well.

Luke 9:46–48 teaches that greatness in the kingdom of God is the exact opposite of the ranking of the world. The disciples disputed over who was higher, but Jesus set a little child beside Himself. The one who receives the little one in the name of Jesus is greater than the one who exalts himself, and the one who lowers himself and serves is greater than the one who demands to be served.

Jesus, the highest of all, took our sins upon Himself with His baptism, was lowered even to the death of the Cross, and completed salvation with His resurrection. The person who has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit no longer needs to live to prove his own greatness. For he has already become a child of God. Rather than occupying a high place, he receives the little one; rather than his own name, he exalts the name of Jesus; and he comes to live a life of serving one soul preciously even in a place no one sees.

The name and the authority of Jesus cannot be monopolized

"Now John answered and said, 'Master, we saw someone casting out demons in Your name, and we forbade him because he does not follow with us.' But Jesus said to him, 'Do not forbid him, for he who is not against us is on our side.'" (Luke 9:49–50).

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The standard of the disciples' judgment was not Jesus but 'us'

This word follows the earlier event in which the disciples disputed over *"which of them would be greatest."* Jesus, knowing the hearts of the disciples, set a little child beside Himself and said that the least is the great one, and that receiving a little child in His name is receiving Him.

Then John, who had heard the word of Jesus, reported that they had earlier forbidden a certain man. Though that man was casting out demons in the name of Jesus, they had stopped him because he did not go about with the twelve disciples. John and the disciples blocked a work that was being done in the name of Jesus, for the reason that the man did not go about with them.

This scene shows that the disciples' mind of *"which of them would be greatest"* was continuing in another form. Before, the disciples had disputed among themselves over who was higher; now they judged that a person who did not belong to their company had no right to use the name of Jesus. Within the group a competition for rank had arisen, and toward the person outside appeared an exclusive attitude.

We must pay attention to the reason John gave for the prohibition. He did not say they stopped him "because that man does not believe in the Lord" or "because he preaches a false gospel." They forbade him *"because he does not follow with us."* The standard of judgment had become not Jesus but 'us.'

John did not say, "that man does not follow the Lord"; he said, *"because he does not follow with us."* He was in effect thinking that belonging to Jesus and belonging to the company of the disciples were the same thing. He judged that no one could work for Jesus without going about together in the same way they did.

But that man was actually casting out demons in the name of Jesus, and the disciples saw it. Even so, the disciples stopped that work for the reason that he did not go about with them.

All authority lies in the name of Jesus Christ

The disciples regarded as a privilege the fact that they had been called directly by Jesus and had received authority. But the Master of the authority that subdues demons is not the disciples but Jesus Christ. The disciples were not the owners of that authority but servants who received it from the Lord and used it.

It is true that the disciples had received the authority to cast out demons. In Luke 9:1 Jesus gave the twelve disciples power and authority over all demons and to cure diseases. But the Master of that authority is not the disciples but Jesus. The disciples were not the owners of the authority but servants who received it from Jesus and used it.

Therefore the grace the disciples had received could not become a ground for excluding others. When one begins to regard what was received by grace as one's own possession, service becomes power, mission becomes privilege, and the preaching of the gospel turns into competition to widen one's own territory. Jesus corrected this fault of the disciples with the words *"Do not forbid him."*

Jesus saw the fact that the man was acting in reliance on His name. In the parallel word of the Gospel of Mark, Jesus also said, *"no one who works a miracle in My name can soon afterward speak evil of Me."* The standard the disciples had to examine was not whether the man went about with them, but whether he relied on the name of Jesus and whether he opposed Jesus.

God accomplishes His own will without being bound by the

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fences of men. At the center of the work done in the name of Jesus must be not the name of a person or of an organization but the name of Jesus Christ.

Jesus said, *"He who is not against us is on our side."* This is the word telling the disciples to lay down their self-centered taking of sides. We must not make an enemy of a person working for the kingdom of God merely because he does not belong to our company. If that person is driving back the work of evil in the name of Jesus, what the disciples must do is not compete with him or hinder him, but acknowledge the work of God.

The standard for judging a person is not 'does he belong to the same organization as we do?' but whether he rightly believes Jesus Christ and preaches the salvation He accomplished. The name of Jesus is not a name for raising the fame and power of men but the name of the Savior, who saved sinners from all their sins.

The saving meaning of the name of Jesus is revealed clearly within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior, who saves sinners from their sins. Jesus did not come only to display the power of casting out demons; He came to fundamentally save mankind, who were under the power of sin, death, and the devil.

Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. The sinless Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, in order to take the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. Through His baptism Jesus took over all the sins of sinners and became the Lamb of God, who bears them.

Bearing the sin of the world He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, Jesus went to the Cross. By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross He received the judgment of sin in our place, and He was buried and rose again in three days, and so overcame

the power of sin, death, and the devil. Therefore the name of Jesus cannot be separated from the salvation He accomplished with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection.

Casting out a demon in the name of Jesus is a work that makes one evil spirit leave a person, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit saves a person from all sin and from eternal judgment. Therefore, more important than visible power is that a sinner believes the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection and receives the remission of his sins.

In Luke chapter 10, when the seventy rejoiced, saying, "*even the demons are subject to us in Your name,*" Jesus said to rejoice not that the demons submitted but that their names were written in heaven. The work the Lord counts most precious is not man displaying power but a sinner believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of sin, and becoming one of the people of God.

The Master of the gospel is Jesus Christ

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also examine himself before this word. The fact that he has come to know the true gospel cannot be a ground for despising others. He came to realize the gospel not because his own wisdom was superior but because by the grace of God he heard the Word and came to believe.

If, after coming to know the true gospel, a person thinks, "only we are used by God and no one else can do anything," he can repeat the fault the disciples committed. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a doctrine that proves our superiority but the good news that proclaims how Jesus saved sinners. The

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Master of the gospel is not our organization or our leader but Jesus Christ.

The standard for clearly keeping the essence of the gospel also lies with Jesus Christ. What matters is whether one believes and preaches the remission of sin that Jesus completed by taking the sin of the world upon Himself with His baptism, shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again. At the center must be the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished, more than the names of men and the size of organizations.

This word also makes us look back at competition between churches and ministers. If we cannot rejoice together when people are saved and the gospel is preached through another church, and instead worry that the numbers of our own church may shrink, we are putting our own organization before the gospel. Trying to take the fruit of the gospel from one another, disparaging other ministries, and stressing one's own merit are no different from the disciples' dispute over *"which of them would be greatest."*

When a believer envies the gifts of others, he comes to look for faults and doubt the qualifications of the person who does what he himself could not do. In such a heart hides the desire to keep one's own position rather than the glory of God.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and makes him realize such competitiveness and exclusiveness. The person led by the Holy Spirit can rejoice when the work of the gospel goes well even if he himself does not stand at the center. Even when he labors without a name, he can thank God when he sees souls being saved through others.

True fellowship in the gospel does not mean only that everyone enters one organization. It is also fellowship when each, in his own place, believes the same Jesus Christ, preaches

the salvation He completed, does not hinder one another's ministry, and cooperates when needed. At the center must be not the name of a person or of an organization but the name of Jesus.

To work in the name of Jesus also includes following His character and His methods. Jesus lowered Himself and gave Himself up to revive sinners. Therefore, if someone holds up the name of Jesus while oppressing and dominating others or trying to widen the power of his own group, he is at odds with the way of Jesus.

Jesus corrected the fault of His disciples but did not cast them away. John had a wrong zeal, but he told Jesus what he had done, and Jesus taught him clearly, *"Do not forbid him."* Even wrong zeal, when laid down before the word of the Lord, can be corrected into right zeal.

We, too, can judge others excessively for the reason that we love the Lord. In the name of keeping the truth we can protect the interests of our own group, or, claiming to defend the gospel, we can in fact try to remove the person who challenges our authority. At such times we must honestly examine whether our standard of judgment is "does he oppose Jesus?" or "does he not join us?"

The name and the authority of Jesus are not the possession of any individual or group. That name is the name of the Son of God, who saved us from all our sins with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit exalts the name of Jesus rather than widening his own name and territory, and becomes a person who rejoices and serves together, glad that souls are saved and the gospel is preached, even through other people.

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Jesus, who went to save those who had rejected Him

"Now it came to pass, when the time had come for Him to be received up, that He steadfastly set His face to go to Jerusalem, and sent messengers before His face. And as they went, they entered a village of the Samaritans, to prepare for Him. But they did not receive Him, because His face was set for the journey to Jerusalem. And when His disciples James and John saw this, they said, 'Lord, do You want us to command fire to come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?' But He turned and rebuked them, and said, 'You do not know what manner of spirit you are of. For the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save them.' And they went to another village" (Luke 9:51–56).

He went steadfastly toward Jerusalem to bear the judgment of sinners

Luke 9:51 is an important turning point in the ministry of Jesus. Jesus had already spoken of His suffering and resurrection, and on the Mount of Transfiguration, too, the decease He would accomplish at Jerusalem was mentioned. The words *"when the time had come for Him to be received up"* show that the whole ministry leading through the Cross and death to the resurrection and the ascension was moving toward completion.

The words *"when the time had come for Him to be received up"* show that the earthly ministry of Jesus was moving toward completion. Jesus does not ascend immediately; He must first suffer at Jerusalem, die on the Cross, and rise again on the third day. After that He would show Himself alive to the disciples and

go up into heaven. Therefore in this word the whole saving work of Jesus—the Cross and death, the resurrection and the ascension—is in view.

Jesus did not go without knowing the suffering that waited at Jerusalem. Nor did He go to be welcomed by people as king. Obeying the will of the Father, He chose that way Himself to save sinners and went steadfastly forward.

The resolve of Jesus was not a reckless choice toward death but obedience to the will of the Father. It was the resolve of love, by which, as the Savior who had taken the sin of mankind upon Himself, He would receive the judgment of sin in their place and complete salvation. No one dragged Jesus by force onto the way of the Cross. Jesus went forward toward Jerusalem of His own accord to save sinners.

Seen in the dimension of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus going steadfastly toward Jerusalem was the walk by which He would complete on the Cross the saving work He had begun in the Jordan River. Jesus had already taken the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. The sinless Son of God received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and so took over all sins.

Now Jesus goes to Jerusalem bearing the sins He took upon Himself with His baptism. There He would be nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and die, receiving the penalty of sin in our place, and be buried and rise again on the third day and overcome sin and death. Therefore the journey of Jesus toward Jerusalem is not a mere change of place. It is the journey of salvation on which He goes to complete the righteousness of God with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection for the salvation of all sinners.

Between the Jews and the Samaritans there was a long ethnic

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and religious conflict, but Jesus did not avoid the Samaritans. He preached the word of living water to the Samaritan woman and presented the good Samaritan as the example of loving one's neighbor. Jesus is the Savior not of the Jews only but of all people, including the Samaritans and the Gentiles.

But Jesus did not unconditionally avoid the region of Samaria. Jesus preached the word of living water to the Samaritan woman, and later He presented the Samaritan who showed mercy as the example of loving one's neighbor. Also, when He healed the ten lepers, the one who returned and gave thanks was a Samaritan. Jesus is not the Savior of the Jews only, but the Savior of all the people of the world, including the Samaritans and the Gentiles.

Yet the people of this village did not receive Jesus, for the reason that He was going toward Jerusalem. The ethnic feelings and religious antagonism accumulated over a long time influenced their attitude toward Jesus.

Today, too, people can reject the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished in order to keep the doctrines they have long believed and their religious experiences. They can put the teaching they are used to hearing before the word that Jesus took all sins upon Himself by receiving baptism in the Jordan River and accomplished the complete remission of sin with the blood of the Cross and the resurrection. But however old a human tradition may be, it cannot stand above the word of God.

The disciples wanted to destroy with fire, but Jesus rebuked them

Seeing the Samaritans reject Jesus, James and John were enraged. They asked, *"Lord, do You want us to command fire to*

come down from heaven and consume them, just as Elijah did?" The disciples wanted to bring down immediate judgment by the power of God on those who had rejected them.

The words of James and John looked like zeal for Jesus, but they did not agree with the will of the Lord, who intends to save people. They wanted to destroy those who had not received Jesus, and Jesus rebuked such disciples. Even zeal for the Lord, if it does not follow the heart and the will of the Lord, can flow not toward reviving people but toward harming them.

James and John wanted to use the power of Jesus not to save people but to destroy those who had rejected them. They wanted power, but they did not yet fully know the heart of Jesus. That rejecting the gospel is wrong, and that the heart which wants to destroy at once the person who rejected it is righteous, are two different matters.

The person who preaches the gospel must be careful not to wrap his own feelings in the will of God. He must not curse people, saying, "if you do not listen to me, you will surely meet disaster," nor hate and mock the person who has rejected the gospel. The purpose of preaching the gospel is not to subdue the other person and prove one's own rightness, but to have the sinner believe the salvation Jesus accomplished and obtain life.

The disciples saw only the fault of the Samaritans, but Jesus also saw the wrong heart within the disciples. So Jesus rebuked James and John first, rather than the village that had not received Him. The person who knows the gospel must not only point out the sins of the world but also examine before the Word the pride, hatred, and vengefulness in his own heart.

God is the holy and just Judge, who surely judges sin and unbelief. But at this time Jesus was not going to judge and destroy sinners; He was going to Jerusalem to bear the judgment of sinners in His own body.

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The Cross reveals together the justice of God toward sin and His love toward sinners. God did not pass over sin lightly, but because He loved sinners, He laid that judgment on Jesus. The sins of the Samaritans, of James and John, and of us all—Jesus took them upon Himself with His baptism and received their judgment on the Cross in our place.

But because God loved sinners, He did not bring that judgment down on them at once, but laid it on Jesus. Not only the judgment the people of the Samaritan village deserved, but the judgment James and John deserved, and the judgment of sin that all of us deserve—Jesus took them on with His baptism and received them on the Cross in our place.

This is the mercy of God revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God did not pass over sin as though it had never been. He had Jesus take all the sins of the world upon Himself and pay their wages on the Cross, and so saved sinners justly. Jesus went steadfastly toward Jerusalem to receive Himself the judgment that should fall on sinners.

It is the will of Jesus to save people from destruction

Jesus rebuked the disciples and went to another village. He did not subdue by violence those who had rejected Him, nor did He give up His saving work. After His resurrection and ascension the gospel was preached in Samaria as well, and many people received Christ with joy. The longsuffering of Jesus left them the opportunity to hear the Word again and be saved.

This shows an important attitude in the preaching of the gospel. The gospel is not something people are made to accept by threats and forced submission. We must clearly preach the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and

the resurrection, but when the hearer rejects it, we must not respond with violence or insult. The responsibility for rejecting the gospel lies with that person, but the one who preaches must not be seized by hatred and vengefulness.

Believers, too, easily grow discouraged or angry when they are rejected while preaching the gospel. If we preach the gospel to our family and are rejected or ridiculed, we can close our hearts, resolving never to speak again. But like Jesus, we must not hastily sit in the judge's seat; we must be longsuffering and pray. The person who rejects now may believe the gospel later through another opportunity.

The church today also must not immediately classify as an enemy the person who does not accept its teaching, nor despise other denominations, regions, and peoples. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit must remember that he too was originally a sinner who deserved judgment and was saved by the mercy of Jesus.

Believing the gospel does not end with speaking doctrinally of the baptism of Jesus and the Cross. It must appear as bearing the heart with which Jesus treated sinners. Not retaliating against those who reject us, being longsuffering while preaching the truth, and wishing that even those different from our own side may be saved—this is the attitude fitting for the person who has believed the gospel.

Jesus did not go to Jerusalem to destroy those who had rejected Him. He went to carry their sins on His own body and to die in their place. By receiving baptism in the Jordan River He took upon Himself the sins of the Samaritans and the Jews, of James and John, and of us all; He paid the wages of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross; and He rose again on the third day and accomplished complete salvation.

Therefore we must not reject Jesus, like the Samaritans,

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because of our own tradition and feelings. Nor must we, like James and John, wish immediate judgment to fall on those who reject the gospel. We must first believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart and receive the remission of all our sins, and preach the gospel to those who do not yet believe, with the longsuffering and merciful heart of Jesus.

The purpose of following the Lord is to preach the gospel

"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:57–62).

With a heart that seeks the profit of the world, one cannot follow the Lord

This word was spoken on the road as Jesus was going toward Jerusalem. What waited where Jesus was going was not the throne and glory of the world but arrest, suffering, and the Cross. Therefore, to follow Jesus is not to obtain the profit and comfort of the world through Him; it is to follow the will of the Lord,

who saves sinners and preaches the kingdom of God.

The first man said to Jesus, *"I will follow You wherever You go."* His confession sounded passionate, but Jesus answered, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."* He had thought that if he followed Jesus he would enjoy power and glory with Him, but when Jesus said that He had nowhere even to lay His head, he did not follow the Lord.

Jesus is the Son of God, who created heaven and earth, but on this earth He did not seek His own comfort and glory. Even while rejected by people, He went His way to take the sin of the world upon Himself and complete salvation on the Cross. The person who follows the Lord must also follow, not with the purpose of gaining his own success, position, and material things, but with the purpose of serving the will and the gospel of the Lord who saved him.

When a person follows Jesus to achieve his own purpose, he turns away when what he wants is not given. However much one says with the lips that one loves the Lord and will follow Him anywhere, if the heart is set on the profit of the world, one cannot follow to the end. The purpose of following the Lord must be clear. That purpose is to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus entrusted, and to save souls.

The Lord told us to preach the kingdom of God

To another person Jesus first said, *"Follow Me."* But he answered, *"Let me first go and bury my father."* Jesus said, *"Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God."*

That man thought there was something he had to do first,

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before the call of the Lord. But if a person intends to follow the Lord only after finishing everything he thinks he must do in the flesh, he can never follow. For when one matter ends, another arises, and there is no end to man's responsibilities and cares. Jesus commanded him to preach the kingdom of God before the affairs of the world.

In the kingdom of God there are the King and His people. The King of that kingdom is Jesus Christ, who created us, saved us from sin, and will judge on the last day. The person who has received the remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is one of His people and serves Jesus as the King of his life.

Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Carrying those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin, and He was buried and rose again in three days, and so overcame the power of sin, death, and Satan. Jesus saved sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and established the kingdom of God.

Therefore, to preach the kingdom of God is to preach the fact that Jesus Christ is the King and that He removed all the sins of the world with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. It is to make known, to the people deceived and bound by sin and Satan, the good news that Jesus has already completed salvation and that whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of all sins and becomes one of the people of God.

Jesus did not save sinners so that we would only rejoice in the fact of being saved and live our own lives. The Lord sends the person who has received the remission of sin into the world to preach the kingdom of God. Preaching the gospel is the most

precious mission Jesus entrusted to those who follow Him.

The person who has put his hand to the plow must follow the will of the Lord without looking back

The third man also said, *"Lord, I will follow You,"* but then said, *"let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house."* In his words, too, was the word *"first."* While saying he would follow the Lord, he put his own thoughts and the affairs of his family before the call of the Lord.

Jesus said, *"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God."* The one who plows a field must look ahead and push the plow to make a straight furrow. If his hands grip the plow while his heart and his eyes turn backward, he cannot plow the field rightly.

The person who has received the remission of sin by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit is like a person who has gripped the plow of the gospel in his hands. He must not look again at the desires of the world and his own purposes, but look at Jesus, who goes before him, and at the preaching of the gospel He has entrusted. If, while following the Lord, one seeks first one's own profit, position, and comfort, the direction of the heart turns back to the world.

In the life of following Jesus there are times when we must deny our own thoughts and desires. Even when circumstances are hard and things do not fit our own will, we must first seek the word of the Lord and the profit of the gospel. If we hold on to our own will, we cannot follow the Lord; but if we lay down our own thoughts and believe the word of the Lord, we can receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit and keep walking the way of the gospel.

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Our being saved is not something achieved by our own resolution and sacrifice. We received by faith the salvation Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who has received this grace, thankful to the Lord who saved him, follows the Lord with the purpose not of his own ends but of preaching the gospel.

Jesus is not only our Savior but also the Creator, the King, and the Judge. Since we are His people, we must believe and follow the words of Jesus the King. Since the Lord told us to put the work of saving souls in the first place of our lives, we must keep the preaching of the gospel at the center of our lives even while doing the work entrusted to us in the home, the workplace, and the church.

Luke 9:57–62 teaches clearly what the purpose of following the Lord is. The person who would gain the profit of the world and achieve his own will cannot follow Jesus, who lived for the gospel with nowhere to lay His head. If one puts what is important to oneself before the call of the Lord, and looks back at the world even after gripping the plow, one cannot carry out the work of the kingdom of God.

Jesus has commanded us, *"You go and preach the kingdom of God."* Therefore, the person who has received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit must convey through his life the fact that Jesus removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who lays down his own purposes and follows the Lord with the purpose of preaching the gospel lives as a worker fit for the kingdom of God. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 9

[Question] 1. What important events are recorded in Luke chapter 9?

Luke chapter 9 records the following: Jesus sending out the twelve disciples to preach the kingdom of God; His feeding a great multitude with the five loaves and two fish; Peter confessing Jesus to be the Christ of God; Jesus foretelling His suffering, death, and resurrection; His being transfigured in glorious form on the Mount of Transfiguration; His healing the demon-possessed boy; and His teaching on discipleship and on the attitude of preaching the kingdom of God. These events reveal who Jesus is and show what kind of life the person who believes and follows Him must live.

At the beginning of the chapter, Jesus gave the twelve disciples power and authority to control demons and to cure diseases, and sent them out to preach the kingdom of God. Then, in the deserted place, He fed about five thousand men their fill with five loaves and two fish. The disciples saw their insufficient circumstances, but Jesus had them obey His word and distribute to the multitude what they received from the Lord.

"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God.'" (Luke 9:20).

The confession of Peter forms the center of Luke chapter 9. Jesus is not one of many prophets but the Christ whom God sent. On the Mount of Transfiguration, too, the appearance of Jesus was gloriously changed, Moses and Elijah appeared, and out of

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the cloud was heard the voice of God saying to hear the words of Jesus. Afterward Jesus revealed His power by healing the demon-possessed boy.

"Saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.' Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:22–23).

Jesus walked not the way of obtaining the power of the world but the way of suffering to save sinners. He received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself once and for all, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In the latter part of the chapter, Jesus taught the disciples, who were disputing over who was greater, to receive the little one and serve from a low place, and He told those who would follow Him to put the call of the Lord and the kingdom of God first. Therefore, the person who believes in Jesus as the Christ must believe the salvation He accomplished, deny himself, and follow the Word daily.

[Question] 2. In Luke 9:5, what did Jesus say the disciples should do when they met a city that did not receive them?

Jesus said that in a city that did not receive them, when they left that city, they were to shake off the dust that clung to their feet as a testimony against them.

"And whoever will not receive you, when you go out of that city, shake off the very dust from your feet as a testimony against them.'" (Luke 9:5).

Jesus sent out the twelve disciples to preach the kingdom of God. Therefore, not receiving the disciples was not merely a matter of not providing lodging for unfamiliar travelers; it was rejecting the people Jesus had sent and the word they preached. The act of shaking off the dust from the feet was not personal anger or retaliation but a solemn warning testifying that that city had not accepted the word delivered to it.

The disciples were not to dispute endlessly with those who did not receive them or try to subdue them by force; they were to leave that place and keep preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God in other places as well. Since they were not people raising their own honor but servants sent by Jesus, they had to preach the entrusted gospel faithfully without altering the Word to win people's favor.

We, too, must not be discouraged or oppose people emotionally when they do not accept the gospel at once after we have preached it. We must preach the Word with patience, and when someone refuses to the end, we must not try to force a result, but keep preaching the gospel to other souls and carry on the mission entrusted to us.

[Question] 3. In Luke 9:7–9, why was Herod the tetrarch greatly perplexed when he heard the news about Jesus?

Herod the tetrarch was greatly perplexed when he heard of all that Jesus had done. It was because people were saying about Jesus that John the Baptist had risen from the dead, or that Elijah had appeared, or that one of the old prophets had risen again. Since Herod had had John the Baptist beheaded, when he heard such news he was perplexed, unable to know who Jesus was.

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"Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. Herod said, 'John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?' So he sought to see Him" (Luke 9:7–9).

The news Herod heard was of Jesus preaching the kingdom of God and healing the sick, and of the twelve disciples, who had received authority from Jesus, preaching the gospel and healing diseases in many places. As the ministry of Jesus became widely known, people tried to explain Jesus with the names of the prophets they knew.

Herod was the tetrarch who ruled Galilee, and he had put in prison and then put to death John the Baptist, who had rebuked his sin. But even after killing John, he could not stop the work God was doing. The words and the power of Jesus spread all the more widely, and the news reached even Herod in the palace.

Herod wanted to see Jesus, but seeking to meet Him out of curiosity and believing in Him as the Christ are not the same. John the Baptist, Elijah, and the old prophets were servants used by God, but Jesus is the Christ of God, whom they testified of and waited for. To know Jesus rightly is to believe and confess Him as the Savior according to the word of God, not according to the rumors of people.

We, too, must not stop at observing who people say Jesus is, but must answer clearly before the Word who Jesus is to me. Jesus is the Christ whom God sent and the Savior, who saves sinners. When we believe the salvation He accomplished and obey the Word, we become people who know and follow Jesus rightly, not people perplexed before rumors.

[Question] 4. In Luke 9:12–17, how did the miracle of the five loaves and two fish take place?

The miracle of the five loaves and two fish is the event in which Jesus fed a great multitude gathered in the deserted place their fill with five loaves and two fish. When the day began to wear away, the disciples proposed sending the multitude to the villages and the countryside, but Jesus told the disciples to give them something to eat. When Jesus blessed the loaves and the fish and broke them and gave them, about five thousand men all ate their fill, and the leftover fragments amounted to twelve baskets.

"When the day began to wear away, the twelve came and said to Him, 'Send the multitude away, that they may go into the surrounding towns and country, and lodge and get provisions; for we are in a deserted place here.' But He said to them, 'You give them something to eat.' And they said, 'We have no more than five loaves and two fish, unless we go and buy food for all these people.' For there were about five thousand men. Then He said to His disciples, 'Make them sit down in groups of fifty.' And they did so, and made them all sit down. Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude. So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them" (Luke 9:12–17).

This event begins at the scene where the realistic judgment of the disciples and the command of Jesus meet. The day was ending, the place was a deserted place, and those who had to eat were about five thousand, counting only the men. The food the disciples had was also very little, but Jesus commanded them, *"You give them something to eat,"* so that they would know their

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own insufficiency and rely on the word and the power of the Lord.

Jesus had the disciples seat the people in groups of about fifty. Then He took the loaves and the fish, looked up to heaven and blessed them, broke them, and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples set before the multitude what they had received from Jesus. The One who supplied was Jesus, and the disciples obeyed the Word and distributed what He gave.

All the people ate and were filled, and the leftover fragments were twelve baskets. Jesus did not turn away from the circumstances of the hungry multitude but filled their need abundantly. This work shows that Jesus is the Lord, who cares for the multitude and has the power to fill what is lacking.

The miracle of the five loaves and two fish also teaches whom the person who does the work of God must rely on. The disciples fulfilled their responsibility of seating the people and distributing the food, but the power that fed the multitude and its result came from Jesus. Faith is doing the work entrusted to us according to the word of the Lord while relying on the power and the blessing of the Lord, who accomplishes that work.

When the people and the work entrusted to us look great, we must not give up, calculating only what is lacking. We must entrust what we have to the Lord, do what He has commanded step by step, and serve the people in need with the grace Jesus gives.

[Question] 5. In Luke 9:16, what did Jesus do with the five loaves and the two fish He received?

Jesus took the five loaves and the two fish and, looking up to heaven, blessed them. Then He broke them and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude.

"Then He took the five loaves and the two fish, and looking up to heaven, He blessed and broke them, and gave them to the disciples to set before the multitude" (Luke 9:16).

What Jesus did appears as taking the loaves and the fish, looking up to heaven and blessing them, and breaking them and giving them to the disciples. The power that fed the multitude did not come from the food itself or from the calculation of the disciples; it lay with Jesus.

Jesus had the disciples also take part in this work. The disciples were not the source of the power but the people who distributed to the multitude what they had received from Jesus, and they obeyed the command of the Lord and carried out the work entrusted to them.

This scene shows the fact that we must rely not on human means and methods alone but on the power and the blessing of Jesus. What the disciples had was little, but when they obeyed the Word, they could distribute to the multitude what they had received from the Lord.

We, too, when the work entrusted to us looks great, must not give up after calculating only our own ability, but entrust what we have to Jesus and obey the Word. We must believe that the power that accomplishes the work lies with Jesus, and share with others the grace and the things entrusted to us that we have received from Him.

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[Question] 6. In Luke 9:17, after the multitude had all eaten and were filled, how much food was left over?

After the multitude had all eaten and were filled, the leftover fragments of food were twelve baskets.

"So they all ate and were filled, and twelve baskets of the leftover fragments were taken up by them" (Luke 9:17).

The Gospel of Luke does not record that the people merely tasted a little. All the people ate and were filled, and when the leftover fragments were gathered, they came to twelve baskets. Five loaves and two fish were far from enough to feed a crowd of about five thousand, counting only the men, but the food Jesus had them distribute fed them all and still remained.

The fact that twelve baskets were left over shows that the power and the supply of Jesus were sufficient to fill the need of the multitude. The core of this miracle is not that the disciples had prepared enough, but that Jesus took the insufficient food and fed the multitude abundantly.

The disciples thought it impossible by their own calculation, but according to the word of Jesus they seated the multitude and distributed the food they received from Him. When they obeyed the Word, all the people ate their fill and even the leftover fragments were gathered up.

We, too, when what we have is little and the work entrusted to us looks great, must not conclude that it is impossible from the visible circumstances alone. We must believe the power of Jesus and faithfully do the work entrusted to us, acknowledge that the One who fills what is needed is Jesus, and use the grace we have received with thanksgiving.

[Question] 7. In Luke 9:20, what was Peter's confession of faith concerning Jesus?

Peter confessed Jesus to be the Christ of God. The crowd regarded Jesus as John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets who had risen again, but Peter confessed that Jesus is the Christ whom God sent.

"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God.'" (Luke 9:20).

This confession was not a word acknowledging Jesus only as an excellent teacher or a powerful prophet. Christ means the Anointed One. Just as kings, priests, and prophets in the Old Testament were anointed, Jesus is the King, who rules the people of God; the Savior, who saves sinners as the High Priest of heaven; and the Prophet, who fully reveals the will and the word of God. The confession of Peter is the confession of faith acknowledging that Jesus is the very Savior whom God promised and sent.

Jesus first asked the disciples who the crowds said He was. The disciples answered that people called Him John the Baptist, Elijah, or one of the old prophets. People saw the power of a prophet in the words and the miracles of Jesus but did not know His true identity. Then Jesus changed the object of the question and asked whom the disciples believed Him to be. Faith must not stop at repeating the appraisals of others but go on to confessing clearly whom one believes Jesus to be.

The Gospel of Luke records the words about the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus immediately after the confession of Peter.

"Saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.'" (Luke 9:22).

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This shows that the kingship of the Christ and His salvation are not accomplished in the way of obtaining the power of the world. Jesus had to suffer, be rejected, and be killed to save sinners, and then rise on the third day. He is not a king who avoids death but the King, who takes the sin of His people upon Himself and overcomes death.

Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, was judged on the Cross carrying that sin, and rose from the dead, and so saved sinners. Therefore, to believe in Jesus as the Christ of God is not only to exalt His name; it is to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The confession of Peter makes us look together at the identity of Jesus and at the saving work He would accomplish.

The confession of Peter also leads to the life of a disciple. After speaking of His suffering and resurrection, Jesus taught that the person who would come after Him must deny himself and take up his own cross daily and follow Him. The saved person must lay down his own rightness and stubbornness, his fears and weaknesses before the Lord, and follow His word. The person who denies himself does not raise his own judgment above the word of the Lord, but submits his heart to the will of the Lord and follows Him.

The confession of Peter is also the confession the church must hold on to. The church must stand on the faith that Jesus is the Christ of God and that He has saved sinners. When preaching the gospel, too, we must preach Jesus as the Savior, who took sin upon Himself, received the judgment, and rose from the dead.

We must examine daily before the Word who Jesus is to me. True confession appears in believing that Jesus is my Savior and my Lord and in receiving His word as the standard of life. Like the confession of Peter, we too must clearly believe and confess

Jesus to be the Christ of God, and with that faith deny ourselves and follow the Lord.

[Question] 8. In Luke 9:21, after hearing the confession of Peter, what did Jesus command the disciples?

After hearing the confession of Peter, Jesus strictly warned and commanded the disciples to tell it to no one.

"And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one" (Luke 9:21).

Here, *"this"* refers to the content Peter confessed, that Jesus is *"The Christ of God."* The confession of Peter was right, but Jesus commanded the disciples not to tell that fact to people at once but first to keep silent.

Jesus then said that He would suffer many things, be rejected by the religious leaders and killed, and then rise from the dead on the third day. The disciples had to go beyond confessing Jesus as the Christ and know that the Christ is the One who would accomplish salvation through His suffering, death, and resurrection.

This command also teaches that one must not put forward one's own judgment and zeal merely because one knows a right fact. The time and the manner of the disciples' speaking and acting also had to follow the word of Jesus.

We, too, must not become people who confess Jesus as the Christ of God and yet do not follow His word. We must believe the salvation He accomplished, put His will before our own judgment, and obey the Word.

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[Question] 9. In Luke 9:24, how did Jesus say a person can save his life?

Jesus said that whoever desires to save his own life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for His sake will save it.

"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" (Luke 9:24).

This word is connected with the teaching given just before, that the person who follows the Lord must deny himself and take up his own cross daily and follow Jesus. Losing one's life does not mean taking one's own life or deliberately seeking out suffering. It means not making oneself the master of one's life, and following the Lord, putting Jesus and His word before one's own will and profit.

But this does not mean that a person obtains the remission of sin and eternal life as the price of such self-sacrifice. The remission of sin and eternal life are not obtained by human effort or merit; they are received by believing the salvation Jesus accomplished. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so accomplished our salvation. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sin and eternal life.

Therefore Luke 9:24 is not a word telling us to make self-sacrifice the merit of salvation; it shows with what attitude the person saved by believing in Jesus must follow the Lord. The saved person no longer lives for himself alone but lives for Jesus, who saved him. If one fails to follow the words of Jesus while trying to protect only one's own safety, face, and profit, one loses the true life and fruit of faith. Conversely, the person who lays down his own will and profit for the Lord, though he seems outwardly to lose, enjoys true life in Jesus.

True faith does not remain in the confession of the lips alone. The person who believes the salvation Jesus accomplished does not insist that his own thoughts are always right, but denies himself before the Word and follows the Lord daily. Such obedience is not a condition or a price for obtaining eternal life but the fruit of faith that appears in the person who has already received the remission of sin and eternal life.

Therefore we must not try to save ourselves by our own efforts and sacrifices but believe the salvation Jesus completed. And after being saved, we must not put the profit of the world and self-preservation before Jesus, but live following the Word even when loss and hardship come. The person who entrusts his life to Jesus and follows the Lord, though he seems to lose, lives by faith the life he has already received in Jesus.

[Question] 10. In Luke 9:30, who were the ones who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration and talked with Jesus?

The ones who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration and talked with Jesus were Moses and Elijah.

"And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30–31).

Moses is the man who received the Law from God and delivered it to the people of Israel, and Elijah is the prophet who cried out to turn back to God the people who had fallen into idolatry. The appearance of these two shows that the testimony of the Law and the Prophets is connected with the saving work of Jesus.

The two men appeared in glory and talked about the decease

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Jesus would accomplish at Jerusalem. This decease is connected with the work by which Jesus would undergo suffering and the death of the Cross at Jerusalem and rise from the dead, and so fulfill God's plan of salvation.

Afterward, out of the cloud was heard the voice of God saying to hear the words of Jesus, and when the voice had ceased, only Jesus was there. Moses and Elijah are servants who testify of Jesus, and the One who Himself fulfills God's promise of salvation is Jesus.

Therefore we must not stop at the amazing sight of the Mount of Transfiguration or at the great figures themselves, but look at Jesus, whom they testified of. We must hear and follow the words of Jesus, the Son of God, who accomplished salvation.

[Question] 11. In Luke 9:30–31, what relation do Moses and Elijah, who appeared on the Mount of Transfiguration, have to the saving work of Jesus?

The appearance of Moses and Elijah on the Mount of Transfiguration shows that the Law and the Prophets of the Old Testament testify of Jesus and that the salvation God promised is fulfilled through Jesus. Their speaking of the decease Jesus would accomplish at Jerusalem reveals that the salvation the Old Testament pointed to would be accomplished through the death of Jesus and His resurrection from the dead.

"And behold, two men talked with Him, who were Moses and Elijah, who appeared in glory and spoke of His decease which He was about to accomplish at Jerusalem" (Luke 9:30–31).

Moses received from God the Law and the sacrificial system and delivered them to Israel, and Elijah cried out to turn back to God the people who had fallen into idolatry. The Law, the

sacrificial system, and the testimony of the prophets made people realize sin and pointed to the Christ who was to come and to His salvation. The role of Moses and Elijah also lay not in taking the place of Jesus but in testifying of Him.

"And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, 'This is My beloved Son. Hear Him!' When the voice had ceased, Jesus was found alone. But they kept quiet, and told no one in those days any of the things they had seen" (Luke 9:35–36).

Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, was nailed to the Cross at Jerusalem and received the judgment of that sin, and rose from the dead, and so completed salvation. The decease spoken of on the Mount of Transfiguration is connected with this saving work, and it shows that the glory of Jesus is revealed in His suffering for sinners and saving them.

Therefore we must not let our hearts be taken by mysterious sights or great figures themselves, but believe in Jesus, whom the Law and the prophets testified of. As God commanded, we must hear the words of Jesus and, by believing in the salvation He completed, follow Him.

[Question] 12. In Luke 9:46–48, over what did the disciples dispute with one another?

The disciples disputed with one another over the question of who among them was the great one. Their dispute revealed their concern over who would become higher and more recognized.

"Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, 'Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and

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whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.'" (Luke 9:46–48).

Jesus had said that He would be delivered into the hands of men, but the disciples, without realizing the meaning of that word, set their hearts on their own position and exaltation. Jesus knew their hearts and set a little child beside Him.

Receiving in the name of Jesus a person as small as a little child is receiving Jesus Himself. The great one in the kingdom of God is not the person who occupies a high place and is served, but the person who lowers himself, regards the small and the weak as precious, and serves them.

Jesus, the highest of all, also lowered Himself to serve sinners. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. The person who believes this salvation and has received grace serves others as the fruit of that faith.

Therefore we must not compare ourselves with others and contend to be exalted or recognized. We must not make the office or the work of the church a means of displaying ourselves, but remember the grace received from Jesus and gladly serve in a low place.

[Question] 13. In Luke 9:57–58, what did Jesus say to the person who said he would follow Him wherever He went?

To the person who said he would follow Him wherever He went, Jesus said that foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.

"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that

someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.'" (Luke 9:57–58).

That man said of his own accord that he would follow Jesus. Jesus did not immediately praise his resolution, but taught that the life of following Him requires the attitude of putting the will of the Lord before the success or comfort of the world and of bearing hardship and sacrifice.

Jesus did not seek comfort and splendor on this earth but went through many villages preaching the kingdom of God. The center of this word is not the house or the property itself; it lies in not putting a comfortable life and the profit of the world before Jesus.

Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed our salvation. The person who has received the remission of sin by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit, thankful for the grace received, does not follow Jesus as a means of fulfilling his own greed, but makes the will of the Lord and the preaching of the gospel an important purpose of his life.

Therefore we must not calculate only what we can gain while following Jesus. Even when circumstances are hard and the expected reward does not come, we must believe that Jesus is the Savior and the Master, and follow Him faithfully, putting His word before comfort and the profit of the world.

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[Question] 14. In Luke 9:61, what did the third person ask to be allowed to do first before following Jesus?

The third person asked to be allowed first to bid farewell to his family before following Jesus.

"And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'" (Luke 9:61–62).

The request to bid his family farewell looks natural, but Jesus dealt with the attitude of "*first*" that appeared in that man's words. While saying he would follow Jesus, he put the matter he intended to settle before the call of the Lord.

The person who plows cannot make a straight furrow if he keeps looking back. In the same way, if the person who has decided to follow the Lord has his heart taken by his past life and the profit of the world, he cannot fully carry out the work entrusted to him. When we follow Jesus first of all, we can also love and care for our family rightly, not according to our own greed but according to the love and the word of the Lord.

Salvation is received by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rising from the dead. The saved person, thankful for this grace, receives Jesus as the Master of his life and puts the will of the Lord and the kingdom of God before his own plans.

Therefore we must not keep postponing obedience while saying that we will follow Jesus. Remembering the grace of salvation received from Jesus, we must obey the Word in the place now given us, and go forward unwavering for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Deny your own rightness and follow the Lord

< Luke 9:18-24 >

"And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?' So they answered and said, 'John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God.' And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.' Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

The life of faith starts from denying oneself

The life of faith is denying ourselves, whether we have done well or done poorly. The life of faith starts precisely from there. Our Lord said in this passage, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23)*. In fact, the whole life of faith is contained in this word. The life of faith after receiving salvation is denying

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oneself and following the Lord. When we receive salvation as well, we must deny our own righteousness and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus bore all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist in the Jordan River and with the blood of the Cross—for only then can we receive salvation; and after receiving salvation, too, we can follow the Lord only when we deny ourselves.

Then why must we deny ourselves in following the Lord? The Lord said that even when our thoughts are right, and even when we are doing well, if we want to follow Him, we must abandon our own selves and follow. Therefore, even when we hold a different thought, we must deny it; even when our thought is right, we must deny it; and even when we ourselves are not right, we must deny ourselves. Even after you and I have received salvation, each of us has things we like and thoughts of our own. Yet we must deny them. Why must we deny them? Because they are not right. We ourselves are never right. Our own thoughts, our plans that look beautiful, the plans and thoughts of man are never right. That is why we must deny them.

Dear fellow believers, receiving salvation is a moment, and the life of faith after receiving salvation continues for a lifetime. Then why do we agonize so much while living the life of faith? And where does our faith grow? Faith grows in denying oneself. And what torments us is also our own selves. Why is that? It is because we must deny ourselves daily that it is painful. Why is it painful? Because we think that we ourselves are right. Even if not in everything, we still think there is something right in us, and that is why it is painful. To deny is like being told to act as one dead while still alive. To live as one dead while alive—how painful and unnatural that is! Dear fellow believers, the life of faith starts from denying oneself, and it bears the fruit of faith and comes to its end in one's denying one's own self. We must

know that faith is precisely denying.

Dear fellow believers, our thoughts and hearts quickly go out and scatter. It is because we think something is right. But if you look at the way of following the Lord, it is denial. Denying oneself is the life of faith.

If we do not deny ourselves, we come to leave the Lord

Dear fellow believers, we have received salvation. But suppose that after receiving salvation we do not deny our own selves while living the life of faith. Then where would we go? Not denying oneself means regarding oneself as right and one's own thoughts as correct, fitting, and profitable. Because they seem so to us, we do not deny them. But if we do not deny, we come to leave the Lord. We cannot follow the Lord. If we do not want to follow the Lord, we can just go on according to our own right opinion. But if we do not deny ourselves, we are leaving the Lord. Then is leaving the Lord doing well? Is not denying oneself really right? No. In fact, what we thought right is not right, and what we thought good is not good. That is why our Lord tells us to deny our own selves.

Just as we sing, "I have now become a body that has received the Lord's new life; the old things have passed away and all has become new. I will now serve the Lord and follow Him," in following the Lord we must deny daily. The one who wants to follow the Lord must deny his own self daily. The person who denies his own self daily, takes up his cross daily, bears hardship daily, and denies his own self is the one who can follow the Lord. Such a person can also taste that grace of the Lord.

The Lord told us to deny ourselves and come after Him. It is

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because what we do is not all right. Is there anything right in your thoughts? It is not right. Even if there seems to be something that looks right, we must know that it is not right. Only then do we deny. In your thoughts there are evil thoughts, there is your own rightness, and many thoughts are mixed together. But what happens if we act on those thoughts? Are those thoughts really right? It is when we come to know that they are not right that we can deny our own selves. Dear fellow believers, what you think is never right. What you are judging is not right either. Only when we deny ourselves before the word of God and before the church can we possess true rightness.

Dear fellow believers, there is no rightness in us. We must deny what we have judged wrongly, and not only what we have judged wrongly but also what we have thought out well. Why is that? Because we are not right, and because only the Lord is love and only the Lord's leading is the truth. Do you not think so as well? Truly, denying daily while following the Lord is hard. In fact, denying daily is a hard thing. Dear fellow believers, it is not denying only outwardly; we must know that the thoughts within us are not right. The thought, "I will live this way from now on; I want to live this way; this seems right; living this way seems fitting"—even that thought we must deny. Because it is not right. Why can those who have newly received salvation not follow the Lord? Because they have many thoughts of their own, because they hold their own rightness to be correct, and because they hold their own wrongness to be correct, they cannot follow the Lord.

The longer one has believed, the more one must deny one's own rightness

And why is it hard for the brothers and sisters who have lived the life of faith for a long time to follow the Lord? It is because they have much rightness of their own that it is hard to follow the Lord. Having much wrongness of one's own can rather be corrected. It is exposed to all the world, so that both oneself and others know it, and therefore one can deny it. But what we must also deny is our own rightness. That rightness is hidden in me and is not revealed; one does not speak of it openly, yet asserts it inwardly. But the Lord tells us to deny it. If it remains, the life of faith is finished. When you look at those who seemed to be doing well in the life of faith and then suddenly fell away, it is because they had their own rightness and went out following their own right thoughts; because they held their own thoughts to be right and went on that way, they drifted far from the Lord and far from the church.

It is so with those who do well in the life of faith. The better one does, the more one must deny oneself daily. Because even what is right in us is not right before the Lord. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? This is a very great problem. Satan the devil has put much of one's own rightness into you, into the brothers and sisters, and each person also keeps producing his own rightness. Even so, we must deny it. Why? Because producing one's own rightness is not right before God. It looks right in one's own eyes and, being profitable to oneself, only looks right for a moment; but seen truly, it is not right, and that is why we must deny our own selves. In your hearts and in my heart as well, such rightness of our own keeps rising up.

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What has not yet come up out of the ground still remains

When God sent the ten plagues on the land of Egypt, He sent the plague of hail, and after that He sent the plague of locusts. When the hail struck the plants of the field, the Scriptures record that the wheat and the spelt, not yet grown up, remained undamaged. But then the swarms of locusts covered the whole land of Egypt and devoured even the herbs of the field and everything green that the hail had left undamaged. The inside of our hearts is like that too. Our bad things we have already admitted to be bad. They were exposed, we surrendered, and we denied them. But it does not end there; we must deny our rightness that still remains within us, the rightness of man. It still remains. So we must deny daily.

Dear fellow believers, do you see? It is in your hearts and it is in my heart too. We do not know how much of it still remains. That is why we must deny our own selves daily. If one's own rightness piles up, it comes to ruin before the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, God loves us absolutely and loves us forever. It is the same with the leaders of the church. But in our hearts something right comes up. When something right comes up, it becomes one's own being right. It is one's own rightness and not rightness before the Lord, and yet one begins to assert one's own rightness. From that moment one fails to receive the Lord's leading and ends up leaving the Lord. Dear fellow believers, whether we have done well or done poorly, only the person who denies himself daily follows the Lord. Even if we have done wrong, if we admit what we did wrong and deny ourselves, we can follow the Lord and are restored again. And even if we have many things we do well, if we deny our own selves, saying, "Even this is not right before the Lord," we can

again follow the Lord. We can follow the Lord at any time. The one way is that we must deny. Only when we deny our own selves can we follow the Lord.

The growth of faith lies in denying oneself

Dear fellow believers, that is exactly what the growth of faith is. The growth of the people of faith is denying themselves. It does not end with acquiring much knowledge, nor does it end with having followed this far, nor does it end with one's own rightness and one's own righteousness increasing. Growing faith is the faith that denies itself daily. The person who denies is the person whose faith has grown, and that person is the one whose faith is growing. When you look closely, people know it, but they do not deny. If one does not deny, however well one has done, even if one has obeyed, it all comes to nothing. However well we may have done, if we do not deny, in the end nothing has grown, and even what has grown all becomes void. It is because one did not deny. The person who grows spiritually while living the life of faith knows how to deny his own rightness and also denies his own wrongness before the Lord. When we are too weak, we deny our weakness, our wrongness, and our filthiness, and hold on to the righteousness of the Lord and follow Him; and when we are too accomplished, we deny our own selves, break ourselves down, and follow the Lord. This is what denying oneself is. Only when we deny like this can we follow the Lord. Dear fellow believers, denying is hard, is it not?

Do you have rightness? Among the plans or thoughts hidden inside you, is there anything right? There is none, and yet we have things we consider right. They are hidden inside. That is why we do not deny. If we do not deny and the things we

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consider right keep piling up, we come to lose the Lord completely. We must know that we are not right. We must deny what is right in us, and we must deny what is wrong in us. Only such a person can live before the Lord, can follow the Lord, and can live a happy and beautiful life forever, receiving and enjoying the blessings of the Lord.

We must abandon our own thoughts

Dear fellow believers, look at Mephibosheth, who came before the king. When he came before the king limping on both feet, the king's heart could not have been at ease, and the sight of him must have kept weighing on the king's mind. Even so, did not the king say he would show him kindness? One must deny one's own self, take hold of that kindness, and go forward. But when David was driven out by his son and took the road of refuge, Mephibosheth did not follow him. Why was that? Because he thought that if he, a cripple, followed, he would be a burden to the king, he did not follow. Later, when David returned, he asked Mephibosheth why he had not followed him. Mephibosheth answered that he had not followed because he thought that if he followed the king he would be a burden. But the king did not like that.

Dear fellow believers, we must abandon our own thoughts. Mephibosheth should have denied himself. If David perished, he too should have perished with him, and if David prospered, he too should have prospered with him. But not following, while claiming it was for David's sake, became in the end a deed that opposed David and made him an enemy to David. Later, the property and everything Mephibosheth had went entirely to his servant. Why? Because the servant followed the king.

Dear fellow believers, we must abandon what is right in us. That is harder than abandoning and denying what is wrong in us. But our rightness is by no means right. We must abandon it before the Lord. Yet Mephibosheth did not abandon it. He thought, "The king is now on the road of refuge; if I follow, he must put me on a horse and take me along, and when we cross a river he must carry me over on something—if war breaks out, will I not be a hindrance because of myself?" He had much rightness of his own. So he did not follow, and by not following he rather became an enemy. He did not rebel against the king, but because he had much of his own rightness he became an enemy. Dear fellow believers, if we assert the rightness that is within us, we come to deny God. Then we cannot follow the Lord.

The Lord wants to live together with us at all times. Dear fellow believers, to grow spiritually is to deny oneself. It is to deny one's own self daily. The life of faith does not always have only good things. In your thoughts there are many thoughts of this kind and that. But we must see what the Lord says, what is said in the church of the Lord, and what is wanted; and if our own thought does not fit what is wanted, we must deny ourselves. This is the spiritual life and the life of a Christian. Then how hard this is! Is it not hard to follow the Lord? But if we deny, it is easy. The Lord said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)*, and He said, *"For My yoke is easy and My burden is light" (Matthew 11:30)*. If we deny, it is easy; and if we do not deny, we ourselves must carry the load, and so it is heavy.

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David, who denied his own rightness

Dear fellow believers, those who have grown spiritually deny themselves. Look at David. An opportunity arose for David to kill King Saul. While Saul was sleeping on the ground, if he had thrust the spear in at one stroke, it would have been over. It was a matter that would have ended in a moment. He could have thought that in that way his own will would be fulfilled and the will of God would be fulfilled as well. But David did not do so. Because God had anointed Saul and had also anointed him, he believed that if God had established him, then even if he did not kill Saul, God Himself would remove Saul and establish him, and that this was the will of God. “It is right to deny my own thought of stabbing and killing this man.” In this way David denied himself before God. Do you deny yourselves and follow the Lord? Do you deny your own rightness? Now our faith must keep maturing. We must deny our own rightness. However right my thought may be, I must deny it; and however wrong my thought may be, if the Lord says it is all right, then it is all right.

We must deny daily

Dear fellow believers, at such times we can follow the Lord. We must deny daily and deny forever. Do you have something right? You must deny that right thing. Are you too weak? You must deny that weakness and believe in the Lord and follow Him. Denying is the life of faith. Looking at this word, I feel that I still have far to go. Only by denying can I follow, and though I have denied until now, I must keep denying and must deny forever. To speak honestly, following the Lord until now has been hard. Has it not been so for you as well? Yet the Lord says that from

now on, too, we must deny our own selves daily and forever. So it is a truly hard thing. Thinking of it humanly, it is so hard that it seems there ought to be a day of graduation from denying as one's faith grows, but there is no day of graduation. So when I think quietly, it feels bleak. I have come this far waiting for the day when the sun would shine even into a mousehole, but there is no graduating. I must deny again; I denied, and I must deny again. In the old days I denied with the things I did wrong, but now I must deny even with the things I do well within me. I must deny even what seems all right to me, and I must deny even what I want, and that is harder. It is harder because it keeps me from doing what I want. But this is the word of God. Then we must live knowing, first of all, that to deny is the right answer. At any rate, we have followed with difficulty until now, knowingly or unknowingly; but I believe that not only the denying we have done until now is the answer, but that denying daily, continually, is the answer.

Dear fellow believers, the life of faith is real. So when we actually try to deny, it is hard. But God is the truth. I have never once seen it fail to come to pass just as God spoke a single word. Since the creation of the world I have never once beaten God. I received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and followed the Lord. And I suffered separation, suffered persecution while following the Lord, went through everything, and lost all the things of the world as well. Yet the Lord says that whoever wants to follow Him must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Him, and that whoever leaves house or brothers and sisters or parents or children or lands and follows the Lord receives a hundredfold in this world. Even this word is included in denying one's own self.

When I actually reached that situation, a conflict arose in me as to whether I could follow the Lord even if I lost everything

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according to this word. I wondered how on earth I could follow. To have to follow even losing children or parents or wife—if it be according to this word, I thought it too severe. But if you want to follow, there is no way to do it except like this. Even if such things happen to me, I must follow. So, resolving that if I die, I die, and if I am ruined, I am ruined, I followed.

After that it seemed to have become somewhat right, but there was still more to deny. And I must deny daily. Though I cannot say it aloud, inwardly there are times when it is wearisome, when I get irritated and feel stifled, as if I were shut inside a net, and I just want to tear it open and get out. But the way to tear open this net and leap out is precisely the work of denying one's own self daily. It is right. It is true. When we deny daily, we can tear apart this net that confines us. The way to tear what confines us is to deny our own selves. Then one's own self can no longer bind oneself.

When we deny ourselves, we follow the Lord to our heart's content

At such a time we can fly in the open sky to our heart's content and follow the Lord to our heart's content. That is what denying oneself is. Dear fellow believers, is it not so? What imprisons oneself is one's own self. To escape from one's own self, one must deny one's own self. If a person who claims to follow the Lord acts according to the thoughts he harbors inside, he will certainly leave the Lord; it is a thing plainly in sight, so I cannot help but speak of it. If you act just as you are thinking, you leave just so. Therefore, dear fellow believers, deny yourselves. Denying one's own self is right. It is because we ourselves are not right that our Lord has spoken like this. Dear

fellow believers, do you believe? Confess with your mouth, "Amen." When the Lord comes and speaks, He may speak even more severely. The Scriptures say, *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation"*. Only when we confess with the mouth does it become our own.

We do not know how many things are binding our own selves. That is why we must deny. Because we ourselves are not right, we must deny. The brothers, the sisters, and I myself must live knowing this. Receiving salvation is a moment, but denying is everlasting and hard.

But if we only know that we ourselves are not right, denying is a very natural thing. Do you have anything right? Is there rightness in you? There is none. Is there anything in your own thinking that is wise, good for food, pleasant to the eyes, and usable? It was Satan the devil, and Adam and Eve, who, when they had rightness in their own thoughts, challenged God and tried to contend with God, and were cursed before God.

Even now Satan the devil attacks my heart and yours with that very thing. He is inciting my rightness and your rightness. Dear fellow believers, are you not suffering much even now? There are still many hidden things in our hearts. Only when we quickly come to know that they are not right do we deny. Only when we realize that we are not right do we deny. And when we deny ourselves, we come to live spreading our wings in the Lord to our heart's content, swimming freely in that wide, deep sea and flying freely in that open sky, doing the work of God and living in the glory of God. We come to receive such happiness and such blessing. Because we are freed from our own selves.

Dear fellow believers, even the rightness of our own that is deep in our hearts is not right. However good what is inside you may be, it is not right. We must always know this. We have

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become one in Christ, have become the children of God, and have become Christ's own. When we deny our rightness, admit our wrongness, and follow the Lord, the Lord makes us glorious and beautiful and lets us live praising the Lord. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Let us all pray together and close. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Deny yourself and follow God

< Luke 9:23-24 >

"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it."

I have been to the provinces to find a church building. I think that in serving the Lord together with our ministers, and in serving the gospel from now on, there is truly much for us to do. But however much there is to do, and even if we preach the gospel and many souls receive salvation, I come to think: if we cannot deny our own selves, how can we become the workers of God and the servants of God?

We must deny both our own excellence and our own deficiency

In this passage Jesus said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23)*. To deny oneself is to deny one's own excellence, and it is also to deny one's own deficiency.

Denying oneself is an essential condition for following the Lord. We received salvation by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River and

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by shedding His blood on the Cross. After receiving salvation we must follow the Lord, and what we must do without fail in order to follow the Lord is precisely the work of denying ourselves. Dear fellow believers, I know there are many aspects in us that must be denied. It is not that one cannot follow the Lord because one is too weak. What is weak can also be denied. The weak person must follow the Lord by faith, and if one is too accomplished, one must deny that excellence as well.

However accomplished and clever I may be, I must deny myself. If one is too clever and too accomplished, one becomes one's own guide and fails to follow the Lord. Therefore we must deny ourselves and believe the word of the Lord. Only then can we follow the Lord.

There are times when we are too accomplished to follow the Lord, times when we are too deficient to follow, and also times when we love our own selves too much to follow the Lord. Since He said that whoever wants to come after Him must deny himself, if we love our own selves too much, we must deny even that beloved self. There is truly much we must deny in order to follow the Lord.

We must deny even what we love

If one loves one's wife or one's husband too much, this too must be denied. If we do not deny it, we cannot follow the Lord. We can receive salvation, but from then on, if we do not deny ourselves, we cannot follow the Lord. In the latter half of the passage He said, *"For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will save it" (Luke 9:24)*.

This word means that the one who would live by his own strength dies, and the one who, though he should die, denies

himself, believes the word of the Lord, and follows becomes one who lives. After we have received salvation, we must deny ourselves.

I must deny loving my own self too much, but I must also deny loving my wife or husband or children or money or honor too much. Outwardly this seems to be for others rather than for one's own self, but even in these matters we must deny ourselves. We cannot help loving all these things related to us, but if we love them too much, we become unable to follow the Lord.

At such times we must deny ourselves. "I love my wife and husband and children so much, and I love money and honor so much, that I cannot deny them. I must live, so I cannot deny these things. To tell me to abandon them is the same as telling me to die; for me to live, I cannot deny them. I have received salvation in Jesus, but I can never let go of what I love." Dear fellow believers, if one loves something else besides the Lord too much like this and follows it, one dies.

The one who would live loses, and the one who would die lives

But the one who would die lives, and the one who would save his own life will lose it. That to be willing to die is to live—this is self-denial. Though it is a person I truly love, I deny. It means that if one's own self would live, one must rather deny one's own self.

Let us take an example of this word. Even after receiving salvation, we still love the other things we have loved until now. Here is a brother who has received the remission of his sins, and before receiving the remission of his sins this brother worked as a missionary, and his career is quite brilliant. But this brother

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also has things he worries about. You all have them too. Each person lives for something.

For example, suppose that brother loves his wife very much. That brother has received salvation, so he must follow the Lord and serve the Lord, and since he is a missionary, it is fitting that he preach the gospel. Receiving salvation is truly good, serving the Lord is natural, and preaching the gospel is what he ought to do; but the problem is that he loves his wife too much. So there arises his own standard: I must have at least such and such an amount of living expenses so that my wife does not live shabbily but lives decently. Suppose there are preconditions attached because he loves his wife: for me to live, I must have so much for living costs; for my wife to rest and sleep, the apartment must be so many pyeong; and our social position and economic level must not fall too far behind others.

When the precondition attaches—"because I love my wife, I must do this much for her"—then although he has received salvation before the Lord, must serve the Lord, and must preach the gospel, he comes to make these calculations. But whether that is guaranteed or not, if he denies what is his own and serves the gospel, he lives by the Lord.

But if it seems to him that these things will not be guaranteed, the desire to live arises. When I try to live and try to provide such things for the one I love, I come to look for another way to live. The thought occurs: "I will go on doing missionary work, so who will support the economic side and every need that will satisfy my beloved?" And then, looking at the church of God and the ministers around him, he says, "This is not it. It is impossible for my wife to live here." Dear fellow believers, if one loves one's wife too much, one can become like this.

The thought is that his wife cannot manage at this level and must not receive this kind of treatment. It is not that this brother

is actually so, but that the heart can be so at any time. Even if he does not say it aloud, he thinks, "I must live, and I must meet those conditions for the one I love. To provide that, I must go out and find my own way; if it cannot be done here, I must find it elsewhere," and if he can receive support from some organization that is not born again, he stretches out his hand to it.

If, wanting to live like this, he had put it into action, would he have lived or not? Though his flesh lived for a time, the result is that the one who would live dies. On the other hand, the Lord said, "*whoever loses his life for My sake will save it*". "I ought to do this much for the one I love, and in the church of God that can by no means be satisfied; but whether I die or live, I serve the gospel. When the servants of God eat, I eat too; when they play, I play with them; when they work, I work with them; even if it is not one hundred percent as I wish, I will deny myself and live for the gospel. Even if I cannot provide amply for the one I love, my following the Lord is right and fitting." When the heart is thus set on being willing to die for the Lord, such a person is treated well in the Lord as much as can be. Truly, though I meant to die, following the Lord I rather eat better, live better, am treated better, and come to be at peace—that is the word.

This was said by way of example, but the word of this passage is precisely that the one who would die for the Lord lives, and the one who does not deny himself and would only live himself dies. That is why the Lord said that whoever wants to come after Him must deny himself and take up his cross and follow Him.

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My thoughts and my rightness are not the truth

There is truly much of our own selves that we must deny in order to follow the Lord. One's character and individuality, one's tastes, one's desires, one's excellence and deficiency, strength and weakness—all these are things we must deny. Dear fellow believers, everyone has all these things, and we cannot throw them all away; but if they become a problem in following the Lord, we must deny them. My thoughts or my rightness are not the truth. My thoughts, my weakness, my strength, my rightness, and my desires are parts to be denied, not objects to be followed. The way one has lived until now, one's own standards, or one's own thoughts must not become the truth.

We must keep denying ourselves. What happens if we cannot deny our own selves? We come to be bound to our own selves and suffer, and we also become unable to follow the Lord. The word of this passage is exactly that word. In conclusion, we must deny our own selves.

Whoever wants to follow the Lord must deny himself. If one does not intend to follow the Lord, there is no need to deny one's own self. Rather, one should develop the self more. Whether it is character development or self-development, one should do more of it. But if I want to follow not myself but the Lord, I must deny myself. Anyone must do so. Both I and all of you must deny.

I too followed the Lord while denying myself. There were times when my being so accomplished and so clever boiled over and I made a fuss, but to follow the Lord I denied myself. When my excellence rose up, I kept looking at my faults, saying, "What is so great about me? A poor thing like me," and denied my excellence. On the other hand, there were times when I was so weak and so full of faults that I slandered, rebuked, ignored,

and trampled on myself, saying, "How could the likes of me serve the Lord?"

At such times, too, one cannot work. It is like the young men who could not even fold their own bedding and hardly washed their faces by themselves, yet at the training camp are said to do such things well; if one looks only at one's own deficiency or weakness, one sinks down of oneself, saying, "How could the likes of me serve the Lord?" But I denied that too. Did the Lord use me because I was somehow accomplished? Or did the Lord say He could not use me because I was deficient? At any rate, we must deny both our excellence and our wrongness.

The reason He made man on the sixth day

Dear fellow believers, why did our Lord make man on the sixth day? This is my own thought, but suppose that when God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning, He had first made man from the dust, and then said let there be light, and divided the waters above the firmament from the waters below the firmament, and brought forth the fruit trees, and made the sun and the moon and the stars, and made the birds that fly in the sky. If He had made man first, then when God said, *"Let there be light,"* man would have stepped forward, saying, "God, why must there be light? Is the light not too bright? Make it a little weaker." Or of the stars, "They should twinkle more brightly—why do they shine so faintly?" Man would have stepped forth insolently, thinking himself accomplished.

Dear fellow believers, if we are too accomplished and cannot deny our own thoughts, then even when the Lord would take us and use us, He cannot use us. When He would take us and use us, saying, "Do this," we keep asking why, when, what, and how,

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following the five Ws and one H, and keep asserting our own thoughts and our own rightness. Then the Lord says, “I cannot work with someone as accomplished as you. You may go; I must use someone a little lacking.” But when He would take and use someone too deficient, that one says, “I cannot.” Even when He says, “Just do it and it will be done,” he says, “Still I cannot. That person is so much more capable than I—does the Lord not know how to judge people? If I do it, the Lord will surely be disappointed, so I cannot.” Dear fellow believers, both the accomplished and the deficient must deny their own selves.

If they do not deny, the accomplished cannot be used because of their excellence, the deficient cannot be used because of their deficiency, and those who are neither this nor that cannot be used for that reason either, so the Lord can use no one at all. That is why He said that whoever wants to come after Him must deny himself. When the Lord gives the deficient one work to do, he must deny himself by faith and do it, saying, “Lord, do You give work to one as deficient as I am? Though I am deficient, if You command me, I believe it will be done as I believe Your word and do the work of God.” Then the work gets done.

When the Lord gives the accomplished one work, if he denies himself and does it, saying, “In my own thinking it seems it will not work that way, but relying on the word of the Lord I will do as You say. Then I believe it will be done,” that work gets done.

Only when we break down our self-will does the Lord use us

At one time I made things very hard for the brothers. I would say, “Put a boiler in the room,” and when they had finished

installing the boiler, I would call those brothers again. “Brother, come here. Tear this out.” “Why tear it out?” “Tear it out. And connect this hose again and run it to that room over there.” “If you were going to do that, you should have said so from the beginning. We even finished plastering the cement—do you know how hard it was?” The brothers could not say it to my face, but would go to the toilet and say, “He should have said so earlier—does his head not turn that far?” At such times the toilet door would fly open as if it would break and be slammed shut with a back kick.

I knew that too. Then, thinking to myself, “That fellow is losing his temper,” I would give him more work. “Brother, come here. Tear this out over there, and come over here and tear this out too.” “Why tear this out?” “Tear out this side and run it all the way around and connect it to this side.” “Instead of that, why not just tear out one and connect it to this side? That would work.” “Do as you are told.” “Then you should rather tell us to tear it all out and start over from the beginning. That would be better.” He gets irritated and pushes back. “Rather than doing it partially, tear it all out.” Then I feel a little sorry, but I say, “That is my business. I will not do that. Tear it out partially. Tear out this much here and that much there.” The brothers steam with anger. So not a single job was ever done in one go. If someone is too accomplished and stubborn, I keep giving orders, and I find some fault or other and give orders again. If one does not do as told and does not deny one’s own thought, I give orders yet again.

So the brothers, unable to overcome their own tempers, would get headaches and buy painkillers to take. “Then how should we do it?” “How? Do it like this.” “In my thinking it would be better to do it like this.” “Stop the useless talk and do as you are told,” I say.

These days I do not do it much, but in the early days it was

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the same even when we played jokgu. We would draw the lines, set the net in the middle, and play, and if the ball goes outside the line, it is all out. However well one has kicked, it is out. But when the ball fell a full meter outside the line and I called it in, the brothers would be beside themselves. Unless a man is stone blind, how can a ball that fell a meter outside be in?—they protest, burning up. Then I say, "As I see it, it is clearly in—why do you call it out?" "However much you are a pastor, and however much I am a layman, you should only insist on what can be insisted on," one says; and I say, "You are the one who should insist only on what can be insisted on. Clearly, as I see it, it is in." Then I ask his own team, "In or out?" and among his own team the brothers who know my intent say, "It is in." Then he says, "This is flattery and blind obedience. I will not play jokgu," and I say, "If you will not play, do not play. Step out."

In the beginning there were many times I did that to the brothers. In particular, two pastors would snort steam from their noses and fume. Sometimes this one would take my side and sometimes that one would take my side, and the two would fight each other. Then I would laugh inwardly and think: well done—fight; only by fighting are you broken; if you are not broken, how can I take you along and plant churches and give you work? Whichever side it is, fight until you are broken.

Now I do not do it so much. Now they understand the Word, and when I speak they calculate it all: that word is spoken to me, and that one is spoken to someone else. But dear fellow believers, rather than saying that word is for me and that word is for someone else, keep in mind that the Lord is speaking to all of us who are born again, and to me as well. Only when we deny ourselves can we follow the Lord. The one who is willing to die lives. Even when it seems in your own thought that it will not work, if it is called right before the Lord, you just do it. Then you live.

Take up your cross and follow the Lord

And the Lord said to take up one's cross and follow Him. It is following the Lord in the midst of hardship. Even in the midst of feeling that I will die, that this cannot work, that it is too hard to live, we must serve the Lord for the gospel to be preached. It is taking up one's own cross and following the Lord. Each of us has hardships, and following the Lord in the midst of hardship is truly following the Lord. It is not following the Lord when everything is fine. Until now I have followed the Lord in the midst of hardship while living the life of faith.

Because I am a pastor and a man, do you think someone like me would not weep? I have wept much. I went where no one knows and wept much. There were many times I wept and many times I struggled alone. That is why I know that you find it hard to serve the Lord. I see that you struggle when you follow and serve the Lord. But you must not think that I have none of that. I too have many hardships and difficulties I cannot tell you. Truly there are hard things I cannot tell anyone, so that I swallow them down alone and my insides churn at times. When it is hard, just as He said to take up your cross and follow Me, both I and you serve the Lord in the midst of hardship. Because we serve the Lord in such hardship, there are times when we are pressed down; sometimes we want to gather and eat something delicious, want to receive some reward, want to do something.

So when we have the chance, we play amusing games and play like children, helter-skelter. Because there are times that are too difficult and hard, we play like that on purpose to escape it in a human way; even playing the mole-catching game in the park, we do not tap gently but strike with all our might to relieve the stress.

Only when we truly take up our own cross in hardship and

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follow the Lord can we follow the gospel and follow the Lord. Only when we deny ourselves and take up our own cross and follow the Lord can we truly follow the Lord. You and I must have these two things without fail. Dear fellow believers, keep this in mind. These two things apply exactly to your life and to my own life. When we are too accomplished, we must deny ourselves; when we are too deficient, we must deny; when we are too ordinary, we must deny; at all times we must deny. And even when we have hardship, we must always think of the Lord first, think of the work of the Lord first, and follow the Lord. We must follow the Lord holding these two together without fail.

At such times we can follow the Lord. It is so for everyone. Whether young or old, whether a student or a worker with a job, it is so for all.

Here the middle school students, the high school students, and the Sunday school children too—anyone must deny himself and take up his cross to follow the Lord. A child follows the Lord in the midst of being young, as much as a child can; an adult, as much as an adult; one mature in faith, as much as one who is mature—when each denies himself and takes up his cross and follows, we can follow the Lord. When all of us, each at his own level, deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow the Lord, we all become able to follow the Lord.

Whether a mission school student or a worker of God or our brothers and sisters or the Sunday school children, everyone who has received salvation must deny himself. And he must take up his cross and follow the Lord. Only then can he follow the Lord. Especially the workers of the Lord must deny themselves. But breaking down one's self-will is a very hard thing. That is why, in earlier days, to make the workers break down their self-will, I told them to tear out even work done well, and then they had to do it again.

In my own view it would work to do it this way, yet he orders it that way, one thinks. Even when it seems it would go well this way and one wonders why he orders it that way, one must break down one's self-will. One must deny one's own thought. "My thought is nothing. It is said that every plan of the thoughts of man's heart is always only evil." So one breaks down one's own will. When one breaks oneself like that, one can do as the Lord commands, and when one does it, it works. And as one goes on like that, one becomes a person of faith.

The blessing received by the one who denies himself and follows

Just as Abraham followed the word, we too come to follow the Lord. And we come to live with strength in the Lord, and to enjoy joy and happiness, reward and satisfaction in the Lord. That is, we come to live. Here, to live means the same as to receive blessing. Not long ago we made a contract for a church building in a certain city, and we named the church Blessing Church. There is a Blessing Church in another city as well, and because blessing is good, we gave it that name. In fact, the heart of every person wants to receive blessing before God. People want to receive blessing, but they do not know well where the church that receives blessing is, so we named it Blessing Church.

Those who deny themselves, deny their own thoughts, and follow the Lord are connected with the blessing received before God. They themselves receive blessing, their descendants receive blessing, and all the people around them also receive blessing. Dear fellow believers, when can we receive such blessing? When we follow the Lord even in hardship, and when we deny ourselves and follow the Lord—when these two are

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combined—we receive blessing along with them. This is the word of the Lord.

No one is excluded from this. The Lord said that whoever leaves house or brothers and sisters or parents or children or lands for the Lord and for the gospel and follows Him receives a hundredfold in this age. Dear fellow believers, the Lord said a hundredfold. Then does that mean to abandon them all? It is not that, but that one did not follow their will but followed the will of the Lord first. Then one receives blessing a hundredfold—that is the word. Dear fellow believers, these two things must be combined without fail. Those who deny themselves and follow the Lord even in the midst of hardship become those who live and those who receive blessing from the Lord.

The life of faith we live after receiving salvation is in fact a life that combines these two. Today is said to be the Buddha's birthday, and watching what they show on television, the doctrines of Christianity and the doctrines of Buddhism are similar. Attaining Buddhahood pairs with sanctification, and prayers of repentance pair with self-reflection; I felt today how many things could be joined with a line drawn between them. In Buddhism, too, they say that to attain enlightenment one must deny oneself and reach liberation.

Dear fellow believers, but doctrine is only doctrine. The servants of God, the brothers and sisters, whoever is born again—they deny themselves, and then take up their cross and follow the Lord. That is the real life of faith.

But denying oneself is very hard, and taking up one's cross and following the Lord is also very hard. Dear fellow believers, how hard is it to follow the Lord, who goes ahead carrying a cross as big as a utility pole? How hard is it to carry one and follow? Yet the Lord said that this is how you must actually follow Me in your lives. That is how we must follow the Lord.

We must deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow the Lord. Those who truly serve the Lord practice these two things. Denying does not mean denying everything altogether; it is denying that which becomes an obstacle to my following the Lord—that is, one's own thoughts. We deny ourselves like that, and then, even in hardship, even when it does not suit my taste, by following the Lord we become those who follow Him. Those who did not follow the Lord like this have all left.

Among the old popular songs there is a lyric about leaving at night on a slow train without even a word of farewell. Dear fellow believers, if you and I who sit here are not people who, in following the Lord, deny ourselves and follow the word of God and follow the church of God even in hardship, and who, even when other thoughts rise up in our own minds, deny those thoughts and believe and follow if God has said so—then we have left, like the one who left on that night train. Some leave at this station and some leave at that station; everyone leaves.

But the person who denied himself and followed the Lord even in hardship, the person who denied his own thoughts and followed the Lord, regarding the Lord alone as right, did not leave, and all received blessing, and came to live a life in which the present is better than the past and the future better than the present. Dear fellow believers, let all of us, whoever we are, deny ourselves and take up our cross and follow the Lord even in the midst of hardship.

This is truly following the Lord. The person who would live must deny himself and follow the Lord even in hardship. But the one who would live according to his own will does not do these two things. Then he dies spiritually. He says, "If it does not work, I will just do it alone," but it never works. He fails to keep his heart, and in the end he dies and is cut off.

However accomplished one may be, even with strength

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enough to strike down a thousand men on the spot with the jawbone of a donkey like Samson, if one works alone, one dies. Yet even among the servants of God there are those who cannot deny their own thoughts. “If I did it alone without interference, my heart would be at ease and it would be good. I would just preach the gospel clearly and, without denying the rest, eat delicious things with the brothers and sisters, and then, if there happens to be a soul to preach the gospel to, preach the gospel—if I lived like this, it would work.” Dear fellow believers, the person who does not deny himself is bound to come to have such thoughts.

And he comes to try it. But such a person surely dies. Even when he tries, he can do nothing, and nothing comes to pass. If he tries, it surely turns out like this. We can know it from the seniors who tried to succeed on their own.

Many of your seniors left in this way. When one leaves, when one falls from the vine, there is nothing at all. The one who fell from the vine fell because he could not deny himself, and fell because he did not follow the Lord even in hardship. Those who did not do these two things all left, and died.

Dear fellow believers, is living not better than dying? We must live. And should not the future be better than the present? For that to be so, we must deny ourselves. We must follow the Lord in the midst of hardship. Though it is hard now, if we follow the Lord in hardship, we come to live. This is the truth. But if we do not do it, we come to die. We must set out to find the way to live. Just as we named it Blessing Church, we must receive blessing. Like Jacob, we must receive blessing without fail.

After receiving the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John the Baptist and shedding His blood on the Cross, we must not regard the life of faith as all

finished, thinking only of going to the kingdom of heaven. When you ride an airplane and go up, the cirrus clouds are spread out below and the sun shines down on them—truly vast. Even the clouds, seen from below, seem to be only one layer, but when you go up, there is one layer, two layers, three layers—how many there are! The higher you go up and the nearer to the sun, when you look down, it is so clear and clean, and the clouds are not ordinary either: they are shaped like mountains, shaped like rocks, or spread out like a wide plain. How amazing and beautiful the world of God is! Looking at this earth, I come to believe in my heart that since God has made heaven, He must have made it truly beautiful indeed. Looking down while riding in the airplane, it was so good. Down on the earth the wind blows, clouds gather, and the weather changes from moment to moment, but when you go up above, whether it rains below or thunders, regardless of all that, the sun shines bright and the cirrus clouds are spread wide. The world of God is that beautiful.

Truly, the one who follows the Lord receives blessing regardless of the circumstances of this world. Dear fellow believers, we must become those who follow the Lord. So we must become those who do not die but live, and those who receive blessing. We must become those who receive salvation and receive blessing. I ask you not to hear this word merely as a sermon but to hear it with faith. Hear it as the word God speaks to you yourselves. Those who have become workers, the brother ministers who are doing ministry, the brothers and sisters who support the work of the Lord and serve in various ways, and the brothers and sisters who, even without directly supporting it, are being nurtured well—all must keep this word in mind.

Everyone must deny himself and follow the will of the Lord even in hardship. Then we come to live. Dear fellow believers, I truly hope you will not suffer more pain living according to your

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own will. I hope you will live well. Following the Lord even in hardship, and at times eating delicious things and going on trips as we do so, we will live like that and then go to the kingdom of the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, we live well. While we are at it, should we not also eat delicious things, and, while we are at it, also live well because of the Lord? Let us live like that. Let all of us follow the Lord even in hardship and difficulty; and if the harvest we reap later is greater, we will follow the Lord all the better. If we were going to be ruined in the end, we could not follow; but if things are going to go well, what reason is there not to follow?

Dear fellow believers, we must follow the Lord even in hardship. And we are to live enjoying the blessing the Lord gives. That is happy beyond all telling. Truly we are happy people. Even when we ride an airplane, we do not ride it with worry; and even going around to find a church building, though there is some hardship, our hearts are glad in the Lord, so it is a joy. Since we live anyway, let us live joyfully. And let us live receiving blessing. For that, we must deny ourselves, and we must follow the Lord even in hardship. I close the message. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Let us follow the Lord for the purpose of preaching the gospel

< Luke 9:57-62 >

"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'"

The church of God is the place where we gather like this and praise, hear the word of God, pray to God, and can serve the gospel of God.

It is something to be very thankful for that we live the life of faith in the church of God like this. But foolish people, people who are truly dull of head and know nothing but the flesh, do not know how precious this is. They know that money is precious, but they do not know how precious spiritual things are.

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It truly grieves the heart, but it is good for a pig to live like a pig. For a pig to live elegantly like a noble is something entirely wrong. A pig must live like a pig, and a foolish person must live like a foolish person. Living so is the fitting life. If I say such things there can be misunderstanding, and if someone challenges me, asking whether my intelligence in the flesh is higher than others', I have nothing to say. But if a person does not know as precious the precious thing God has given, and stays inside the church only deceiving eyes outwardly, half-heartedly, for the sake of his own flesh, what is he different from the truly foolish? When the time comes, he will bare his claws and reveal his deeds.

Therefore, while we are in the church we must receive rebuke as well and learn what is to be learned. There are many things we know but cannot do, yet we must know what is to be known and believe what is to be believed, and follow along in life for what is lacking.

"The Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head"

Looking at the passage today, as Jesus was going along the road, a certain man spoke to the Lord. He said, *"I will follow You wherever You go" (Luke 9:57)*. This man seems to have recognized Jesus. He is saying that wherever You go, he will follow.

When the man spoke like that, Jesus said, as we have read, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head" (Luke 9:58)*. Here the Son of Man refers to Jesus Himself, the Son of God who came in the body of a man, and He said that He has nowhere even to lay His head. Dear fellow believers, think of it once. Is there an address of Jesus on this earth? There is an address of His birth. His

birthplace is Bethlehem. Then does He have a place of residence?

Is your place of residence not registered at the local office? But have you ever seen the address of the residence of Jesus while reading the Scriptures? There is none. Jesus went about here and there. So Jesus said, *"Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."*

Dear fellow believers, *"the Son of Man"* in the Scriptures is a word that refers to Jesus Himself, who came in the body of a man. It does not simply mean a son of man or a gentle person. Originally Jesus is the Creator. But He put on the body of a man for a while and was on this earth for about thirty-three years.

During that time, how many people were there who recognized Jesus as the Savior of mankind, the Creator, the Judge, the One who gives blessing and curse? But this man seems to have been quite clever. "I want to follow You. Wherever You go, I will follow You." Then Jesus said, "I have nowhere even to lay My head. Even if you come after Me, there is no place even to sleep comfortably."

The person who would follow the Lord for his own ends

Did this man follow, or did he not follow? He did not follow. Then why were there such people? Because they had heard or seen that Jesus performed the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, raised the dead, opened the eyes of the blind, made the lame rise, and cast out demons, doing many mighty works, it seems he said he would follow because it looked as if there would be something to gain if he followed.

There were also many people who said they loved me. One person said, "Pastor, I love you. I love you," saying he loved me

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as if his breath would give out. Once he began, he would say "I love you" twenty times over. Even saying it five times in a row would leave one out of breath, but he would say it about twenty times. So I said, "How do I know that you love me? There is one way to know. Do you love God? If you love God, you love me; and if you do not love God, you do not love me. It is simple. However much you shout with words that you love me, it is useless." But to that word he gave no answer.

Then a little later he betrayed me outright. "Love? What love—it was all just words thrown away. The reason I bowed to you for a while was to gain something." Many people did that to me. I cannot list all the names, nor do I want to. Because the mouth becomes dirty, the heart becomes dirty, and the thoughts become dirty.

It was so even with Jesus. When Jesus was on this earth, there were many who would follow Jesus with their own ends in view. But when He said He had nowhere to lay His head, the man seems to have given up. So Jesus looked at another person beside him, not that man, and said, *"Follow Me" (Luke 9:59)*.

Then that man said, "I will follow, but since my father has died, let me first go and finish the burial and then return and follow." Jesus said, *"Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:60)*. What Jesus, having come to this earth, wants of us is precisely the preaching of the gospel.

The preaching of the gospel, as you well know, is preaching the kingdom of God. The Lord came to this earth and, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, took all the sins of the world upon Himself, and bearing those sins He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again, and so saved us from all sins. Preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the world is the work the Lord has entrusted to

us. In the first half of this year alone we sent 288,671 books overseas, and adding single copies, it seems we have sent more than 300,000. The first half is not yet over, so we will send more. One brother has been laboring late into the night these days to send out what has piled up.

Only when we follow the Lord can we also preach the gospel. Only when we follow the Lord and obey the command of the Lord is the gospel preached; otherwise, how would the gospel be preached? In fact, even among the people inside the church there are very many whose hearts are set on the wrong things. There are many who are interested in money, and many who would try to grab a position.

Some, though they are not even fit vessels, try to become leading workers. To the person who serves the Lord rightly, all the work can be entrusted. How could I work alone? But if it is entrusted to a person with such a heart, his own soul is ruined and dies. If one works while stealing what belongs to God, can he live? He cannot live. What is the purpose of following the Lord? It is to serve the gospel, to preach the gospel—that is why we follow.

To preach means, as the word says, to deliver; does shouting alone spread it? To the person whom our voice cannot reach, how shall we deliver it? We must make books, print them, and deliver them. That is why we do literature mission. People all know about literature mission, but those who practice it are next to none.

In the passage, the man said he would bury his own father and come. Our country has a three-day funeral, but in the land of Judea the periods connected with burial are long. When Jacob died, it took forty days to embalm his body with spices, and the Egyptians mourned for seventy days. In Egypt in those days, when a person died they removed all the internal organs from

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the body, emptied the inside, filled it with spices, and made a mummy so that the outline of the form showed, and buried it. Making a mummy and mourning like this took a long time. They would place the body in a cave like that, and since the climate there was dry and the humidity low, the body was long preserved or dried. Even now, after thousands of years, mummies are being excavated. So if one goes to hold his father's burial and is worn down by such long and complicated funeral procedures and condolence greetings, his heart is wholly taken by it and he becomes unable to follow the Lord.

If we are born into this world and try to follow the Lord only after doing all our duties in the flesh, we cannot follow. Dear fellow believers, that is impossible. It is the same with children. Western education has a very good point. The moment one graduates from middle school and high school, they say, "Enough. Now go out and live on your own." That is the best and that is the right answer. For the parents do not stay alive until the child dies, and one's own life one must pioneer oneself. It is only natural.

But in our country there are so many of the kangaroo tribe. There are many who, past thirty or in their twenties, still try to live under the protection of their parents. At the age when they should be serving their parents, should they rather live taking from their parents, sucking their parents' flesh and blood?

This word—to leave the father's burial to the dead and follow the Lord—seems heartless, but when you actually serve the Lord, the body is one, and one cannot do two things well. It is so with everything. If you try to do two things, you cannot imagine how much attention you must pay. If one must do the work of the world, keep the duties of the world, and also do the work of God, how could one do it all?

You who have come into the church and live here are in a

very good position, for the ground is laid. Do you not have only to do the work of God? I mean that you have no need to worry about food, clothing, and shelter. You cannot imagine how well things are arranged. But out in the world, one cannot even dream of such things; one must earn money oneself to solve the problems of food, clothing, and shelter. Bound to that all one's life, one can do nothing. The work of God has its time.

"Having put his hand to the plow, and looking back"

The Lord said to us, *"Follow Me."* And what is it that we follow and do? It is to preach the gospel. It is telling us not to live for ourselves. And yet another person said to the Lord, *"Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house" (Luke 9:61).*

Then Jesus spoke, taking the plow as an example. The plow is a farming tool that tills the field. The ox pulls in front, and from behind one grips the plow and presses it down to turn over the soil of the ground. These days machines do it all, but the plow was the farming tool used in those days, and so He gave this example.

Jesus said, *"No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God" (Luke 9:62)*. The plow must keep going forward, and just holding the plow and following is hard enough—if one looks back, where would the plow go? The furrow goes crooked. It means one cannot do the work of God.

That is why those who believe in Jesus sometimes hear it said that they are cold, that they are mean. But it is not that the person is mean and cold; it is that one becomes so while following the Lord. It happens as one does the work; it is not that we were

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originally so cold and mean. If you put yourself in the other position, you will know.

If you and I do not serve the gospel, if we do not follow the Lord, if we give up following the Lord, can the people of this world hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit? They hear the gospel through us; if it is said that there are many others besides us who deliver the gospel, then who is there? I ask bluntly and openly. Who is there? If there is anyone, name him.

I say it because I truly do not know of any. Dear fellow believers, the religionists are one hundred percent frauds. Have you ever thought that, among those who hang up a visible cross and run a religion, most are frauds—rather than thinking there must be one or two frauds and the rest not? If one thought so without grounds, that person himself would be in the wrong; but if one looks at the facts squarely as facts, they are frauds. You cannot imagine how many frauds are waiting on every side. Whom are they waiting for? They are waiting for all the people of this world. They have spread their nets here and spread them there, waiting everywhere.

If you flee this way, they seize you on this side and defraud you; if you flee that way, they defraud you on that side. You and I were all in the midst of that too. There is no escaping. Flee as you may, under heaven there is not one inch of a way out. The point is that people have never considered how many frauds there are. When I say such things, people say, “That is talk for the sake of a sermon—have you gone and met them?” But if you are once properly caught by a fraud, from your parents to your descendants all go to hell, and you are exploited like that.

The family of one worker, they say, was so dizzy in the head because of their son that they had a car accident and the car was even scrapped. If he left home and left the church, he should say to his parents, “I am sorry for this and that. I will keep my place,

so do not worry," and if the parents call, he should answer and at least explain how things went, should he not? He does not answer when they call, and no call comes when they wait, so how the parents' hearts must burn! A person must do his basic duty. The mother, heartsick, says, "It would have been better if he had not been born." If he had not been born, there would have been nothing to grieve over. Still, one settles one's heart: he is my child even so; spiritually he has gone astray; if he means to live in the flesh, let him live—you live your way and I will live mine.

One cannot follow the Lord after doing all one's duties first

The person who follows the Lord sometimes hears it said that he is heartless. But look once at the passage. The one who of his own accord says, *"I will follow You" (Luke 9:61),* is a person who follows for his own ends. When the Lord said, "I have nowhere to lay My head; even if you come after Me, there is no place even to sleep in comfort," that was the end of it. When Jesus said to the person beside him, *"Follow Me,"* he says he will follow after burying his father. The Lord says to leave that to the dead and quickly follow Him and preach the kingdom of God. And another person asks to be allowed first to bid his family farewell. But one cannot follow the Lord after doing everything one has to do.

I also had an adoptive mother who had me educated and all but raised me. But if I did all my duties to my parent, I could not serve the gospel. So I said I was going out to serve the gospel. "Child, do not do that. If you stay here, I will hand over the directorship, buy you a car, send you to study abroad—I will do

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it all for you." "That is not it. I am going out to preach this gospel." "Can you not preach it here?" If I preached here, I could preach to the people who come to the prayer center, but the range of preaching was too narrow. So I said I would go out into the world and preach.

"Do not do that. I raised you and did all I was to do for you; now in my old age should you not live supporting me? Do a little of a person's duty." But if I did so, I could not do my duty before God. A person's duty can be done even after going out. Do you think it was not hard for me either?

Dear fellow believers, even now some people think like this. Having built up this much scale and launched this much business, should one not now stop expanding, look after one's own body, live comfortably, drive a good car, buy a set of golf clubs and go around hearing "Nice shot, boss!" once in a while—many think so.

But I have no property under my name. There is nothing except working together with this church. Even if there were, what of it? Even if something enormous like a hotel worth hundreds of billions of won were put under my name, I would not want it. What would I do if such a thing were put under my name? I would sell it all and serve the gospel, and share with you, buying delicious things to eat and working together—that is all. What would one do with such a thing?

We must prepare for the gospel and go forward

People say that at this point one ought to live at ease, but to deliver the gospel to all the whole world, there is still a long way to go. A few days ago in China, they say, 100 millimeters of rain fell in one hour and a small city was completely flooded. In some

places landslides and floods came, and in other places even wildfires started. It is the same with our country. The cold air and the warm air must flow along together, but when they stall and meet and collide right over us, the water pours down. Then 100 millimeters in one hour in an instant is nothing. When it pours down like a water bomb, there is no way to cope. That is why we prepare against such things.

Landslides may come and hard times may come, so the business must also be grown, so that we live well, our families live well, and the gospel is preached much. In this last era, when they say even finding a job is hard, we who serve God must also live well until we meet the Lord; should we just stay in a precarious situation? If I settle down and sink into complacency now because my stomach is full and my back is warm, how will the sprouting new generation live?

The Lord said that no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. Since the Lord leads at the front, we must keep following the Lord. There will also be duties on this earth we cannot fully do. Even so, if we please the Lord, countless people receive salvation through us. Then it is done. When a person tries to do a right work, there are things gained and things lost—how could one gain everything? How could one be praised by everyone?

I like serving the gospel. I like it that you serve the Lord and do spiritual work and also eat well and live well in the future. There is a saying that parents feel full just watching food enter their children's mouths; I am glad when you live well. I am satisfied with that. I wish for nothing more. In a little while I will go before the Lord—what more would I wish for?

For you and for me alike, money alone does not settle everything. A person's mind must be set upright and whole, his faith must be set in properly, he must know the Lord and follow

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the Lord. If, while following the Lord, you keep looking at the world, you are ruined. If you turn your direction, you lose the Lord. Just as in driving, when you turn the wheel the car goes as you turn it, what matters is where you set your heart.

The best thing is to receive the eternal life and the salvation God has given, and, uniting our hearts with God, to live a life of walking with the Lord while we live on this earth, and then to meet the Lord. What would we do living on this earth? With what would we satisfy our hearts? There is nothing better than the work of God. I have finished the message. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The kingdom of God that has come to this earth

< Luke 9:57-62 >

"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head.' Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God.' And another also said, 'Lord, I will follow You, but let me first go and bid them farewell who are at my house.' But Jesus said to him, 'No one, having put his hand to the plow, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God.'"

In the daytime worship service today we shared the word about what we must live by as our standard—that is, that we must live with our purpose set on the work of saving souls. Rather than trying to hold on to both the work of the flesh and the work of the soul by our own strength, if we offer our lives to the work of saving people's souls, God fills up the remaining parts as well. So our saints must first do that work of saving souls for the kingdom of God, must set their hearts on it first, and must place our goal there.

Today we have read the word of Luke chapter 9. Verses 59

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and 60 of the passage say, *"Then He said to another, 'Follow Me.' But he said, 'Lord, let me first go and bury my father.' Jesus said to him, 'Let the dead bury their own dead, but you go and preach the kingdom of God'"*.

"Preach the kingdom of God"

When a certain man said he would follow Jesus, Jesus said that the Son of Man has nowhere even to lay His head; and then to another person He Himself said to follow Him. Then that man said he would follow, but asked to be allowed first to go and bury his father, and Jesus said to let the dead bury their own dead and told him to go and preach the kingdom of God. When yet another said he would follow the Lord but asked to be allowed first to bid his family farewell, He said that no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. In this way our Lord is telling those who want to follow Him, and those whom He has called to follow, to preach the kingdom of God. Then what is the kingdom of God? Dear fellow believers, in this hour of the Word let us look together at this kingdom of God.

What kind of One is the King of the kingdom of God?

He said to preach the kingdom of God; now, for a kingdom to be formed, there must first be a king. And only when there are the king and his people is there a kingdom. Then what kind of One is this Jesus we believe in? The Lord we believe in is the One who saved us from sin. And our Lord is the One who is the

Judge, who presides over judgment. In Revelation chapter 20 verse 11 there appears the One who sits on a great white throne, and that One is Jesus Christ. The very One who saved us sits in the seat of judgment at the end of this world as the Lord of judgment and judges. We must know this kingdom of God. When we first know who our King is, who the One who saved us is, the kingdom of God is rightly established in our hearts.

Jesus our King is not only the Judge; the Scriptures say that He is the Creator. Who is the One who created the heavens and the earth in the beginning? He is the very Lord who saved us. Dear fellow believers, we often know the Lord only as the One who saved us, but the Lord told us to preach the kingdom of God. What is that kingdom of God? It is precisely who Jesus Christ is and what He has done for us. The Master of the kingdom of God, the King of that kingdom, is Jesus Christ, and He is the Creator. Dear fellow believers, the fact that Jesus Christ, the Master of our souls, is the Creator must be in our hearts.

He is not present merely as the Lord of salvation. We must know the fact that the Creator, who made us and made this universe, is the Almighty. Our Lord is the Almighty, who calmed the sea. Our Lord is the Judge, and He is also the Master who has reclaimed this world.

The Lord, who took back the kingdom that had been lost

Our Lord told His disciples, and those who wanted to follow Him, to preach the kingdom of God. Why does He tell them to preach the kingdom of God? Because this world is a world that was once taken by Satan the devil. God entrusted this world He had made to human beings, to Adam and Eve, but Adam and

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Eve, taken in by the enticement of Satan the devil, ended up losing that kingdom. But our Lord came to this earth and took this kingdom back.

That is why our Lord tells us to preach the kingdom of God—that is, to preach His own kingdom. Dear fellow believers, our Lord truly wants His kingdom to be preached. Our Lord came to this earth, shattered all the power of sin of the enemy, Satan the devil, removed all the authority of Satan, took this kingdom back, and gave it to us, the people of God. And Jesus Christ became the true King of this earth. That is why the Lord tells us to preach His kingdom. We must listen carefully to this word telling us to preach the kingdom of God.

What did God command us who are born again? He said, *"baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20)*. That was precisely preaching the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God we must preach is that Jesus Christ is the King of this earth, that Jesus is God and the Creator and the Judge. And we must preach the fact that Jesus has removed our sins and removed the sins of this world. Preaching the kingdom of God means precisely that. When we preach the kingdom of God to the many people on this earth who are deceived by Satan the devil, people are saved from sin, come to know God rightly, serve God, and receive grace before God.

That is why our Lord spoke to us. He is saying that the world of Satan the devil has come to its end, and that the true Master of all people is Jesus Christ. Dear fellow believers, the Master and Creator and Judge of all people, including you and me, is Jesus Christ. Do you believe that fact? When such things are engraved in our hearts, when we come to know that God rightly, we become those who, as His people, serve the King, repay the

grace of the King, and preach the kingdom of God. Our Lord took back the world that had been lost through sin. And in this world He wants, as King, to receive worship from His people, to receive service, to receive praise, and to receive thanksgiving. Dear fellow believers, we must listen well to these things our Lord speaks to us.

What we must preach

We must truly worship our Lord. Then how must we worship the Lord? If in our born-again hearts there is no heart that fears God, if we think only of having received salvation, we can only become dissolute. The One who told us to preach the kingdom of God is our King and Judge, our Savior and Creator and the King of the kingdom of God, and we must know clearly the fact that we are His people. And after that we must preach the kingdom of God. When we speak of the kingdom of God, that is, this gospel, we must deliver the fact that Jesus Christ shattered the authority of Satan on this earth and removed the sins of all people. Our Lord is the One who remits sin. Our Lord, as the One who remits sin, has removed the sins of people.

There is not one person in this world who has sin. But Satan the devil deceives people so that they feel as if they still had sin, deceiving them into thinking that Jesus Christ did not remove all sin, and so keeps them from serving God. Our God tells those who want to follow Him to preach the kingdom of God, and says that no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. Dear fellow believers, what must we preach? We must open our mouths and preach that Jesus Christ took all the sins of this world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and, by receiving the judgment of those

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sins on the Cross, has removed all sins. When we preach this kingdom of God, the power of Jesus Christ appears, and the souls that were bound and deceived by Satan the devil are set free, and as the people of God they come to know Jesus Christ, bow in worship before Jesus Christ, and praise God. That is why the work we must do is preaching the kingdom of God. Dear fellow believers, do you understand what it means to preach the kingdom of God?

First, to preach the kingdom of God, we must know the fact that we are His people. Second, to preach the kingdom of God, we must first know clearly that He is our King and Judge and Creator, that He is not the same as we are but the Absolute One, the One worthy to receive worship, and the One who removed our sins. Third, to preach the kingdom of the Lord, we must testify that our God has removed our sins.

Dear fellow believers, what must we strive for in our daily lives? We must strive to preach the kingdom of God. Are there not many people around you? What must we preach to those people? We must preach the kingdom of God. It is the fact that Jesus Christ is the King, and that Jesus Christ has removed all sin—that is, that all the sins under which you were serving as a slave, deceived by Satan the devil, Jesus Christ has removed without remainder. We must preach the fact that Jesus Christ loved you and removed all your sins, the fact that the kingdom of God has come to your heart and your soul, the fact that the kingdom of God has come to this earth. Dear fellow believers, how will you speak to the people around you? The great commission of Jesus Christ is the preaching of this gospel, and this is the preaching of the kingdom of God.

The kingdom of God has already come to this earth

What this means is that the kingdom of God has already come upon this earth. Dear fellow believers, it is not a matter of making the kingdom of God come, nor of human beings pulling it down from heaven; the kingdom of God has already come to this earth. We must first preach, to those who do not know it, the kingdom of Jesus Christ, the kingdom of God that has come. Speaking of it is the task of us saints. That our saints, living on this earth, worship God and serve God and sing praise before God and live within His statutes, and also testify to all the people living on this earth of the fact that the kingdom of God has come to this earth—this is preaching the kingdom of God.

Do you preach the kingdom of God? If it is just preaching the gospel, perhaps one can preach it. But our Lord told us to preach the kingdom of God. God has removed the sins of all the people of this earth and the kingdom of God has already come to this earth—why then are people still living crushed under sin, still without knowing God rightly? God is not One who merely receives worship; He is the One who removed our sins, the God of love and the Judge and the Just One. He is truly the God of love and the God of truth. We must tell people that, just as He promised to remove our sins, He came to this earth and removed our sins—your very sins.

But many people have little interest in the fact that the kingdom of God has come. Dear fellow believers, the fact that the kingdom of God has come must first be engraved in our hearts, and then it must be testified into people's hearts. Satan the devil says that merely preaching the gospel is something we may as well try. But we must proclaim to Satan the devil: "Satan the devil, your age is already over. Upon this earth the kingdom

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of God has come. Jesus Christ is the King, and He is the Creator and the Judge, and He alone rules us. We are His people. The whole earth is His, and all mankind must serve Him." Dear fellow believers, when we proclaim and testify to Satan the devil that this kingdom of God has already come, Satan the devil can no longer deceive us and can no longer deceive the souls of people.

Who is it that so deceives the souls of people? Even now, in the hearts of people, Satan the devil deceives them as if he were king, as if his kingdom were still on this earth. In the hearts of people, in the souls of people, Satan the devil exists as a petty god that curses those who do not listen to him and sends down calamity on those who do not serve him. Dear fellow believers, we must plant in people's hearts the fact that the kingdom of the devil is finished. We must preach that the kingdom of God has come. Then Satan the devil can no longer do with people as he pleases. Our Lord is saying in this passage that the kingdom of God has come, and to preach that kingdom.

Jesus Christ came to this earth and removed the curse of Satan the devil

Dear fellow believers, in what year did Japan surrender? In 1945. The year the atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima and Japan surrendered is 1945, and August 15 of that year is our Liberation Day. Japan had occupied almost all of this part of Asia, and this land too was in their hands. But after the American atomic bomb fell on Hiroshima, the emperor of Japan declared unconditional surrender. Those who heard that broadcast of the emperor of Japan declaring unconditional surrender, those who received this news first, knew that the Japanese were not the masters of this

country, that this country had been liberated, that this country was our country, the country of Joseon.

So people ran out with the national flag and shouted hurrah; and what was it like in the hearts of those who knew that fact? It was that this country was absolutely not the country of Japan but the country of Joseon. The moment the fact was planted in their hearts and they came to know it—liberated from the country of Japan; this is the country of Joseon—the Japanese could no longer wield any power in this land of Joseon. To preach the kingdom of God is precisely that. On this earth Satan the devil keeps pressing people down and tormenting them and still tries to rule them, but there is something we must tell people: if you keep listening to Satan the devil, you are being deceived; do not listen to the words of Satan the devil—Jesus Christ came to this earth and has already reclaimed this kingdom as the kingdom of God.

Jesus Christ came to this earth and removed all sin, removed without remainder all the curses of the people bound by Satan the devil, took the kingdom away from Satan the devil, and has now made it the kingdom of God. Therefore we must tell people: "Believe in Jesus Christ. If you believe in Jesus Christ, you receive salvation. You not only receive the remission of sins, but all the authority of Satan that torments you will depart. Receive Jesus Christ, and believe the fact that Jesus Christ has removed all your sins and shattered all the authority of Satan." Dear fellow believers, when we preach the gospel, we must preach together with it the fact that the kingdom of God has come upon this earth. Then Satan the devil comes to lose his strength. This word telling us to preach the kingdom of God is truly important.

Even now many people are being deceived. Even now they are deceived into thinking that Satan the devil presides over this world. This world is not a world over which Satan the devil

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presides. Dear fellow believers, do not be deceived. Do not think that Satan the devil can harm you, or that you will surely be ruined if you do not listen to his words. Command, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan, depart!" Before the name of Jesus Christ, the King of the kingdom of God, Satan the devil can wield no strength. Dear fellow believers, we must testify of the fact that the kingdom of God has come to our homes as well, the fact that the kingdom of God has come to this earth as well, the fact that the kingdom of God has come to every corner of this globe, wherever it may be. Dear fellow believers, do you see? Just as the news of the August 15 liberation was made known to everyone, we too, whenever we meet anyone, must preach the fact that the kingdom of God has come to him, that Jesus Christ has removed all his sins, has set him free from all those curses of Satan the devil, and has saved him.

The battle of the Lord was the battle with Satan the devil

In the passage, while our Lord was telling them to preach the kingdom of God, as the Lord was going along the road a certain man tried to follow Jesus. Verses 57 and 58 say, *"Now it happened as they journeyed on the road, that someone said to Him, 'Lord, I will follow You wherever You go.' And Jesus said to him, 'Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head'"*. The Lord seems to have known this man's heart well. He seems to have been the kind of person who wanted to play the king on this earth while following Jesus. So He spoke to him like that; and in fact, when Jesus was on this earth, He had nowhere to lay His head. Until Jesus took all the sins of the world upon Himself with the

baptism He received from John the Baptist in the Jordan River and put an end to it by dying on the Cross, our Lord was not at ease wherever He went on this earth. Wherever He went there were adversaries.

The reason our Lord tells us to preach the kingdom of God is that He wanted to testify of the fact that He came to this earth as King, shattered the authority of Satan the devil, and fought Satan the devil and won. The true battle was the battle with Satan the devil, not a battle with us human beings. Satan the devil was originally an angel that opposed God, and our Lord Himself defeated this Satan the devil by the just law of God. And while telling them to preach the kingdom of God, He did not receive a certain man though he wanted to follow; and in verse 59 He Himself called another person, saying to follow Him. The one who had set his hope on the earth our Lord refused, and to another He Himself said to follow Him, entrusting to him the work of preaching this kingdom.

Dear fellow believers, our Lord is speaking of the kingdom of God. He is not speaking of a kingdom of this earth. Truly our God wants to give the kingdom of God to us, the people of God. And God not only wants to give His kingdom; He wants the kingdom of God to be truly planted in our hearts. Our Lord truly wants it to be engraved in our hearts, in the hearts of all people, that we are His people and He is our King, and that we, joined with Him, become the kingdom of God.

God has the heart's desire that the kingdom of God be preached upon this earth and that the kingdom of God be established. What does our God long for most upon this earth? It is the will of God that each single soul receive salvation, and the more ultimate goal is that the kingdom of God be engraved in the hearts of people and established upon this earth. That is the purpose God has set toward us. What our Lord desires of us

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is that the kingdom of God be truly established within our hearts. Dear fellow believers, have you received the remission of sins? If you have received the remission of sins, are you the people of God? Is Jesus Christ your Master and your King? Is He the Creator? Is He the Judge? Jesus Christ is not only our Savior; He wants to be served and worshiped as the King of our hearts. This is the kingdom of God.

The Lord, who wants to be restored as the King of our hearts

I know that this kingdom of God has come to us who have been born again first. But we must once sort out the kingdom of God that is in our hearts. We must examine again whether in our hearts Jesus Christ is truly God, or whether He is present merely as the Savior; whether He dwells in our hearts as the Absolute One, that is, as God; whether He is in our hearts as the Judge; whether He is in our hearts as the God of absolute truth; whether He is in our hearts as the Creator, as our God. Originally He was our God and was God to us. He was from the beginning the Creator and the Judge. In the hearts of Adam and Eve at the first, that was originally there. But after Adam and Eve sinned, in all their descendants Jesus Christ was not present as King—then as what? As merely a savior, merely one man among men. Jesus wanted to restore the kingship of God. Because He wanted to restore the fact that He is King, He told us to preach the kingdom of God.

We must examine whether in our hearts Jesus is truly the Creator, the God of creation; whether in our hearts Jesus is the Judge; whether He is truly Almighty God, our King and the God who made us. The Lord wants to be seated fully in our hearts as

God. In your hearts, is Jesus Christ God? Jesus Christ is true God, but if this is not sorted out, people can think of Him as merely the savior who saved us—He removed sin, but might not the deity be somewhere else; might not God be somewhere else?

Dear fellow believers, the One who is God, the King of kings and the Lord of lords, the One who will receive worship and praise forever and ever, is none other than Jesus Christ alone, who saved us, who created us, and who will judge us. In Revelation, who is the One who receives the book from the right hand of God the Father, who sits on the throne, opens the seven seals, judges all things as written in it, and, being the Alpha and the Omega, accomplishes the beginning and the end? It is Jesus, who saved us—the One who created us, the very Jesus who removed our sins, the Jesus who has granted us the eternal kingdom of God. He wants to be truly restored as King in our hearts. He wants to become King among His people, in this church; He wants to become King in the hearts of the saints; and He wants to become King in this world.

The Lord came to this earth to restore the kingship. But among the saints there are those in whose hearts Jesus Christ is not present as King. They are those for whom Jesus Christ has not become their King, those who have received salvation but for whom He has not become King, those who do not know well what kind of One that Lord is. When we do not know well what kind of One the Lord is, we have no strength. Dear fellow believers, we must establish clearly in our hearts the fact that He is our Creator, the fact that He is the Savior who saved us from sin, and the fact that He is the God of judgment who will judge at the last. When we know Him rightly, there is strength and power in the hearts of us saints, and when we go before Him there is boldness, and faith springs up, and we can receive His power.

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Dear beloved saints, has the kingdom of God come into your hearts? Has God truly become King to you? Is He the Creator? Is Jesus Christ your Judge? Then preach this kingdom—preach the fact of what kind of One Jesus Christ is. The Lord has entrusted to such of us the preaching of this kingdom of God. Dear fellow believers, Christianity is not a religion like the other religions of the world. What must be settled within our hearts? We must realize firmly in our hearts that He is our God and our Deity—that Jesus Christ is the God of our hearts and the Absolute One. Only then can we preach that this kingdom has come, and when we preach it, power appears.

When we know the Lord rightly, we can preach with strength

I think the cause of saints losing strength, failing to pray well, and their faith growing dim lies in ignorance, in not knowing Jesus well. If you search all sixty-six books of the Scriptures, they speak of Jesus Christ. It says, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1),* and God said let there be light and there was light; and who is the One who said let there be light? He is the very Jesus who saved us. The One who made this world from the beginning is Jesus Christ. There, in the words *"The Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2),* the Holy Spirit appears; and then, in the passage where He says let Us make man according to Our image, God the Father appears. In Revelation the Father appears, the Holy Spirit appears, and then Jesus Christ, the Lamb of God, appears. Jesus, the One who saved us, is the One who was there from the beginning, from when He made us human beings and made this earth.

And who is the Lord who will judge this earth at the last? He is the very Jesus who saved us. God the Father gave that Jesus all authority in heaven and on earth—the authority to rule, the authority to judge, the authority to save, and all authority—so that He rules over all these things and judges them. We must know clearly the fact that Jesus Christ is the true King of our hearts, the true Deity and God.

Then we can pray before Him and rely on Him, boldly testify of the kingdom of God and offer our lives for Him, and live testifying of the kingdom of God, putting our hand to the plow without looking back. When the fact that the kingdom of God has come to this earth is well established in our hearts, we can preach it with strength. Dear beloved saints, I believe you have come to know the kingdom of God and the meaning of preaching the kingdom of God. The kingdom of God has come to all the people of this earth. Yet there are still many who do not know it. To them we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ wants the fact that He is the Creator and the fact that He is the Judge to be revealed in our hearts. I hope that you will all believe in Him, gain strength in Jesus Christ, and become saints who testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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CHAPTER

10

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Luke Chapter 10

Part 1. Understanding the text passage by passage and its gospel-based interpretation

Luke chapter 10 shows, through the disciples sent out to preach the gospel, the parable of the good Samaritan, and the story of Martha and Mary, the life of the disciple who preaches the kingdom of God, loves his neighbor, and hears the word of Jesus.

1. The sending out of the seventy disciples (10:1–12)

"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say,

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'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus sent seventy disciples ahead of Him, two by two, into the various regions where He Himself was about to go. This shows that the mission of preaching the kingdom of God was not limited to the twelve apostles but was entrusted to more disciples.

The word *"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few"* means that many workers are needed for the ministry of the kingdom of God. The disciples pray that laborers may be sent out, and at the same time they themselves are sent out as laborers.

Jesus compares them to lambs sent among wolves. Rejection and danger may follow when they preach the gospel, but the disciples must deliver peace, not force or violence. The instruction not to take a money bag and a knapsack means, in that sending of that time, to trust the provision of God and the hospitality of people.

The disciples must heal the sick and proclaim, *"The kingdom of God has come near to you."* In a city that does not receive them they shake off the dust, and this is a symbol, not of retaliation, but of not forcing the gospel and leaving the responsibility for the rejection with those people.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The Lord, who sends out laborers for the harvest

Jesus appointed the seventy and sent them ahead of Him, two by two, to the places where He Himself was about to go. Preaching the gospel is not a religious activity that a person starts by his own will. The Lord calls the laborers and sends them, and through them He accomplishes the work He Himself is to do.

Jesus said that the harvest is great but the laborers are few, and therefore they should pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. But He did not have them only pray; immediately afterward He commanded them to go themselves. The person who prays for the gospel does not merely wait for others to work but must himself also obey the Lord's sending.

That He sent the seventy out two by two shows the fact that the preaching of the gospel is not a work accomplished by individual ability or heroic zeal. The saints must be united with one another and cooperate within the church of God in preaching the gospel.

The word not to rely on a money bag, a knapsack, and sandals also cannot be taken only as meaning that He forbade all preparation unconditionally. The evangelist must not trust only in money and human means but must rely on the Lord who sent him. Saints need material things, ability, and circumstances, but the One who opens the door of the gospel and saves souls is God.

The core of what the disciples had to preach was the word that the kingdom of God has come near. The kingdom of God is not a political kingdom of the world but the kingdom into which a sinner enters, receiving the remission of sins, under the rule of God. This kingdom comes into a person's heart through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished by

receiving baptism from John and so taking the sin of the world upon Himself, receiving the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rising from the dead.

2. The warning to the cities that did not repent (10:13–16)

"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me."

General interpretation of the text

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum experienced many of the miracles and much of the teaching of Jesus, but they did not repent. Jesus says that if the same miracles had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago.

On the person who has experienced much of the grace of God there rests a correspondingly great responsibility. It is not enough only to be amazed at seeing miracles; one must change the direction of one's life and return to God.

Hearing the gospel that the disciples preach is connected with responding to Jesus and to God who sent Him. This concerns not every word of the individual disciple but the word of the gospel that Jesus entrusted to them.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—To reject the gospel is to reject the opportunity of salvation

Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum heard the words of Jesus and saw many mighty works. But they did not turn from their own thoughts and their religious righteousness. One is not saved merely by the fact of having seen Jesus at close hand and having experienced amazing power.

Jesus said that to hear the words of the disciples He sent is to hear His own words. This word does not mean to receive unconditionally every word a religious leader speaks as the word of God. One must examine whether the one preaching is rightly preaching the gospel of the salvation Jesus actually accomplished. But if that word is the truth of God and one rejects it merely because one dislikes the person delivering it, the result is that one rejects Jesus and God who sent Him.

The opportunity to hear the gospel does not continue forever. We must not misunderstand the longsuffering of God to mean that there is no judgment. When we hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must lay down our religious righteousness and stubbornness, and know and believe that Jesus is the Savior who has removed all sins.

3. The return of the disciples and the true joy (10:17–20)

"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the

power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.'"

General interpretation of the text

The disciples rejoice, saying that when they commanded in the name of Jesus, even the demons submitted. The name of Jesus is not an incantation; it means the authority Jesus gave and dependence on Him.

That Jesus said He saw Satan fall like lightning means that through the ministry of the disciples the rule of evil had begun to collapse. The word about trampling on serpents and scorpions also symbolizes the authority that subdues the forces of evil; it does not mean to test real danger on purpose.

But Jesus tells them to rejoice that their names are written in heaven rather than that the demons submit. The greatest joy of the disciple must lie not in power or success but in the fact of belonging to God and having been saved.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must rejoice that our names are written in heaven rather than in power

The seventy finished their preaching, returned, and rejoiced over the fact that the demons had submitted in the name of Jesus. That they actually experienced the authority of the Lord was certainly an amazing thing. But Jesus told them to rejoice that their names were written in heaven rather than that the demons

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had submitted.

The greatest blessing of faith does not lie in healing diseases, performing amazing works of power, and being recognized by many people. The greatest blessing is to have believed the salvation Jesus accomplished, received the remission of sins, and become a child of God. The results and power of ministry can make a person proud, but when one knows that one was originally a sinner who deserved judgment and was saved by the grace of the Lord, one cannot boast of oneself.

4. Jesus, who rejoiced in the Spirit (10:21–24)

"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.' Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus rejoices in the Spirit and gives thanks that the truth of the kingdom of God has been revealed to people who are like little children.

This does not mean that knowledge is wrong. Unlike the

proud person who relies on his own knowledge and position, the person who is like a little child admits his own insufficiency and receives the word of God humbly.

Jesus says that the Father has entrusted all things to Him and that only the Son can fully make the Father known. Jesus is not one of many teachers about God but the Son who decisively shows God the Father.

The disciples were directly seeing the fulfillment of the kingdom of God that many prophets and kings had waited for. This was not because of their superiority but was a special grace God had given.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must receive the salvation of God like little children

Jesus rejoiced that God had hidden the truth of salvation from those who claimed to be wise and prudent and had revealed it to people like little children. To be like a little child does not mean to believe without any thought. It is to admit that one cannot solve the problem of sin with one's own knowledge and religious righteousness, and to humble one's heart before the word of God.

A sinner must not try to fit God's way of salvation to his own judgment. He must know and believe the word that Jesus took all sins upon Himself once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, that He received the judgment on the Cross because of those sins, and that He rose from the dead. The person who believes this and has received the remission of sins is the blessed person whose name is written in heaven.

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5. The lawyer's question and the limit of man that the law exposes (10:25–29)

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?'"

General interpretation of the text

A teacher of the law asks what he must do to obtain eternal life. When Jesus asks in return what is written in the law, he answers that one must love God with all one's heart and love one's neighbor as oneself.

Jesus acknowledges that his answer is right and tells him to do accordingly. Love for God must appear not as a mere religious confession but as the act of loving one's neighbor.

The teacher of the law, wanting to justify himself, asks, *"Who is my neighbor?"* He tried to fix the range of people he had to love, but through the parable of the good Samaritan Jesus turns the direction of the question into "To whom do I become a neighbor?"

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The law exposes that man is a sinner who must be saved

The lawyer asked Jesus what he must do to obtain eternal life. In his question lay the thought that he could obtain eternal life by his own works. He knew the law that one must love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's strength, and with all one's mind, and love one's neighbor as one's own body.

But knowing the law and keeping the law perfectly are different. Man loves himself more than God, lives according to his own interests, and hates others in his heart. There is no one who can love God and his neighbor perfectly.

The law is not a word given so that man should pile up good works and be saved by them. It makes man realize that he is a sinner who cannot live according to the commandments of God, so that he may seek the Savior. But the lawyer did not admit his own inability; wanting to justify himself, he asked who his neighbor was.

To believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one must first know that one is a being who, like the man who fell among thieves, cannot save oneself. Before thinking of oneself as a righteous person who can save others, one must admit the fact that one needs the mercy and the salvation of Jesus.

6. The parable of the good Samaritan (10:30–37)

"Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And

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when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

General interpretation of the text

A man fell among thieves and was left nearly dead, but a priest and a Levite saw him and passed by. The exact reason they passed by does not appear in the text. What is important is the fact that religious position and knowledge did not lead to actual love.

A Samaritan, who at that time was in a hostile relationship with the Jews, had compassion on the wounded man, treated his wounds, and took him to an inn. He paid the cost and even took responsibility for the additional expense. His love did not stop at feeling but appeared as action that used time, possessions, and labor.

Jesus asks who became a neighbor to the man who fell among thieves. When the teacher of the law answers, "He who showed mercy," Jesus tells him to do likewise.

True love for one's neighbor is to show mercy to the person who needs help, beyond the boundaries of nation, religion, and

society. This parable does not mean that one obtains salvation by good deeds; it shows the depth of the commandment to love God and one's neighbor, and how true mercy appears in action.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The good Samaritan shows Jesus, who saved sinners

The man who was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho fell among thieves, was robbed of everything, was beaten, and was abandoned almost dead. This man shows the state of mankind, fallen under the power of sin and Satan and unable to come back to life by its own strength.

The priest and the Levite saw that man and passed by on the other side. This shows the fact that the law and religious knowledge cannot save the sinner. The law can expose man's sin and wounds, but it cannot wash away that sin and give life to a dying soul.

But the Samaritan saw the man who had fallen among thieves and had compassion on him. The figure of the Samaritan, whom people despised, reveals Jesus, who was rejected in the world and yet came to save sinners. Jesus did not wait from afar for sinners to come back to life by themselves. He who is God put on the body of a man and came near to us.

The Samaritan poured oil and wine on the wounds and bandaged them. Seen from the gospel, this shows the salvation by which Jesus healed the sinner's wounds with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. Jesus took all our sins upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. And He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment of those sins, and rose from the dead. The Holy Spirit testifies that

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this word of salvation is the truth.

The Samaritan set the wounded man on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. Jesus, too, does not leave the person who has received the remission of sins alone but leads him into the church of God. The inn shows the church of God, where the saved soul hears the word, has his wounds treated, and grows in faith. The two denarii represent the word of the Old Testament and the New Testament entrusted to the church. The saint must keep hearing the word in the church, confirm the salvation he has received, and grow into a person who cares for other wounded souls.

The word of Jesus, *"Go and do likewise,"* must not be understood as a command to buy eternal life with good deeds. One must first know that one is the man who fell among thieves and the person who was brought back to life by the mercy of Jesus. The person saved by the mercy of the Lord can remember the love he has received, preach the gospel to other souls, and serve them. Love and service are not the price of salvation but the fruit borne from the faith of the saved.

7. Martha and Mary (10:38–42)

"Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.' And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which

will not be taken away from her.'"

General interpretation of the text

Martha welcomes Jesus into her house and prepares many things, but Mary sits at the feet of Jesus and listens to His word. Since sitting at a teacher's feet was the posture of a disciple, Mary is portrayed as a disciple learning the word of Jesus.

When Martha complains about working alone, Jesus says that she is worried about many things but Mary has chosen the good portion.

This does not mean that serving is wrong. The problem is that serving turns into worry, comparison, and complaint, and pushes out the hearing of the word of Jesus. The parable of the good Samaritan teaches us to practice love in action, and the story of Mary teaches that such action must first start from hearing the word of Jesus.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Hearing the word of the Lord comes before serving

Martha welcomed Jesus and His disciples into her house and prepared food. Her serving was a precious work. In fact, only when there is someone's labor and sacrifice can other souls hear the word in comfort. Jesus did not say that all of Martha's serving was wrong.

The problem lay in the fact that Martha, her heart grown busy with many things, could not hear the word of the Lord and even tried to pull Mary, who was hearing the word, into her own work.

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When serving comes before the word, worry, resentment, and comparison can arise in the heart. Because of the thought that she works much while others do not work, she comes to put forward her own labor even before the Lord.

Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to His word. Jesus said that she had chosen the good part and that it would not be taken away from her. For a sinner to be saved, he must first hear from the word what Jesus has accomplished for him. Even after being saved, one must keep hearing the word for faith to grow and to discern the will of the Lord.

We must not divide hearing the word and serving the Lord into things opposed to each other. One must first hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. After that, too, faith must grow within the word. The person so built up by the word can rightly serve the Lord, the gospel, and souls with thanksgiving and faith.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 10 conveys

The flow of Luke chapter 10 is clear. The Lord sends out the saved as workers of the gospel. But the saint must rejoice in the salvation by which his name is written in heaven rather than in the power and results of ministry. He must also abandon his self-righteousness in seeking to obtain eternal life by the works of the law, and know that he is a being who, like the man who fell among thieves, needs the mercy of Jesus.

Jesus became our good Samaritan. With the baptism He received from John He took all our sins upon Himself, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so He saved us from sin and death. The sinner must know this

gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe it in his heart.

The person who has received the remission of sins must keep hearing the word in the church of God. And he must rejoice in the grace of having his name written in heaven, serve other souls with the compassion he has received, and preach the word of salvation to those who do not yet know the gospel. This is the order of salvation, faith, and service that Luke chapter 10 shows. ✉

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Part 2. An expository sermon
following the text passage by passage

The merciful Lord, who sends out the workers of the gospel

Introduction

In Part 1 above we looked at each passage of Luke chapter 10 side by side, from the general interpretation of the text and from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at the life sent out as a worker of the kingdom of God, the joy of having one's name written in heaven, true love for one's neighbor, and the attitude of the disciple who hears the word.

The sending out and return of the seventy, the warning to Chorazin and Bethsaida, the parable of the good Samaritan, and the story of Mary and Martha are not words separated from one another. All these words show the fact that man is not saved by his own strength but is saved by the mercy of Jesus, and that in thanksgiving for that grace he must serve the gospel and souls.

The expository sermon that follows faithfully traces the meaning of the text and examines how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took the sin of mankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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Hear the word of the Lord through the evangelists He has sent

"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.'" (Luke 10:1–16).

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We must pray to the Lord of the harvest and obey the Lord's sending

At the end of Luke chapter 9, Jesus said to preach the kingdom of God, and said that no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks back is fit for the kingdom of God. In chapter 10, which follows, Jesus actually appoints the seventy and sends them out to preach. The calling of the Lord does not end with words and resolutions but leads to the mission of preaching the kingdom of God to people.

The word of verse 1, *"appointed seventy others also,"* means that besides the twelve disciples many more people took part in the ministry of Jesus. The preaching of the gospel is not a work that only a few famous leaders carry. Jesus appointed and sent out many disciples whose names were not recorded.

These men did not go to regions they chose at will because they wanted to. Jesus sent them first into *"every city and place where He Himself was about to go."* The seventy were not masters gathering people to themselves but people preparing others to welcome Jesus, who would come after them. The role of the evangelist is not to exalt his own name and organization but to prepare the way so that people may meet Jesus.

Jesus sent them out two by two. Two can protect and encourage each other better than one alone, and when one wavers, the other can hold him up. Two people can also testify together, not to their own personal assertions, but to the same word they received from Jesus. Gospel ministry is accomplished through fellowship and cooperation rather than through the heroic ability of an individual.

In verse 2 Jesus said, *"The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few."* In the world there are many souls who must hear the word of God and receive the remission of sins.

Outwardly people may look uninterested in the gospel, but God looks upon the souls waiting for salvation under sin and death as grain to be harvested.

Here the Lord of the harvest is God. The souls are God's, the gospel is God's, and the One who appoints and sends out the laborers is also God. The evangelist cannot boast that he himself saves people. The evangelist preaches the gospel, but the One who opens people's hearts, gives faith, and saves is God.

Jesus, saying that the harvest is great, first told them to pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers. And immediately He commanded, *"Go your way."* Gospel ministry begins in prayer, and the very person who asks for laborers must himself also obey the calling of the Lord and go out to souls.

Jesus said, *"I send you out as lambs among wolves."* This means that the way of preaching the gospel is not always safe and welcomed. The disciples could meet rejection and mockery, persecution and threats. The worker of the gospel is not a person who goes out relying on the power of the world and superiority in numbers, but a person who goes out relying on the Lord like a weak lamb.

The workers of Jesus do not use violence and power, falsehood and manipulation. Like lambs, they deliver the word truthfully and gently. Even if the world attacks the workers of the gospel, the evangelist must rely on the power of the Holy Spirit and the word of the truth, not subdue people by the methods of the world.

In verse 4 Jesus said, *"Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals."* This means that the seventy were not to make the possessions and equipment needed for the journey the absolute ground of their security, but were to rely on God. It is to believe that the Lord who sent them will supply what is needed.

The most important preparation of the evangelist is to believe

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in the Lord who sent him and in the gospel of the salvation the Lord accomplished. Finances, skills, and strategies are tools that serve the gospel, but the power that saves souls lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The worker of the Lord must believe in the Lord's supply rather than in his own circumstances and preach the gospel boldly.

The word *"greet no one along the road"* is a command not to delay the mission, held up by long greetings and secondary matters. The disciples had to know how urgent the work of preaching the kingdom of God is and go straight to the place where the Lord had sent them.

If we apply this word today, it does not mean to treat people coldly; it means not to let one's heart be taken by unnecessary affairs and relationships to the point of losing the essence of gospel ministry. If an evangelist only builds friendships with people and fails to preach the very gospel of the remission of sins, he has missed the purpose of his sending.

We must deliver the peace of being reconciled to God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In verse 5, the first word the disciples had to speak was *"Peace to this house."* The worker sent by Jesus is not a person who first delivers curses and threats but a person who delivers peace. That peace is not simply a greeting wishing that the family may have no accidents and prosper materially. It is the peace by which a person who has become an enemy of God through sin receives the remission of sins and is reconciled to God.

This true peace is accomplished through the saving work of Jesus. Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His

own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. The sinless Son of God bore all the sins of mankind.

Jesus carried the sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, went to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He received in our place the judgment the sinner had to receive, was buried, and rose again on the third day. The person who believes in the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection receives the remission of all sins and is reconciled to God. This is the true peace that the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives.

At the time the seventy were sent out, the Cross and the resurrection of Jesus had not yet taken place. They first proclaimed the fact that Jesus the King had come near and that the kingdom of God was coming. Afterward, when Jesus received on the Cross the judgment of the sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism and rose again, the way of salvation into the kingdom of God was fully revealed.

"A son of peace" in verse 6 means the person who will receive the delivered gospel into his heart. On the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished there comes the true peace of having all sins disappear and being reconciled to God.

In verse 7 Jesus told them to stay in one house, eating and drinking what they gave. It means not to move from this house to that house looking for better treatment and more comfortable lodging. The worker of the gospel must not discriminate among people according to the level of their hospitality or keep moving to whoever is more advantageous.

In this word are contained contentment and faithfulness. One must stay with thanksgiving in the house that first received him, have deep fellowship with that family, and teach them the gospel.

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The attitude that uses people merely as objects of the gospel and moves on to wherever more support and influence can be gained is contrary to the teaching of Jesus.

As the word says, *"The laborer is worthy of his wages,"* it is fitting that the worker who serves the gospel receive the help needed for his living. For believers to supply the needs of evangelists and ministers is to take part together in gospel ministry. The worker believes that the Lord supplies what is needed through the saints, and serves the gospel with thanksgiving.

That He said in verse 8, *"Eat such things as are set before you,"* also carries the meaning that the disciples were not to reject people because of differences in food and way of life. The person who preaches the gospel must not insist only on his own tastes and culture, but must be able to respect the circumstances of the one who received him and be thankful.

In verse 9 Jesus told them to heal the sick and proclaim, *"The kingdom of God has come near to you."* In the ministry of the disciples the word and care were together. It was not shouting the love of God with words only while turning away from the suffering of the sick. The fact that the kingdom of Jesus was coming appeared through restoration and mercy.

The greatest power given to saints today is to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to souls sick with sin. The person who believes this gospel is remitted of all sins and obtains new life.

To accept the gospel the evangelist has preached is to accept Jesus

In verses 10–11, shaking off the dust that clings to the feet is

a solemn act that testifies to the responsibility for rejecting the delivered gospel and to the judgment to come. The evangelist, after clearly delivering the word of God, must entrust to God the person who keeps rejecting it and go on to other souls who will hear the gospel.

Even if they rejected the gospel, the disciples had to proclaim again, *"Know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you."* Death and the judgment of God are approaching every person, so now is the time to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. Even if people do not accept it, the fact that Jesus is the King and the fact that God judges sin do not change.

In verse 12 Jesus said that in the day of judgment it will be more tolerable for Sodom than for that city. This shows how great the responsibility is for receiving the opportunity to hear the gospel and yet rejecting it. On the person who has had much contact with the word of God and the work of salvation there rests a correspondingly great responsibility.

In verses 13–15 Jesus rebuked Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum. These regions experienced much of the word and the mighty power of Jesus at close hand. But the fact that they saw many miracles did not automatically guarantee salvation. They saw Jesus and yet did not turn their hearts and believe.

Tyre and Sidon were known, from Israel's point of view, as Gentile cities to be judged, but Jesus said that if the same mighty works had appeared there, the people would have repented, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. This means that religious background and a long career of faith do not guarantee salvation.

Even if one has attended church for a long time, heard much of the word of the Scriptures, and experienced countless graces, if one does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit in one's heart, one cannot receive the remission of sins. If one hears

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the truth for a long time and yet holds on to one's sin and pride and rejects the gospel, the responsibility becomes all the heavier.

Capernaum thought it would be exalted even to heaven, but Jesus said it would be brought down even to Hades. Spiritual pride keeps a person from accepting the gospel. The person who relies on his own religious knowledge and works may not accept the righteousness of Jesus, who was baptized and died on the Cross for sinners.

In verse 16 Jesus said, *"He who hears you hears Me."* The disciples who were sent out were not people delivering their own philosophy and opinions but people delivering the word they had received from Jesus. Therefore, when they faithfully delivered the word of Jesus, to hear that word was to hear the word of Jesus.

The evangelist whom Jesus sends preaches not his own thoughts but the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. When the evangelist preaches the salvation completed by the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, to hear and accept that gospel is to accept the word of Jesus and to accept God the Father who sent Him.

To reject Jesus is to reject God the Father who sent Him. The Father sent the Son, the Son completed salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and the Holy Spirit works so that we may realize and believe this gospel.

The worker who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be a person who has himself first believed that gospel in his heart and received the remission of sins. It is hard to lead others to clear salvation by delivering only religious knowledge while holding sin in one's heart as it is. One must first believe the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus and be reconciled to God, and then deliver that peace to others.

Today there are still many souls to be harvested. The gospel

is needed not only by our close family and neighbors but also by people living in many languages and cultures. We can use printed materials and videos, the Internet and various technologies, but technology itself is not the gospel. All of them must become tools for preaching the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus.

Luke chapter 10, verses 1–16, teaches us to rely on God, the Lord of the harvest, and preach the gospel of the peace and the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished. Jesus accomplished this peace by taking all sins upon Himself with His baptism, receiving the judgment on the Cross, and rising again. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit and becomes one of the people of the kingdom of God.

The greatest joy is that our names are written in heaven

"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.'" (Luke 10:17–20).

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The power of Satan has been broken by the name of the Lord

Jesus had sent the seventy out two by two into each region, as we saw above, and had them proclaim that the kingdom of God had come near. The disciples obeyed the command of Jesus, went to many villages, delivered the word, healed the sick, and drove back the working of evil spirits. Now they finish their ministry, return to Jesus, and report the results.

Verse 17 records, *"The seventy returned with joy."* The disciples did not return disappointed and without any fruit; they experienced amazing things and returned full of joy. They said, *"Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."*

The most important words in the disciples' report are *"in Your name."* The demons submitted not because the ability and wisdom of the seventy were outstanding. It was because they were sent by Jesus and relied on the name and authority of Jesus. The source of the power was not the disciples but Jesus.

The disciples confessed *"in Your name,"* and yet their hearts were taken by the achievement, *"even the demons are subject to us."* Jesus corrected them so that they would rejoice more greatly in the grace of being saved and having their names written in heaven than in the fact that power had appeared.

When fruit appears in gospel ministry, a person easily exalts himself. Today, too, one can regard the size and finances of meetings, testimonies of healing, and people's praise as identical with God's recognition, but visible success does not automatically prove that person's salvation and faith.

That Jesus said, *"I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven,"* is the word that He saw the rule of Satan collapsing when the disciples preached the kingdom of God in the name of Jesus.

Satan tries to hold people under sin, falsehood, and death, but

when the word of Jesus is delivered and the kingdom of God comes, that falsehood and rule collapse. The expression *"I saw Satan fall like lightning"* shows that before the authority of Jesus the defeat of Satan is swift and decisive.

The most fundamental work of Satan is to keep people from believing the word of God. He keeps them from believing the word that the sin of the world was taken on by the baptism of Jesus, that the judgment of sin was ended by His death on the Cross, and that salvation was completed by His resurrection. He holds people in their own sin and their own righteousness and keeps them from accepting the righteousness of God.

When the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached, this falsehood of Satan collapses. When a sinner believes in his heart the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, he is no longer ruled by Satan's accusation. Instead of judging that sin remains by looking at his own feelings and works, he comes to believe the word of God that Jesus took all his sins upon Himself and received the judgment.

In verse 19 Jesus said, *"I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy."* Here the serpents and scorpions, as beings that poison and harm people, represent the forces of Satan and evil spirits. The words that follow, *"all the power of the enemy,"* make this meaning clear.

Jesus gave the disciples the authority to control the power of Satan and evil spirits. This was not an inherent strength arising within the disciples but authority Jesus entrusted to them. The One who gave the authority is Jesus, and the One who makes that authority take effect is also Jesus.

Therefore the believer is not a person who contends with Satan in direct strength. He does not defeat Satan with his own will, with shouting, or with the intensity of his emotions. He

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opposes him by faith, with the authority of Jesus, who overcame sin and death, and with the word of the salvation He accomplished.

To rely on the name of Jesus is to believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the almighty Lord who took the sin of the world upon Himself with His baptism and completed salvation with His death on the Cross and His resurrection. The authority that overcomes Satan comes from precisely this faith.

The word *"Nothing shall by any means hurt you"* is the promise that the authority of Jesus is greater than all the power of Satan. The child of God who has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit through the gospel of the water and the Spirit opposes and overcomes the lies and attacks of Satan in the name of Jesus. Satan cannot take salvation and eternal life away from him.

We must rejoice most that our names are written in heaven

In verse 20 Jesus says, *"Nevertheless."* While acknowledging the authority the disciples received and the results of their ministry, He tells them something more important. He said, *"Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven."*

Jesus did not take away the disciples' joy; He led them to a greater joy that does not waver. The fruit of the ministry of casting out demons may appear on one day and not appear on another. People's responses and the outcomes of ministry keep changing as well. But the fact that the name of a saved person is written in heaven is not a joy that wavers with success and failure in the world.

Having the power to cast out demons and receiving the remission of sins and becoming a child of God are not the same thing. Even if one is known as a powerful minister, if one does not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit and sin remains as it is in one's heart, one has not obtained the life of the kingdom of heaven. On the other hand, even a believer who shows no amazing power and lives without a name—if he has believed the gospel and received the remission of sins, his name is written in heaven.

That one's name is written in heaven means that that person has become one of the people belonging to the kingdom of God. Whether one is famous in the world, or has much property and power, is not important. That God knows him and has received him as one of His own people is the greatest glory.

Then how is a person's name written in heaven? It is not written because one has cast out many demons, done good deeds, and preached much. When one believes in one's heart the salvation Jesus accomplished and receives the remission of sins, one becomes one of God's people.

Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. The sinless Jesus, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. From this time Jesus went toward the Cross as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Jesus carried all the sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He received in our place the curse and the judgment the sinner had to receive, was buried, and rose again on the third day. By the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, the power of sin, death, and Satan was decisively defeated.

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Satan accuses people on the ground of sin and threatens them with death. But if Jesus received all sins over to Himself with His baptism and fully bore the price of those sins on the Cross, the ground on which Satan can condemn the believer disappears. The risen Jesus showed that the judgment of sin was finished and that the way of eternal life was opened.

The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit is remitted of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit dwells in his heart and makes him believe that he is a child of God and a person belonging to the kingdom of God. This is a grace greater and more fundamental than the power to cast out demons.

The ministry of the disciples did not produce their salvation. It was because they were first saved by the grace of Jesus that they ministered with thanksgiving. The believer today, too, must not judge his own worth or faith by numbers and results, but must make the unchanging grace of salvation the ground of his joy.

The church, too, must not put forward only great meetings, amazing testimonies, and phenomena of healing and power. What the church must rejoice in most is that a sinner hears the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, believes in his heart, and receives the remission of sins. The salvation by which one person's name is written in heaven is greater than a visible miracle.

If the success of ministry is placed at the center, people compare and compete with one another and exalt human names. But the person who rejoices in the grace of having his name written in heaven knows that all saints have been saved by the same gospel, and he can give thanks together even when a soul is saved through another person's labor.

Even when amazing fruit appears in ministry, we must give

the glory to Jesus. Rather than boasting, “We did it,” we must confess, “The name and the authority of the Lord have worked.” On the other hand, even when we meet difficulty and failure, we must not lose the joy of salvation. Outward results change, but the salvation Jesus completed does not change.

We defeat the lies of Satan with the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The center for the believer is not the activity of Satan but Jesus Christ and the salvation He completed. Satan shakes faith with lies, but the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit opposes and overcomes Satan with the name and the word of Jesus.

The most important battle with Satan is keeping the faith that believes the word of God. When Satan accuses, “You are still a sinner,” “Jesus did not completely remove your sins,” we must not look at our own works but hold fast to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must drive back the lie with the word that Jesus took all sins upon Himself with His baptism and received the judgment on the Cross.

The saved person admits his actual wrongs, turns from them, and apologizes to the person he has harmed. At the same time, he refuses Satan’s condemnation that because of his wrong the remission of sin Jesus completed has been canceled, and he stands firm in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit makes the believer realize his sins and wrongs concretely so that he may turn from them, but Satan drives him into vague condemnation and despair. The rebuke of the Holy Spirit leads a person to the gospel and restoration, but the accusation of Satan makes him believe that the salvation of

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Jesus is insufficient and makes him run away from God.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit can oppose the lies of Satan in the name of Jesus. His authority does not lie in shouting loudly but in believing the word that the salvation of Jesus is complete. The faith that "Jesus took all my sins upon Himself with His baptism, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again" tears down the accusation of Satan.

Luke chapter 10, verses 17–20, teaches that the grace of being saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and having one's name written in heaven is greater than power itself. The believer holds fast, not to his own strength, but to the complete salvation by which Jesus overcame sin, death, and Satan with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit, which saves a person's soul from sin, is a greater power of God than the phenomena of controlling demons and healing diseases. This gospel must be preached to every sinner, and whoever believes the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus and receives the remission of sins has his name written in heaven.

What we must truly rejoice in is not that our names have become famous in the world but that they are written in heaven. It is not that we have been recognized by many people but that God knows us as His own children. It is the fact that we were saved, not because we are stronger than Satan, but because Jesus overcame Satan, sin, and death.

Salvation appears when we receive the word like little children

"*In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, 'I thank*

You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.' Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.'" (Luke 10:21–24).

The person who receives the word like a little child comes to know the truth of salvation

Verse 21 begins with the words *"in that hour."* The seventy had returned from their preaching journey and rejoiced that the demons had submitted to them in the name of Jesus. Jesus told them to rejoice that their names were written in heaven rather than that the demons submitted. At that very hour Jesus also rejoiced in the Spirit and gave thanks to God the Father.

The disciples rejoiced in visible power and the success of ministry, but the joy of Jesus lay in the fact that the grace of salvation had appeared to people. He rejoiced that the secret of the kingdom of God had come to be known, not by the high and famous of the world, but by the people who received the word of God like little children.

Here the figures of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit appear together. Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and called God *"Father."* The Son gave thanks to the Father in the Holy Spirit. The three are not one person confused together; they are distinct from one another, yet

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they are God who accomplishes one salvation.

This appearance was seen also when Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River. The Son, Jesus, received baptism from John the Baptist and came up out of the water, the Holy Spirit descended upon Him, and the voice of the Father was heard from heaven. The Father planned salvation and sent the Son, the Son took the sin of mankind upon Himself with His baptism, and the Holy Spirit testifies to the truth of that salvation and makes the believing heart realize it.

Jesus called God *"Father, Lord of heaven and earth."* God is not only the personal God of Jesus and the disciples but the Master who created and rules heaven and earth. To whom and how He will reveal the truth of salvation also depends not on human power and learning but on the will of God.

Jesus said, *"I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes."* Here *"these things"* refers to the work of the kingdom of God and the truth of salvation that appeared above—the grace by which the power of Satan collapses through Jesus and sinners become the people of the kingdom of God.

"The wise and prudent" are the people who trust their own wisdom and judgment and do not receive the word of God as it is. Because they rely on people's recognition and the authority of the world and place their own thoughts above the word of God, they do not see the truth of salvation that has appeared before their eyes.

A person can have much theological knowledge and Bible knowledge and still not believe the salvation of Jesus. One can study the languages and historical backgrounds of the Scriptures and explain doctrines, and yet not accept the fact that one is a sinner and needs the remission of sins Jesus accomplished. If knowledge does not humble that person before God but makes

him exalt himself, it rather becomes a barrier that keeps him from seeing the gospel.

"Babes" are the people who admit their own insufficiency and receive the salvation God has spoken just as it is. As a little child believes his father's words, they believe in their hearts the word that God had all sins taken on through the baptism of Jesus and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection.

The person who is like a little child admits the fact that he cannot remove his sins by himself. He knows that however good his life is and however many religious works he does, he cannot wash away the sin of his own heart. So he lays down the way of salvation he has made and accepts the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished.

Jesus said, *"Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight."* Salvation is given by grace so that no human boasting may arise. If a person were saved by his own wisdom and good deeds, he would boast of salvation as his own merit. But because a sinner without any merit is saved by believing the word of God, all the glory returns to God.

Knowledge and education, property and social position cannot become the ground of salvation. What divides salvation is not a person's conditions but the difference between the faith that receives God's testimony like a little child and the unbelief that insists on its own righteousness.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit, too, did not come from human philosophy and religious imagination. It is the salvation God accomplished and revealed in the word and in history. The sinner does not invent that gospel with his own thoughts but hears the work of Jesus recorded in the Scriptures and receives it by faith.

Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. The sinless Son of God, by receiving baptism from John

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the Baptist, the representative of mankind, took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. The meaning of this salvation is not a doctrine made by human wisdom but the righteous work God testified to by His word.

Jesus carried the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism, went forward to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He received in our place the judgment and the curse the sinner had to receive, was buried, and rose again on the third day. By the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, the problem of sin and death was completely settled.

The person who relies on his own wisdom may doubt how the baptism and death of One could remove the sins of all people. But childlike faith trusts and receives the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus that the Scriptures testify to, more than its own limited thoughts.

Only by receiving the revelation of the Son can we know God the Father

In verse 22 Jesus said, *"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father."* God the Father entrusted to the Son all authority to rule salvation, judgment, and the kingdom of God. Jesus is not one among many religious leaders but the only Son who received all things from God the Father.

If we look only at the lowly appearance of Jesus, it is hard to know who He is. He went about with nowhere to lay His head, was together with ordinary people, and at last was hung on the Cross like a sinner. Seen with the wisdom of the world, He looks like a man who failed and was forsaken. But Jesus is the Son of God who received from the Father all authority in heaven and on earth.

Jesus said, *"No one knows who the Son is except the Father."* The One who fully knows the true identity and being of Jesus is the Father. People can observe the appearance and deeds of Jesus and appraise Him as an excellent teacher or a prophet, but without the revelation of God they cannot fully know that He is the eternal Son of God and the Savior.

He also said that no one knows *"who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him."* God the Father is not One who can be discovered by human philosophy and religious training alone. To know God the Father truly, the revelation of the Son is needed.

This means that Jesus is not one of many ways to God but the only Son who reveals the Father. Apart from Jesus one cannot know God the Father rightly. One cannot say that one believes in God while rejecting who Jesus is and what He accomplished.

Here, to "know" has a meaning deeper than simply knowing much information about God. It includes believing who the Father and the Son are and entering a relationship of life with them. Memorizing knowledge about God and receiving the remission of sins and knowing God as one's Father are different.

The Son reveals the Father through the gospel. The person who lays down his own righteousness and accepts the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection believes the revelation of the Son and comes to know God as his own Father.

The Holy Spirit also takes part in this work of revelation. The Holy Spirit is not One who gives a way of salvation separate from Jesus; He makes the heart of a person realize and believe the salvation Jesus accomplished. He dwells in the person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and leads him to know God as Father and to serve Jesus as Savior.

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Therefore in verses 21–22 the saving work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is clearly revealed. The Father willed salvation and entrusted all things to the Son. The Son accomplished salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and reveals the Father. The Holy Spirit enlightens the heart of man so that he may know and believe this salvation.

Blessed are the eyes and ears that see and hear Jesus Christ

In verse 23 Jesus turned to His disciples and said privately, *"Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see."* This word was not so much a public declaration to many people as a comfort and blessing given personally to the disciples. The disciples did not yet fully know how special a time they were living in.

They were directly seeing the Son whom God had sent. They saw Jesus speak, heal the sick, control demons, and receive sinners. The Lamb of God to whom John the Baptist testified was actually walking with them, and the kingdom of God was coming through Jesus.

The blessed eye is not the eye that sees only the outward appearance of Jesus but the eye that recognizes by faith that He is the Son of God and the Savior who came to save sinners. Unlike the people who saw Jesus directly and yet did not believe, the disciples heard His word and followed Him.

In verse 24 Jesus said that many prophets and kings desired to see what the disciples were seeing but did not see it, and desired to hear what they were hearing but did not hear it. The people of faith of earlier ages waited for the salvation of God and believed the promise, but they did not directly see Jesus

come in the flesh and work.

The blessing the disciples enjoyed was not received because they were wiser and finer than the people of other ages. It was because God called them at the time He had appointed and let them see and hear the ministry of Jesus. Therefore this blessing is not a ground for boasting but becomes a responsibility of thanksgiving and testimony.

Today we do not see the flesh of Jesus directly with our eyes. But through the Scriptures we are hearing even the completion of the Cross and the resurrection, which the disciples had not yet seen at that time. We have the whole word of salvation—that Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself with His baptism, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again on the third day.

Therefore we also have a great blessing together with a great responsibility. If we hear the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit through the Scriptures and yet do not believe, we cannot say that we failed to believe simply because we did not know. Since the salvation God accomplished through the Son has been clearly testified, we must open our hearts and accept it.

The reason Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit was not that famous and powerful people exalted Him. It was because people like little children accepted the salvation of God and their names were written in heaven. God rejoices when a sinner lays down his own righteousness, receives the salvation of the Son, and becomes a child of God.

Our joy must also be here. Rather than boasting that our knowledge of the faith has grown and that we explain the Scriptures better than others, we must rejoice in the fact that Jesus saved us with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. And we must rejoice together when others realize this gospel and receive the remission of sins.

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The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not boast that he was saved because he is wise. He receives like a little child the word that Jesus took all his sins upon Himself with His baptism, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again. The person who has so received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit does not know God only as a distant Absolute Being but knows Him as his own Father, and comes to serve Jesus as his own Savior and Lord.

Jesus, the true Neighbor of the person who fell among thieves

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day,

when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:25–37).

The law exposes the sinner but cannot give eternal life

This word is commonly called 'the parable of the good Samaritan.' If we read this parable only as the moral lesson, "Help people in trouble and live kindly," we miss the center of the salvation Jesus spoke of. The text begins with a lawyer testing Jesus and asking, *"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* What we must look at first is the heart of the lawyer, who thought he could obtain eternal life by his own works.

The lawyer was a man who studied and taught the law of God. He asked, not because he did not know, but to test Jesus. In his question lies the premise, "What must I do?" He was thinking of eternal life as something he could acquire with his own knowledge and works rather than receive as the grace God bestows.

Jesus did not give the answer at once but asked in return, *"What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"* This was to set the lawyer before the law he thought he knew so well. The lawyer answered accurately that one must love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's strength, and with all one's mind, and love one's neighbor as one's own body. In love for God and love for one's neighbor the core demand of the law is contained.

That Jesus said, *"You have answered rightly; do this and you*

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will live," was the word that set the lawyer's self-confidence before the perfect demand of the law. To live by the law, one must love God with all one's heart, soul, strength, and mind, and at every moment love one's neighbor as one's own body. The sinner cannot perform this perfect demand, and so before the law he comes to discover his own inability and sin.

The demand of the law is right and holy. The problem lies in the fact that the sinner cannot perform it perfectly. The law is not a means that gathers a sinner's good deeds and produces salvation for him; its role is to reveal the holiness of God and the sin of man. The person who stands honestly before the law does not put himself forward, saying, "I can do it"; he comes to seek the mercy of God, saying, "I am a sinner who has not kept this word fully. Save me."

But the lawyer did not admit his own inability. Verse 29 states clearly that he asked again, *"wanting to justify himself."* He asked, *"And who is my neighbor?"* In this question lies the heart that would limit the range of love. If he narrowed the range of his neighbors to the people he found easy to love, he could claim that he had kept the law.

Jesus did not let the lawyer pick out whom to love and so establish his own righteousness. Rather, through the figure of the man who fell among thieves, He showed who the human being fallen in sin and death is, and who the true Neighbor is who can completely save such a sinner.

The true Neighbor of the person who fell among thieves is Jesus Christ

A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. The text does not state his nationality or

occupation, his faith or social position. The thieves stripped him of his clothing, beat him, and left him almost dead.

The man who fell among thieves had no ability to treat his own wounds or move to a safe place. He was in a state where, left a little longer, he could die. This figure shows the spiritual state of man under sin. Man thinks he can remove sin and escape the power of death by his own good deeds and religious efforts, but before God the sinner is a being who cannot bring himself back to life.

The priest and the Levite saw the man who had fallen among thieves but passed by on the other side. They show the religionist who has not been born again, who establishes his own righteousness with the law and religious works. Even if one teaches the law to others and holds a high religious office, one cannot save oneself or any sinner from sin and death.

The law makes clear what sin is and exposes that the sinner is a being to be judged, but it cannot receive judgment in the sinner's place or give him new life. Just as the priest and the Levite could not bring the man who fell among thieves back to life, religious knowledge and works also cannot save the human being fallen in sin and death.

Then a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came to that place. At that time there was a long religious and ethnic conflict between the Jews and the Samaritans. From the lawyer's point of view, the very fact that a Samaritan appears as the model of love would have been uncomfortable. Yet Jesus spoke of the despised Samaritan, not the priest or the Levite, as the one who showed mercy.

The Samaritan, like the priest and the Levite, saw the man who had fallen among thieves. But his response was different. When he saw him, *"he had compassion,"* and went to him. He stopped his own journey and came close to the wounded man.

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He poured oil and wine on the wounds and bandaged them. Then he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him himself. On the next day he gave two denarii to the innkeeper, asked him to keep taking care of him, and even promised to take responsibility for repaying whatever additional expense was incurred when he returned.

The lawyer answered that the one who showed mercy was the neighbor of the man who fell among thieves. But the One who had compassion on sinners, came to them, and showed complete mercy is Jesus Christ. The text first makes us see, not "Whom must I help?" but "Who saved me, fallen in sin and death?" Our true Neighbor is Jesus Christ.

We were those who, like the man who fell among thieves, were trampled by sin and could not come back to life by ourselves. The Son of God had compassion on us, the unworthy; He laid aside the glory of heaven, came close to sinners Himself, and walked the way of salvation to bring us back to life from sin and death.

Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. The sinless Son of God received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and so fulfilled all the righteousness of God. And by carrying those sins, being hung on the Cross, shedding His blood, and dying, He received in our place the judgment of sin we had to receive.

The baptism of Jesus and the Cross are not events separated from each other. Jesus, who took the sin of mankind upon Himself with His baptism, carried that sin and shed His blood on the Cross. That Jesus said, *"It is finished!"* and died means that the price of sin was paid completely. And by rising again from the dead on the third day, He overcame sin and death and gave us new life.

This is the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. The sinner does not bandage his own wounds with his good deeds and come back to life by himself; by believing the righteousness of God accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, he is remitted of all his sins. The person who believes this gospel receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and becomes a child of God.

The oil and wine the Samaritan poured on the wounds show the salvation by which Jesus healed the sinner's wounds with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The grace of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection explained above brings the sinner fully back to life.

The inn to which the Samaritan brought the man who fell among thieves shows the church of God, where saved souls receive protection and care. After saving sinners, the Lord does not leave them alone; He gives the Holy Spirit and cares for them in the church with the word and the gospel. And He takes responsibility for the saved people of God until He comes again.

The word *"Go and do likewise"* exposes the fact that the lawyer could not obtain eternal life by his own works. Only Jesus performed the complete mercy of going to the man who fell among thieves, giving all that was His, and taking responsibility to the end. The remission of sins and eternal life are not a reward obtained by human good deeds but the gift of God, received by believing the salvation Jesus completed with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

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The person who has received the Lord's mercy serves his neighbor with the gospel and love

The person who has received the mercy of God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit also lives showing mercy to his neighbor. He does not pay the price of salvation with acts of mercy; because he believes the salvation Jesus bestowed and is thankful, he bears the fruit of love, following the leading of the Holy Spirit.

If one says one believes the gospel and yet keeps turning away from a suffering person, one must look back at one's own faith and life. The true gospel does not let us confess love for people with words only. When a hungry person needs food, a sick person needs treatment, and a person struck by violence needs safe protection, it leads us to give actual help within the range possible.

Today our neighbor is not only the person who attends the same church as we do or holds the same thoughts. People whose race and nationality, region and class, political views and religion differ from ours are also, if they are in suffering, neighbors who need our help. Helping only those who like us and will repay us is far from the mercy the Samaritan showed. Jesus spoke of the love that becomes a neighbor even to the person regarded as an enemy.

The church of God is the community that cares with the gospel and the word for the souls Jesus has saved. It must also become a place where people wounded by sin and by the violence of the world can receive protection and love. Saints who have received the remission of sins must remember the mercy they received from the Lord and actually look after the poor and the sick, the abused and the lonely.

The greatest mercy the church can show a sinner is to preach

the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, and so deliver him from eternal judgment and death. While preaching this gospel, we must also look after the actual suffering of the person before our eyes. Just as the Lord had compassion on both soul and body, the person who believes the gospel must deliver the truth and stretch out the hand of love.

This word warns us not to boast of religious office and knowledge. The priest and the Levite saw the man who had fallen among thieves and passed by. Today, too, a pastor, a church leader, or a person who has lived the life of faith for a long time must not regard himself as righteous merely on account of office and knowledge. In particular, if one turns away from the suffering of victims and the weak for the sake of the church's appearance or one's own convenience, one is repeating the figure of the priest and the Levite.

We are not people who, like the lawyer, boast of our own works and fix the range of our neighbors; we are people who have first received complete mercy from Jesus Christ. The person who knows this grace does not establish his own righteousness but preaches the gospel to the person who needs the mercy of God and draws near to him in love.

This passage shows that to us, who cannot keep the law perfectly and obtain eternal life by ourselves, Jesus became the true Neighbor. Jesus took all sins upon Himself with His baptism, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose again, accomplishing complete salvation. The person who has received this grace does not boast of his own righteousness but draws near to his suffering neighbor with the gospel and love.

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To hear and believe the word of salvation first is the good part

"Now it happened as they went that He entered a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha welcomed Him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, who also sat at Jesus' feet and heard His word. But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.' And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.'" (Luke 10:38–42).

The Lord is pleased with hearing the word more than with much preparation

This passage follows after Jesus spoke the parable of the good Samaritan to the lawyer. In the previous passage He showed the lawyer, who sought to obtain eternal life by his own works, that the true Neighbor of the human being fallen in sin and death is Jesus Christ. In the text that follows, the same flow appears: hearing and believing first the word the Lord speaks is more important than the works of man.

The lawyer asked what he had to do to obtain eternal life, but Mary sat at the feet of the Lord and listened to the word He gave. Salvation is not obtained by a person doing many things for the Lord; it is received by hearing and believing what Jesus accomplished for sinners.

In verse 38, when Jesus and His disciples were on their way and entered a certain village, Martha welcomed Jesus into her

house. That Martha received Jesus into her house and prepared food was a precious act of serving. But Jesus regarded hearing and believing the word of life He delivered as more precious than human hospitality.

In verse 39 Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to His word. To sit at His feet does not simply mean that she rested nearby; it shows the attitude of a disciple learning from his teacher. Mary did not see Jesus only as a guest to be entertained but received Him as the Lord and Teacher whose word she must hear.

Martha received Jesus into her house, but Mary was receiving the word of Jesus into her heart. To welcome Jesus into one's house is precious, but to hear the word Jesus speaks and believe it in one's heart is more important. For what Jesus ultimately wants to give a person is not the satisfaction that comes from receiving food and human hospitality, but the word of salvation that gives the remission of sins and eternal life.

Verse 40 says that Martha was *"distracted with much serving."* When the many preparations took hold of her heart, the composure to hear the word of the Lord disappeared. Even a work begun in order to serve the Lord—if because of that work one fails to hear the word of the Lord, the priority of serving has been turned upside down.

Before Martha's eyes the things she had to do kept appearing. What and how much to prepare, how short the time was, and why her sister was not helping her occupied her heart. At last, looking at Mary hearing the word of the Lord, she could not rejoice and began to feel that it was unfair.

Martha said to Jesus, *"Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone?"* In these words lie not only hurt feelings toward her sister but also discontent toward Jesus. In Martha's thinking, Jesus should have made Mary get up and help

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her. She wanted Jesus also to agree with the priority she had set and to command Mary.

She began by wanting to serve Jesus, but at some point she was trying to move Jesus and her sister by the way she herself had fixed. This is the spiritual danger that busyness brings. A person may think he is working for the Lord and yet actually put his own plans and standards ahead of the Lord. When things do not go as he intends, he even judges others and complains to the Lord.

The same thing can happen inside the church. To serve for the gospel, prepare worship, and care for other believers is precious. But if one evaluates others by the fact that one does much work, or demands recognition and reward from the Lord on the ground of one's own labor, the center of serving has changed. Work for the Lord can rather become a barrier that keeps one from hearing the word of the Lord.

In verse 41 Jesus called her name twice, *"Martha, Martha,"* and rebuked Martha, who was worried and troubled about many things. What had to be set right before the food Martha prepared was her heart, which had missed the word of the Lord and been seized by comparison and resentment.

The word *"But one thing is needed"* shows that many preparations were not necessary, and that the one thing most needed now was to sit at the feet of the Lord and hear the word of life. The most important purpose for which Jesus came was not to receive abundant hospitality but to let them hear the word of life.

In verse 42 Jesus said, *"Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her."* Mary chose what was most important at the very hour Jesus was speaking. She did not put other work first but sat at the feet of the Lord and heard the word of life.

The *"good part"* Mary chose is the word of Jesus and the salvation and eternal life received by believing that word. Food and possessions, office and the achievements of this world can disappear or be taken away, but the remission of sins and eternal life received by hearing and believing the word of the Lord no one can take away.

The good part is to hear and believe the salvation Jesus accomplished

If we see this word within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the first thing a sinner must do is not to move about busily trying to serve God by his own strength, but to hear what Jesus has accomplished for him. The sinner cannot remove his sins with good deeds, service, and religious zeal. However much work he does, if he does not know the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished, the problem of sin and judgment is not solved.

Before demanding more works from the sinner, Jesus first accomplished complete salvation for him. Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. The sinless Son of God took the sin of mankind upon Himself, went to the Cross, and shed His blood.

That Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross was His receiving in our place the judgment of the sins He had taken on with His baptism. And He was buried and rose again on the third day, overcoming sin and death. Thus the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection are the righteous work God completed to save sinners.

Man must first hear this word of salvation. But it is not

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enough to hear the sound only with the ears. One must believe in one's heart the fact that Jesus took all one's sins upon Himself with His baptism, paid the price of those sins completely on the Cross, and rose again. When one believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one is remitted of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

This connects with the attitude Mary showed. Mary did not try to show her labor to Jesus; she sat at His feet and sought to receive from Him. Gospel faith does not start from putting forward what I can do for the Lord. It starts from hearing and believing what the Lord accomplished for me, and giving thanks.

Jesus alone completed all salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The sinner does not add his own works to this salvation; he hears the word the Lord accomplished and believes it in his heart, and so receives the remission of sins. This is the gift of grace God gives freely.

When we believe the word first, serving also becomes the fruit of faith

The right order of faith is first to hear the word of Jesus, believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and receive the remission of sins. Then, in thanksgiving for the grace received from the Lord, one serves the gospel, the church, and one's neighbor, following the leading of the Holy Spirit. Serving that starts from the faith that hears and believes the word becomes the fruit, not of self-righteousness, but of thanksgiving and love.

If one works to establish one's own righteousness without believing the gospel, one compares oneself with others and becomes resentful when not recognized. But when one believes the grace by which the Lord has washed away all one's sins,

serving becomes, not the price of salvation, but the fruit of thanksgiving for the love already received.

The person who has heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows that he himself was first in sin and death. Because he believes the fact that Jesus brought him back to life with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, it is hard for him to boast of his own merit while serving others. He knows that what he has received from the Lord is far greater.

What the person who has received the remission of sins absolutely needs is to be together with the church of God and keep hearing the word. Through the word his faith grows, he comes to realize the will of the Lord, and he enjoys the grace and blessing received from the Lord. If one grows distant from the church and the word, busy with the affairs of the world, one misses again the good part that Martha missed.

Rather, what Martha needed was the wisdom to keep things simple without needlessly increasing the work. In the life of faith today as well, if we think we must do even every work the Lord has not commanded, the heart grows busy. If we make excessively many events to be recognized by people and pursue outward results, we can lose the essence of hearing the word of the gospel and caring for people's souls.

It is the same in the home and at work. We must do faithfully what has to be done, but we must not let worry occupy the whole heart. Even in a busy reality we must stop before the word and examine, "What has the Lord accomplished for me?" and "What is the one thing that pleases the Lord now?" Rather than trying to handle every task perfectly, we must set our priorities by faith.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and makes him realize and remember the word of Jesus. He also gives the faith and wisdom to serve the gospel, the church, and his neighbor

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according to that word. The life that hears and believes the word and serves with that faith is the life led by the Holy Spirit.

The figure of Martha is in us as well. While loving the Lord, we can complain under the weight of many tasks, and, thinking our own way is right, we can even try to move other people and the Lord. At such times the Lord awakens us, as He called, *"Martha, Martha,"* and tells us to lay down worry and anxiety and return again before the word.

The good part Mary chose is the place of hearing and believing the salvation Jesus accomplished. The circumstances and appraisals of this world change, but the remission of sins completed by the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus does not change. When we believe this word first, the Holy Spirit leads our labor, not into competition and resentment, but into the serving of thanksgiving and love. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 10

[Question] 1. Briefly explain the important events of Luke chapter 10 and their lessons.

The important events of Luke chapter 10 are these: Jesus sending out the seventy; His teaching the returned disciples what true joy is; His speaking the parable of the good Samaritan; and His speaking at the house of Martha and Mary. These events give the lesson that the person who has first heard and believed the word of salvation must preach the kingdom of God and serve his neighbor with the grace he has received.

First, Jesus sent the seventy out two by two and had them proclaim that the kingdom of God had come near. He taught that, since the harvest is great but the laborers are few, they should pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers, and should preach the gospel relying on the Lord who sent them. When the seventy returned rejoicing that even the demons had submitted, Jesus told them to rejoice in the fact of being saved and having their names written in heaven more than in visible results.

"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.'" (Luke 10:20).

Then, to the lawyer who asked the way of eternal life, Jesus spoke the parable of the good Samaritan. The man who fell among thieves could not save himself, but the Samaritan had compassion on him, bandaged his wounds, and brought him to an inn and cared for him. The sinner also cannot save himself by

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his own strength; he must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit—which Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rising from the dead—and so receive the remission of sins. The saved person remembers the mercy he has received and shows mercy to his neighbor.

"But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.'" (Luke 10:42).

Martha was worried and busy with the many tasks of serving Jesus, but Mary sat at the feet of Jesus and listened to the word. Jesus said that Mary had chosen the good part. This means that before serving, one must first hear the word of the Lord and believe the salvation He accomplished. Luke chapter 10 teaches us to rejoice in being saved and having our names written in heaven, to hear and believe the word of the Lord first, to preach the gospel of the kingdom of God, and to show the mercy we have received to the neighbor who needs help.

[Question] 2. In Luke 10:1, whom did Jesus separately appoint while He was going toward Jerusalem?

Jesus separately appointed seventy others besides the twelve disciples. And He sent them ahead of Him, two by two, into the various towns and regions where He Himself was about to go.

"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go" (Luke 10:1).

That Jesus appointed the seventy shows that the work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God was not a work entrusted only to the twelve disciples. Jesus called more people

as laborers and sent them ahead to the places where He would go, so that the people could hear the word of the Lord.

The seventy were not people sent to deliver their own thoughts or their own names. As evangelists sent by Jesus, they had to heal the sick and proclaim that the kingdom of God had come near. When an evangelist rightly delivers the word he has received from Jesus, to accept his words is to accept the word of Jesus who sent him. Therefore the evangelist must not put forward his own assertions but deliver the word of Jesus accurately.

The kingdom of God the seventy had to preach is the kingdom in which sinners are saved through Jesus. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed our salvation. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins becomes one of God's people and can deliver the news of that salvation to others.

Therefore the evangelist must first believe the salvation Jesus accomplished and rely on the word of the gospel rather than on his own ability or knowledge. Not everyone holds the same church office, but every saved saint has the mission of testifying, each in his own place, to the salvation Jesus accomplished. We must not stop at praying for laborers for the harvest to be sent out, but must obey when the Lord sends us and preach the gospel together.

[Question] 3. In Luke 10:1, in groups of how many were the seventy of the preaching band sent out?

The seventy of the preaching band were sent out in groups of

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two. So the seventy were divided into thirty-five pairs and sent ahead to the various places where Jesus Himself was about to go.

"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go" (Luke 10:1).

The seventy did not go at will to the places they wanted. They were sent ahead to the towns and regions where Jesus Himself was about to go. They were not people revealing themselves or delivering their own assertions, but people preparing the way for Jesus, who would come after them, and preaching the kingdom of God.

That the seventy were sent out two by two shows that the work of the gospel must be carried, not alone and according to one's own will, but by helping one another and joining hearts together. They must pray together, encourage each other when one is discouraged, and also examine with each other whether the word they preach agrees with the word Jesus entrusted. Co-working is not competition or a struggle for position; it is serving the same purpose, filling up one another's insufficiency with the role given to each person.

The word that saved saints must preach today is also the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so accomplished salvation. Those who preach the gospel must not put forward differing human thoughts but testify clearly, with one heart, to the word of salvation recorded in the Scriptures.

Therefore we must not regard the work of the gospel as our own work alone or compete with others. We must pray and help one another with the saints the Lord has established together with us, and preach with one heart the salvation Jesus

accomplished. Like the seventy sent out two by two, we must rely on the Lord who sent us and co-work faithfully in the place entrusted to us.

[Question] 4. In Luke 10:2, with what content did Jesus teach the preaching band to pray?

Jesus taught them to pray that, since the harvest is great but the laborers are few, God, the Lord of the harvest, would send out laborers into His harvest.

"Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest" (Luke 10:2).

Here what is to be harvested refers to the many souls who must hear the word of God's salvation. There were many people who had to hear the gospel and receive the remission of sins, but few laborers to deliver the word of salvation to them rightly and lead them to faith. Jesus told them to make this the first subject of their prayer.

The Lord of the harvest is not the evangelist or a church leader but God. God must open people's hearts, let them hear the word, and raise up and send out laborers to preach the gospel. After telling the disciples to pray, Jesus immediately commanded, *"Go your way,"* so the person who prays must also be ready to obey when God sends him.

The laborer for the harvest must first be a person who has believed the salvation Jesus accomplished, received the remission of sins, and clearly knows the gospel he is to preach. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed salvation. The laborer

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must preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit rightly and lead sinners to Jesus.

Therefore we must look upon the souls who have not heard the gospel and pray specifically that laborers for the harvest may be sent out. We must also help and pray that the laborers God has raised up may learn the word rightly and preach the gospel boldly. When the Lord sends us to our family, our workplace, and our neighbors, we must not avoid it but obey in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the place entrusted to each of us.

[Question] 5. In Luke 10:12, how severe a judgment does the town receive that rejects the gospel and does not receive the disciples?

The town that rejects the gospel and does not receive the disciples of Jesus receives a judgment more severe than Sodom. Jesus said that in the day of judgment it will rather be more tolerable for Sodom than for that town.

"But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city" (Luke 10:12).

Jesus sent the seventy to many towns and had them proclaim that the kingdom of God had come near. In a town that did not receive them, they were to go out into the streets and shake off the dust that clung to their feet, yet make known that the kingdom of God had come near there also. The fact that the kingdom of God has come near does not change because the gospel is rejected, and the person who has heard that word comes to bear responsibility for the word he has heard.

The reason for this judgment is not simply that they did not provide lodging or food for unfamiliar evangelists. The disciples

were sent as people delivering the word Jesus entrusted to them. Therefore, when they delivered the word of God rightly and yet that word was rejected, this was rejecting Jesus who sent them, and further, rejecting God who sent Jesus.

"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.'" (Luke 10:16).

Sodom was a city that received the judgment of God for its great wickedness. But the town that heard the kingdom of God and the word of salvation through the disciples of Jesus and yet rejected them received greater light and opportunity and still did not believe, so its responsibility is also heavier. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed the salvation for sinners. If one rejects this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the end, one comes to stand before the judgment of one's own sins.

The evangelist must not judge people by his own feelings but deliver the word of salvation clearly and urge them to repent and believe. We must not take lightly the opportunity to hear the gospel, and when the word of salvation that agrees with the Scriptures is delivered, we must hear it humbly and believe. And when we preach the gospel, we must make known clearly both the severity of the judgment and the grace of the salvation Jesus has bestowed.

[Question] 6. In Luke 10:13, to which cities did Jesus say, "*Woe to you*"?

Jesus said *"Woe to you"* to Chorazin and Bethsaida. The two cities were rebuked because they heard the words of Jesus and saw many mighty works and yet did not repent.

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"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13).

Chorazin and Bethsaida were cities of the region of Galilee where Jesus ministered. The people there received many opportunities to encounter the words and the mighty power of Jesus at close hand. But the fact that they saw amazing things did not itself become faith. They saw the power of Jesus and yet did not repent and believe His word.

Jesus said that if the same mighty works had been done in Tyre and Sidon, those people would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. Tyre and Sidon were Gentile cities, but the meaning is that they would have repented more clearly before the power of Jesus than Chorazin and Bethsaida. One cannot be saved merely by the religious privilege of having heard the word of God much and at close hand.

The word *"Woe to you"* makes known the salvation and the judgment of God, and is a solemn warning to turn from sin and believe in Jesus before the judgment comes. We must not stop at being amazed at miracles but abandon our own thoughts and righteousness and return to the word of salvation God has given. The greater the light and the opportunity of grace received, the heavier the responsibility for rejecting that word.

Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed the salvation for sinners. Therefore we must not feel secure merely because we hear the word often or have lived the church life long; we must believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished and receive the remission of sins.

[Question] 7. In Luke 10:15, how far down did Jesus say Capernaum would be brought?

Jesus said that Capernaum, far from being exalted to heaven, would be brought down even to Hades.

"And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades" (Luke 10:15).

Capernaum was a place where Jesus delivered many words and performed many mighty works. The people there saw the ministry of Jesus at closer hand than other regions and received many opportunities to hear the word of salvation. But the fact that they saw great power did not mean that they repented and believed.

In the word of Jesus, *"who are exalted to heaven"* exposes the fact that the privilege Capernaum received, and its self-exalting attitude, could not save that city. The word *"will be brought down to Hades"* is the warning that, as the result of rejecting the salvation of God, they would receive a severe judgment. This speaks not of the physical height of a city but of being exalted and brought low before God.

The problem of Capernaum lay not in having had no opportunity to hear the word, but in having encountered much of the word and power of Jesus and yet not humbling itself and repenting. The Jesus they had to believe in received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed salvation. The greater the light and the opportunity of salvation received, the heavier the responsibility for rejecting it.

Therefore we must not exalt ourselves on the ground that we have heard the word of God much or attended church long. We must examine how the salvation Jesus accomplished is recorded

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in the Scriptures and believe that word in our hearts. When we hear the word, we must not insist on our own thoughts but receive it humbly, and in thanksgiving for the grace of salvation we must live following the word of Jesus.

[Question] 8. In Luke 10:17, what did the seventy report to Jesus when they returned from their preaching journey?

The seventy returned from the preaching journey and reported to Jesus with joy, *"Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name."*

"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.'" (Luke 10:17).

The seventy obeyed the command of Jesus, went out to many towns, and preached the kingdom of God. And when they ministered in the name of Jesus, they experienced even the demons submitting. They saw a power they had not expected, rejoiced greatly, and returned to Jesus and told Him the results.

The important words in their report are *"in Your name."* The demons submitted, not because the seventy originally possessed special power, but because Jesus sent them and gave them authority. The name of Jesus is not an incantation a person uses to show off his own ability. It means being sent by Jesus, obeying His word, and relying on the authority of the Lord.

To rejoice at seeing the fruit of preaching is not wrong, but if we make only visible power and results the ground of our joy, we may boast of them as our own merit or be easily discouraged when the results are small. Jesus had them make the grace of being saved and having their names written in heaven a more fundamental joy than the results of ministry.

"Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20).

Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed our salvation. The name of the person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins is written in heaven. Therefore we must acknowledge that every fruit is given by the name and the authority of Jesus, make the grace of salvation our greatest joy, and serve faithfully so that others also may hear and believe this gospel.

[Question] 9. In Luke 10:23–24, why did Jesus say to the disciples, *"Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see"*?

Jesus said that their eyes were blessed because the disciples were directly seeing the promised Messiah, whom many prophets and kings had desired to see and hear, and were hearing the word of God He delivered.

"Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.'" (Luke 10:23–24).

The prophets and kings of the Old Testament looked toward the Messiah God would send, and the salvation He would accomplish, through the word of promise. They waited for that promise to be fulfilled, but they did not directly see Jesus come to this earth, speak, and do the work of salvation. The disciples,

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however, went about with Jesus, the promised Messiah, heard His word, and witnessed the kingdom of God appearing among them.

What the disciples saw was not simply amazing miracles or the figure of an excellent teacher. They saw the Son of God healing the sick, casting out demons, and revealing the kingdom of God. But the experience of seeing Jesus with the eyes of the flesh does not itself take the place of faith. Only when one recognizes by faith the Jesus God has revealed and receives His word can one enjoy this blessing.

Just before this, Jesus gave thanks that God the Father had hidden the truth of salvation from those who considered themselves wise and prudent and had revealed it to people like little children. The disciples received this blessing not because they were worldly-wise or outstanding. They admitted their own insufficiency and received the word of Jesus like little children, and God let them know the Messiah and the truth of salvation.

Jesus, whom the disciples saw and heard, received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed salvation. The promise of salvation that the prophets and kings had waited for was fulfilled in this gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. To believe this gospel, receive the remission of sins, and become a child of God is the greatest blessing a person can enjoy.

We do not see Jesus directly with the eyes of the flesh, but through the recorded word of the Scriptures we can know who He is and how He saved us. We must give thanks for the grace of coming to know by the word the fulfillment of the salvation that many prophets and kings waited for, and receive it with a childlike heart. And we must faithfully preach so that those who do not yet know this gospel may also hear and believe the salvation of Jesus.

[Question] 10. In Luke 10:25–28, what did Jesus tell the lawyer, who asked the way to obtain eternal life, to confirm and to do?

Jesus asked the lawyer what is written in the law and how he reads it. When the lawyer answered that one must love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's strength, and with all one's mind, and love one's neighbor as one's own body, Jesus said that his answer was right and that if he did so he would live.

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.'" (Luke 10:25–28).

The lawyer asked, not with a humble heart wanting to learn the truth, but with a heart wanting to test Jesus. In his asking, *"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* lay the thought that he could know and practice the law and so obtain eternal life. He could state the content of the law accurately, but he did not examine his own actual self before that word.

The word of Jesus, *"Do this and you will live,"* points to the perfect obedience the law demands. One must love God with all one's heart, soul, strength, and mind, and love every neighbor as one's own body, but the sinner cannot keep this law fully. Before the standard of the law, Jesus made the lawyer realize his own sin and inability and seek the Savior.

But the lawyer did not admit his own inability; wanting to justify himself, he asked again who his neighbor was. He

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thought that if he fixed the range of the neighbors he had to love, he could be recognized as a person who had kept that commandment. So through the parable of the good Samaritan that follows, Jesus showed that love for one's neighbor does not stay in words or knowledge but appears as the actual love that has compassion on a dying man and saves him. At the same time He made the lawyer look back at whether he could indeed practice such love fully.

Eternal life is not a reward a person obtains as the price of keeping the law. The sinner must abandon the heart that relies on his own works and believe in Jesus, who delivers him from sin and judgment. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so completed salvation. Eternal life is the life God gives to the person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We too must not regard ourselves as righteous because we know much of the content of the Scriptures and do good deeds. Before the word we must admit our own figure, which has not loved God and our neighbor fully. We must lay down our own righteousness and believe the salvation Jesus accomplished, and after receiving the remission of sins we must, in thanksgiving for that grace, love God and actually serve the neighbor who is in difficulty.

[Question] 11. In Luke 10:29–37, with what parable did Jesus answer the lawyer who asked, *"And who is my neighbor?"*

Jesus answered the lawyer with the parable of the good Samaritan, who had compassion on the man who fell among thieves and rescued him. The priest and the Levite saw the man beaten by the thieves and left almost dead, and yet passed by on the other side, but the Samaritan went close to him, bandaged his wounds, and brought him to an inn so that he would keep receiving care.

"But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:29–37).

The lawyer, wanting to justify himself, tried to fix the range of the neighbors he had to love. But instead of debating who counts as my neighbor, Jesus asked who became a neighbor to

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the man who fell among thieves. When the lawyer answered that it was the one who showed mercy, Jesus told him to go and do likewise.

The priest and the Levite knew the law and held religious office, but they saw the dying man and passed by on the other side. The Samaritan, on the other hand, had compassion on him, went close, bandaged his wounds, brought him to an inn, and paid the cost so that he would keep receiving care. True love for one's neighbor does not lie in words or status; it appears as the mercy that helps and saves the suffering person.

The man who fell among thieves shows the figure of the human life wounded by sin and dying. The One we need is Jesus, who does not turn away from sinners but comes to them and saves them. Jesus received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us from sin and death. The sinner believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtains the remission of sins and eternal life.

The word of Jesus, *"Go and do likewise,"* is the teaching that one must first admit that one is a sinner in need of salvation, like the man who fell among thieves, receive the mercy of Jesus, and then show the mercy one has received to one's neighbor. The saved person must actually care for the neighbor in difficulty and deliver to the person dying in sin the gospel that brings life.

We too must not calculate how far our love must reach or weigh the status and qualifications of the other person. We must go close to the person who needs help and serve him with heart and hands. Above all, we must preach the gospel so that the soul wounded by sin may know and believe the mercy of the salvation Jesus has bestowed, and we must care together for the saved so that they may be restored and grow in faith.

[Question] 12. In Luke 10:40–42, what lesson did Jesus give Martha, who appealed that her sister was not helping her?

Jesus said to Martha that she was worried and troubled about many things, but that one thing is needed. And He taught that Mary had chosen the good part of hearing the word of Jesus, and that it would not be taken away from her.

"But Martha was distracted with much serving, and she approached Him and said, 'Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone? Therefore tell her to help me.' And Jesus answered and said to her, 'Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things. But one thing is needed, and Mary has chosen that good part, which will not be taken away from her.'" (Luke 10:40–42).

That Martha welcomed Jesus and prepared food was a precious act of serving. But as the preparations grew many, her heart grew busy, and, seized by worry and anxiety, she could not hear the word of Jesus. Jesus called her name repeatedly, *"Martha, Martha,"* and urged her to calm her heart and first listen to the word of the Lord rather than prepare many things.

The good part Mary chose was to sit at the feet of Jesus and hear the word. She knew that the first thing to be done at that time was to hear the word of the Lord, and she chose that place. Jesus said that since Mary had chosen the good part, it would not be taken away from her.

The word "*will not be taken away from her"* means that He would not take away, because of Martha's demand, the place of hearing the word that Mary had chosen. Moreover, the affairs of the world and visible results can disappear or pass to others according to circumstances, but the salvation and the truth obtained by hearing the word of God and believing it in the heart

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are precious and eternal. Since the word contains who Jesus is and how He saved sinners, hearing and believing the word becomes the foundation of all other serving.

The figure of Martha shows that one can do many things for God and yet fail to hear the very word. One must first realize one's sins through the word, and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rising from the dead. The serving done in this faith is not a merit for obtaining salvation but the fruit of thanksgiving for the grace received.

Therefore we must faithfully carry the affairs of the world and the various services of the church, and yet not put off hearing the word because of busyness. We must not complain, comparing our serving with that of others, or demand that others move by our own way. We must first calm our hearts before the word, believe the salvation Jesus accomplished, and, receiving strength and wisdom from that word, serve with joy. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Do not despise the words of the evangelist

< Luke 10:1-16 >

"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, 'The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves. Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, 'Peace to this house.' And if a son of peace is there, your peace will rest on it; if not, it will return to you. And remain in the same house, eating and drinking such things as they give, for the laborer is worthy of his wages. Do not go from house to house. Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, 'The kingdom of God has come near to you.' But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, 'The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you.' But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. 'Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting

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in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me.'"

The work of God that appears through the church

God has given us the wisdom to preach the word of the four Gospels, to make it into books, and to deliver it to the whole world. Readers around the world say that they are so thankful to have met books that tell them the truth simply and clearly. At the beginning of each of the four Gospels a record about John the Baptist always appears, and after that Jesus appears, and after that the life lived by faith appears. So we make books that show that all four Gospels speak about the ministry of John the Baptist, and we also make books on the subjects, 'Is Jesus Christ God? Is Jesus Christ truly our Savior?' We do this because we feel that such books will become food for the souls of the readers.

Even within one week, about twenty people in many countries overseas have been saved and have sent in testimonies of their faith. Even if we went around the whole world for a week preaching the gospel, we could not make twenty people receive the remission of sins and take up a pen themselves and write and send in testimonies. We joined our strength together, and God saved those souls. The places where we have preached the gospel are beyond counting. We give great thanks to God. He has given us far greater blessings than what we have worked for.

If an ordinary church tried to have about twenty people in many countries be saved, it could not do it even in several

decades. A person who has sin cannot do this even if he devotes his whole life to being buried in that country. Some people say that they ministered their whole lives and could not teach anything even to a single person. We are doing this work by joining our strength together. Even when we grow weary in some task and become discouraged in heart, when we see such testimonies our hearts are filled, we are able to wait, and we prepare more and preach more. So I hope that the brothers and sisters will not think, 'Is this my work? It is the work of the ministers.' We are all doing it together. Because each one of you works in the part entrusted to you, we make books and send them overseas, and because the gospel is preached to the whole world in that way, every week souls receive the remission of sins and send in testimonies. Those who are saved before Jesus and send in testimonies are rather few. Did it not say that ten lepers were healed and one came back and gave thanks?

From the beginning our church set its direction as 'Boast together with the inheritance of the Lord, preach the gospel to every tribe, be patient and have hope,' and it has never once changed it. Why did it not say from the beginning 'Preach the gospel to every tribe' rather than 'Boast together with the inheritance of the Lord'? It is because to preach the gospel one must have material means. The gospel cannot be preached by sermons alone; what has been preached must be made into documents and delivered as books so that people may read them, receive a change in their hearts, and be saved. Saying, "If you believe in Jesus you go straight to heaven," is not the gospel. In whatever local church, when a new soul is saved and workers grow up, that is all the inheritance and the property of the church. The businesses the church carries out are also the inheritance of the church if they earn the material means needed for serving the gospel. We must be of one heart in this.

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While living through a week, you will have met many things of one kind and another. But rather than those things, you must consider what work God has done through the church, look upon that work, believe, give thanks, and unite your heart to it. Though I am insufficient and weak, it is enough to live the life of faith thinking about which part I should join in. You must look upon how great a work the church is doing, and live knowing that it is your faith and your inheritance. You must not live looking only at yourself. If I too had looked only at the work I do, I would have been discouraged long ago. The work each one of us does is small, but if we know that our task is to unite with the work the church does, serve the gospel, and gain that harvest together, it is worthwhile. Only then is the life of faith maintained. The books we have made are being translated into dozens of languages and going out by the hundreds of volumes. Because God told us to do it, all of us are joining our strength together and doing the work. We give thanks before God.

The role of the evangelist, who does in the Lord's place the work the Lord would do

When we look at the word of Luke chapter 10, the scene in which our Lord sends out evangelists appears. He is speaking the word that to receive evangelists is to receive God, and that not to receive evangelists in one's heart is not to receive God. It says, *"After these things the Lord appointed seventy others also, and sent them two by two before His face into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. Then He said to them, "The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few; therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest. Go your way; behold, I send you out as lambs among wolves"*

(Luke 10:1–3) Besides the twelve disciples, Jesus appointed seventy others as evangelists and sent them out two by two ahead of Him into every city and place where He Himself was about to go. He wanted to go Himself and preach the word, but He sent the disciples out in pairs of two. He told them to pray that laborers for the harvest would be sent out, and then immediately He told them to go and work, saying that His sending them was like sending lambs among wolves.

And He said that when they preached, they were to do it like this: *"Carry neither money bag, knapsack, nor sandals; and greet no one along the road. But whatever house you enter, first say, "Peace to this house" (Luke 10:4–5)* Our preaching the gospel is doing the work that the Lord must do. The Lord comes to us and speaks, and He does that work through us. Evangelists must know that they are doing in the Lord's place the work the Lord must do. And when they preach, they must believe what the Lord has done and rely on the Lord. In the old days our elders wore a money belt, a purse for money, inside their clothes. To say not to carry a money bag is to say not to wear a money belt. It means simply to believe and rely on the Father and preach.

He also told them not to greet just anyone, but to speak peace to whatever house they entered. He said that if a person to receive that peace was there, the peace would rest on him, and if not, it would return to the one who had spoken the peace. These days, when I take a taxi and get out, I greet the driver saying, "May you become rich." Some people say thank you, and some look puzzled. In the same way, He tells us to speak peace and blessing to the people we meet. If it is received, peace will dwell in that house, and if it is not received, that peace returns to the person who spoke it.

And He told them to remain in that house and to eat and drink what was given them. He said that it is fitting for a laborer to

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obtain his wages. It means not to take money along when going to another person's house to preach. It means not to carry travel fare and not to pack food to take along. And it means to eat whatever is given them in the house they entered to preach in. When you go out to preach, there are houses that invite you in and give you tea and food, and there are houses that tell you to stay the night when the sun sets. When I preached in the old days, there were such houses as well.

To receive the evangelist is to receive God

Let us look at the word that follows. He said, *"Whatever city you enter, and they receive you, eat such things as are set before you. And heal the sick there, and say to them, "The kingdom of God has come near to you." But whatever city you enter, and they do not receive you, go out into its streets and say, "The very dust of your city which clings to us we wipe off against you. Nevertheless know this, that the kingdom of God has come near you" (Luke 10:8–11)* It is a matter of whether or not they receive the evangelists. To receive evangelists is to receive God, and to reject evangelists is to oppose God. He continues to speak: *"But I say to you that it will be more tolerable in that Day for Sodom than for that city. "Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes. But it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the judgment than for you. And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades. He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me" (Luke 10:12–16).*

He said that to hear the words of the evangelists is to hear the

word of the Lord, and that he who rejects the words of the evangelists rejects the Lord, and he who rejects the Lord rejects Him who sent the Lord. That He said that the person who treats the words of the evangelists lightly and rejects them rejects Jesus Christ, and that the one who listens well to the words of the evangelists and receives them receives Jesus, is because the evangelists are the ambassadors of God. Inside the church of God we are all evangelists. Each one has his own work entrusted to him, and to treat lightly the words of those who go ahead of us inside the church is to treat lightly the Lord who is inside that person. Those who go ahead speak because they are afraid he will die, and if he sneers and does not listen, he is rejecting the Lord.

When we preach and ask, "Do you have no sin?" and the other person answers that he has sin, we speak to him about the sin of man and preach to him the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If he hears that word and receives it, saying, "That is right. That is my condition, and it is recorded that way in the Bible," he has received the word of the Lord. The one who hears through the word and receives the salvation the Lord accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is, that Jesus was baptized by John and had the sin of the world passed over to Him, bore that sin, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead—receives the remission of sins. Whether the evangelist who delivers the word of God is handsome or ugly, weak or strong, the word he preaches is the word of God. So because receiving the word of the evangelist becomes receiving the word of Jesus, a person is saved. But the person who rejects the evangelist is not merely rejecting that person; he is rejecting Jesus.

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"And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven"

So our Jesus said, *"Woe to you"*. *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the mighty works which were done in you had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago, sitting in sackcloth and ashes" (Luke 10:13)* It means that if He had gone to Tyre and Sidon and preached the word, those people would have admitted that they were such sinners, received it, and believed. Jesus went about much in the regions of Chorazin and Bethsaida, but the people of those regions did not receive Him and rejected Him. So He kept speaking the word "Woe to you."

The Lord is not now going about this earth in person and working; He comes with the word and the Holy Spirit into the hearts of the evangelists who have received His word and received the remission of sins, and through them He is having the gospel preached to other people. Therefore people who treat lightly what evangelists, the servants of God, and the people of God say are treating Jesus lightly. The representative of these is Capernaum. *"And you, Capernaum, who are exalted to heaven, will be brought down to Hades" (Luke 10:15)* When I think of Capernaum, the paralytic comes to mind. Jesus went to Capernaum and healed a paralytic. He performed the most works there, showed the most signs and miracles, and spoke the most words, and yet the people of Capernaum treated Jesus and His disciples lightly and rejected them terribly. It means that Capernaum was that proud. It is the word that the one who seeks to be exalted to heaven is brought down to Hades—that is, that he receives an eternal curse from which he can never turn back.

Even when the word of God is delivered and advice is given so that things may go well for them, people do not listen. Those who go ahead exhort like this: "Even if you have insufficient

areas, the Lord does not mind such parts at all. If you join with the church and take part in the things the church does, then because you also took part, you too are qualified to have the benefit obtained through it. Since He said, "seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness", you must live by faith." One ought to do the work of God and then look after his own affairs, but there are people who do their own work first and never look back at the work of God. People who say, 'If you do this for me, I will do the work of God,' are finished with it once their fleshly desire is fulfilled. Such people do not do the work of God. They say they will believe in Jesus if their sickness is healed, but once the sickness is healed, that is the end of it. But the Lord first blesses our souls and makes our faith grow, and after that He makes things go well for the flesh. There is no case of His making the flesh prosper first and then making the soul prosper. He said, *"Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24)* and He said that the one who has left brother or sister or house for the sake of the Lord receives many times more. It means that the Lord blesses and rewards the person who suffers for the Lord and lives for the Lord.

What is the word the Lord speaks to evangelists? *"He who hears you hears Me, he who rejects you rejects Me, and he who rejects Me rejects Him who sent Me" (Luke 10:16)* Jesus Christ spoke this way in the Bible. If a person stops up his ears and shuts his eyes and does not even think even while Jesus is speaking, and rejects the servants of God when they speak, saying, 'Do you think I am a fool?' then in the end whom is he rejecting? It means that he ends up rejecting God the Father. If the servants of God, whether those who go ahead or those who come behind, speak for the sake of what is truly right, for the

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sake of you and me, we must listen. If we do not listen, that is the sin of having rejected God the Father. In the heart of man there is self-esteem. When the peevish pride of the flesh rises up, no one can stop it, and the heart changes immediately. If a person betrays God the Father, betrays Jesus Christ, and betrays the evangelists who deliver the word to him, where will he end up going? He goes to Hades. Hades is precisely hell.

When we joke, it does not matter what we say to one another. But when the other person speaks the word of God and says what is right, we must listen. During the sermon as well, we must think carefully and make a judgment about whether the servant of God is preaching out of his own feelings or preaching the word of God, and whether he is preaching for our sake, and then listen. God intends to give us life; He absolutely does not intend to kill us. He keeps exhorting us because He is afraid we will die. In the end, those who treat the words of the evangelists lightly are those who treat God the Father and Jesus Christ lightly.

Put down deep roots in the word

Some people are far too light. “Hell, is that all? I’ll just go.” It means that they treat far too lightly the word that the servants of the church of God and the brothers and sisters have delivered to them. Those who despise the word of God are shallow people. That shallowness must be cast away. There are trees with a large trunk but shallow roots. If such a tree is nudged only a little from the side, it falls over. Some trees look small in what appears outwardly, but their roots are deep. We must become such trees, whose outside is unimpressive but whose roots are deep and firm. It means that while living the life of faith before God, we must not treat lightly the servants of God and the brothers and sisters

who preach the word of God, those who speak for your sake. "I am ready to pack my bags at any time. Once I make up my mind, the whole situation is over." There are people with such a light heart. If a person has such a heart, it ends right there. There is nothing—no past, no present, no future. He lives only waiting for the day of the judgment of fire.

If someone meets evangelists, the people of God, and then rejects them, it is worse than not having met them. If he had not met them at all it would be better, because there would still be an opportunity to meet them later, but once he meets them and rejects them, there is no further opportunity to turn back. It is recorded this way in Hebrews chapter 10: *"For if we sin willfully after we have received the knowledge of the truth, there no longer remains a sacrifice for sins, but a certain fearful expectation of judgment, and fiery indignation which will devour the adversaries" (Hebrews 10:26–27)* To treat the words of evangelists lightly is to treat God the Father and Jesus Christ lightly.

I do not say this in order to exalt myself. When I stand before those who live before God, my heart becomes tense. It is because God is inside you, and what appears through you may be of God. We listen to sermons, offer praise, pray, live the life of faith, and serve, and in doing so we must know what the word of the Bible says. The faith the seventy evangelists had when they went out to preach, the faith that the Lord had sent them, the faith that goes when told to go—this is not the faith of people of the old days alone. This word, *"Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida!" (Luke 10:13)* is not somebody else's story. Is the word of Jesus Christ a laughable word? We cannot treat His word lightly. He said, *"He who receives a prophet in the name of a prophet shall receive a prophet's reward. And he who receives a righteous man in the name of a righteous man shall*

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receive a righteous man's reward" (Matthew 10:41) and He said that even one who gives a cup of cold water to a little one shall by no means lose his reward.

We are dealing with God. Our preaching the gospel is also done before God. Our serving is also done before God. It seems to be done to people, but in the end it is done to God. Therefore we must fear the word, must know it, and must conduct ourselves under that faith. Man is a swaying reed. It is so for both men and women. But the roots of a reed are deep. It may break, but it is not easily pulled up. The stalks that came up last year dry out completely when winter comes, but when spring comes buds sprout and they grow like a tree. Old reeds break, and when new shoots come up there, it becomes a new beginning. Our hearts must be sound like this. Not only must we be saved, but the word of God must put down deep roots in our hearts. We must hold on to it firmly. We must know the brothers and sisters as our own brothers and sisters and as workers of God. A person whose heart is light and who is ready to leave the church at any time ends up leaving after all.

There are people who, when their bodies were sick, came to church, heard the word, and received the remission of sins, but once their bodies became healthy, have packed their bags in their hearts and are ready to go the moment they get the chance. Serving the Lord is not an easy matter. Everyone finds it hard; where is there anyone who does not find it hard? They say that a certain saint sent a text message to a minister: "I will not be coming to church any more." After sending such a message, he did not answer even when someone called, and went his own way. He rejected the word of God he had usually heard. To have believed the word he heard and then betray it is to have betrayed God the Father. If a person is exalted to heaven, he is brought down to Hades. Living in hell is not easy. It is by no means easy.

Each person must know for himself whether it is easy to go into the fire and live there.

A life whose heart is noble

We have met the church of God, and inside it we have heard the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and we have heard countless other words as well. The person who rejects this rejects God the Father. To have rejected Jesus Christ is to have rejected every blessing. To have met Jesus is a tremendous blessing, but to have met Jesus and then reject Him is a fearful curse. A person's circumstances may be shabby, but a person's heart must not be shallow. We must become people whose hearts are firm, like a tree planted by streams of water. Though we are insufficient, we must firmly take hold of the word of God, take hold of what those who go ahead have said, engrave it on our hearts, submit with our hearts, and follow with our hearts. Only then can we live the life of faith. Only then can we have and enjoy the kingdom of God as our own, and can make other people blessed as well.

The Bible says that man does not live by the bread of the flesh alone. Do we live in order to eat and drink? Our thinking must be noble. We the righteous are nobility. Our hearts must be changed. A person of a distinguished family is treated with respect for his dignity even if he possesses nothing. A world-famous athlete also received a title and became a nobleman. A person must have dignity. Our outward appearance may not be splendid, but at the very least a person who has received the remission of sins has dignity. It is because he is nobility. Even if you do not think of yourselves as nobility, you are already living as nobility. Your hearts are noble. You must live your whole

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lives in a manner befitting nobility.

We cannot forsake the Lord. We cannot despise the words of the evangelist. We roughly knew that to treat the words of the evangelist lightly is to treat Jesus Christ lightly, but we did not know that it was such a tremendous matter. The Lord has taught us this. The reason the Lord taught us this is so that, though we are insufficient, we may live with faith, and may know the fact that we have all taken part together in the work of God that arose through the church, and may live with such pride. God has given us that blessing and given us that pride. We give thanks to our Lord. I pray daily that He will let us truly live in a manner befitting nobility. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Rejoice because your names are written in heaven

< Luke 10:17-24 >

"Then the seventy returned with joy, saying, 'Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name.' And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.' In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight. All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.' Then He turned to His disciples and said privately, 'Blessed are the eyes which see the things you see; for I tell you that many prophets and kings have desired to see what you see, and have not seen it, and to hear what you hear, and have not heard it.'"

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"Do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you"

The seventy evangelists went out to preach and returned rejoicing. They came back and reported, *"Lord, even the demons are subject to us in Your name" (Luke 10:17)*. When they delivered the word and cast out demons in the name of the Lord, the demons actually went out. Then Jesus spoke. *"And He said to them, 'I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. Behold, I give you the authority to trample on serpents and scorpions, and over all the power of the enemy, and nothing shall by any means hurt you. Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven.'" (Luke 10:18–20).*

Before the seventy evangelists the demons could not stir; they submitted and departed. The evangelists came back and boasted of it with one voice. At that, the Lord told them not to do so but said, *"Rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)*. Therefore we ought to rejoice that our names are written in heaven. To rejoice that our names are written in heaven is far better than to rejoice at casting out demons.

When the disciples made this report, the Lord first said that He saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. The disciples boasted that the demons submitted, but Jesus spoke of Satan. Originally Satan was the chief among the angels who attended God, but he led the angels under him in a rebellion and was cast out for that sin. So that chief became Satan, and the demons became the followers of Satan. Therefore we must not think of Satan and the demons as the same. What the Lord said and what the disciples said were different from each other. The Lord was saying not to rejoice that the demons, who are like subordinates,

submit, but to rejoice more that our names are written in heaven, in the Book of Life, than at performing any power in this world.

Is the name of the one who performs works of power also written in heaven?

To understand why the Lord spoke this way, we must look around at the things happening near us. A certain famous pastor abroad holds great healing meetings where an audience of over a hundred thousand gathers. He tells the sick to lay their hands on the part that hurts, prays for them, and proclaims, "Today the Lord has healed a person with heart disease." Then a few people come up and testify that they rode a wheelchair for seven years and received healing at today's meeting, and they walk and run before the audience, and the crowd claps like thunder, saying they praise the Lord. Famous pastors of our country also often hold the same kind of meetings hand in hand with that man. Another famous pastor lays his hand on the head of the person who has come up to testify, and though he did not even push, the person falls backward, and the assisting pastors catch him from behind and lay him down, and he even speaks in tongues while lying fallen. We come to see such scenes.

If one believes in Jesus and one's sickness is healed, that is good. Not being sick is better than being sick. If in our church, too, we prayed for every sick person, healed him, and had him testify, people wanting to be healed of their diseases would gather like clouds and we would soon have to build a great chapel. It is actually a good thing. But the point is that to the evangelists who had done such good things and were rejoicing, the Lord said, *"Rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)*.

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The question is whether the names of the people who perform many works of power are indeed written in heaven. Have they really become children of God? Have they known and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and had their hearts washed of sin? If not—even if that person receives respect and love from many people, if his name is not written in the kingdom of heaven—what is better about him than about us, whose names are written in the kingdom of heaven? That is what the Lord is saying here. The names of us who have received the remission of sins and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit are written in heaven. We are those who have received a greater blessing from God than they.

What He has hidden from the wise and prudent

At that time the Lord rejoiced greatly in the Spirit and spoke. *"In that hour Jesus rejoiced in the Spirit and said, 'I thank You, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that You have hidden these things from the wise and prudent and revealed them to babes. Even so, Father, for so it seemed good in Your sight" (Luke 10:21)* The Lord, speaking of how blessed and precious the children of God are whose names are written in heaven, said that God had hidden this fact from the wise and prudent and revealed it to those who are like little children.

Who are the prudent and the wise? It speaks of the people who have human wisdom and prudence, the people who serve as slaves of Satan. In this world there are many people who, seen by the standard of the world, look far wiser and more prudent than the born-again. There are many who call themselves clever, many who think themselves wise and prudent. From such people He has hidden it. What has He hidden? He has hidden the way

of becoming a child of God. And to people like little children, people who simply and purely believe when God speaks, He has revealed it, had their names written in heaven, and made them the children of God. He said that this is the will of God the Father.

Seen in a worldly way, Satan the devil is wise and prudent. Who, he asks, would like a life of receiving the remission of sins and living this plainly inside the church? There are times when I too have had such thoughts. The work of the Lord is so precious, and compared with what we have worked, the Lord saves so many souls and accomplishes His will, that out of sheer thankfulness we keep doing this work. But the life that man instinctively regards as prudent and wise is not this kind of ministry or life of faith. Believing in God and serving the Lord well while also living well oneself, going to heaven and at the same time living comfortably and richly in this world—that is the prudent and wise life the world speaks of. From such prudent and wise people He has hidden it, and to those who are like little children He has revealed it. What has He revealed? He has revealed salvation. He has revealed the fact that we receive the remission of sins and our names are written in the kingdom of heaven, and the glory given to them, and what kind of life is the right one—He has revealed it all.

While saying this, Jesus rejoiced that what God the Father had done was truly right. That He hid salvation and Jesus Christ from those who claim to be prudent and wise in this world, and revealed it to people like little children—people who in a certain sense look neither prudent nor clever but foolish—and saved them: this is truly right, and this is truly the will of God the Father. So Jesus, while speaking, was filled with the Holy Spirit and rejoiced. We too, when we think that our names are written in heaven, are so glad and our hearts become full. We are people who belong to heaven. With this one fact alone we can give

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thanks and live the life of faith as much as we please. Look at what the Lord said. He is speaking in reverse of who is really prudent and wise. He is saying that those who are like little children are truly prudent and wise, and that the people who claim in the world to be prudent and wise are foolish people.

The Father has made it known

The Lord went on to speak. *"All things have been delivered to Me by My Father, and no one knows who the Son is except the Father, and who the Father is except the Son, and the one to whom the Son wills to reveal Him.'" (Luke 10:22)* In a word, God opened to us by revelation the way of receiving the remission of sins, showed it, and made us realize it, so that we believed that way, received the remission of sins, and became children of God. There was no one who recognized who Jesus was. God the Father made it known to the disciples of Jesus. He made them know that Jesus is the Savior of mankind and the Messiah.

When Jesus called Himself the bread of life and told them to eat His flesh and drink His blood, the many people who had been following Him could not understand it at all, and thinking, 'If we follow any longer, something terrible will happen,' they all left. The people who had followed like clouds drained away like an ebb tide, and only the disciples remained. When He asked whether they also would go away, Peter answered. *"But Simon Peter answered Him, 'Lord, to whom shall we go? You have the words of eternal life" (John 6:68)* And when He asked who they said He was, Peter confessed, *"Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.'" (Matthew 16:16)* and Jesus said, *"Jesus answered and said to him, '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).

That the disciples of Jesus recognized Jesus, believed and followed Him, and even after Jesus rose again and ascended could preach His name and the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the way of salvation He gave, to all the earth, even to the point of martyrdom, was because God gave them realization, faith, and guidance. To us also God the Father has made all this known. He made us know who God the Father is, who our Lord Jesus Christ is, how He saved us, and how He removed our sins, so that we recognized Jesus, believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and became children of God. And now we too have come to call the Father of Jesus Christ our Father God. It came to be so because Jesus Christ opened our spiritual eyes with the word of revelation and showed us and made us know God, who belongs to heaven, and every spiritual blessing. Because all this was accomplished by God, we have become blessed people.

A life that looks foolish and yet is wise

To sum it all up, what the Lord is saying is that He has hidden it from the wise and prudent and revealed it to you who are like little children. We must look back at ourselves once: what kind of people we must be before God, what the inside of your hearts is like now, and whether we believe that believing and following the word of God is truly wise, thankful, and right. What the Lord is saying is that what is wise or prudent in the world is foolish. God was pleased to save believers through the foolishness of preaching. The gospel looks foolish. Hearing the word that the Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist

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and had our sins passed on to Him, hung on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead and saved us, we say, "Amen, Hallelujah." When the Lord received baptism from John, the sin of the world was all passed on to Jesus. My sins went over, and the sins of my ancestors, the sins of my children, the sins of the past, the sins of the present, and the sins of the future—the sins of all the people of the world, from the first forefather of mankind to the end of mankind, all went over. This we believed simply, like little children, foolishly enough, just as it is. And so we became children of God.

Truly, seen by the people of the world, it looks foolish. Our doing the work of God is so, and our life is so. It looks so foolish that one wonders whether the righteous, the servants of God, and the people of God really have to live this way. Then why do we live this way? Because the word of God is right, because serving like this and living like this is right—that is why we live this way. Because this is right, this is what is wise. If it were said that blessings are given without any sacrifice for the Lord, no one would remain here. Whether the Lord gives or does not give, we live this way because we believe it is right, first of all, to live according to the Lord's will. Living so, there have been many persecutions and adversities, but when we live this way, though it looks foolish, the Lord says, "You are a person after My own heart," and then gives what is needed. Since we have united our hearts with the Lord, agreeing that it is right to follow Him, whatever the Lord gives, we do not do such things as leaving because of it, or being destroyed and falling into Hades. The Lord saved people who are like little children, and He is telling us that such people, though they look foolish, are rather the wise and the prudent.

The life of the righteous that has names written in the Book of Life

There is a movie called 'Schindler's List.' The Jews whose names were written on the list of a man named Schindler were saved. In the war the Jews were taken prisoner, dragged to the camps, and massacred. Schindler was originally a businessman who supplied war materials to the German army. Since labor was cheap if he brought in prisoners and put them to work, he was a man who did business by paying money to the government and asking to have prisoners assigned to his factory. But when he saw the German soldiers treating the Jews as less than human, shooting them without any prick of conscience and regarding them as worse than beasts, God gave Schindler a heart of compassion. Though he did not have much work, in order to save the Jews he received the prisoner lists and wrote their names on the roster of workers of his factory. Four hundred, five hundred—he kept enlarging the list, and it is said that during the war he saved about a thousand people.

When the war ended and Germany became the defeated nation, Schindler himself was in a position to be tried as a war criminal. When he said farewell to the Jews and they thanked him so much for saving them, he looked at his gold ring and grieved that if he had sold this ring he could have saved one or two more, and looked at his car and grieved that if he had sold it he could have saved several more. After he died, the descendants of the people he saved grew to several thousand, and every year the Jews take their descendants to Schindler's gravestone, lay stones on it, and give thanks, saying that this man saved them. To the Jews, Schindler is a figure who can never be forgotten. It is because in that hard situation he spent his own money to employ them as workers and rescued their lives.

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It is the same with us today. He is telling us not to rejoice in such things as healing the demon-possessed and the sick, but to rejoice that our names are written in the kingdom of heaven. And if we, like Schindler, and like Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, the Apostle Paul, Peter, the twelve disciples, and all the saints who learned under them in the Scriptures, live not a life only for ourselves but a life that saves the souls of other people, then we are the ones who are spiritually wise and prudent. If we believe that Jesus is my Savior, that He removed my sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, made me a child of God, and wrote my name in the kingdom of heaven, then we must at least live a life for others. Even if we look foolish and stupid in the eyes of the people of the world, before God we must become people who, like little children, are spiritually prudent and wise. We must become the kind of people who save the souls of others.

In one week twenty testimonies of salvation came in. That Schindler gave all his property and worked for several years and saved a thousand people is precious, and his name is remembered for a long time; and we, who save people serving as slaves to Satan, are living the right life. We are living such a life now. Whether the work of serving the gospel suits one's own disposition or not, and though what an individual does is feeble, if you look at the results of the whole country's churches working together and at what God has worked through the church, and accept by faith the fact that you also have taken part in it, and work, it will be rewarding. We have done little work, but the Lord brings us so much. Twenty people are only those who sent in testimonies in one week—would they be the only ones saved? It is something so thankful. God has taught us this kind of life. It is not that we realized by ourselves that living this way is blessed; God taught us. So we are doing this work with pure, childlike faith, and God has given us countless spiritual

blessings and keeps giving them.

The one who believes like a little child before the Lord

If I, one person, do not serve the gospel, will the gospel fail to be preached? God can work through others as well. Only, it is regrettable and wrong for one to be left out of such a blessed place. Yet also, if we give up this work, the people of the world cannot hear the gospel. Before the Lord we must become like little children. Even if we look a little foolish, we must become steadfast people. We must become people who, if a thing is right, follow it just so and obey, and who look ahead to the future and live the present under a rewarding goal. Though we work all day long and seem to have little to show, the Lord receives what we do, and through it He has brought countless lives back to life. He keeps bringing them to life. He said that in the last days so many people receive salvation that man can hardly count them.

God has shown us how to live a tremendously blessed life. If perhaps there is someone who understands this word with his head but cannot at all say amen in his heart, he is a person who has not met Jesus Christ. He is a person who does not know who God the Father is and who Jesus is. Such a person must think again before God about his own salvation, and preach the gospel to himself, going over it again, and believe. It must be settled clearly. The Lord came to this earth for the whole world, received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, carried that sin to the Cross, was nailed there, shed His blood and died, rose again on the third day after death, and became the God of our eternal salvation. At that time your sins and my sins all went over. It is just as the word says:

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"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) and He died on the Cross saying, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* We must engrave this fact clearly on our hearts once more. God has shown us this blessed life and let us live it. So we truly give thanks.

When we minister in the name of Jesus Christ, we must not rejoice that demons go out, but rather rejoice that our names are written in the kingdom of heaven. Even if a demon-possessed person comes into the church, do not rush at him to cast out the demon. Casting out the demon is of no use. The church merely becomes a demon-casting church. Even a demon-possessed person, when he comes to his senses, knows well that he is being dragged about by the demon. I too was once a person possessed by a demon, so I know well. A demon-possessed person can also carry on social life well. It is only that he is at times under the rule of the evil spirit; otherwise he does everything well. Therefore that person himself must kneel before God, before Jesus Christ, like a little child and surrender his heart. Unless he surrenders of himself, the devil never lets that person go. Then before long he brings in even more demons and presses him down more severely. His heart must surrender to Jesus Christ and truly acknowledge the Lord as God.

What we must know is this. We must know, not with words only but with the heart, the fact that our names are written in heaven, and believe that we have truly become such people, and give thanks and rejoice. We give thanks before God. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

With the faith of the law one cannot receive the Holy Spirit

< Luke 10:25-30 >

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."

Man is fundamentally a mass of sin

In this world there are not many people who know their own insufficiency. Is there anyone in this world who has been saved from all his sins? Is there anyone whose works are perfect? Were the people saved before the Lord those who could not keep the law well, or those who kept the law of God well? The correct answer is that the one who has not kept the law of God well receives salvation. It is because the grace of salvation the Lord

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gives comes down upon sinners.

Do you perhaps know the law of God as something given for man to keep? Do you know that the law God gave was given to make us realize that by man's works we cannot become perfect before God? And yet have you been striving until now to keep the law? Man does not know his own self. He lives not knowing how many sins he commits and that he will go to hell because of those sins. People think that if they polish themselves just a little, they will become decent people. Know that such a person is one fallen into delusion. That man becomes decent if he tries is a delusion, and thinking that one has lived virtuously, and thinking that one can live virtuously from now on, are also delusions. Man is fundamentally a mass of sin and evil—how can he live virtuously? Do you admit that man, because he is fundamentally a mass of sin and evil, is one who cannot help committing sin? Do you live knowing that you are a mass of sin?

Where is the place that shows the figure of man exactly? It is the word of God. All the word of God shows the figure of man exactly. The word of the Scriptures shows the root of the evil inside man and its end. But the Scriptures also show with certainty how a sinner is born again of water, the blood, and the Spirit. Because man does not know his own sinful figure at all, God is actually showing us our figure with the written word.

Is there true goodness in man? Until he knows that there is no goodness in himself, he lives under the delusion that there is goodness in him. When a human being realizes that he is fundamentally a mass of sin, he can be saved from sin. The Scriptures record that man can have good thoughts, but there is no true goodness inside him. In human beings there are only thoughts that pursue goodness; it is not that there is actually true goodness within them. If someone hopes to possess a diamond displayed in a showcase, can he say that the diamond he has not

paid for is now his? Just as one wants to make the diamond in the showcase one's own, man is merely wanting goodness. True goodness is merely one of man's wishes.

The Scriptures say that no one has the ability to do good. There is the wish to do good, but it says, *"For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice" (Romans 7:19)* The reason man has no ability to do good is that man was born fundamentally a mass of sin. In fact, in the world there has even been a case of someone murdering his parents on the ground that they would not quickly hand over his share of the property. This too is evidence that human beings are masses of sin. The Scriptures also record in Mark 7:21–23 that what comes out of man is only evil things. Man speaks good words well but has no ability to do good. Yet all human beings act as if they had the ability to do good. The hypocrite bears the fruit of hypocrisy. With hypocritical thoughts and hypocritical deeds he deceives others, and at times he himself is deceived by that hypocrisy. 'What do you mean there is none? I have some. I think I can do good. I am different from other people.' There are also those who think so. For a person truly to do good, he must follow the teaching of the Lord; only then does he hold good thoughts and also do good deeds. By himself, man is a sinner who can only practice hypocrisy. Originally, man was born in iniquity and was only a hypocrite doing sin and evil.

Did David admit before God his fundamentally sinful figure? David confessed, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)* David admitted that, being fundamentally an evil man, he was one who committed the sin of violating Bathsheba and even murder, and that he was a mass of sin from the root.

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The insufficient person is saved from sin

Can one who was a sinner be saved from his sins? Is it hard to be saved if one does not know one's own insufficiency? It is so. Because man knows his own insufficiency, he fully believes the merit of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished, and that salvation, and is saved from sin. If David had not known the word of God recorded in the Scriptures, he could only have lived his whole life in hypocrisy. David lived receiving the exhortation of the servants of God and believing the word of the truth. That is why he could receive the salvation God gives. David, too, was insufficient in the deeds of his life, but through the law of sacrifice of the tabernacle God had established and the sacrifice of atonement, he realized the truth that one is saved by faith, and obtained salvation by faith. In this age also, insufficient people like David receive salvation.

Was David a person just like us? David, too, was one who, while the nation was at peace, walked on the roof of the palace, saw a woman bathing, and for a moment followed the flesh and committed sin. Anyone can commit sin when he falls into the evil of the flesh. David, too, was a person who was fundamentally a mass of sin, and so, when he left the Lord for a moment and fell into the sin of the flesh, he could confess that his own figure was so evil. Are you also this kind of person? Then the grace of salvation that came upon David comes upon you as well. David was a person who, even while committing the sin of adultery and covetousness that made another man's woman his own, did not know his own true figure. Even while following his own flesh, he lived justifying himself. But one day the prophet Nathan came and rebuked him: in a certain town there lived a poor man and a rich man; the poor man had only one lamb, and the rich man had many sheep. One day a guest

came to the rich man's house, and to entertain the guest he took away the one lamb of the poor man's house and served it. Nathan asked the king what should be done with such a man. David flew into a rage, saying that such a man must never be left alive. Then the prophet Nathan said, *"You are the man!" (2 Samuel 12:7)* and awakened David to the fact that he himself was precisely such a man. Even David had no righteousness before God by works. David was no different from ordinary people. But he received rebuke through the prophet Nathan, admitted his own figure, fundamentally a mass of sin from birth, and was saved by believing the salvation the Lord gave. David is a model of the saved person. Therefore even an insufficient person can be saved by believing the salvation the Lord has given.

Which comes first, works or faith?

Is it faith or works by which one obtains salvation before God? Before God it is faith. God first gave the law of salvation to all people. In a person's being saved from his sins, faith comes first. The object a person must believe in is God. Jesus came as the Savior. When a person is saved from his sins, Jesus sees the faith that believes in the baptism the Lord received from John and the blood of the Cross, and saves him.

The Pharisees, who were legalists

When Jesus was born, Israel was a vassal state of Rome. The Lord saw the sheep without a shepherd and had compassion on them. Among the people there were many pitiful ones who had lost their way and were wandering without a guide. In such an

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age there lived those who carried on the legalistic faith that one is blessed if one observes the Old Testament law, and they were the Pharisees. Their self-conceit was tremendously strong. In this world there were no hypocrites who lived a religious life more zealously than the Pharisees. At that time Jesus brought people back to life and said, *"Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5)*, and of the dead He did not say that they had died but said that they were sleeping. The work of Jesus was the teaching of heaven, transcending the level of the law. And yet the lawyer challenged Jesus. The lawyer's challenge was utterly reckless.

Does one obtain eternal life by practicing the law of God? No. Even if one kept all the Ten Commandments God gave, one could not obtain salvation, and there is no one in this world who can keep all the Ten Commandments. What is the reason man cannot keep the commandments of God? It is because the commandments and the law God gave are commands of so perfect and high a level, and because man himself is evil. If man were fundamentally good, he would be able to keep the law of God. But because man was born fundamentally evil, he cannot keep the law. Man could not keep the law of God, and though he tried to live by hypocrisy it did not work, and his own rightness kept breaking down again and again. To try to become perfect by keeping the law of God is arrogance. One comes to commit the great sin of hypocrisy.

The lawyer, who was a great sinner, said, *"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25)* The figure of the lawyer shows well the figure of us human beings. It also shows the fact that the lawyers were ignorant of the truth concerning God. The meaning of Jesus' word, *"You have answered rightly; do this and you will live" (Luke 10:28)*, was that man cannot keep the law. How could man keep the law of God? How can a mass of sin not commit sin? Man does not know his own figure

at all, and does not realize the fact that he is a seed of evildoing. If one does not know that one is fundamentally a mass of sin and evil that cannot do good, one challenges the law of God.

How do you read the law?

Jesus asked two things: *"What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" (Luke 10:26)* The lawyer answered that it says, *"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself."* He really did not know his own sinful figure. The lawyer thought that he kept the law, and taught others that they must live this way. But since mankind began, there has not been a single person who fully kept the law God established. It is because the law of works God gave was not given to be kept.

Yet many people, thinking that the law of works, which cannot be kept, is a law God gave to be kept, are straining to keep it. When I see such a person, I think how pitiable, arrogant, and foolish he is. Since man, who has evil in him, cannot keep the law of God, how shall he not die? It says, *"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'" (Galatians 3:10)* Know that if you, not knowing that you are still a mass of sin, try to stand before God by keeping the law, you are under the curse that leads to hell.

If one knows and believes the word of God only literally, one will make a great error. The law God gave, the command of God, exposes the fact that man, being evil, fundamentally cannot keep it, and so points out man's sin. We must know and believe the

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deep will of God contained in the law. The one who knows and believes the will God speaks within the law is the one who has realized the truth that Jesus received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, and so saved us from all sins. Only when we know and believe that the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross—that is, the gospel of salvation of the water and the Spirit—are for saving us from all the curses of the law, are we saved. Do you now believe like this?

How must we read the law? Many people do not understand the books of the law and know and interpret them only literally. But that is reading the Scriptures without understanding them. For the person who has evil in him and cannot live according to the law will in the end stand before the judgment seat of God and go to hell. This lawyer, too, knew only that God had given the law to his people to keep, and so, living a religious life in great misunderstanding, he went the way of destruction. The law recorded in the law books was the law, 'Love God.' But the faith of the works of the law resulted in a curse. God demands sinlessness of people in works, but man cannot become sinless by the law, and therefore by the works of the law he cannot be saved from sin. For man to do according to the word—to love God and love his neighbor with all his strength, with all his mind, and with all his life—was an impossible thing. How a person understands and reads the word of the law is important. If one understands and reads the law of God rightly, one can believe in Jesus, who came by water and the Spirit, and receive the remission of all sins; but if one understands and reads it wrongly, one is bound to the curse of the law and can only be cursed. How do you understand and believe the law?

Can man keep the law of God?

Can man fully follow the will of God with his own heart? The law of God itself is faultless and entirely fitting. But though the law of works God established is perfect, when we look at the sinful nature of man, born a mass of sin, keeping the law of God is impossible. Because man is imperfect, he can by no means keep God's law of works. That perfect law of the works of God makes the sinner a sinner, makes the sinner surrender before God, and leads him to Jesus Christ. All arrogant people fall headlong before God's law of works.

Those who fear God kneel before the law of works and come to seek the Lord's gospel of the grace of the water and the Spirit, saying, "I am a sinner. I go to hell because of the sins I have committed. Save me." God sent down the law of faith and the law by which sin can be realized, in order to bestow grace and mercy on us who have evil in us. We must believe that keeping the law is not the will of God; rather, the word means that through the law we should realize our sins, come forward to Jesus Christ, and receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Do you now believe like this?

The law is like a policeman who points out sin

The law is like a policeman who points out man's sin. The law and the commands of God play the same role as when citizens break the law the nation has fixed and the police appear, make the sin to be sin, and bring down judgment. The significance of the law of God lay in exposing the sinner as a sinner and reviving the conscience. God's law of works was something that played the role of a policeman pointing out sin,

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exposing our insufficiency.

In the Scriptures the sun points to Jesus, and the moon points to man. We receive the light of the sun God has given and obtain strength and grace. The Lord is the sun, and we are the moon. The moon receives the light of the sun and shines that light on the dark world. We human beings have no light. If we have light, it is only that we receive and reflect the light of the Lord. I hope that you will know well the purpose and the reason for which God gave the law of works, and stand in the line of the law of faith—the word of the water and the Spirit and the blessing of righteous salvation—and believe. Then you will become the descendants of Abraham, the descendants belonging to Jesus Christ.

There is nothing that is not right in the word of the law of God

Every command the law of God speaks is right, every one alike. The law says, *"You shall not murder,"* but human beings, who have evil in them, commit murder. That is why He said not to murder. Because people are all masses of sin and evil, they commit sin, and God gave the law telling them not to commit that sin. Do you know that it is right not to commit adultery? Do you know that it is right not to steal, not to covet, and to honor your parents? We know it is right, but because inside man there is an evil exactly opposed to it, he lives committing sin. Then is it possible to keep the law? Is it not man who, while knowing the law of God is right, cannot live according to it? It is because man is fundamentally a mass of sin. So the law of God was like the policeman of the world. The law was the law that points out man's sin and makes him realize it. The law of God was not given to be kept. It was to show that man is a mass of sin. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus, who saved the man who fell among thieves

< Luke 10:25-37 >

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think

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was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

The word we have read today is what our Lord spoke to a certain lawyer. People today look at this word and often make a resolve to become good people. They think that believing in Jesus is becoming a good person, and that what God wants of us is also that we become good people. And so many people misunderstand this word and wish that human beings would become truly good neighbors to people. Furthermore, cases in which human beings try to become saviors and deliverers to other human beings in place of God are extremely common. If a person knows the word of God well he is saved, but if he fits the word of God into religion and looks at the Bible only from the viewpoint of good deeds, morality, and ethics, he comes to commit a great error. He not only commits the error himself but also casts many people into error, with the result that he goes to hell himself and drags other people to hell as well.

The purpose for which our Lord came to this earth is to save us human beings from sin and make us children of God who can enter the kingdom of God. Our Lord came to this earth to make us righteous and to make us children of God, so that we might receive the remission of sins and obtain eternal life. Yet when we look at the Bible, at the time Jesus was on this earth there were many people who challenged Jesus. There were people who slandered Jesus, and there were people who challenged Jesus head-on. Among them there was one who was the most impudent and proud, and he was none other than a teacher of the law of the nation of Israel. Such a person is called a lawyer. A teacher of the Jews is called a rabbi, and a teacher of the Jews

was a person of great position. He was a teacher, a politician, and also a leader of the people. When the term lawyer appears in the Bible, it refers to a leader of the people who was in a great leading position, had high learning, and knew the word of God of the Old Testament well and orthodoxly.

When our Lord came to this earth, many people knew Jesus as merely an ordinary young man of Nazareth. They knew Him as a somewhat strange young man who had never attended school and had no teacher from whom He had learned anywhere, yet who had a great deal of knowledge, who had not one thing about the secrets of the kingdom of Heaven that He could not solve, who could well prevail when He talked with the teachers of the law, and who spoke to the people of Israel the true meaning of the truth of God. That young man was precisely Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ was circumcised, and when He was about twelve years old He went into the temple in Jerusalem and conversed with the teachers of the law, the leaders of Israel, and the elders. The people of Israel remember that the twelve-year-old Jesus lacked nothing at all while conversing with the lawyers. Jesus was outstanding from His childhood. Jesus never attended school in this world. Only, if we hear the story handed down by word of mouth, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, did the work of a carpenter under Joseph, who was betrothed to His mother Mary though he was not His physical father.

That Jesus turned thirty and was baptized by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, thereby bearing all the sins of mankind, and one event that occurred while He was working on this earth for three years is precisely this event of the lawyer that you and I have read today.

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The lawyer who challenged Jesus head-on

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, "Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25) We have just shared the word about how learned and how great a leader a lawyer was. A lawyer, who was a leader of the people, a leader of the Old Testament religion, and a teacher of the congregation, stood up and challenged Jesus head-on and tested Him. Perhaps if this man had known that Jesus was the Son of God, he would not have done so.

But Jesus had already gained great fame at that time. In the eyes of this lawyer, Jesus seemed to be an opponent worth contending with once and worth talking to. So he stood up and tested and challenged Jesus. He asked what he must do to obtain eternal life. It is truly a senseless thing to say. A teacher of the law thinks that he goes to the kingdom of Heaven by keeping the law, that he goes to the kingdom of Heaven and obtains eternal life by the righteousness of the law. Seen by us who know this gospel of the water and the Spirit, no matter how much he may be a teacher and instructor of the law, it makes no sense at all how a person can think that he can go to the kingdom of Heaven by keeping the law, by doing something himself. Yet this lawyer challenged Jesus in that way.

This part is the scene in which Jesus and the lawyer confront each other. Jesus asked, *"What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" (Luke 10:26)* He asked that way because the man was so distinguished in the law and so thoroughly versed in the law. Then this lawyer answered, *"'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'" (Luke 10:27).*

He truly answered like a teacher of the law. He gathered up

all the six hundred and thirteen articles of the law and the Ten Commandments that form their framework, bound together the law and the commandments of God, and spoke very concisely and accurately. The first is to love God with all one's heart, with all one's soul, with all one's strength, and with all one's mind—that is, with everything—and the second is to love my neighbor as my own body. The whole law and all the commandments are to love God and to love people, and this was all the commandments and all the law of God, the law of God that He gave us to keep. Since he summarized this in two things and answered accurately, it was truly an answer befitting a teacher of the law, and he was a truly remarkable man.

Since he had stood up to test Jesus, was it not in effect a fight that broke out in the course of conversing with Jesus? Jesus knows that this man is a very clever man. And He also knows that this man is one who prides himself that he can go to paradise, obtain eternal life, and go to the kingdom of Heaven by his own works.

Then what is the law? The law is what makes us realize and know sin; it is by no means something we can keep in full. The word of the law and the commandments that God gave us are not something we can keep one hundred percent; they tell us what is right and make us realize how much of a sinner we are. Yet this lawyer thought, "Even if You are the Son of God, I can keep the law without You and obtain salvation. I am a man who can obtain eternal life. Let us really have a match." This is as good as Jesus and the law, the grace of God and the law, coming to grips with each other. Having thus come to grips, the lawyer summarized and answered the question of Jesus clearly and well.

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"Do this and you will live"

So Jesus said, *"You have answered rightly; do this and you will live" (Luke 10:28)* He said it was right because He had to say that what was answered rightly was right, and He must not be unreasonable. And He was saying this: "What you know is right. Since you said, what shall I do to obtain eternal life, are you not thinking that you can do something? Then try doing it. See whether you can truly love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind. And see whether you can love your neighbor as your own body." Our Lord said that since he had spoken rightly, he should try doing it once. God knows that we human beings cannot keep the law one hundred percent, that we cannot truly love God with all our soul and love our neighbor as our own body.

Dear fellow believers, if there were such a perfect human being, he would be God, a deity; how could he be a human being? Is it not a senseless thing to say? Can you love your neighbor as your own body? If a beggar is hungry, can you regard it as your own hunger and share with him? And can you do that not just for one or two people but for all of them? It is not possible. So right now Jesus and the teacher of the law are having a confrontation in which sparks are flying from their eyes. When Jesus said, do this and you will live, a person with even a little knowledge of his own condition would have said, "Oh dear, this will not do for me. I know it, but how can I carry out all of it? How can a man carry out one hundred percent of what he knows? I cannot do it." And he would have promptly bowed his head, saying, "Lord, You are right. Even though I know it, I am an insufficient man who cannot carry it all out this way." Then he could even have received the remission of sins, but this man is

truly a remarkable man.

In our country there are now many people who believe in Buddhism. It is said that Buddha said that in heaven and on earth he alone is the honored one, that there is no one but himself in heaven and on earth. Dear fellow believers, is there no God in heaven? Is there no one on earth better than himself? How can he say that he is the highest? It is a senseless story. Buddha was originally Siddhartha, a prince of India, and that man did not die in any such remarkable way. Under a bo tree he agonized over why man was born, why he lives, where he goes when he dies, whether he disappears when he dies or goes somewhere, and then he died. Such a thing is called philosophy. Anyone who is a human being has such thoughts. Dear fellow believers, this is not my own story; I have quoted just as it is what appears in a book.

Right now Jesus and the lawyer are having a truly spark-flying confrontation. They are not doing it with their fists, but when the teacher of the law on one side says that he can do it, Jesus says, how will you do it, know yourself. If Socrates had been there at that time, this man could have learned a lesson, but this man foolishly still did not know his own condition. So he asked, *"But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, "And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)* He was saying, "I have kept all the law of God. But since He said to love your neighbor as your own body, just tell me who my neighbor is. I will carry it out just so." He is a truly self-confident lawyer. Among those who challenged Jesus, there was no one as self-confident as this man. Looking at him now, this man seems to be a perfect man without a single fault. He seems to be a leader of the nation of Israel, a teacher of the law, a man who is always teaching, a man whose words and deeds agree. So we see a truly remarkable man asking Jesus who his neighbor is.

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So Jesus gives this lawyer an example and, while explaining it, takes him down a peg. What our Lord says in this part is who the true neighbor is and who the true Savior of human life is. And He also tells us the fact that all human life has fallen into sin and is being destroyed while held captive by the devil, and the fact that a human being cannot save a human being. Our Lord is telling us that the One who will save us from hell, from destruction, and from tribulation is Jesus Himself.

"Went down from Jerusalem to Jericho"

Let us look at the word from verse 30 of the text. *"Then Jesus answered and said: "A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead."* Jesus began His explanation by giving a parable. He continued, saying, *"Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you." So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:31–37)* In this fight our Lord won honorably. He won with the word.

Let us look at the word to see how He won. He said that a certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. Dear fellow believers, Jerusalem can be said to be a place situated on a mountain. The city of Jerusalem is a great city of Israel, a city like the capital of a nation. Jerusalem was a city situated on high ground, and there the tabernacle was, and the temple was. It was the place where the temple was, at which the whole nation of Israel gathered to worship God, to offer sacrifices, and to receive the remission of sins.

Jericho, on the other hand, is a city situated in a region of very low ground. A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, and the thieves beat him and left him half dead and departed, and by chance a priest came down that way and saw him and passed by on the other side, and a Levite also arrived at the place and saw him and passed by on the other side. What is this story trying to say? Jerusalem is the seat where the lawyers of the nation of Israel, that is, the teachers of the law, are dwelling. The teachers of the law teach in the great synagogue of the great city of Jerusalem. They are people who teach everyone who comes there according to the word of the Old Testament, and he was the very chief among them.

Then what does it tell us that a certain man went down to Jericho and fell among thieves? This man is a person who knows the law of God and knows the six hundred and thirteen commandments. Do this, do not do that, honor your parents, when a child is born let him be circumcised on the eighth day, when a woman has her monthly period let her not come to the temple for several days—there is no telling how many such commandments there are. Do we not have civil law in our country? If we ask where this civil law came from, it all came from these commandments. Where did civil law, private law, and national law all come from? All the laws of this world came

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from the law and the commandments of God in the Old Testament, from the six hundred and thirteen do's and do not's here. The civil law, private law, and national law of America and England also all came from here. That is why the president of America places his hand on the Bible and takes the oath of office. Without falsehood, before God, he promises the people upon the law that God established that he will observe the law.

That our Lord said a certain man went down to Jericho and fell among thieves is the word that you, who know the law and act as a teacher of the law, are a person who is now falling. Jericho means fragrance and points to the world. Jerusalem points to the city of religion, and it means that a person living a religious life keeps going down to Jericho without knowing it. It means that he is falling into the world. So this man went down to Jericho and fell among thieves, and the thieves stripped him of his clothing, beat him, left him half dead, and departed. Dear fellow believers, what do the thieves speak of? They speak of sin, and they speak of the devil.

Why does a person perish? There are various factors in a person's perishing, but the greatest factor is sin. A human being perishes because of sin, because of the sins he has committed. Because of sin a person goes to hell, because of sin he lives a sorrowful life, and because of sin he cannot live brightly in this world. Dear fellow believers, other things can be managed if one makes an effort, but if a person has sin he dies. There is no peace in his soul. So when a person is born into this world, he somehow lives a religious life. People believe in anything at all. There are people who believe in other people, believe in stones, and believe in the sun; is this not the thought of pantheism? All the people of the whole world serve material things as gods. Human beings are material, the sun and the moon are material, money is material, and all the things of nature are material, and people

serve those material things and live religious lives. They pray for the farming to go well and for business to go well. In our country especially, they set out a pig's head and say, "I pray, I pray, I pray to the god of the earth." Is all this not religion?

People who live religious lives each set up their own laws, and the Ten Commandments are not found in the Bible alone. Every kind of religion has its ten commandments. A place called Daesun Jinrihoe has also set up ten commandments, and Confucianism also has many laws. There are so many laws, and yet there is no one who lives according to those laws. All of them are joined to the world and fall. That a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves means that although he lives a religious life, he cannot do even that religious life one hundred percent, and while falling in company with the world, the sins he has committed wound him and he is dying.

So Jesus spoke this word in order to tell the teacher of the law that his condition was exactly like that. It means that though you are a teacher of the law and teach others well, you are a person who cannot keep the law, you are a human being who is now falling, and in the end you are a person who will meet thieves and die. It means that you die because you commit sin.

The priest and the Levite, who passed by on the other side

Our Lord said that the thieves stripped him of his clothing, beat him, left him half dead, and departed. These thieves are wicked thieves. Since they stripped off all his clothing, beat him, left him half dead, and departed, they were extremely vicious thieves. It says, "*Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side.*

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Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side" (Luke 10:31–32) Dear fellow believers, of whom does the priest speak? He speaks of the person who kills oxen and sheep inside the temple in Jerusalem and offers sacrifices before God on behalf of the people, that is, of a religious leader. It speaks of the teachers of the law of the nation of Israel in the Old Testament.

The priest saw the man who had fallen among thieves and passed by on the other side, and the Levite also saw him and passed by. What does a priest teach inside the temple? He teaches the people to love God with all their soul, with all their strength, with all their mind, and with all their devotion, and to love their neighbor as their own body. Jesus used the priest to speak indirectly to this lawyer. It means, you speak as firmly as iron and know the word of God clearly by the law, but do you actually live that way? It means, when a poor person comes into the temple and an insufficient person comes in, do you truly treat him that way? When a rich man comes in, do you not say, "Please sit over here," and when a poor person comes in, do you not pretend not to see him? When you meet a person you truly ought to help, do you not pass by on the other side? Jesus saw through the heart of this lawyer and spoke. Since he had asked who his neighbor was, He was saying, the man who fell among thieves is your neighbor, and you priests and Levites who serve inside the temple, did you truly care for him this way? Did you not all pass by on the other side?

Dear fellow believers, though the man had met thieves and been beaten nearly to death and could not even cry out, he would have used all his remaining strength to ask to be saved. Yet it means that the priest, with the skirts of his robe fluttering, went down, and even though he saw him, he simply slipped off along a side path and went down to Jericho. Though a man was dying,

he pretended not to see. The priest did so, and the Levite did so. The Levite, speaking in today's terms, refers to a religious leader. In terms of Buddhism he is the head monk, in terms of Christianity the general assembly president or a pastor, and in terms of rank we could say he corresponds to a deacon or a senior deaconess. The priest and the Levite are leaders of the nation of Israel and leaders of Old Testament religion who serve God inside the temple. They are not ordinary commoners but genuine leaders. And yet all of these passed by. They saw a man dying and pretended not to see, and religious leaders are only pleased to say to those who have money, *"Come to Me, all,"* and they by no means take pleasure in a man who is dying.

Dear fellow believers, every religion looks orderly on the outside. But they only rake in money; they do not care whether a person goes to hell or not, whether he receives the remission of sins or not. If someone says he is distressed because he has sin, they tell him to solve it himself. They tell him to go and pray on a mountain, they tell him to try fasting and praying for forty days, and they tell him that God will forgive him because his devotion is admirable. Dear fellow believers, it is not just one or two people who have died while doing a forty-day fasting prayer. There are many who have died from wrongly listening to the words of a pastor, many who have died while building a chapel, and many who have died after going off to fast. People do not know it, but there are many such cases. The priest passed by, and the Levite passed by. It means, you only say with words that as teachers of the law you know and keep the law, but did you truly give life to a dying man? Did you not fail to save him and all pass by pretending not to see?

Through this text our Lord is telling us extremely important facts. It is that a person can by no means be saved by having a religion. He is telling us the fact that a person can by no means

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be saved by knowing the law and keeping the law. And it is that religious leaders are not true saviors and are not servants of God, and lawyers are even more so. It is the word that those who say, "Give much tithe, do not commit sin, live virtuously," while not lifting a finger themselves, are not leaders but false prophets. Our Lord says that a person can by no means receive the remission of sins with the law, and cannot receive the remission of sins by carrying out the law either. It is because there is not one person who will carry out the whole law. Do you carry out all the law of God? Can you? You cannot.

We know the law and yet cannot carry it out. Do not take the name of God in vain, do not serve other idols, do not bow down, remember the Sabbath day and keep it, honor your parents, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not covet—there are these ten commandments, and if a person breaks even one of them he has broken them all. In James too it says, *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10)* If a person breaks even one of the six hundred and thirteen commandments of God he has broken them all, so how can a man say that he keeps the law? Yet this lawyer is impudent and proud, and says that since he is already thoroughly versed concerning God, if only He will tell him who his neighbor is, he will carry it out immediately. In fact this man is precisely the kind of person who would run away if he met a man who had fallen among thieves. But is our Jesus not truly gracious? Without a single vulgar word, how graciously He speaks. Jesus, You are truly my Lord and our Lord.

A leader who has not received the remission of sins cannot give life to anyone

Our Lord told this lawyer that it would not do for him. Even today, within Christianity, those who teach only by the law while not having received the remission of sins themselves cannot save the other person. They cannot save those among the church members who are suffering because they have sin, they cannot save those who wish to go to the kingdom of Heaven, and they cannot save those who are facing death. When a person facing death says, "Pastor, I am so afraid as I face death. Something keeps appearing before my eyes. I am frightened. I do not want to go. I believed in Jesus, and now that I am at the point of dying, something good ought to appear, so why do such frightening things appear? They have come to seize me. I do not want to go," the pastor can do nothing about it.

Dear fellow believers, in such a place, if we clearly teach him what Jesus Christ as his Savior has done for him, our Lord comes Himself, drives away Satan the devil, is enthroned in his heart, takes him by the wrist, and leads him all the way to heaven, to the kingdom of Heaven. Dear fellow believers, those who have received the remission of sins die so very beautifully. When they die they say that they are not dying but going to the kingdom of God, and they tell others not to say that they have died. The born-again servants of God and many predecessors in the faith say when they die, "Do not weep saying that I have died. I am leaving this earth and going to the kingdom of Heaven."

Dear fellow believers, a person who has not himself been born again, who knows the word of God by the law but who has not received the perfect remission of sins so that not one sin remains through Jesus Christ, cannot save another person. He cannot save those who are going to hell, and he cannot save a

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person who has fallen into sin. We believed in God in order to believe in Jesus, receive the remission of sins, and go to the kingdom of Heaven. But if a person believes without knowing well, there is always sin in his heart, and if he goes wrong, sin piles up. Jesus Christ is our Savior, who saved us perfectly, and the Lord of salvation. But a leader who has not received the remission of sins cannot lead a single one of his church members to the kingdom of Heaven. They all pass by on the other side. “I am dying of distress because I have sin.” “Take care of it yourself.” “Why is there so much sin even though I believe in Jesus? Sin has increased even more since I believed in Jesus.” “I told you to take care of it yourself.” “How?” “Do a fasting prayer or an all-night prayer, take care of it yourself.” If that is how it is going to be, he would believe at home; why did he come to church?

A true leader would say, are you so distressed because of sin, why did you not say so sooner, and would deliver to him the word of God. If the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached to him, he receives the remission of sins. “Jesus took away all your sins with the baptism He received from John. Then is there sin in your heart, or is there not?” “There is none.” When Jesus takes away all our sins, our conscience knows that there is no sin. A person has a conscience. When he receives the remission of sins, that conscience is liberated from sin and lives on vigorously. But a person who has not received the remission of sins cannot do this, and those who have received the remission of sins do it.

That is exactly what our Lord is saying to this lawyer. It means, you are a leader, but you have not received the remission of sins, and you are trying to obtain eternal life by keeping the law, but how will you keep the whole law? Do you not commit even one sin in your whole lifetime? And do you save the people under you? Do you not fail to save them? It means that since all

the people under you commit sin and you too are a sinner, you are a person who drags people to hell.

Jesus, who became the true neighbor of the man who fell among thieves

The priest passed by on the other side and the Levite did too, but it says, *"But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you" (Luke 10:33–35)* It means that a certain Samaritan treated him and gave him life. It means that this Samaritan was the true good neighbor.

Why did Jesus bring a Samaritan onto the scene here? Samaritans were people whom these lawyers regarded as worse than dogs and pigs. Within Israel there is the city of Samaria, and the city of Jericho, and the city of Jerusalem. Just as in our country there is this province and a neighboring province and the capital, so there were each of these cities. Among them the city called Samaria became a people of mixed blood because enemy troops frequently invaded and carried off the women living there, and also occupied it and lived there and took Israelite women as their own wives. So the nation of Israel utterly despised the Samaritans, saying that although they were the same people as themselves they were worse than dogs and pigs, that they were a mixed people and were defiled.

But that Samaritan, while journeying, arrived there, saw the

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man who had fallen among thieves, had compassion on him, poured oil and wine on his wounds, bandaged them, brought him to an inn, and treated him. And since he himself was in the middle of a journey, he entrusted money to the innkeeper, asking him to take good care of this man, and saying that if more was spent he would repay it when he returned, and so he rescued him. Who was the true neighbor? It means that it was the good Samaritan.

When Jesus was on this earth, did people know Jesus as the Son of God, as the true Messiah, as the true Savior of mankind? They did not know Him that way but called Him a heretic. They regarded Him as impudent, as one who threw the nation into confusion, as a thoroughly worthless man. They regarded Him as more of a thorn in the eye than a Samaritan and despised Him more. Among the people, those who respected Jesus did respect Him, but the leaders of the nation of Israel mocked Jesus greatly.

It said that a certain Samaritan was in the middle of a journey, and Jesus is journeying even now. He is going about even now in order to look for and meet whoever seeks Him, whoever truly wants to receive the remission of sins, and whether there is anyone who is truly distressed because of his own sin. It means that He is going about together with His servants. It means that the Lord, while wondering whom He shall save, who the man that fell among thieves might be, who is truly distressed because of his own sin, and who wants to die because of his own sin, is working through His servants together with the church of God, and is saving people with the word.

The Samaritan became the true neighbor of the man who fell among thieves. But the lawyers, who were leaders of the nation of Israel, and the Levites, that is, the religious leaders, did not become neighbors to the man who fell among thieves. Who is the true neighbor? It is the Samaritan. It said, *"And he said, "He*

who showed mercy on him" (Luke 10:37) Dear fellow believers, who showed great mercy and who showed great compassion to us? Who is the One who truly had compassion on us, who could only go to hell because of sin, and who saves us human beings and brings us to the kingdom of Heaven? It is Jesus. Jesus, who came into this world and was despised, who had nothing worthy of admiration, came to this earth to save sinners and personally bore the sins of us sinners upon His own body with the baptism He received from John. And by being nailed to the Cross, He Himself received all the judgment that we were to receive. Jesus is the One who saved us from sin, made us people of the kingdom of Heaven, and led us there. He is not a human being, He is not a religious leader; He is precisely Jesus. He is the Lord who became our Savior. Dear fellow believers, do you believe it?

Jesus showed us mercy, Jesus is our God, and Jesus is the true Savior who saved us from sin. Jesus is the One who takes us to the kingdom of Heaven, and Jesus is the One who protects us. Dear fellow believers, who is the true neighbor? It is precisely Jesus, the Son of God. Who is our true Shepherd? It is Jesus. He is not a human being, and He is not a religious leader. No matter how well a man knows the law and how much of the word of God he knows, he is not the one who saves us; Jesus removed our sins and saved us from sin. Because we believe in Jesus, we who had been placed in a situation of having fallen among thieves and being certain to die can be protected, be saved, have our wounds bound up, and revive again. No matter how much we search in this world there is no other name by which we may be saved, so Jesus Christ is the true Savior of our human life.

Who is the true God who will help those who have met with tribulation? It is precisely our Savior, Jesus. That Lord is not

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only the Savior who saved us from sin, but also the Savior who saves us from every danger, from every failure, from every temptation, and from weakness. Jesus alone is our true Savior. Who helps us? Do people help us? People only pretend to help; they do not truly help. People weigh their own interests. Our Lord is not visible to the eye, but when we pray to that Lord and seek His help, He protects us like the apple of His eye, protects us in the midst of danger, and revives us again in the midst of failure.

Dear fellow believers, the lawyer and Jesus came to grips; who won? The lawyer used only his mouth, but Jesus practiced it with His body. By being baptized by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He fulfilled all the righteousness of mankind and bore all our sins. And not only with words, but by dying on the Cross Himself and laying down His own life for us, He saved us from all sin.

Jesus is the true Savior of you and me. That Jesus alone is our Savior—this is the word that this Bible tells us. Who is the one who showed us mercy? Who is our true neighbor? It is He, Jesus. The One who is the Son of God and our true Savior and the Master of life, the One who gave us eternal life, made us righteous, and pulled us out of deep sin and saved us—precisely Jesus, who is the Son of God and the King of kings, is the neighbor and the true Savior of you and me. Dear fellow believers, do you believe it?

The oil and the wine, and the church that has become the inn

What is the word that Jesus came to this earth, came near to sinners and near to the wounded, and poured on oil and wine? It

is the story that He who is God clothed Himself in a human body, came to this earth, was baptized by John and bore our sins upon His body, and gave up His own life to us and thereby saved us. The wine speaks of the precious blood of Jesus. It also speaks of joy, and it speaks of that blood of Jesus Christ. The oil speaks precisely of the Holy Spirit of God. The reason we can receive the remission of sins is that when Jesus, who is true God, came to this earth, had our sins passed over to His body by the baptism He received from John, and laid down His own life for us, we obtain true salvation by believing in Him. He came near to us, poured oil and wine on the wounds, bandaged them, set us on His own animal, and took us to an inn. This animal speaks of the servants of God. Then where did He take him? He brought him to an inn and took care of him, and *"On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, "Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you" (Luke 10:35).*

Our Lord actually saved us just as this word says. When we committed sin and were truly weak and without strength, and were beaten by thieves and nearly dying, the Lord came to us, pulled us out of sin, and saved us. Does a person commit sin on purpose? He commits sin because he is weak. There is not one person who tries to live wickedly on purpose. But in this flesh there is nothing good. Inside this flesh every kind of sin is full. Since he possesses sin, how can he not commit sin? He commits sin because he is weak. So we were defeated by sin and could only go to hell. But the Lord came to us—what did He do for us? He saved us.

The Lord came even to the Jordan River, went even to the Cross, went even into the tomb, and rose again and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. It means that He has already saved us abundantly and become our true Savior, so that now we

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may be saved simply by believing in our hearts what our Lord has done. Dear fellow believers, you believe it, do you not? Our Lord bore all our sins upon His body and saved us, and He pours His oil and His blood on the wounds caused by our sin, bandages them, sets us on His own animal, takes us to an inn, and cares for us. Our Lord saves us and leads us inside the church of God. This inn is precisely the church.

Dear fellow believers, the church is an inn. The church is a place where weary lives, lives that have become travellers, rest very comfortably, gain strength, and go on. So the church that has become an inn has a very large kitchen. In an inn there is also an innkeeper and there are many servants. There are not just one or two. The traveller gains strength at that inn and has his wounds treated, and he settles down and lives there until the master who saved him comes. This inn speaks precisely of the church.

Dear fellow believers, do you know how many wounds all human lives, including the saints, have? They have truly many wounds. It is human life to live in this world bearing wounds. Who is the One who truly treats our wounds? It is Jesus. If we rightly know Jesus, if we confirm by the word the fact that Jesus became our Savior, the wounds of our hearts are treated. And we must be protected. Those who have been wounded must be protected. It means that it is not all over once we have been saved; we must be protected.

Our Lord showed us great mercy. He saved those who were to go to hell and made them people of the kingdom of Heaven, and He made us His own children. Being saved from hell alone would be reason for thanks, and yet we became children of God, the highest position in the world, and came to go to the kingdom of Heaven and live together with God—how great a mercy is this? How greatly did He have compassion on us and put great

grace upon us and love us? This was the love of God Himself and His salvation.

The good Samaritan spoken of here speaks precisely of Jesus Himself. In the word that He poured on oil and wine, the oil speaks of the Holy Spirit, who is God. And that He poured on wine speaks of the fact that He bore the sins of all mankind upon His body and gave His own life, that is, His blood, to people who could only die because of sin. The Bible says that blood makes atonement for sin. It means that He gave His own life in place of our having to shed our blood and die, and thus kept us from receiving judgment. Dear fellow believers, it is saying precisely that Jesus became our Savior.

And our Lord told the innkeeper to take care of this man, saying that if more expense was incurred He would repay it when He came again. *"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" And he said, "He who showed mercy on him." Then Jesus said to him, "Go and do likewise" (Luke 10:36–37)* After that, is there any word the lawyer said? There is none. "I saved you; from the days of your ancestors until now, you have not once saved a man who fell among thieves. From the beginning of the world to the last days, in order to make you the people of God, though I am the Son of God I came down to this earth according to the will of the Father and saved you; have you seen a human being save a human being? A human being does not go to the kingdom of Heaven by doing well, and by human merit no one goes to the kingdom of Heaven. Because I am your Savior, I led you to the kingdom of Heaven and made you the people of God Himself. Believe in Me." Our Lord spoke that way concerning Himself, and we too believe it so.

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The truly good work is to preach the gospel

Dear fellow believers, people say many strange things with this word. They say that we must live virtuously. In Christian circles and Catholic circles, in every religious circle, this word ‘good’ is used a great deal. There are many mission societies such as the Good Samaritan Mission Society and the Good Neighbor Mission Society, and among the names of chapels there is also the Good Samaritan Church.

What we must know here is the fact that what Jesus is saying is not the story of doing good to people. What Jesus is saying is that the true Savior of mankind is He Himself. It is that He Himself gave us true life, and that He bore all the sins of those who could only die because of sin and who were wounded, and treated them. He is telling us here that the Lord became our true Savior. Dear fellow believers, you believe it, do you not?

But false religious people read this word and say that since the Samaritan here did a good work, we too should care for the pitiable. People who do not believe in Jesus also do such things well. They do them even better. What is the truly good thing that we are to give to people? It is the gospel. To preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people who can only die because of sin and can only go to hell, and to pull them out of hell, is the best work we can do for our neighbor. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe it with an amen.

This is the real good work. It is not because people have no food for the flesh that they go to hell, and it is not because they have no food that they perish. If they have nothing to eat, we must help them. But if we truly love people, what must we do? Bringing rice to them is also a precious thing, but we must preach the true gospel to the souls of people. We must preach that the Lord became our Savior. This is the best work we can

do. To preach to people what the Lord has done in saving us, just as the Samaritan did—this is precisely the fulfilling of the law. It is keeping the law. It is to love God and to love your neighbor as your own body. To preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the fulfilling of the law. The fulfilling of the law is to love God and to love people, and this is everything that God speaks of. To fulfill these two things, one must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

I hope that you and I will not be deceived. I hope you will not be deceived by people who say that they have done a good work simply by giving a piece of bread. Bread goes into the stomach and disappears once a person goes to the toilet, but if the word of the truth of God is preached once and believed, one obtains eternal life. To truly love one's neighbor, to truly love people, is the preaching of the gospel. Knowing that preaching the gospel to another person is truer love and a better work than giving him relief, I hope you will preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For the sake of preaching the gospel, I hope you will also share your food. For the sake of preaching the gospel, I hope you will also make sacrifices. This is what God wants and desires of us. We give thanks and offer praise that our God Himself became our Savior. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Set your purpose on the work of saving souls

< Luke 10:25-37 >

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think

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was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

Eternal life is not obtained by doing

If we look at the word from Luke 10:25, a lawyer appears. That lawyer asks Jesus, *"what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* He was a lawyer who thought as though he obtained eternal life by doing some work.

If we look at the conversation between Jesus and this lawyer, we see the lawyer being defeated on points and Jesus winning on points. Of course we know well the fact that we cannot keep the law, and we also know well the fact that God did not give us the law in order that we should keep it.

What work did this lawyer here do? He made keeping the law his specialty. So this man's occupation was precisely that of a lawyer, that is, a person who keeps the law.

What work shall we, who have received the remission of sins, do?

Then what work shall we, who have been born again, do? Shall we do the work of the spirit, or the work of the flesh? And we must clearly know what the work of the spirit is and what the work of the flesh is. We have believed in Jesus and received the remission of sins. We have no sin. Do we, who believe in the water and the blood of Jesus Christ, have sin? We do not.

Here Jesus speaks by giving a parable. He said that a man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves,

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and the thieves beat him, left him half dead, and departed. He also said that a priest and a Levite appeared and avoided him as they passed by.

This can of course be said to be a parable directed at the lawyer, spoken through the priest and the Levite. But did Jesus not take away even the sins of those thieves who beat the man going down to Jericho nearly to death and left him and departed? Jesus took away even the sins of the thieves. So those thieves too could become people without sin, if only they believed this gospel.

The Lord removed even the sins of the priest and the Levite

Here a Levite appears. A Levite can be compared to someone of about the rank of a deacon or an elder inside the church, that is, a person who is not a clergyman but who holds an office. Our Lord removed even the sins of that man, who heard the groaning of the man who had fallen among thieves and was half dead, and saw his state, and yet passed by on the other side lest it be to his disadvantage and lest he suffer loss. Of course He removed all the sins of the priest who appears here as well. This is the truth that the Bible speaks of.

Our Lord removed all the sins of you and me as well. That we have no sin is a truly marvelous gift that God has given us. The person who believes in the water and the blood of Jesus Christ and has received the remission of sins has no sin. Jesus bore all the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and died receiving the judgment for those sins, and rose from the dead. If a person believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit, he receives the

remission of sins and is saved. But the question is how we must live after we have received the remission of sins. Shall we speak only of the fact that we have no sin, or what work shall we do after receiving the remission of sins? This lawyer did the work of keeping the law all his life, but what work shall we do?

Before us there are two kinds of work. There is the work of the flesh and there is the work of the spirit. It is clear that we have no sin. Then how shall we, who have no sin, live? There is the work of saving souls, and there is the work of serving the flesh. Which of these will you and I do? This is the greatest assignment given to the righteous who have been saved.

If we ask what work we shall do, where is there anyone who does not know that we ought naturally to do spiritual work? Everyone knows it. Everyone believes it. Everyone knows and believes that we must do the work of saving souls. But has it actually been settled in your heart and mine that the work of saving souls is right? Has your heart been settled, or do you merely know it? Is even what you know merely knowledge? Are you holding even that knowledge merely as one doctrine? Do you have such a firm purpose, in which the setting of a direction and the setting of a goal have been accomplished, that doing a certain work is clearly right?

We must clearly settle in our hearts what work we shall do after we have been born again. This lawyer strove his whole life to keep the law well in order to obtain eternal life, but we must live doing the work of the spirit. It is because God removed the sins of you and me. Because we have no sin, we must do the work of saving souls. This is only natural.

The lawyer lived his whole life boasting of keeping the law, and he also came before Jesus and spoke this way boastfully and ended up being defeated on points, but you have received the remission of sins. What work will you do after receiving the

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remission of sins? You must do the work of saving souls.

Then what kind of work is the work of saving souls? It is the work of preaching the gospel to people like this lawyer, to people like the priest and the Levite, and to people like those thieves. The work of leading people to receive the remission of sins, the work of preaching the gospel to them, the work of supplying the word and leading them—that is the work of saving souls.

Give the rest of your life to the work of saving souls

The only work left for you and me to do all our lives is the work of saving souls. Just as the saying goes that the world is wide and there is much to do, this world is truly wide and there is much for us the righteous to do. There are also many ways to earn money in the world, but what work must we do after being saved? We must do the work of saving souls. Apart from this we have no true work to do.

Even our confessing daily, “I have no sin, Jesus took away all my sins so I have no sin,” is in fact for the sake of preaching the gospel to other people and for the sake of giving glory to God. If someone says that he has no sin in order to boast about himself, some people who see it might think that he is out of his mind.

But that God removed our sins and placed us on this earth is that He placed us here to do the work of saving souls, the work of preaching the gospel to souls, the work of saving souls from sin—that is, the work of the spirit. This is precisely the reason God is now keeping you and me, who have received the remission of sins, on this earth.

If you and I, who have received the remission of sins, are to set a goal in life, we must set our goal on the work of saving

souls and devote all our strength to that work all our lives. We must live with this goal. We must live with this goal of saving souls.

Otherwise what becomes of us? Without a goal in life, without a direction, and without any sense of worth, we end up doing only the useless work of the flesh. But what is the result that the work of the flesh leaves behind? There is nothing but death, nothing but dying. We truly do not want to become like that. We do not want to do such vain work. Let us do the work God has entrusted to us, the work that a born-again person must do, the work of saving souls. Let us do the work of saving souls all our lives. Truly it is for this work that we have been left on this earth, and it is on this earth that we have especially received the calling of the church of God and been set in place and are inside the church.

That you and I personally have no sin is a truly thankful thing and something we ought rightly to speak of and testify to. But though it is also necessary to speak of the fact that one has no sin, the real thing is to do the work of saving souls all one's life. We must live with this goal all our lives. You and I must live with this goal. Otherwise there is no meaning and no worth in life. With what enjoyment and with what goal shall we live our lives? For what did God tell us to live, and for what did He say it is right to live?

God removed all our sins. We have no sin. For what did God tell you and me, who have no sin, to live? What God has told us is to live for the salvation of souls. How many people like the priest who appears here are there on this earth? How many religious leaders, how many such sinners, are there? Even such a person was an object to be saved before God. People like the Levite were also objects to be saved. Not only people who are worldly virtuous and skilled at hypocrisy, but even people like

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thieves who commit robbery were objects on whom God would bestow the remission of sins. To such people we must preach the gospel. God entrusted the work of preaching the gospel to us who have received the remission of sins. And He tells us to do this work. We must make the work of saving souls our mark and live.

What is the work of God?

What work must we truly do? Before God, what do we do, and what work do we do, that is doing the work of God? If we look at the Gospel of John, He says, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent."* We can say that the work of God is of two kinds. To believe that Jesus Christ removed the sins of you and me, and to receive Jesus as my Savior—that is the work of God.

What is the other work of God? To do the work of preaching to all people that Jesus Christ, whom God sent, has become the Redeemer and the Savior is the work of God. That is, to do the work of saving souls is the work of God. What work shall you and I do all our lives after being saved? All our lives we must save souls. We must live with that goal.

We must set our purpose and live like Daniel

We truly must not live meaninglessly after receiving the remission of sins. To live without setting a purpose is to live meaninglessly. Just as when Daniel went to Babylon he set his purpose not to eat the delicacies of the king but to eat vegetables, and prayed to God three times a day and there praised God and

set his purpose to live for God, we too must set our purpose after being saved. We must set our purpose to live for the salvation of souls, know by faith and live by faith that living this way is the will of God, and set our purpose and live for the salvation of souls. Dear fellow believers, we must set our purpose clearly and live. Otherwise, no matter how long we live, it is a vain life.

What good is it to reach the age of seventy, or eighty, or ninety? If we have lived much of our life without a goal, what benefit is there in living long? Whether we live one year or two years, ten years or a hundred years, we must set our purpose clearly and live. Only then is a clear road determined, and life is not tedious but worthwhile and full of strength. If we live without setting a purpose, there is no delight in life. There comes to be no delight in why we must live and why we must eat. Therefore we who have been born again must set our purpose clearly. That purpose is that we must live for the salvation of souls. He said, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)* Therefore we must set our purpose. Only when we set our purpose and live, only when we have a clear mark, can we keep going without stopping the steps we have taken, and can we go forward toward the mark whatever difficulty and hindrance there may be.

Therefore we must make the gospel our mark, set our purpose, and go forward all our lives for the salvation of souls. Everyone must do so. We must set a clear purpose.

In this time we must look back at ourselves once and consider for what you and I are to live after being saved, and what purpose we will set. If we have lived having been saved, knowing and believing only that we ourselves have no sin, without setting a purpose, now we must leap beyond that level and set our purpose clearly and live. We must settle in our hearts

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that whatever we do, we will live for the gospel and for the salvation of souls.

Settle your heart to live for the work of saving people like the lawyer, people like the priest, people like the Levite, and people like the thieves. There are many souls around us who must be saved. Around us there are many such sinners, people like this lawyer, who live making the keeping of the law their occupation, saying, *"what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25)* We must save those souls as well. There are also many people like the priest, people like the Levite, and people like the thieves. To such people we must preach the gospel and must lead them. We must lead them into the church and must give them discernment with the word of the truth.

We must devote all our strength to the work of saving souls.

Dear fellow believers, the night of this world keeps growing deeper. The whole world is growing dark, wickedness abounds, and the world grows gloomier. In this dark world we are lights like very small fireflies. Those small lights have gathered and are shining inside the church. This light must live carrying out the role of light. Truly the light must not live setting a different purpose for itself.

Dear fellow believers, we must truly set a clear purpose and live the rest of our lives truly worthwhile and profitable, as a life that pleases God. Our church holds a great many meetings and is devoting all its strength to the salvation of souls.

We must devote all our strength to the work of saving souls. Our working at a job must also be done for the salvation of souls. For whom must our earning money, our going to school, our

breathing, and the purpose of our very living itself be? They must be for the salvation of the souls of sinners. For that work we have been called. Not just anyone comes inside the church. If a person is saved and does not do the work of saving the souls of sinners, he ends up doing nothing but fleshly fighting over who is higher and forming factions. There is nothing but whether the church suits him or not, whether they will meet separately or not. There is nothing but striking and hitting, envying and hating, quarreling and forming factions.

But if we do the work of saving souls, our hearts are gathered into one. Being gathered into one, though insufficient, we pray for souls, join together and help one another, and do the work of saving souls with the same purpose. Therefore our hearts are joyful, our bodies are joyful, and living itself is worthwhile. You and I have been saved and our faith has become firm, and now we must live the rest of our lives for the work of saving the souls of other people. We must live for this purpose.

This lawyer lived his whole life for the purpose of keeping the law, but the goal of us who have been born again must be to save the souls of sinners. This we believe. I too believe it.

Though we are insufficient, we must live for the Lord and for the salvation of souls

We must live with that goal. We must truly live for the salvation of souls. We have no sin. Let us confess that we have no sin. Do we have sin, or do we not? We have no sin. I believe that God will be pleased with this voice of faith.

By believing that we have no sin, that God saved us with the water and the blood, and that Jesus took away all our sins when He was baptized by John, we have no sin. By faith we have no

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sin. Having become people without sin, we must now clearly set our purpose for what we must truly live and live accordingly. We must not live like mayflies. You and I must now set our purpose for the rest of our lives, and we must think that the soul of my family and the soul of another person are the same soul. It is not that the soul of my family is precious and the soul of another person is not precious. Before God souls are the same.

Let us preach the gospel of the water and the blood to souls. And let us save souls. Let us truly live our whole lives for the work of saving souls. For such work we have been called. Whatever hindrance lies before us, let us endure and live by faith. The life of a born-again person is of two kinds. It is whether he lives for the salvation of souls or lives for his own flesh. But for us there is only one. We could live in a fleshly way, but for us there is nothing but the work of saving souls. Apart from that there is nothing. There is nothing else. There cannot be, and even if there were, living that way would be so joyless that we could not live.

We must live for the salvation of souls, for the work of having souls receive the remission of sins, for the work of preaching that Jesus took away all the sins of this world when He was baptized by John. When we live that way we truly come to live a worthwhile life before God, receive many rewards before God, receive many spiritual blessings, and bear much fruit. And we come to give more glory to God the Father. Our God the Father receives more glory through us. And more souls come to be saved.

That God saved you and me and placed us on this earth is that He placed us here to save souls. Let us truly keep this part in mind and live. What we do is far too little and insufficient, but in any case, let us truly live for the Lord, for the salvation of souls. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Eternal life cannot be obtained by the works of man

< Luke 10:25-37 >

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think

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was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25) This evening I wish to speak the word on how a person must obtain eternal life and be saved. In the time of Jesus a certain lawyer came to Jesus and, in order to test Jesus, threw out the question, *"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"*

This lawyer regarded himself as different from ordinary people. He said such a thing in order to exalt himself and to be recognized by Jesus. A lawyer is a teacher of the law, a teacher among the Pharisees, and a person respected by the Jews. In Israel, too, they treated teachers with respect and greatly exalted them.

Because this lawyer had never yet been defeated by anyone, he came forward with a heart that wanted to contend once with Jesus, whom people praised. Put simply, his meaning was this: 'When you contend with me, can you walk as uprightly and speak as rightly as I do, and do as well as I even when various things are examined in terms of the law?'

The lawyer's test and the two great commandments

Jesus did not immediately give an answer to that question, but instead asked in return, *"What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?" (Luke 10:26)* The lawyer answered by

summarizing the law into two things. One was to love the LORD your God, and the other was to love your neighbor as yourself.

Jesus condensed those many commandments, six hundred and thirteen of them, into these two, love toward God and love toward people. To the lawyer, who answered rightly with these two, Jesus said, *"You have answered rightly; do this and you will live" (Luke 10:28)* But this man asked again, *"And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)* This was because he wanted to be recognized by everyone and to display that he was better than Jesus.

The parable of the good Samaritan

When the Pharisee asked, *"And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)* Jesus this time spoke by giving a parable.

"Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then

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Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:30–37).

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, and he was beaten nearly to death, had everything he possessed taken from him, and was left behind. The priest and the Levite who came down that road saw the man who had fallen among thieves and yet passed by on the other side. Only a certain Samaritan came down, took him in his arms, poured oil and wine on his wounds and bandaged them, set him on his own animal, entrusted him to an inn, promised that if more was spent he would repay it when he returned, and went on his own way.

Jesus asked, *"which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" (Luke 10:36)* It was the one who showed mercy, that is, the Samaritan. Then Jesus in effect asked this: Then can you also do as this Samaritan did? Since you say that you properly know the law of God, try practicing it just so. If you can carry it out, you obtain eternal life. But do you have such strength? You do not. You too are like the man who fell among thieves, and in a little while you are one who will go to hell. Do you know that you too are one who must be saved?

Eternal life cannot be obtained by works

Jesus clearly explained with this parable how a person obtains eternal life and receives the remission of sins. A person's obtaining eternal life is something that God must let him obtain, and it is obtained only when he receives the remission of sins from God. That he receives the remission of sins and becomes able to do what is right is something accomplished by believing that Jesus is the Savior and the Son of God.

The greatest desire of a person is precisely the desire for

eternal life. Everything that lives strives not to die and to live for ever. But being saved from sin and obtaining eternal life depend on God, who is Jesus. Only if God the Father and Jesus give eternal life does one obtain eternal life.

The apostle John said, *"These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life" (1 John 5:13)* The one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has eternal life. If a person is saved from sin, eternal life naturally follows. But this teacher of the law challenged Jesus in order to obtain eternal life by keeping the law with works, and that was a wrong challenge. This teacher of the law in the end failed, did not obtain eternal life, and went to hell. If a person wants to live for ever, he must not come before God with works; he must realize that salvation cannot be obtained by the law and must believe in Jesus as his Savior.

We must not come before God with our own works

In the time of the Old Testament, after Joshua died, a leader named Jephthah was raised up among the judges. When Jephthah went out to fight against the people of Ammon, because they were far too many, he became afraid and offered a vow in prayer. "God, if You let me win, when I return from winning the war I will take the person who greets me first, kill him, and offer him before God as a burnt offering."

After that, God let him win and he gained a great victory. But when he was returning home after winning, of all people his only daughter came out beating a small gong and greeting him, saying, "Father." The heart of that father collapsed. He lamented, saying, why is it you, my only child, and not a servant, who comes out?

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But because he had already made a promise, he had to kill even his own daughter and offer her as a burnt offering. That daughter later learned of the matter and asked that she be allowed to bewail her own death together with her companions for two months only, and after two months Jephthah could do nothing but do just as he had vowed. So it became a custom in Israel that the daughters of Israel went out yearly to lament her.

It would have been enough simply to ask, “God, please let me win the war. Please give me a blessing.” But that prayer of works, in which he vowed to offer as a burnt offering the one who greeted him first, rather brought about a curse. When we come before God, we must not come with a prayer of works of vowing, nor with our own works. We must come only with the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and thereby obtain salvation from sin and obtain eternal life.

The law was given to make us realize sin

To try to come before God with the works of man is the greatest sin. We must come before God by faith and must live by faith. The law was not given so that we should keep it, but was given so that we should realize and know sin. God gave the law so that a person might realize that he is a sinner and one who can only go to hell, come before Jesus Christ, who saved him, believe what He has done in saving him, and thereby obtain salvation. Therefore He left it recorded in the Bible that a person must not try to obtain eternal life or the remission of sins by keeping the law with works.

A person cannot keep the law. Let us examine together the Samaritan, the priest, and the Levite who appear in this parable.

Among the lawyers the leader is the priest, who teaches the word of God, and after him the Levite. Jesus said that a man went down from Jerusalem, the city of religion, to Jericho. Jericho means fragrance. Then why did he go down from Jerusalem to Jericho? He was saying that the one who lives a legalistic life of faith falls. A legalistic person cannot be made new; he only becomes more corrupt and more rotten and at last is destroyed, so that his end is worse than his beginning.

When that man, who had fallen among thieves and could not move at all, groaned in a voice barely as loud as a mosquito, saying, "Excuse me, please save me. Is there no one?" the priest pretended not to see it and went his own way. The priest speaks of a leader who lives a legalistic religious life. The priest is one who says that a person must live virtuously, must believe like this and act like this, and yet who does not do it himself and only tells others to do this and that. The person who does not know the water and the blood of Jesus and knows only the law, the person who does not know the salvation by which God saved him, is precisely the lawyer.

Second, the Levite, who had learned under the priest, came down in a holy manner. In the very same place he heard the voice of that man who had fallen among thieves and looked down on the very same scene, but this man too, just as his own heart determined, pretended not to see and passed by.

Who indeed is the Samaritan?

But down that road came a certain man riding an animal, and he was a Samaritan. Although the Samaritans were of the same people as the Jews, they lived in a small town and were pointed at with scorn by their fellow Jews. It was because previously,

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when people of other nations invaded, they married Samaritan women and a people of mixed blood arose, and the Jews utterly despised them, calling them a mixed people.

This Samaritan saw the man lying covered in blood, hurriedly drove his animal over, took out the flask of oil and wine that he always carried about, cleaned the wounds thoroughly, and gave first aid. And after clothing him with his own garment and binding him so that the blood would not flow, he set him on his own animal, took him to an inn, asked the innkeeper to treat him well, gave him money, said that if it was not enough he would give more when he returned, and departed.

Who indeed is this Samaritan? He is Jesus, who is treated with contempt by all people. The people of the world who do not believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and in His blood despise Jesus most of all. People respect Sakyamuni, Confucius, Mencius, and Socrates, and they even respect a person who clears away rubbish as someone to whom they are grateful, but Jesus came to this earth and did not receive respect. That is why He was called the stone the builders rejected, and He was despised by the people of the world as one of no use at all.

The Samaritan here points to Jesus, and the falling among thieves points to falling among the devil and sin. The descendants of Adam met the devil, who is like a thief, and could only die; then how were we saved? It is that God poured oil and wine on those wounds. Jesus is God, and He is the Lord of creation, who made the whole universe and made you and me. Because He poured on oil and wine and treated him, the man who fell among thieves was healed and was saved.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the oil and the wine

The wine speaks of the new life that Jesus Christ gave us. Jesus said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5)* Food scientists say that grapes give life to a person, and that when they enter the body they cleanse the blood and adjust the balance of the body with various nutrients. Jesus is the Master of life.

In our Lord's pouring oil and wine on the wounds of the man who fell among thieves lies the secret of our salvation. The work our Lord did in order to save us sinners, who had fallen among thieves, was of two kinds. The first is the work of Jesus coming to this earth as a man and being baptized by John. Why was He baptized by John? He was baptized by John in order to wash away and remove our sins cleanly, as one washes away germs. The second is the work of bearing the sin of the world and receiving the judgment in our place on the Cross, and thereby saving us from sin. Just as the Samaritan gave life to the man who fell among thieves and brought him to an inn so that he obtained life out of death, the Bible says that the man who fell among thieves obtained eternal life and the priest and the Levite did not obtain eternal life.

Then how do we obtain eternal life? We must believe in Jesus and receive the remission of sins, and if a person believes in Jesus and yet his sin remains as it is, he has believed vainly and wrongly. It says, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)* so did Jesus receive the baptism from John and take away the sin of the world, or did He not? He took it away. And He received in our place on the Cross the judgment that mankind was to receive, and three days after His death He rose again and saved us. Therefore, if a person

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rightly believes in Jesus, it is right that he has no sin, and that is the correct answer.

To become a person whose heart is clean, one must believe the salvation of God, that Jesus, the Master of life, came to this earth, was baptized at the Jordan River, the river of death, by John, the representative of mankind, bore all our sins Himself, and removed the sin of our hearts. Only by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit does one obtain eternal life and receive salvation before God without sin.

This man who fell among thieves had done nothing at all. He only asked for salvation, saying, “Please save me. Please take me and treat me.” Whether the man who fell among thieves lived or died depended entirely on this Samaritan. If the Samaritan had pretended not to see, he would have died, but the Samaritan treated him with oil and wine and completely gave him life. This is what God has shown plainly concerning what our salvation is like, and it is what He has shown of the true faith that obtains salvation by believing in Jesus and of the truth of true salvation.

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have no sin

Truly, believe in Jesus, who gave us the washing away of sin, as my God and my Savior, and be saved. Our Lord said that if we ask whether a person can do even a little something for his own eternal life and remission of sins, he cannot. A person cannot do even a speck of work for his own salvation. Then what is it that a person can do? “God, please save me. Please help me.” There is nothing but that. Salvation depends entirely on God.

This Samaritan whom all people reject, that is, Jesus, saved us from all sin with the baptism He received from John and the

blood of the Cross. Just as water washes away filth, and just as in the Old Testament sin passed over to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands, Jesus took over all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and put them upon Himself. Jesus had never committed sin, but because He bore our sins He suffered death, the penalty of sin, on the Cross in our place. In this way Jesus became our Savior. This is the salvation of God.

If Jesus had died only on the Cross, we could not become people without sin. His healing the sick and the blind was a sign that showed that He is almighty God, and the works He did in order to make us obtain eternal life and make us people without sin were only two. They are the work of being baptized by John and bearing all our sins, and the work of shedding His blood on the Cross and bearing our death in our place with His own life. This is precisely atonement. The sins one commits oneself and the sin one brings out from his mother's womb are all together called the sin of the world, and Jesus took over this sin of the world from John the Baptist and cleanly washed away the sin inside the heart of the believer.

And in order to give us life again, Jesus went into the tomb, rose again on the third day, and became the God who gives eternal life to those who believe in Him. Do we obtain eternal life by keeping the law? No. Because through the baptism He received from John all our sins passed over to Jesus and Jesus put them all upon Himself, we have no sin. It is not that we become sinners again because we commit sin again. To regard it so is because one does not know the secret of the Samaritan pouring wine on the wounds. Will Jesus, who is God, do the work of removing our sins over and over, or, because He is the Almighty One, will He accomplish it all once and for all? He accomplished it all once and for all. That He poured on oil

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speaks of the Holy Spirit. That God came to this earth and accomplished atonement once and for all is spoken of countless times in Hebrews and Romans and the epistles of the apostle Paul and the Gospels.

To try to receive the remission of sins by praying a prayer of repentance, saying, *"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* is exactly the same as that lawyer. When He said, love God and love your neighbor as yourself, you have answered rightly, do this and you will live, it means to try carrying it out once, relying on that law and on one's own works, but a person cannot do it.

Then what did God do in order to save us entirely? Before making us human beings, the three, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, held counsel. They said, let us create the whole universe and then make man in Our image, but since Satan the devil will surely do harm, in view of that We will send Jesus. God said to His Son Jesus, "Go in the form of a man, bear the sins of mankind with the baptism You receive from John, and fulfill the law of My righteousness." And He said, "Since the wages of sin is death, bear all those sins, become the offering of atonement, and receive the judgment in place of man; then I can make those who believe in You My sons."

Just as it says, *"just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4)*, from before He made us, the three had planned to make us His children through His Son. Afterward, when He had made man, a fallen angel became envious and attacked, enticing them by saying that if they ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil they would become like God. Although God knew everything, He permitted it, and the first man Adam ate it, but God had already determined to save us from all sin. It says, *"He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15)* so it means that God would come as the Seed of the woman and be put to death by

Satan the devil.

After Jesus bore all the sin of the world, suffered death in the place of man, and rose again, God the Father gave to those who believe in Him the right to become children of God. God accomplished everything just as He had planned before the foundation of the world. He sent His Son, had Him baptized so that He took over all the sins of mankind, had Him nailed to the Cross and die, accomplished everything, and told us to believe. Salvation did not depend on us but depended on God. To become a person without sin, white as snow, one must believe that Jesus received the baptism for us and must believe that Jesus is God. The death and the resurrection of the Cross are the conclusion of His having been baptized.

Our sins were washed away by the baptism Jesus received from John, and the penalty for them was accomplished on the Cross, and our being made alive again came through the resurrection of Jesus. We believe that Jesus is God, who made the whole universe, and our Savior, and we believe that He saved us with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. By believing in Jesus we have become righteous and been saved, and inside the church of God we receive nurture and protection and are living through this world within the love and the blessing of God, by that grace which God bestowed with the two denarii.

In this way we have been saved simply by believing in our hearts, and not even 0.1 percent of works went into it. Who will become the neighbor of the man who fell among thieves? Legalists cannot become that. Those who build grand structures of red brick, as though God were inside a church building, and gather people together and make that their business—under such people one cannot receive the remission of sins. Only from Jesus can one receive the remission of sins. Also, the animal the Samaritan rode speaks of the servants, and the servants always

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carry oil and wine in their two pockets. If you want to become a person without sin you must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John, and if you want to be saved from the judgment you must believe in that remission of sins by which Jesus bore our sins and received the judgment on the Cross in our place, and if you want to obtain eternal life you must believe in the resurrection by which Jesus died and rose again.

We are like the man who fell among thieves; we are weak people who have become the target of Satan the devil and cannot avoid the arrows he shoots and who die when struck. But our Lord came to us as our Savior and saved us. Our Lord is journeying even now, and God is riding His servants as His animal and working. He is speaking with the truth that the one who believes has salvation and eternal life, and the one who does not believe has destruction and hell.

If a person is to obtain eternal life, he must believe that Jesus gave us eternal life and saved us from sin. Fortunately you and I have believed this. But there are still many people who do not believe. We must continue to preach this gospel. The one who believes has no sin. The person who has received the remission of sins has no sin. To preach this gospel is the work we must do. There is nothing else. For us who believe, sin cannot possibly exist. Giving thanks before God, we who have believed and been born again must preach this gospel. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord alone can save us with His mercy

< Luke 10:25-37 >

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think

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was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

Today I wish to testify to the word concerning the mercy of God. If we look at today's word, when Jesus asked the lawyer, *"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" (Luke 10:36)* the lawyer answered, *"He who showed mercy on him" (Luke 10:37)* Then the Lord said, *"Go and do likewise"*, that is, you also show mercy in the same way, and it was indeed a word befitting Jesus.

The word mercy means to have compassion, to have pity, and to love. To have compassion, to love, to embrace, to nurture, and to make things go well is mercy. And this is the mercy that God has shown to us human beings.

The mercy of God, which warmly embraces us

The mercy of God is a mercy that warmly embraces us. God had pity on us, had compassion on us, loved us, protected us, and blessed us. Dear fellow believers, did the mercy of God bless us? It did. God became a man, came to this earth, and by being baptized by John the Baptist He bore all the sins of you and me, the sins of all mankind, and He carried that sin of the world to the Cross, was nailed through both hands and both feet, shed all the blood of His life, and died, bearing in His own body the judgment for the sins of all mankind. In this way the mercy of God saved mankind from sin and judgment.

God loved and protected us mankind and showed us mercy in this way. It was not because there was something lovable in

human beings, but was the unconditional agape love that God showed toward us mankind.

Because we resemble the image of God, God loved us unconditionally, protected us, and saved us unconditionally. So you and I have received the love of the mercy of God and have been saved. You and I have been saved and have obtained eternal life through the love of the mercy of God.

The Lord wants us to ask for mercy

The mercy of God is the love by which He had pity on us, loved us, and saved us. Do you know what it is that the Lord wants of us? Let us read Matthew 12:7 together. *"But if you had known what this means, 'I desire mercy and not sacrifice,' you would not have condemned the guiltless."* Our Lord wanted us to know the meaning of the words, that He desires mercy and does not desire sacrifice. Our Lord wanted us to ask God for mercy. "God, please love me. Please save me once and for all from all the sin of the world. Please make me a child of God." It was such love of mercy that He wanted us to ask for.

At my house there are a few dogs, and as I raise them I see how much dogs want to be loved by their master. When one of them wags its tail, looks up, and rolls over asking to be petted, the others all follow suit. I see that all of them want the master to stroke them.

That is precisely the picture of wanting mercy. It is a dog demanding unconditional love from its master. It is not coming forward and turning around once to show off its figure, saying, "I have gone on a diet and my figure is this slim, so am I not worth your loving?" and then asking to be petted; it is simply coming and lying down and unconditionally asking to have its

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belly rubbed—that is wanting the love of mercy.

You and I have obtained salvation through that unconditional love of the mercy of God. What did we do before God? We did nothing well at all. And yet that we were saved is the salvation God gave by loving us one-sidedly. Even before we knew Jesus Christ, in order to take over all our sins and in order to offer up His own body before God as the offering of atonement, the Lord was baptized by John two thousand years ago, and after that He was nailed through both hands and both feet on the Cross and poured out all His blood, and by that death and resurrection He completely saved you and me from all sin.

That He was Himself baptized and loved us to the point of death—this was the mercy of God. We have been saved through the mercy of God. Just as the word of Isaiah says, by His being pierced and wounded and struck with the whip and suffering pain—that is, by His being baptized by John and bearing all our sins—we have been saved by believing it. If we have anything to put forward before God, it is faith alone. There is nothing else at all.

Not dozing during the worship service, coming without missing a single evening service for a week—such things are acts of love done out of love for God. They are affection, friendship, and fellowship. Because we have received great love from God and received great grace, we chew over the word of the Lord, share food together, and share the love of fellowship through the word.

A while ago on television they showed a documentary that covered a fish with maternal love. When the female attaches her eggs beneath a rock, the male comes and from then on protects the young. He does not leave the side of the rock where the eggs are attached but always guards them, fanning the eggs with his fins to keep them cool and guarding them to the end so that other

fish cannot come and eat the eggs. And he guards them until all the young have hatched, and then, unable to eat anything at all, he collapses from exhaustion and dies.

The love of that fish, a mere creature, is like the love of God. In order to give life to its young, knowing that its own life was in danger, it guarded them until they hatched out of the eggs and in the end lost its life. This is love and mercy. Through such love of God, you and I have believed in our hearts the salvation of the truth and have been saved.

And so you and I have been saved. Then in receiving this salvation, what must we ask for before God? We must have a heart that wants compassion before God, that wants love, that wants eternal life, and that wants the remission of sins—that is, a heart that wants the mercy God tells us to ask for.

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"

If we look from Luke 10:25 today, a certain lawyer, that is, a teacher of the law, appears. This man came before Jesus and asked, *"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* When Jesus said, *"What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?"* the lawyer answered, *"'You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,' and 'your neighbor as yourself.'"*

This is the word that follows. *"And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And*

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when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:28–37) This is the conversation that Jesus and a teacher of the law had.

"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" That the lawyer asked Jesus this way was an attitude that said, "I have carried out all the law of God, so just order me to keep any law you like. I can do any amount of it." In a word, it means that he was full of self-confidence. When Jesus asked, "How do you read the law?" the lawyer said that he knew and read it as the word that tells us to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Jesus said, *"You have answered rightly; do this" (Luke 10:28)*. When you and I look at this writing, we can see how frustrating and laughable the lawyer was.

Jesus clearly said, *"do this and you will live" (Luke 10:28)*, and would there not be a conversation only if this man understood what was said? But instead he asked back, *"And who is my neighbor?" (Luke 10:29)* Jesus spoke fittingly to such a lawyer. "Can you love God with all your heart and with all your mind and with all your strength, and love your neighbor as your own body? It is right, all right, but try doing it. If you carry out the law perfectly you live, but if you do not carry it out

completely you die." This is the word He spoke.

By the law we cannot receive blessing

Let us look once at the word recorded from Deuteronomy 28:1. *"'Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth. And all these blessings shall come upon you and overtake you, because you obey the voice of the LORD your God: 'Blessed shall you be in the city, and blessed shall you be in the country. 'Blessed shall be the fruit of your body, the produce of your ground and the increase of your herds, the increase of your cattle and the offspring of your flocks. 'Blessed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 'Blessed shall you be when you come in, and blessed shall you be when you go out. 'The LORD will cause your enemies who rise against you to be defeated before your face; they shall come out against you one way and flee before you seven ways. 'The LORD will command the blessing on you in your storehouses and in all to which you set your hand, and He will bless you in the land which the LORD your God is giving you. 'The LORD will establish you as a holy people to Himself, just as He has sworn to you, if you keep the commandments of the LORD your God and walk in His ways. Then all peoples of the earth shall see that you are called by the name of the LORD, and they shall be afraid of you. And the LORD will grant you plenty of goods, in the fruit of your body, in the increase of your livestock, and in the produce of your ground, in the land of which the LORD swore to your fathers to give you. The LORD will open to you His good treasure, the*

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heavens, to give the rain to your land in its season, and to bless all the work of your hand. You shall lend to many nations, but you shall not borrow. And the LORD will make you the head and not the tail; you shall be above only, and not be beneath, if you heed the commandments of the LORD your God, which I command you today, and are careful to observe them. So you shall not turn aside from any of the words which I command you this day, to the right or the left, to go after other gods to serve them" (Deuteronomy 28:1–14).

We have read up to verse 14, and the word that sums it all up appears in verse 1. *"Now it shall come to pass, if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments which I command you today, that the LORD your God will set you high above all nations of the earth" (Deuteronomy 28:1).*

It is a conditional sentence. It is that if you keep and carry out all the commandments of God, He will give you all these blessings. So if a person reads Deuteronomy chapter 28 only up to verse 14, he arrives at the conclusion that if he lives according to the law of God he receives blessing. This lawyer too seems to have read this word of Deuteronomy only up to verse 14 and not to the end. When ordinary people look at the Bible, there are many cases in which they read only a little of the first part and pass over it easily, saying, "Ah, this means this."

But if we look from verse 15, it says this: *"'But it shall come to pass, if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments and His statutes which I command you today, that all these curses will come upon you and overtake you: 'Cursed shall you be in the city, and cursed shall you be in the country. 'Cursed shall be your basket and your kneading bowl. 'Cursed shall be the fruit of your body and the produce of your land, the increase of your cattle and the*

offspring of your flocks. ‘Cursed shall you be when you come in, and cursed shall you be when you go out. ‘The LORD will send on you cursing, confusion, and rebuke in all that you set your hand to do, until you are destroyed and until you perish quickly, because of the wickedness of your doings in which you have forsaken Me. The LORD will make the plague cling to you until He has consumed you from the land which you are going to possess. The LORD will strike you with consumption, with fever, with inflammation, with severe burning fever, with the sword, with scorching, and with mildew; they shall pursue you until you perish. And your heavens which are over your head shall be bronze, and the earth which is under you shall be iron. The LORD will change the rain of your land to powder and dust; from the heaven it shall come down on you until you are destroyed. ‘The LORD will cause you to be defeated before your enemies; you shall go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them; and you shall become troublesome to all the kingdoms of the earth. Your carcasses shall be food for all the birds of the air and the beasts of the earth, and no one shall frighten them away. The LORD will strike you with the boils of Egypt, with tumors, with the scab, and with the itch, from which you cannot be healed. The LORD will strike you with madness and blindness and confusion of heart. And you shall grope at noonday, as a blind man gropes in darkness; you shall not prosper in your ways; you shall be only oppressed and plundered continually, and no one shall save you. ‘You shall betroth a wife, but another man shall lie with her; you shall build a house, but you shall not dwell in it; you shall plant a vineyard, but shall not gather its grapes. Your ox shall be slaughtered before your eyes, but you shall not eat of it; your donkey shall be violently taken away from before you, and shall not be restored to you; your sheep shall be given to your enemies, and

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you shall have no one to rescue them" (Deuteronomy 28:15–31) If we keep reading from verse 15, what comes to mind? A hospital comes to mind. The patients of a hospital who suffer from blindness and confusion of heart and scab and scurvy and hemorrhoids and every kind of disease come to mind.

From verse 1 to verse 14 there is the conditional clause of blessing, *"if you diligently obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments"*. But from verse 15 it is the word of curse, *"if you do not obey the voice of the LORD your God, to observe carefully all His commandments"*. As for the reason God gave the law, Romans chapter 3 says, *"By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)*. By the law we human beings cannot receive blessing from God. We can only be cursed. Yet we have seen much of how all people, while trying to keep the law, reject the baptism Jesus gave and the salvation of the Cross, and are cursed and destroyed because of it.

We must first realize that if we are to receive blessing from God, it cannot be done by the law. God is merciful, but it cannot be done by the law. That is why in the New Testament He said, *"I desire mercy and not sacrifice" (Matthew 12:7)*. It means that God wants to give us mercy.

This man was a teacher of the law, but he did not know at all the purpose for which God gave the law, and he tried to be saved by keeping the law. The law says to live for God alone, but are we human beings able to live that way? Are we people who can love God alone with all our strength and with all our mind and with all our soul? How well a person thinks all kinds of miscellaneous thoughts! It is an impossible matter.

So this teacher of the law is spiritually blind. On top of that, as they say that an ignorant man is stubborn, he goes one step further and instead asks Jesus who his neighbor is. Even so Jesus

does not give up but tells him one story. While explaining the illustration of the good Samaritan, who cared for the man that fell among thieves, He wished that this lawyer would realize his own ignorance.

Is there any realization?

A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves. The thieves stripped off that man's clothing, took away all the money he had, made his whole body covered with blood, and left him almost dead. Then by chance a priest came down that road from Jerusalem to Jericho, saw that man who was almost half dead, and passed by on the other side.

Also by chance a man called a Levite was coming down, and he acted exactly as the priest had. But a certain Samaritan, while journeying on an animal, passed along that road, saw that man who had fallen among thieves and been wounded and robbed of everything he had and was half dead, and had pity on him. Because he felt so sorry for him, he poured oil and wine on the wounds, tore his own garment and bandaged them, and brought him to an inn. And he said to the innkeeper, "I am in the middle of a journey and am busy, so it will not do; please take care of this man. I will give you two denarii, and if the money seems insufficient, ask again when I have finished my journey and return. I will repay you," and he went away.

After telling the whole story, Jesus asks, *"which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?" (Luke 10:36)* The lawyer answered, *"He who showed mercy on him" (Luke 10:37)* When Jesus said, *"Go and do likewise"*, from then on the lawyer said nothing more about this.

Why is that? It is because now he had realized what the word

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meant. When Jesus spoke to him with the word of the law of God of the Old Testament age, he said he would keep it, but this time He set before him the problem of the law concretely within life.

Jesus was saying to the lawyer, "You are precisely the priest who appears here, and you are precisely the Levite. With your mouth you say that if you carry out the law you receive blessing, but the one who, when he actually meets a man who has fallen among thieves, passes by on the other side is precisely you." Though He did not say it out loud, it means that inwardly He severely rebuked that hypocrisy. Because the lawyer's own righteousness was so strong that he could not understand at all, He explained it concretely this way. The whole of Christianity in the world today is like this lawyer.

'Jerusalem' speaks of the city of religion. It is the city of God, which is also called the city of peace. Yet when Jesus Christ came, this city of religion, Jerusalem, did not receive Him. It means that they did not receive Him in their hearts but were anxious only to keep the law hypocritically. Present-day Christianity is similar to this. The Christian leaders of today are also splendid, with only the form remaining when they worship. In a word, only the atmosphere is grand. How do the countless Christian religionists of this age, hypocritical with only the form of piety and holiness, preach Luke chapter 10?

"Dear fellow believers, we too must live like this. We must live the life of the good Samaritan. We must care well for others. We must look in well on places like orphanages and homes for the aged, and it is the duty of us Christians to look around well and see whether there might be an unfortunate neighbor in the house next door. Do you understand?"

Dear fellow believers, they all preach this way with this text. The present-day Christian clergy, who have taken up holy office

without being born again, are more tenacious and stubborn than the lawyer. We must know. We must know that being born again cannot be done by the law, and only by receiving the mercy of God, who makes us born again of water and the Spirit, are we saved. In the text, Jerusalem speaks of the city of religion, and the priest and the Levite speak of the officeholders who say that they believe in Jesus.

Then of whom does the Samaritan speak? He speaks of Jesus. The thieves speak of Satan the devil and point to sin. The inn speaks of the church of God. The Levite and the religious leaders only like to teach with words, glibly and with their mouths alone. Their pride in being the successors of Moses pierces the sky, but they have no Holy Spirit. That is why Jesus also said to do what the Pharisees say but not to imitate the works they do. So among the Christian leaders of today there are countless people whose mouths run like flowing water but who do not lift a finger.

Today's text means many things to us and its meaning is very deep. That is, Christians who live a religious life by works have no interest at all in a single soul receiving the remission of sins. They are by no means the neighbor of the man who fell among thieves. They have no interest in a person's soul receiving the remission of sins and going to the kingdom of Heaven, and are interested only in things like tithes, thanksgiving offerings, special offerings, building offerings, and offerings of the thousand burnt offerings. They have no interest in being born again of water and the Spirit. Those who wish to meet the Lord in this age must believe the word.

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The man who fell among thieves was precisely you and me

Dear fellow believers, who is the One who showed us mercy? It is our Lord. Who is the one here who fell among thieves and was half dead? Was it not precisely you and me?

You and I were the ones who fell among thieves. There is no one who is born into this world and has no religion. Everyone has a religion. Some people even believe in their own fist as their god, but that fist too is nothing once it is pierced by a single nail. People make all sorts of gods and make them the religion of their hearts.

There are people who believe in Christianity as a religion too. But sin comes and makes us commit sin. It is because, as the word of Mark chapter 7 says, we human beings are fundamentally born with sin from birth. To such as we are, Satan comes and makes us commit sin, wounds our souls, and kills our souls. And he left us half dead and departed. Sin does not come one or two at a time; more than twelve kinds come and make a person commit various sins all his life and kill our souls.

The purpose of Satan the devil is to make it impossible for us to come before God at all and to make us completely distant from God, and not only to make us distant but to make us utterly destroyed because of sin. So while our human life was half dead before God, who came and saved us? Jesus alone came and saved us from the wounds of sin. At that time the Samaritan was a person greatly despised and scorned among the Jews. In the same way, all the people of the world reject Jesus.

But Jesus is our God. Even now, when we say that Jesus is our Savior and Deliverer and God, people dislike it and reject Jesus. The Samaritans were a people who were rejected even though they were people of Israel. What did that Jesus do when

He came? He poured oil and wine on the wounds, tore His own garment and bandaged those wounds, set him on the animal He had ridden, and brought him to an inn. And saying that although this man had once been saved he still had many wounds and needed treatment, He asked that he be protected well and gave two denarii. This speaks of the fact that He has given us the word of the New Testament and the Old Testament.

The innkeeper here also speaks of the born-again servants of God. Then of whom does this animal speak? It speaks of the evangelists. When the born-again evangelists go out and preach and bring in wounded souls, who is inside the church? There is a born-again minister. The born-again minister treats the wounds of sin well with the word of God in the Old and New Testaments. He delivers the joyful news that even the sins you commit daily have already passed over to Jesus Christ.

God is merciful, so He embraces and protects you well, and for your sake He has given you all the blessing and the life of being born again that God possesses.

So God came to this earth and became a man, and in order to save you He was baptized by John and bore all your sins. In that way Jesus became the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament, the offering of atonement. Jesus is the spotless Son of God, who had never committed sin and did not even know sin, but He took over all the sins of mankind, the sins of you and me, by being baptized by John and died on the Cross. Just as the Samaritan saved the man who fell among thieves, by the mercy of God, by the unconditional love of the water and the Spirit of God, by the remission of sins of the atonement of God, He gave new life and the remission of sins to you and me. It is by the mercy of God that God saved you and me.

That great love of the mercy of God made you and me be saved. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only*

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begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16) God gave eternal life to you and me. By that love, in which the body of Jesus was baptized by John and took over the sin of the world, and He was nailed through both hands and both feet on the Cross and laid down His life, He gave new life to you and me. By the Lord's being baptized by John, He removed the sins of you and me.

This is the mercy and the love of God. Dear fellow believers, how could a parent forget his child? The Bible says that even though a child may forget his parent, a parent cannot forget his child.

Satan the devil tried to cast us into sin, make us completely slaves of sin, and cast us into hell. He tried to kill us. Then how could our God the Father remain silent when it concerned His own children?

God the Father sent Jesus and saved you and me through His Son. With the love of His mercy He saved us and removed all our sins. Just as the Samaritan showed mercy, our Lord became our Savior.

Just as a parent conceives and bears a child, God also, from before the foundation of the world, set up a plan to make us His children, and He made the world in five days and on the sixth day made us human beings. Knowing that in the world Satan the devil would entice us, He sent His Son to this earth, and He worked according to that plan in order to make us the born-again people of God, the people of God without sin.

Our Lord became a man, and in order to remove the sin of man, Jesus was baptized by John according to the word of Matthew 3:15 and took over all the sins of us mankind.

The Lord bore our sins by being baptized by John with the law of baptism in the form of the laying on of hands, died receiving the judgment in the place of all sinners, and having

died, rose again and became the Savior of you and me.

We must cast away stubbornness and pride

We must cast away stubbornness. The religious people inside present-day Christianity must also cast away stubbornness. Jesus spoke the word of salvation to us concretely and taught us clearly in the Bible. In Romans He said that judgment comes according to your stubbornness and unrepentant heart.

It is the same even now. This lawyer who appears in the Bible is like the conservatives of this present age and like the new theologians. “I live according to the word of God. I live in holiness according to the word and offer worship in holiness. My faith is Calvinist faith.” But you must know that when any theology is compared with the word of God, it all has contradictions. True faith is the faith that believes the word of the Bible alone.

Just as in old times the lawyer challenged Jesus, we see that today those who are steeped in theology do not believe the Bible purely. Even though Jesus, with great mercy, was baptized by John at the Jordan River and died on the Cross and thereby completely removed all the sins of you and me, and even though this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the great mercy of God and the love that makes us born again and the great salvation, is taught to them with the word, they do not believe.

If a person is stubborn before God, he perishes even in this world and in the end goes to hell. Even a beast dies if it goes mad. A dog that does not fear its master dies. Such a dog does not receive the love of its master’s mercy. The master wants to love his own dog. But what happens if it does not receive the love of its master? In the same way, God loved us human beings

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and sent His Son, and Jesus received baptism from John and took over our sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross and died in our place, and rose again—He loved us this much—so what will become of us if we do not receive this gospel of the water and the Spirit? He is the God who casts us into the fire that is not quenched, into the rubbish bin.

The mercy of God is salvation from sin. The mercy of God is the moving from death into eternal life. The mercy of God is the moving from curse into blessing. The love and the salvation of God are a gift given without price. This is what saved you and me. We must concentrate on believing the salvation Jesus gave. We must not concentrate on keeping the law.

We must not concentrate on a faith of works. If we do, we are destroyed. God does not desire sacrifice. If we try to obtain salvation by works before God, God dislikes it. Our God likes it when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is because He very much likes it when we know and believe the love God has given and respond to that love.

Therefore a person who still has sin in his heart must receive the great love of the mercy of God. He must receive in his heart the love by which Jesus bore your sins when He was baptized by John, and the fact that all our sins passed over to Jesus.

You must receive the love God has given. Only then are you saved. And you must believe that Jesus was nailed to the Cross and died in your place, and that He was judged, and that He was baptized in your place. Why was Jesus baptized by John? Jesus came to this earth and was baptized by John in order to take over all the sins of you and me and fulfill all righteousness, and in order to make you and me without sin and send us to the kingdom of Heaven.

When Jesus was baptized by John, He said, *"thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. So you and I

must believe the love of the great mercy of God. Who is the one who showed mercy? It is Jesus, who is the Samaritan. Jesus saved us from all sin.

Jesus saved sinners with the water and the blood. We must cast away our pride. Being stubborn is because of pride. The person who casts away his pride before God is a person who receives the love of God. We must know how to cast away pride. Dear fellow believers, we must cast away the pride of former days and have the pride of faith of one who has been born again and become a child of God.

After being born again of water and the Spirit, we must have pride within faith, but we must cast away the stubbornness we inherited from our fleshly parents before being born again of water and the Spirit.

Do you think pride makes us receive the remission of sins? Pride makes us go to hell and keeps us from following the Lord. A person of strong pride cannot please God. Before God you are like a dead dog. You must know how to look at your own figure in the light of the word and say, “I am a person like a dead dog.”

God says that you are the offspring of evildoers. We are all the descendants of sinners. That is the fact. Because casting away the pride of one’s own flesh is the way to be saved and to live before God, we must cast away pride. We must have pride in the part that says I am one of the people of God, but when we must cast away our own pride we must cast it away. A person whose own pride is strong cannot receive blessing before God.

This lawyer is strong in pride and stubborn. In the Bible the Pharisee is the representative person of strong pride. Though he is well versed in the Bible and says that he believes very well, he is a person who is already reserved to go to hell.

If we look at the Bible, all those who cast away their pride before God met the Lord and received the salvation of water and

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the Spirit. It is the same even now. God tells even us born-again people to cast away pride. True pride is the pride we have as the righteous within the world of faith, in which we believe and follow the word of God.

Dear fellow believers, do you know what pride is? When someone asks who you are, to establish one's own being by saying, "I am a servant of God and one of the people of Israel," is pride.

Dear fellow believers, if we do not break our pride, can we follow Jesus? We cannot. What is it that keeps us from following the Lord? What is it that keeps you from believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Is it not your own pride? Let us break that pride of yours. If this pride keeps me from following the Lord, let us boldly break it by faith.

Everyone who casts away his own pride receives the love of the mercy of God. On the contrary, everyone who makes his own pride his shield goes to hell. What will you do? Will you cast away your own pride?

Receive the great love of God

What will happen if we defy God? It is hell. No matter how clever a human being is, whether he is a Pharisee or a lawyer, whether he is Yang Guifei or Cleopatra, no matter how outstanding he may be, the one who opposes the salvation of the water and the Spirit of God goes to hell unconditionally.

But on the contrary, what do we obtain if we receive the love of God? It is eternal life. It is salvation. It is a simple matter. Then does this salvation have anything to do with our works? The salvation of being born again has nothing at all to do with your works. Neither living virtuously nor committing sin has

anything to do with it. That we commit sin is because God permitted such an environment in order to teach us that we are sinners. We must not defy God. We must break ourselves, believe God alone entirely, and live by faith. This is right faith. If we are stubborn and act up and defy Him, we die. Then what does our Lord say? *"Do this and you will live"* That is the word our Lord speaks to a stubborn person.

Can you carry it out? Are you confident that you can live according to the law? If you are not confident, receive the great love of God. Our Lord saved you and me with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Once again, I tell you that God saved you and me with the love of His mercy. Dear fellow believers, do you believe it? God has given you and me the blessing of being born again of water and the Spirit with His great mercy. We must believe in our hearts this gospel that has come with water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

Follow with all your heart

< Luke 10:25-37 >

“And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, ‘Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?’ He said to him, ‘What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?’ So he answered and said, ‘“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind,” and “your neighbor as yourself.”’ And He said to him, ‘You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.’ But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, ‘And who is my neighbor?’ Then Jesus answered and said: ‘A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?’ And he said, ‘He who showed mercy on him.’ Then Jesus said to him,

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‘Go and do likewise.’”

“With all your heart, with all your soul”

A certain lawyer came out before Jesus and asked, *“Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?” (Luke 10:25)* and our Lord asked, *“What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?” (Luke 10:26)* The lawyer answered, *“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind, and your neighbor as yourself” (Luke 10:27)*. Then Jesus said, *“You have answered rightly; do this and you will live” (Luke 10:28)*.

There is something the born-again must do. It is to give all their heart when they do the work of God. Truly, this word in the law is right. Our Lord saved us with all His heart, with all His life, with all His strength, and with all His mind. So we believed with the heart unto righteousness and received the remission of sins. Our Lord removed all our sins. We have received the remission of sins, and we serve God and do the work of God. I know it is right that this word—with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind—should be planted in our lives.

We were saved by believing with the heart, but when we do the work of God we must do it with all our heart. If we give all our heart to a task, we can carry it out well even if we are a little insufficient; but there are many times when we neglect the work of God because we do not give all our heart. In doing the work of God there will be differences of ability between individuals. But this is the work of the Lord that saves souls, so we must give all our heart, and yet often we fail to. It is a difference of depth and weight. If we do it with all our heart, we do it gathering our

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strength, and then that work bears much fruit and goes well. Because we do not incline our heart, there are many things that could be done and yet are not done.

Since our Lord saved us, we too must give all our heart, all our life, all our strength, and all our mind. Even if in deeds there are limits and we cannot do everything, we must give all our heart. If we give even our life, what could we fail to do, and what could fail to be accomplished? Nothing. I think Christians must serve God with all their strength. I believe that we should not keep strength in reserve but do our utmost in any work, if it is the work of God. This word is not in the least a wrong word even for us who have received the remission of sins.

The preciousness we come to know when we try with all our heart

When we do overseas missions, domestic missions, and personal evangelism, serving the Lord and following Him in faith, if we try with all our heart and with all our strength, we come to know that there is a truly profound meaning in it. When one gives all one's strength and all one's heart, one enters into that work, and what the workers of the church or the brothers and sisters have said becomes understandable. If instead one tries to follow only at the level of understanding with the head, it does not make sense. Even when one cannot understand why the workers speak as they do, if one gives all one's heart and actually does it, one comes to know why this work is precious and why it must surely be done, and one can also know the heart of the other person. So within it one learns faith, comes to know the will of God, bears fruit, and experiences faith sprouting and growing.

If each one of us serves the Lord with all our heart and all our strength, laying down even our life and giving all our mind, it is not difficult to preach the gospel to the whole world. It is not difficult to make this truth known to all the people of the whole world. If the servants of God and the brothers and sisters, all the people of God, serve with all their heart, all their strength, all their mind, and all their life, each as much as God has given him, I believe the kingdom of God will come quickly. Serving the Lord, I think the heart is very important—the body matters, but the heart even more. I believe that even work that looks impossible can be conquered if we give our heart and all our strength. I believe that all the work of serving God is also like that when we do it with faith in God. What is there that those who have received the remission of sins can pour their hearts into? The work of serving God is truly a work worth pouring one's heart into. I believe this work of serving the Lord and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is truly a work worth giving our heart to.

With all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind—this word 'all' is tremendously important. When we have given our all, we feel as if we would die, but the Lord gives new strength. To be able to give all and yet not give all, doing only a little—that is a tremendously evil thing. When we do not give all our strength, we go off on a wrong path and come to have wrong thoughts. If we give all our heart, where is there room to pay attention elsewhere? The person who goes out into the world does so because he has not given his all. Try doing fully the work entrusted to you. There is nothing to complain about, whether it works or not. Try doing it with all your heart, giving all your time. Then your attention has no room to go elsewhere. Sometimes we rest, but when we do something for God, we must do it with all our heart. In sports or

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play we can yield as much as we like for the sake of enjoyment. But believing in and serving God must be done with our all. The person who does a task with all his strength does every other task well too. If we do not give all our strength, our heart and our faith keep going astray. Do you know why you have no strength? Why is the coming of the Lord not something you wait for, and why does your heart go elsewhere? It is because you do not serve the Lord with all your strength. You feel you would die if you gave your all? You do not die. If we give our all to the Lord, the Lord gives new strength and there is a reward. But if we give our all to the world, it is death.

The kingdom of heaven that the violent take by force

Our believing in Jesus and our receiving the remission of sins must also be with all our heart, with all our mind, and with all our life. Only then are we saved. In Matthew chapter 11 there is the word, *"And from the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12)* Two ministers once came and said they would like to see how this word reads in the King James Bible, so I looked up the Greek original text. It means that the kingdom of heaven is taken by the one who forces his way in with violence. That is why the mild-hearted do not enter the kingdom of heaven well. The person who really wants to enter the kingdom of heaven says, if only he can enter, "I believe, I believe." "I believe that the Lord saved me, that with the baptism He received from John He cleanly removed my sins. I believe in the Lord." The person who believes what the Lord has given grasps it tight, as if seizing it, so that no one else can take it away. Such a person becomes righteous and goes to the kingdom of

heaven. It is the one who grasps by faith, as if plundering, who obtains it.

The Lord has saved you and me—why should we mind the eyes of others? 'What will people say of me if I believe like this?' Whatever others say, if my sins disappear, that is what matters. If I believe this word of God, that I become a child of God, God will be pleased—so why mind the eyes of people? Before God there must be a hope that truly wants to obtain, a most earnest heart. If we fail to take what God has given, it is foolish. If He has given and we still fail to receive, how foolish is that? Jesus has removed all my sins—if, whatever others say, I do not say, "I believe that He has removed all my sins," it is truly foolish. If one says, 'I always commit sin—how could I believe? I am too sorry before Him,' that is enough to make steam come from God's nostrils. When a man with plenty of food says to a hungry man, "Eat," he has only to say thank you and eat. God has given us the kingdom of heaven. When the Lord gives, we have only to say, "Thank You," and receive it. It is we who need the kingdom of heaven. We have only to believe. It is taken by faith.

The people of the world stage sit-ins and demonstrations to seize their share. Then shall we be only genteel even in the matter of going to the kingdom of heaven? In the Scriptures Jacob appears as one example. Humanly thinking, he was a cunning and wicked man. He took away all the blessing of the firstborn in his elder brother's name. It means he inherited all the spiritual blessing and the physical blessing that were with his father. While his brother was out hunting, he consulted with his mother, made a savory dish, put on his brother's clothes, and went in to his father. Since Esau hunted much, his clothes would have smelled of wild beasts. Isaac felt Jacob and smelled his clothes, and—"*So Jacob went near to Isaac his father, and he felt him and said, 'The voice is Jacob's voice, but the hands are*

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the hands of Esau.'" (Genesis 27:22)—he pronounced on him all the blessing of the firstborn. His brother Esau came back and was bitterly aggrieved, but Jacob had seized it by faith. The mother in the Scriptures speaks of the church. The church preaches the gospel and bears and raises souls. If you grasp by faith the gospel the church preaches and every word the church speaks, the kingdom of heaven is also yours, you become righteous, and you receive all the blessings God gives.

There is nothing good in man

In man there is no goodness. People think there is, but there is none. What is called human goodness is only goodness for oneself; there is no goodness for others. Strictly speaking, it is so. The heart cares for one's children and for others, but the flesh is not so. Man's flesh is for itself alone. When he is hungry, he worries that the other person may take the food, and tries to make it his own. Have you not experienced such things in your own lives?

My family in the old days was terribly poor. It was a time when the whole country was hungry. From my childhood this one thing remains fixed in my heart. When the rice was served to the family, into the other bowls it was scooped loosely, but only my rice was pressed down firm. In the old days we sprinkled red pepper powder on soy sauce and ate it with rice. Hunger is the best side dish, as they say, and it still tasted good. But one day it seemed they had given me a great deal of rice, and when I ate away the rice on top, there was a sweet potato the size of a fist inside. When there is white rice only around the edge and one big sweet potato inside, you cannot imagine how disappointing it is. Every time I faced that rice bowl, my wish was to eat one full bowl of white rice, but inside it there would

be a sweet potato or a potato. When I poked the sweet potato out with my chopsticks, just as a hole opened in the rice bowl, a hole opened in my heart and my chest felt empty. Now there is plenty to eat and we share here and there, but when there was nothing to eat, far from helping others, I cannot tell you how much I envied the orphanage children when I saw them wearing good clothes. Is there goodness when one is hungry? When a person is hungry there is no goodness. It is because I am somewhat well off and have room that I share. Even when one who has lived in great poverty thinks of the poor, it is that, overcome with his own sorrow and pitying himself, he wants to help people who live poorly as he did.

It means that the violent force their way into the kingdom of heaven and take it. The one who does not believe with the heart does not possess it. What is so good about us that we should not enter the kingdom of heaven God has given? And having entered, we must also take and enjoy much of what is in it. I hope you will believe so. The reason there are many in this world who will go to hell is that they do not know how to snap it up by faith. It is because they think themselves quite good, and because they mind other people too much. When you look into your own heart, what goodness is there? There is no reason whatsoever not to believe. Did not a certain poet sing that he wished to live without one speck of shame when he looked up at the sky? It is because he lived in shame that he wished to live without shame. It is not because he had lived without one speck of shame as he looked up at the sky.

Who shows mercy to man?

Who saved the man who fell among thieves? Jesus saved him.

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Who is the one who showed mercy? Jesus showed mercy. He had compassion on us and bestowed grace on us lest we go to hell. Our Lord saved us with all His heart, with all His life, with all His strength, and with all His mind. The Lord came to this earth and, living His life of thirty-three years, received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, lived His public life for three years, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so saved us. The Lord gave His life to the uttermost like this. If the Lord had not given all His strength, mind, and heart, He would have stopped in the middle of the work of salvation. The Creator, even while being struck on the cheek by His creatures, endured long, long.

When Jesus was praying on the Mount of Olives, men came to seize Him. When they asked which one was Jesus, Jesus said, *"I am He,"* and the men before Him fell to the ground. To Jesus they were laughable. He could have wiped them out without lifting a hand. But with all His heart, with all His mind, and with all His strength He saved you and me. If Jesus had not given all His heart, mind, and life, He could easily have left us to go to hell. If we look at the three years of His public life after Jesus received baptism from John, before He was nailed to the Cross the underlings of Pilate's court struck Jesus on the cheek, spat on Him, changed His clothes, bound Him, and scourged Him with the scourging given to those condemned to death. It was a whip with things like hooks attached, so that at every stroke pieces of flesh were torn away. Was that all He suffered? He was interrogated by the high priest, interrogated by Pilate, and put to shame by the people. Jesus gave all His mind, strength, life, and heart. And so He gave salvation to you and me. If the Lord had not given all His heart, we could not have been saved. Because He so pitied us, lest we go to hell, Jesus received baptism from John in our place and took over our sins, went to the Cross, and

died for us. And He rose again to bring us back to life. The God who created us did so.

Who is the one who showed mercy? It is our Lord. Can man save man? Can religion save man? It is not the crowd following Jesus that saves man; Jesus saved us. The one who has entered the kingdom of heaven first takes hold of the wrists of those who have not yet come in and pulls them into the ark. Jesus is the Savior of you and me and the One who showed mercy. A certain man fell among thieves, was robbed of all he had, and was half dead, and the two men, the priest and the Levite, saw him and avoided him. The educators of the world, the religious leaders, and those called sages say many good things to people, but when their neighbor is dying they cannot help him at the risk of their own lives. When it would mean loss to themselves and a situation of death, they do not do so. It is like not jumping in when going to rescue a drowning man if it looks like one will die oneself.

This Samaritan is Jesus. Only Jesus saved the man who fell among thieves, and He said to take care of this man until He returns. Only our Lord has removed all our sins; no one else could remove them. Truly our Lord has shown us mercy. We, the weak, who could only go to hell, obtain salvation by believing with the heart. The Lord has come to save us and pours oil and wine on us, whose wounds are severe, and bandages us—shall we decline? You and I are the very ones who had fallen among thieves, and since Jesus saves us, we cannot decline.

Insufficient though we are, let us serve the Lord with all our heart, life, strength, and mind

I speak this word to myself and to you. I resolve in my heart

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that I will serve the Lord with all my heart, with all my life, with all my strength, and with all my mind, and I speak before the church of God and before you. When we give all our heart, it is accomplished. There will also be times when God requires our life. If we give our utmost, what is there we could not lay down, even life? If we give all our strength, we accomplish the will of God, and I believe He will accomplish His will of saving souls through us. To love your neighbor as your own body with all your heart, with all your life, with all your strength, and with all your mind—this is the will of God. Only, it is something the lawyer, not born again, could not do; but we who are born again can do it if we set our hearts on it.

I hope you will believe with your heart that God has saved us, and seize salvation. I hope that the person who has received the remission of sins will incline his heart and serve the Lord with all his strength, with all his mind, and with all his life. It is the will of God. If we do not give our all, the Lord is not pleased. That is not serving the Lord but pretending to. Insufficient though we are, let us give our all. It means to give your strength according to your own capacity, not to bring money and offer it up. There are places that call themselves evangelical and tell people to bring money, and there are people who say Jesus is coming soon and yet build chapels.

The church of God is never like that. Serve the Lord in the situation and the office entrusted to you; if there is no work of serving, then at least preach the gospel; and if you cannot preach, receive the guidance of the church's leader as to what work you can do, and devote all your strength to that work. That is precisely serving the Lord with all your heart, with all your life, with all your strength, and with all your mind. That is what the Lord is pleased with. We are the Lord's. The Lord is our God. ✉

Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

Admit your fundamental sin and come before the Lord with a heart that seeks His compassion

< Luke 10:25-37 >

"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' He said to him, 'What is written in the law? What is your reading of it?' So he answered and said, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your strength, and with all your mind," and "your neighbor as yourself."' And He said to him, 'You have answered rightly; do this and you will live.' But he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, 'And who is my neighbor?' Then Jesus answered and said: 'A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care

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of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, 'Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.' So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'"

The lawyer who tested Jesus

The word begins in verse 25 like this: *"And behold, a certain lawyer stood up and tested Him, saying, 'Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?'"* A lawyer is a teacher of the law. That man came to Jesus and asked in order to test Him. Satan the devil is the same in the old days and now. In Genesis, too, the fallen angel who opposed God enticed Adam and Eve to oppose God. "Did He say you would die if you ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil? He says so for fear you will become like God"—so saying, he breathed his own heart, which had opposed God, into them, who did not fully believe the word of God, and seduced them.

Jesus, who was tempted in the wilderness

If we look at Matthew chapter 4, Jesus received baptism from John, took over and bore all the sins of this world, and then was led by the Spirit into the wilderness to be tempted by the devil. After fasting forty days and forty nights He was hungry, and the tempter, the devil, came to Jesus and asked: *"Now when the tempter came to Him, he said, 'If You are the Son of God,*

command that these stones become bread.'" (Matthew 4:3) Having fasted forty days, how hungry He must have been! The devil tempted Him, saying that if He was really the Son of God, He should command these stones to become loaves of bread.

When we hear 'the Son of God,' we think of Him like the son of a man, like a creature, but the Son of God is God. As a dog, when it bears young, bears a dog, so each brings forth after its kind. There are God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and the three are all our God. When the heavens and the earth were created, the three were present in that place alike. It says, *"The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:2)* and here "the Spirit of God" is in Hebrew 'ruach'—rendered pneuma (πνεῦμα) in the Greek Old Testament—the word indicating the Holy Spirit. Again He said, *"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)* where He spoke with the plural, *"Us."* It means that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one God.

When Jesus was tempted, He responded with the written word: *"But He answered and said, 'It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.''" (Matthew 4:4)* The devil also took Him to the holy city, set Him on the pinnacle of the temple, and tempted Him, saying, *"and said to Him, 'If You are the Son of God, throw Yourself down. For it is written: 'He shall give His angels charge over you,' and, 'In their hands they shall bear you up, Lest you dash your foot against a stone.''" (Matthew 4:6)* When Jesus drove back Satan the devil, He responded with the written word.

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Why did Jesus go to be tempted? First, to show that Jesus is really the Son of God and the Savior of mankind, different from us creatures; and second, to show the temptations a person meets after receiving the remission of sins. Because of what do we struggle most? First we struggle over eating—over food, clothing, and shelter. Right after being saved, our faith is young and there are many dregs in the heart, so there are times when we cannot solve that problem, and when we are in such material difficulty the devil comes and tempts us. Second, he tempts us with honor and power. When we undergo trials of faith through hard things, we must not deal with them by our own thoughts. He was saying that the person who believes in God must admit his sins before God and, like one who holds the word of salvation God has given, must deal with Satan the devil with the word of God.

Satan the devil tempts and challenges like this. In the old days the fallen angel challenged God, thinking, 'Above me there is only God; I will seize that place.' Then God said, "Do you covet this seat? Since you would be exalted to heaven, you will be brought down to Hades," and He made hell. He made a place into which to put those who behave so rashly before God, but since they do not go there at once, the devil has entered the world of man and works among people. He keeps them from believing the word of God and makes them challenge God. In that sense this lawyer also tested Jesus and said, *"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25).*

Is eternal life something obtained by doing? This is a challenging word. He is saying that he can do it, so let him be given a task. Satan the devil had entered his heart and was working. Then Jesus asked what is written in the law and how he reads it, and the lawyer answered that it says to love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your

strength, and with all your mind, and to love your neighbor as your own body. "You know it well indeed. You have answered rightly; do this and you will live," He said—and this man, wanting to justify himself, asked, "Then who is my neighbor?"

Is there anyone who can love the Lord with all his heart and serve God with all his life? Man cannot even do two things at once. If you have him do this and that, he can do neither. So in work there is an order, and only when we do first things first, step by step, are many things solved in their natural course. Man is always imperfect. Yet this lawyer came forward to Jesus and challenged Him high-handedly.

"Neighbor to him who fell among the thieves"

Then Jesus explained with an example. A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho and fell among thieves, was stripped even of his clothes, became half dead, and was thrown on the road. By chance a priest was going down that road, saw him, and passed by on the other side. Seeing the man covered in blood and crying to be saved, he thought, 'I have seen what I should not have seen. If I get tangled in that affair, not only is my day's schedule ruined, but by the look of it he is half dead, and if things go wrong I may even be falsely charged with murder,' and he pretended not to know and avoided him. Then a Levite also saw him and passed by on the other side. A Levite is a person charged with offering the sacrifices for the people at the tabernacle. Both men were religionists. It speaks of the religion of Israel, Judaism. The lawyer now questioning Him was also a man of Judaism, so Jesus was indirectly pointing at him. And after finishing the word He asked: *"So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?' And*

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he said, 'He who showed mercy on him.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Go and do likewise.'" (Luke 10:36–37).

The people who could not keep the covenant established with blood

When Moses took the two tablets of stone and asked the people of Israel, "Will you live according to these commandments?" the leaders of Israel swore that they would live so. When the people of Israel make a promise, they catch a sacrificial animal and promise with blood. Moses caught the sacrificial animal and sprinkled its blood on the people, saying, "This is the covenant you have established with blood, that you will keep the commands of God." It means it was a promise made at the risk of their lives. But did the people of Israel actually keep it? They could not keep a single thing. Committing this sin and that sin in their lives was one thing; they even regarded as burdensome and bothersome the very things of acknowledging God as their God, believing, following, and offering sacrifices. Rather, they carved idols of Baal and Asherah and bowed to them, danced, and offered sacrifices. Baal is a god of the land of Canaan, a god said to make the farming prosper. So in spring they offered sacrifices to Baal, asking that the year's farming go well. To the god Asherah they prayed to bear many children. In the old days children were property. In farming, if there were no family members, one could not even farm; people had to share labor and help one another to live.

They were a people who had so established the covenant with blood, yet when Jesus actually came, did they receive Him? From every point of view Jesus is God, not a man. And He is the One who had been prophesied in the Old Testament. Yet they do

not believe. Rather, the man called a teacher of the law came and challenged Him, saying, *"Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?" (Luke 10:25)* He came out swaggering: I am a man of this level, so speak to me once. So Jesus was saying, "Which of these three showed mercy? It is not you, is it? Have you not opposed Me and refused to listen to My words?" Not listening is opposing God. After this affair, after Jesus died on the Cross, rose again, and accomplished the salvation of mankind, the people of Israel began to be hated by the people of the whole world. It was because they opposed God and did not receive Jesus.

Jesus spoke with this meaning: "Is it not you religionists who have trampled this man who fell among thieves and brought him to the agony of death? Why do you keep those who would believe in Me from believing?" At that time, a person who received Jesus as the Savior was excommunicated from Judaism. If one was excommunicated, one could not even work anywhere and was treated as a heretic. So in the nation of Israel people feared excommunication most. If one was treated by that nation as a Gentile, no longer a believer of Judaism, one was treated like a beast. What we should know here is that originally we ought to say, not 'adherents of Christianity,' but 'Christians'—those of Christ. Since Jesus came to this earth and carried out the role of the Christ and saved us from sin, we ought to say the church of Christ.

Who are those who persecute Jesus? They are religionists. Those who claim to believe in Jesus oppose Jesus and keep those who would believe in Jesus from believing. As the fallen angel opposed God in the old days, so the religionists on this earth now are opposing God. In Buddhism they say, 'In heaven above and earth beneath, I alone am honored'—a teaching to become a divine being oneself. Within Christianity, too, people say,

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"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?" The only one who obtains eternal life by doing something is God, not a creature. To try to obtain it by one's own doing is exactly the same as coveting the place of God. Religionists look very good, but when God sees them it is not so. We call a person good who comforts people and bestows good things. But if by doing so he makes people his own followers and makes them believe the religion he believes, so that they oppose God together and are made to go to hell, then, when God sees it, he is playing the part of a child of the devil.

The Samaritan and the woman at the well

When Jesus asked which of these three showed mercy, the one who showed that mercy was the Samaritan. Samaria was the capital of northern Israel, and Assyria besieged it for three years, then captured and seized it. They carried the people away into exile and brought in foreign peoples to settle in the land. So among the people of Samaria there are many of mixed blood. They are not of pure Israelite lineage; the blood of the peoples of the surrounding nations was mixed in. Though they were fellow Jews, the Jews utterly despised the people of Samaria as people who had failed to keep their chastity.

So in John chapter 4, when Jesus asked the woman at the well for water, the woman said, "How is it that You, being a Jew, ask water from me, a Samaritan woman? Have you not always despised us?" Then Jesus said: *"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)* Then this woman said, "This well is a well of history and tradition that our father Jacob

dug; You have nothing to draw with—how will You give me water?" Jesus 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 that water, and Jesus told her to call her husband. When the woman answered that she had no husband, it went as it is written: *"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.'" (John 4:17–18)* As this woman listened, wondering how He could know and speak all her past, it came about as written: *"The woman said to Him, 'Sir, I perceive that You are a prophet" (John 4:19).*

Religionists oppose Jesus even now

The religionists opposed Jesus. In the time of Jesus the Jews opposed Jesus, and now, in the twenty-first century, people who claim to believe in God oppose Jesus. He is saying that He took over the sin of this world by receiving baptism from John, hung on the Cross and died, rose again, and removed all sin—and they do not believe it. They do not accept it. They say the original sin has been removed, but the sins committed daily are remitted by repenting each time, and how could Jesus have taken away even the sins to be committed in the future? Today's adherents of Christianity say that doctrinally they believe in the eternal remission of sin. But in their actual hearts they believe that Jesus took away the original sin inherited from Adam, that the sins

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committed daily are remitted by daily prayers of repentance, and that future sins are also remitted when they pray in repentance.

But God so loved the world and pitied mankind, and Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and took over the sin of mankind, carried the sin of the world to the Cross and was nailed there, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* and died, and rose again on the third day after death, and is the God who became our Savior. Yet the religionists do not believe in that Jesus Christ who became the Savior. That this lawyer tested Jesus was wrong; that he did not believe was wrong; and that he tried to become more righteous than Jesus by doing something was a great wrong.

Adam and Eve, the ancestors of mankind, committed the sin of not believing the word of God and opposing God. Interested in the word that they would become like God, they ate of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil. That is the sin of opposing God. That sin is more than enough to send one to hell. That sin our mankind inherited through Adam and Eve, and however we struggle on this earth, we cannot live according to the word of the law of God. The word of the law is all right and true. "You shall have no other gods before Me." Is it not right? If a creature made by God does not acknowledge God, that too is a great sin. It is the sin of opposing God and the sin of taking the name of God in vain. Can we do according to the word that says to love God with all our life and with all our mind? We strive to do it, but we cannot do it perfectly. Man is always imperfect. So God said, *"Keep your heart with all diligence, For out of it spring the issues of life" (Proverbs 4:23)* and yet the religionists, putting forward their works, are opposing God.

The One who showed mercy and healed the wounds of the heart

Who is the one who showed mercy? Is it not Jesus? Who is the One who showed mercy to you and me? It is Jesus. Did He not, lest you and I go to hell, leave behind all the glory at the right hand of the throne of God the Father and come to this earth? And is He not the One who took over, by receiving baptism from John, the fundamental sin you and I inherited from the devil, and all the sins we commit while living on this earth, and all the sins we commit out of weakness, and shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again, and so solved them? Who solved the wounds of your heart and mine? Who bandaged, fed, clothed, and cared for all the wounds caused by sin? Jesus did it. That God comes to us who have wounds and says, "Why do you weep over that? When I was baptized by John at the Jordan River for you, I took over all the fundamental sin you inherited and all your transgressions. For you I received all the punishment on the Cross. Why do you grieve? Believe in Me. I am your God, and I have healed all your sins and wounds." God is the One who does so.

Who is the true God of you and me? Who is the Savior who heals our wounds? Who is our true friend and parent? Jesus Christ, the Father God, and God the Holy Spirit—those three have come to us and cleanly healed all the wounds of our hearts, like those of one fallen among thieves, with the word of the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and have made us able to live vigorously by faith, to live tasting the glory of God and receiving His grace, and to live doing the work of leading and saving other people who have wounds in their hearts.

Even if you believe in Jesus, know the fact that if you do not know the truth Jesus came and accomplished, then the more you

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uphold the law and give your life to mission work, the more you are grieving the heart of God. Even if we offer our efforts and our life to God, we cannot receive the remission of sins by them. God so loved us and pitied us that He came to us, bandaged and healed all our wounds, brought us to the church, which is like the inn, and let us receive the grace of being supplied in due season and also hear the word. Since He said that man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God, man's body lives by eating bread, but our heart can live by hearing the word of God and eating it by faith. To give such blessing, Jesus Christ came to this earth and met us with the gospel of the truth of the water and the Spirit.

God dislikes our coming forward putting forth what we have done well

So you must stop the fleshly effort to please God. Rather, you must ask God for help, to be pitied. You must admit that you are fundamentally a sinner who opposes God, and ask for help to be saved from that sin. The inherited sin of the heart that opposes God, and all the sins committed knowingly and unknowingly after being born on this earth—all together they are the sin of the world; and we must become those who grasp and believe the word of the gospel by which the Lord saved us from this sin, and so gladden and refresh the heart of God. People think they please God by coming to worship and offering devotion, giving offerings, singing praise beautifully, and, outside, living generously toward those in need; but that is doing so because they are deceived by Satan the devil.

Know the fact that what God dislikes most is our coming before Him with what we have done well. He says: Did you do

that for Me? Did you not do it for yourself? You have fundamentally inherited a heart that opposes Me, and you have much in you that opposes Me at every turn—are you not hiding that? Bring that sin first before Me and receive remission; after that, it is good to unite to serve the gospel and do the work of the Lord out of thankfulness for the salvation I have given. God says that your acting proud and righteous with what you have done is loathsome to Him. We must know what the heart of God is like. He is the One who is pleased first to solve all our sins and make us God's children; if we try to please God with works, He is the God who says, 'That is not it.' If before the chairman of some great corporation we said, 'Shall I give you a million won? Shall I do your company's work free of charge?' that chairman would rather be made uncomfortable. He would want us not to do such things but, if we really wished to enter that company, to take the examination, enter, and live happily receiving the wages of our work. In the same way God also does not receive it when we put forward how we have lived this way and that for Him. God says: what I want from you is the center of a heart that asks Me for mercy, and the attitude of a heart that wants to receive the remission of sins and to be pitied.

Then why do Christian believers keep trying to put forward before God that they have done this and done that? That is why God dislikes it and why disasters also come on this earth. All the religionists of the world try to live so kindly—why then would God bring disasters down on this globe? In the days of Abraham, when God was about to destroy the land of Sodom and Gomorrah, Abraham asked whether He would not forgive if there were fifty righteous people, and God said, *"So the LORD said, 'If I find in Sodom fifty righteous within the city, then I will spare all the place for their sakes.'" (Genesis 18:26)* and at last He said, *"Then he said, 'Let not the Lord be angry, and I will*

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speak but once more: Suppose ten should be found there?' And He said, 'I will not destroy it for the sake of ten.'" (Genesis 18:32) But there were not ten righteous. All the Christians of the whole world pray like this—would God not hear their prayers? Those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit are all right, but the others, while claiming to believe in God, keep opposing God. God dislikes it. In Malachi He even says: *"'Who is there even among you who would shut the doors, So that you would not kindle fire on My altar in vain? I have no pleasure in you,' Says the LORD of hosts, 'Nor will I accept an offering from your hands" (Malachi 1:10).*

The true repentance God wants

Therefore we must know. God is telling today's Christian believers to know what is wrong. Why, He asks, do you not try to repent truly? What is true repentance? As it says, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)* it is to confess: were you not born with the iniquity that opposes God from the time you were born from your parents' womb? Your parents and ancestors and Adam were all so; so bring that sin first before God and state it as it is—that I was born with such sin and did the wrong of opposing God, and that in my heart also I opposed God much.

It is to say that this sin, inherited through the enticement of the devil, is truly wrong, and that from this hour I will hate the fallen angel, turn from the religions of the world, and believe and follow the word of God. God wants to receive that kind of repentance. The heart God receives is a broken heart and a contrite heart. He wants us to say, "God, remove this sin. Save me from this sin," and to believe in Jesus Christ, the God who,

to save such sinners, came to this earth, received baptism from John and bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross and received the judgment, shed His blood and died and rose again, and so delivered us from all sins.

When we know and believe so, then He becomes our God and our Savior and we become His people. And He tells us to be separated from the world, serve God, and preach this gospel to the ends of the whole world. We must become such people before God. We must know the God who said: *"A bruised reed He will not break, And smoking flax He will not quench; He will bring forth justice for truth" (Isaiah 42:3)* We are now bruised reeds. Our bodies and hearts are sick. If we live on as we are, we go to hell. Sin does not disappear by believing in Jesus unconditionally, by believing only in the precious blood of the Cross.

That He was hung on the Cross was because we inherited the opposing heart with which the fallen angel opposed God, and opposed God ourselves; therefore He came to this earth and suffered sacrifice for us. Why does our mankind suffer? Because we opposed God. That sin of opposing must be laid bare and remitted. We must believe the written word of God, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and receive the remission of sins. Then the wall blocking the way between God and us collapses, and we come to communicate with God and receive the blessing of God. God loves us and we love God, God gives us what we need and we do the things God wants, and we can live congenially in that blessing. Those are precisely the saved, and that place is the church of God.

What God dislikes most is the heart that opposes God, and yet people do not repent of that sin. God does not look at the deeds done wrong here and there; He looks at the center of the heart. I was one who opposed God, and the Lord removed all my

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sins; and not only all the sins I commit from my birth on this earth to my death, but the sins of all who know and believe the righteousness of Jesus Christ, from the ancestor of mankind to the day mankind ends, He has removed them all—and I believe that I too am one among them. Because I believe that Jesus saved me with the water and the blood, my heart is at all times refreshed and glad.

And I can love the Lord and follow Him at any time. If the will of the Lord is accomplished, I am glad at any time. Whether there is much money in my pocket or little makes no difference at all. If the work of God goes well, I am glad; and as for material things, when God blesses us, with them we serve the gospel and we also live. It is not that our churches across the country live because they work well; God has given us wisdom and understanding and arranged everything so that we can live. It looks as if we are serving the Lord, but in reality the Lord has blessed us to live abundantly in both spirit and body, and is serving us.

The Lord always loved us first

It is not that we loved the Lord first; the Lord loved us first. Because the Lord loved us first and removed all our sins—even the sin of opposing God, even all the sins we commit out of insufficiency in our lives—we, so thankful for that love, cannot help loving the Lord and are running to Him. When we humble our hearts and ask to be pitied, He, willingly and with joy, removed our sins by receiving baptism from John. Even now, if we come before the Lord with that attitude of heart, we can be born again of the gospel of the water and the Spirit at any time.

People who have no such heart say that the original sin is

remitted, and the sins committed daily are remitted by prayers of repentance. But the very term ‘original sin’ is not in the Scriptures. It is a doctrine of Christian theology, an interpretation philosophers gave the Scriptures. That the original sin is remitted, that the sins committed daily and the sins of the future are remitted by prayers of repentance, and that at death one is completely sanctified and becomes a flawless person with no relation to sin and goes to the kingdom of heaven—this is doctrine, a system man has made. God did not say so. So Christian believers must turn from this doctrine to be born again of water and the Spirit. Only then can they meet the Lord, be reconciled with the Lord, give glory to God, and live receiving the blessing of God. Because the Holy Spirit is with us, who at any time moistens our hearts with the word of God, we do not live in famine and thirst. Even when we have been sunk in the affairs of the world, as we gather at the hour of worship and listen to the word, we experience various problems being solved, knowingly or unknowingly, and our hearts growing moist. That is the blessing of God.

Know that this word is speaking of precisely that, and I hope that you will first know the true love of God, first know and believe the righteousness of God, and receive the blessing of having all your sins remitted and being born again as a child of God. ✉

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◇ About the Next Series

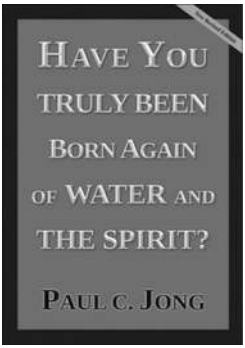
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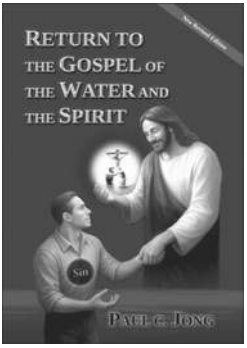
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

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.

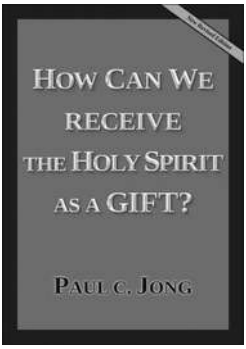
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

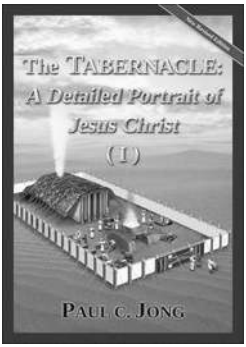
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



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]

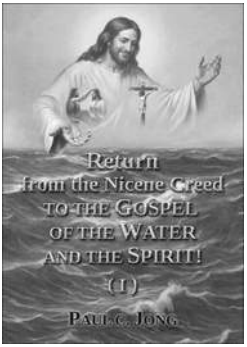


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

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.

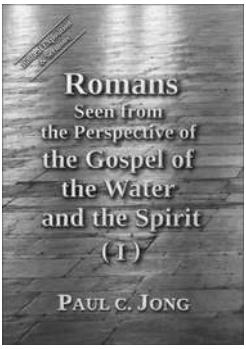
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching 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,

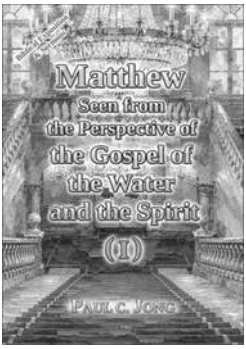
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)



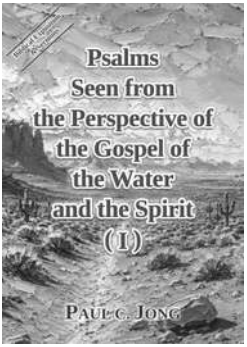
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

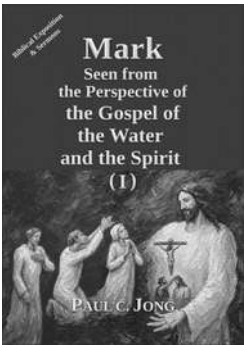


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who is to come.

This book is a biblical exposition that unfolds the Psalms from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. David's songs are not an outpouring of emotion but the confession of a righteous man who has received the remission of sins, a prophetic praise that looked up to the Christ who is to come. The blessing, righteousness, and peace of the Psalms do not come from human goodness but from the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

Beneath it all flows a single gospel. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus took our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the cross, and rose from the dead to make us righteous. When you open the Psalms with this gospel, the old songs come alive as your own confession, and this book leads you to the blessed place of those clothed in the righteousness of God.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



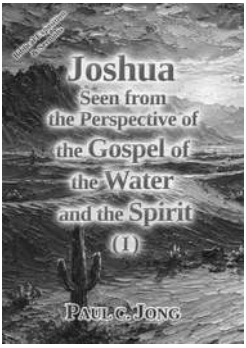
Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

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!

Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy the remission of sins and true rest.

This book explains Joshua chapters 1 through 12 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. From the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan to the fall of Jericho and the defeat of the kings of Canaan, Joshua points to Jesus Christ the Savior. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from death to complete salvation.

Discover the true victory that is obtained not by human strength but by believing the Word of God. Lay down your own righteousness, rise again from failure, be united with the Church of God, and walk boldly in the rest and the spiritual inheritance God has already given.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)

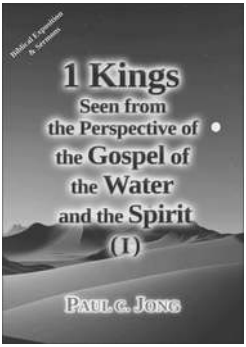


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central 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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

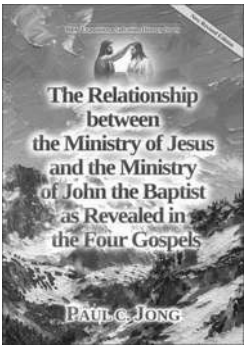


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels



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.

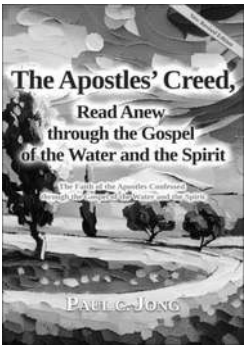
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through 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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

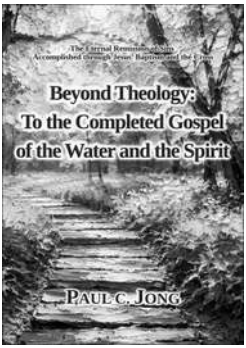


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission 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.

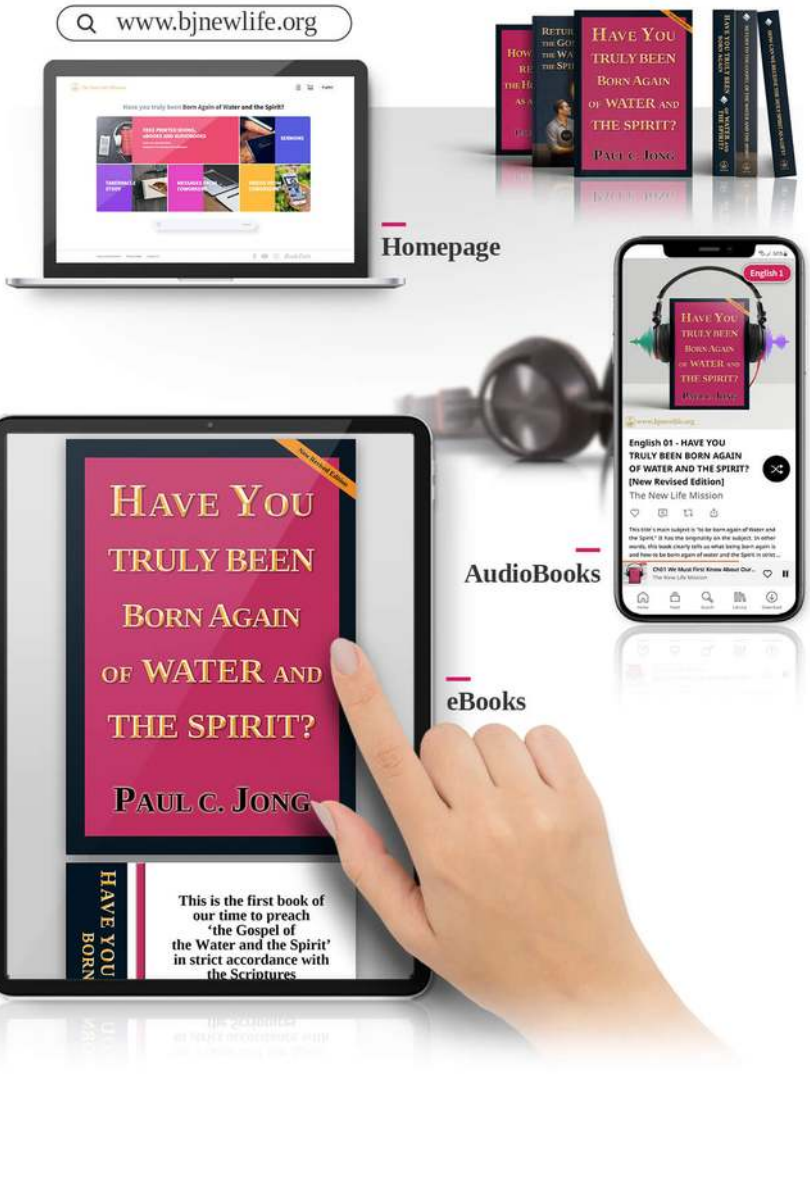
This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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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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Pastor PAUL C. JONG

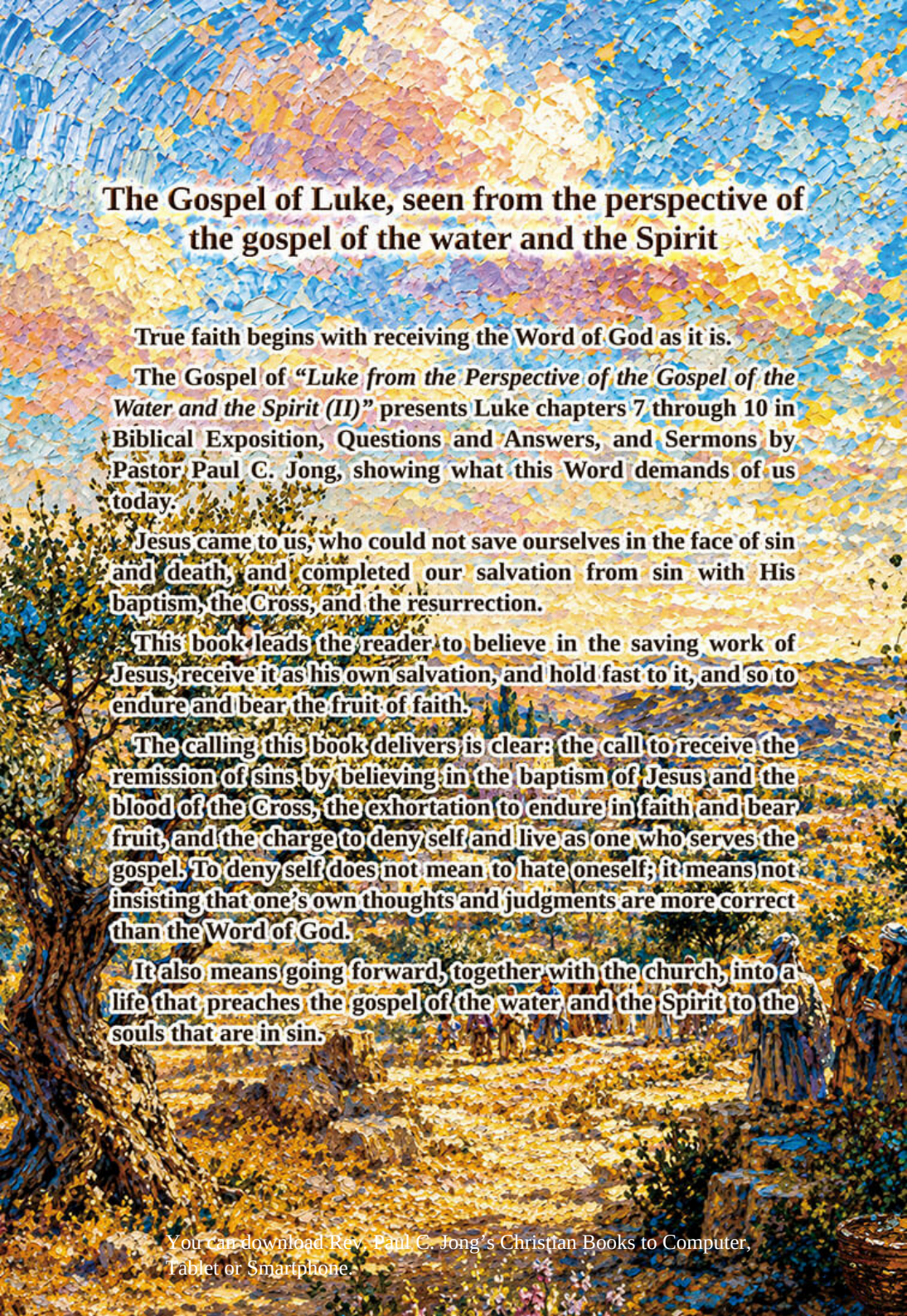
Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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 the past 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. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 100-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

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



The Gospel of Luke, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

True faith begins with receiving the Word of God as it is.

The Gospel of *"Luke from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (II)"* presents Luke chapters 7 through 10 in Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons by Pastor Paul C. Jong, showing what this Word demands of us today.

Jesus came to us, who could not save ourselves in the face of sin and death, and completed our salvation from sin with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

This book leads the reader to believe in the saving work of Jesus, receive it as his own salvation, and hold fast to it, and so to endure and bear the fruit of faith.

The calling this book delivers is clear: the call to receive the remission of sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross, the exhortation to endure in faith and bear fruit, and the charge to deny self and live as one who serves the gospel. To deny self does not mean to hate oneself; it means not insisting that one's own thoughts and judgments are more correct than the Word of God.

It also means going forward, together with the church, into a life that preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls that are in sin.

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