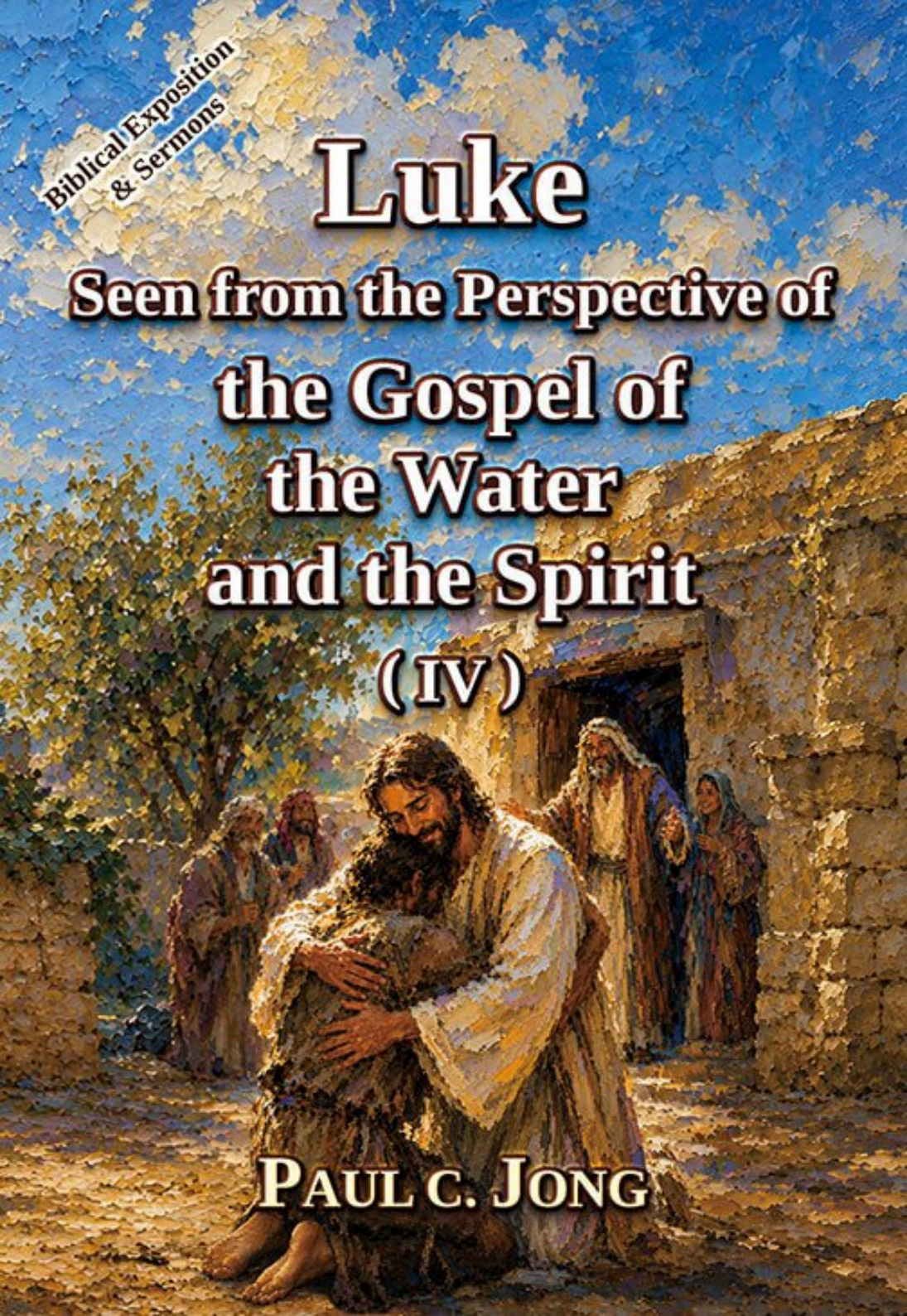
Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Luke

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

(IV)



PAUL C. JONG



"Likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7)

The Gospel of Luke shows us one heart. God seeks the souls that have been lost through sin, and when a sinner is saved and returns, there is great joy in heaven.

But lost souls are not found only in faraway places. The person who says he believes in Jesus and yet still has sin remaining in his heart and no assurance of salvation is the very one who is a lost soul before God. No one can wash away the sin in his heart with his own good deeds, religious zeal, or repeated prayers of repentance.

Jesus Christ took upon Himself the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, carried those sins to the Cross and paid the price for those sins there, and then rose from the dead, and so completed salvation for sinners.

This book reveals, from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the heart of God, who seeks lost sinners, and it will make you a person in whom God rejoices.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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

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

PAUL C. JONG

Hephzibah Publishing House
A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
SEOUL, KOREA

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

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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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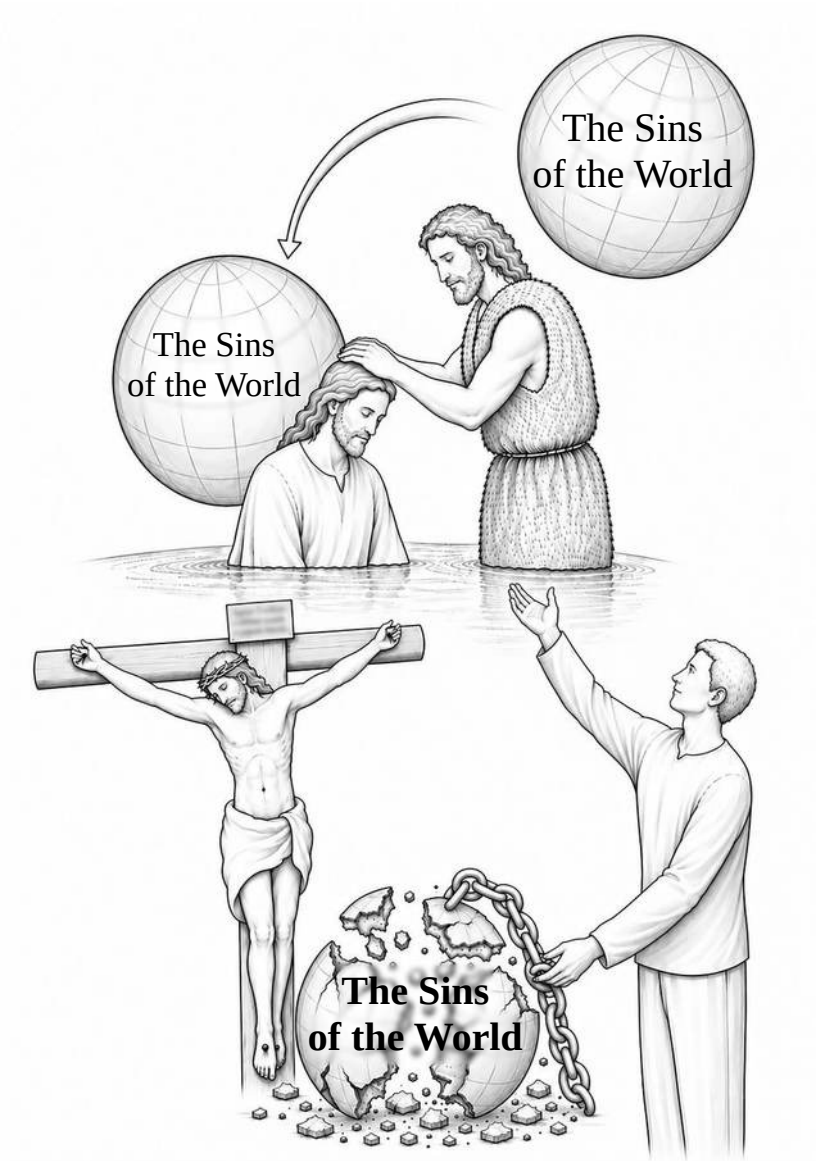

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Preface

To read the Gospel of Luke is not to learn merely as knowledge the lessons about the lost sheep and the steward, about faith and prayer. It is to know how God sought and saved lost 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 Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. Volume 4 of the Gospel of Luke shows what the person who has believed in this salvation must rejoice in, whom he must rely on, and what he must live for. The person who has received the remission of sins gives thanks for the grace of God and serves the gospel together with the Church.

Volume 4 of the Gospel of Luke covers Luke chapter 15 through chapter 18. Through the parables of the lost sheep, the lost drachma, and the two sons, we examine the heart of God, who seeks and saves sinners, and we learn the life of a steward who uses everything God has entrusted to him for the preaching of the gospel. Next we examine the life that forgives a brother, serves by the grace of God, and prepares for the last days, and the faith that prays without losing heart and accepts the word of salvation like a little child. All these words call us to believe the salvation Jesus completed and, with the grace we have received, to preach the word of salvation to the souls who do not yet know the gospel.

The heart of God, who seeks and saves lost souls

In the parables of the lost sheep, the lost drachma, and the

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two sons in Luke chapter 15, the heart of God, who seeks lost sinners, is revealed. The shepherd goes about searching until he finds the lost sheep; the woman lights a lamp and sweeps the house to find the lost drachma; and the father receives with joy the son who lost everything and returned. On the other hand, the older son put forward his own labor and merit and could not share in the joy of his father. The salvation of sinners was accomplished not by a person's goodness or merit, but by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by taking the sins of mankind upon Himself with His baptism, and with the Cross and the resurrection.

God rejoices when a lost soul hears this gospel and receives the remission of sins. The person who knows the heart of God does not seek only his own satisfaction, but preaches the gospel so that the person who has not yet met God can hear the word of salvation. For one soul to believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished and return to the Church of God is something that God and the Church rejoice in together.

The life of a steward who uses what has been entrusted to him for the preaching of the gospel

The parable of the unjust steward in Luke chapter 16 is not a word that praises deception or dishonest conduct. Just as the steward used what was entrusted to him while thinking of what was about to come upon him, the saved person must also think about where he should use the life, the time, the talents, and the material things God has entrusted to him. Riches must not become our master. The person who serves God as his Master uses what has been entrusted to him for the preaching of the gospel and looks toward the eternal kingdom of God.

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The word about the rich man and Lazarus shows that the fact of having much wealth or being poor does not decide salvation. What matters is to hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the written word while one is alive. With the knowledge, good deeds, and religious zeal of the world, one cannot solve the problem of sin. We must rightly know and believe the word of God while we are alive, and must preach the gospel so that other people can also hear of this salvation.

A life that believes and prays by the grace of God and waits for the Lord

In Luke chapter 17 Jesus tells us to examine ourselves so as not to cause others to stumble, and to forgive the brother who repents of his wrong and returns. Faith the size of a single mustard seed does not mean having great confidence in one's own ability, but having faith that acknowledges the word of God as it is. The saved person does not put forward his own labor as merit, but serves the gospel in thanksgiving for the grace of salvation he received first. Also, like the leper who, after being healed, returned to Jesus and gave glory to God, we must not forget the grace the Lord has bestowed, but give thanks for it. We must not have our hearts taken captive by the world, but must serve the gospel together with the Church and prepare the faith with which to receive the Lord who will come again.

The parable of the unjust judge and the widow in Luke chapter 18 shows the fact that we always ought to pray and not lose heart. The saved person asks for what is needed for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel, and waits, believing that God will answer. The Pharisee relied on his own religious deeds, but the tax collector admitted that he was a

sinner who had to receive the mercy of God. A little child does not put forward his own merit but accepts the word as it is, **whereas** the rich ruler relied on his own deeds and riches and so could not follow the Lord.

A person cannot be saved by his own righteousness and ability. Jesus went up to Jerusalem to accomplish salvation through the suffering of the Cross and the resurrection. He took the sins of mankind upon Himself with His baptism, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and then rose from the dead. Like the blind man who knew his own lack and asked Jesus for mercy, we too must believe that only the Lord can save us, and must follow Him.

Before reading this book

This book is arranged so that the word of Luke chapter 15 through chapter 18 may be examined through 'Biblical Exposition,' 'Questions and Answers,' and the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong. Part 1 of the Biblical Exposition examines the text divided into the general perspective and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and makes clear the meaning of salvation conveyed by each passage. Part 2 divides the text according to its content and unfolds the central events and teachings of each passage in the form of a sermon. The Questions and Answers concisely summarize the main verses and themes and help the reader confirm again what he has examined in the Biblical Exposition. The sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong show how we today must believe this word and apply it to a life of preaching the gospel.

The purpose of this entire process does not stop at building up knowledge of the Bible. It lies in helping the reader know

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Jesus, who came to seek lost sinners, and believe, as his own salvation, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He completed. It also lies in helping him pray to God without relying on his own righteousness and riches, and use what God has entrusted to him for the preaching of the gospel.

I hope that everyone who reads this book will not rely on his own goodness or merit, but will believe in his heart the fact that Jesus removed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I hope that the Holy Spirit will make him understand the word, and lead him to pray for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel without losing heart, and, united with the Church, to preach the word of salvation to the souls who have not yet been saved. ✉

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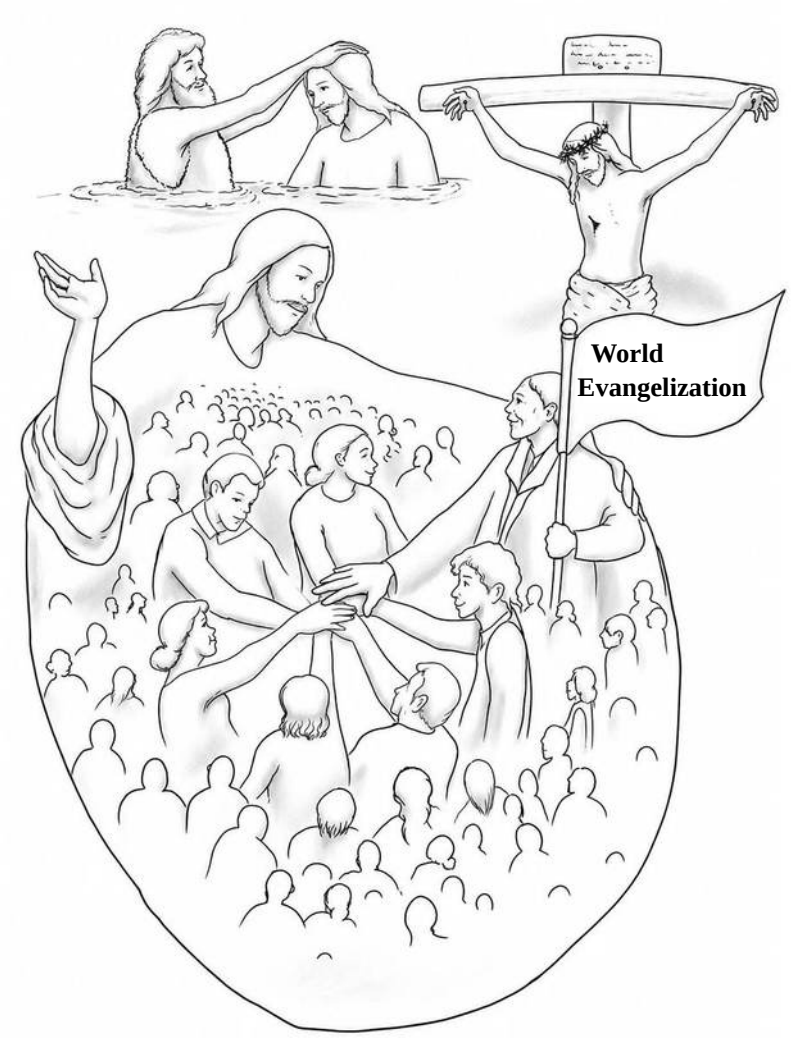

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Luke Chapter 15

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

Luke chapter 15 continues with the parables of the lost sheep, the lost drachma, and the son who left home. The three parables look different, but their center is the same. God seeks the soul that has been lost because of sin, and He rejoices greatly when that soul comes to know the salvation of God and receives the remission of sins.

1. Jesus, who receives sinners (15:1–2)

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.'"

General interpretation of the text

The people who were called tax collectors and sinners draw near to hear the word of Jesus. Tax collectors were regarded as people involved in corruption and extortion while collecting taxes for Rome, and "*sinners*" refers to the people who were rejected religiously and socially.

The Pharisees and the teachers of the Law criticize Jesus for receiving such people and eating with them. At that time, eating together meant more than simply eating food; it carried the

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meaning of accepting the other person as a member of the community.

Jesus did not take sin lightly; rather, He opened the way for sinners to repent and return to God. The three parables that follow explain the heart of God, who seeks the people who are lost, and how He rejoices over their restoration.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus receives sinners in order to save them

The tax collectors and sinners drew near to hear the word of Jesus. They were people despised by the religious people and by the people of that time, but at least they could not deny the fact that they were sinners. The person who knows the fact that he needs salvation comes forward to hear the word of Jesus.

On the other hand, the Pharisees and scribes complained when they saw Jesus receiving sinners and eating with them. They thought that because they knew the Law and were living a religious life, they were more righteous than the tax collectors and sinners. They saw the sins of others, but they did not see the pride, greed, and self-righteousness in their own hearts.

Jesus received sinners not because He acknowledged their sins as right. It was in order to save them from sin and judgment. Just as a doctor needs the sick, those who know that they are sinners and seek salvation come to the Savior. The person whose heart is full of his own righteousness does not realize why Jesus came, even though he has Jesus close at hand.

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2. The parable of the lost sheep (15:3–7)

"So He spoke this parable to them, saying: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.'"

General interpretation of the text

If a shepherd loses one sheep out of a hundred, he leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness and goes searching until he finds the lost sheep. When he finds the sheep, he lays it on his shoulders, returns, and calls his friends and neighbors to rejoice together.

This parable shows the fact that even one lost person is precious to God. God does not give up on the person who has lost his way but actively seeks him, and when he returns, God receives him with great joy.

Jesus says that there is greater joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine righteous persons who need no repentance. Here, 'the righteous persons who need no repentance' can be seen as referring critically to those who think that they themselves have no need of repentance, rather than to people who actually have no sin at all.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The Lord comes to seek the lost sinner

A sheep that has lost its way does not know where it is, and it has no ability to protect itself from wild beasts and dangers. A sinner, too, leaves God and lives according to his own thoughts and desires, but he cannot make a way back to God by his own efforts and religious deeds.

The shepherd did not merely wait for the lost sheep to come back on its own. He went searching until he found that sheep, and after finding it, he did not rebuke it and drive it home; he laid it on his own shoulders and returned. This shows that our salvation is a work that God began first.

God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to this earth. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He took upon Himself all the sins of mankind; He was hung on the Cross carrying those sins and was judged, and He rose from the dead. The Lord Himself accomplished the work of salvation that sinners could not carry out by themselves.

That the shepherd laid the sheep on his shoulders also shows the fact that salvation is not completed by the strength of the sinner. The Lord did not make us follow Him carrying the burden of our sins; He took our sins upon His own body and led us all the way to the place of salvation.

For one sinner to repent does not end with regretting his own wrongs with tears. It is to turn from his own righteousness and mistaken faith and to know and believe the salvation God has accomplished. When one soul that was lost receives the remission of sins, God rejoices greatly in heaven. This word does not mean that He regards lightly those who have already returned; it emphasizes the earnest heart of God, who seeks the one lost soul.

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3. The parable of the lost drachma (15:8–10)

'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'

General interpretation of the text

When a woman loses one of her ten silver coins, she lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches diligently until she finds it. When she finds the lost silver coin, she calls her friends and neighbors to rejoice together.

A lost silver coin cannot come back to its owner by itself, but the woman does not give up on it and searches to the very end. This shows the grace of God, who first seeks the person who is lost, and the value of one soul.

Jesus says that when one sinner repents, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. The parables of the lost sheep and the lost silver coin teach that rather than doubting or rejecting a person who has repented, we should rejoice together with God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—He seeks lost souls with the light of the word

When a woman lost one of her ten drachmas, she lit a lamp,

swept the house, and searched diligently until she found it. The drachma could not make a sound by itself or go to find its owner. The owner had to light a lamp, sweep away the dust, and search for it.

The lost drachma shows the spiritual condition of the person who has left God. A person may not know from where he has fallen or what state he is in before God. It is easy for him to think that his soul is also sound, on the grounds that he is physically alive and doing well in the affairs of the world.

God shines the lamp of the word so that people may see their sins and their spiritual condition. The Law exposes the sin in the heart, and the gospel makes clear how Jesus solved that sin. Through the word, the Holy Spirit helps people to abandon their own righteousness and to realize the baptism and the Cross of Jesus.

Just as the woman swept the house and found the drachma, God seeks lost souls through the Church and the workers of the gospel. He has the word of the gospel preached, uses books, literature, and various means, and keeps letting a person hear the word until that person receives the remission of sins.

The woman who found the drachma called her friends and neighbors and rejoiced together with them. For one person to come to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins is not a joyful thing for that individual alone. It is a thing that God and the Church of God rejoice over together. Therefore, the saved saints, too, must make the salvation of souls their own greatest joy.

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4. The repentance of the younger son, who left home (15:11–19)

"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'"

General interpretation of the text

The younger son demands his share of the inheritance in advance even though his father is still alive. This can be seen as a serious rejection, in that he wants only the property rather than the relationship with his father.

He goes to a far country and squanders all his property. When a famine arises, he falls into a wretched state in which he tends swine and wants to eat even the food of the swine. Since swine were unclean animals to the Jews, this shows that he had gone down to the lowest state.

Only then does the son realize his wrong. Thinking of the fact that there are hired servants with bread enough in his father's house while he himself is about to starve to death, he decides to return to his father.

He thinks of confessing that he has sinned against God and against his father and is no longer worthy to be called a son. He intends to ask to be received even as one of his father's hired servants. His repentance does not stop at realizing his wrong; it appears in the act of changing the direction of his life and returning to his father.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must abandon our own righteousness and return to God

The younger son demanded his share of the property even though his father was still alive. Rather than a life together with his father, he wanted to take his father's property and live as he pleased. This shows the human heart that regards the life, time, and material things God has given as its own and wants to live without God.

The son went to a far country and squandered his property, and when a great famine arose, he reached the point where he could not fill his stomach even with the pods that the swine ate. When he left his father, it seemed that he would be able to live freely, but in the end he lost everything and came to a state worse than that of a servant.

People, too, leave God and look for satisfaction in the material things and pleasures of the world, but they cannot fill the emptiness of the soul with those things. The things of the world may give joy for a while, but they cannot wash away sin

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or give eternal life. The heart that thinks its own strength is sufficient without God is precisely the rich and lofty heart.

The fact that the son went through hardship did not in itself save him. But through that situation he came to see his true self. He acknowledged his own wrong in having left his father and his helplessness, and he decided to return to his father.

True repentance does not stop at words of regret over one's own sins. It is to abandon the thoughts and the self-righteousness one has held on to and to turn one's direction toward God. And it is to go on to know and believe the salvation God has accomplished through Jesus Christ.

5. The father, who welcomes the son who has returned (15:20–24)

'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." 'But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry.'

General interpretation of the text

While the son is still far away, the father sees him, has compassion on him, runs to him, embraces him, and kisses him.

The father does not wait until the son first makes sufficient restitution or proves his worthiness; he welcomes the returning son with love.

When the son confesses his sin, the father gives him the best robe, a ring, and sandals, kills the fatted calf, and holds a feast. These show that he has been completely restored to the position of a son, not a hired servant.

The son's repentance appeared in the act of returning to his father, and the father's forgiveness appeared as love and grace that came before any merit of the son.

The words *"this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found"* mean that a sinner who had left God repents and has his relationship restored. God is not One who reluctantly accepts the sinner who has returned; He is One who rejoices as if He had recovered a child He had lost.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—God restores sinners as His children

While the son was still far away, the father saw him first. The father ran, fell on his son's neck, and kissed him. He did not receive the son only after the son had worked as a hired servant to pay off his debt or had proved his worthiness.

The son confessed that he was not worthy to be called his father's son. But the father did not accept him as a hired servant; he restored him to the place of a son. He clothed him with the best robe, put a ring on his hand, and put sandals on his feet.

The best robe represents the righteousness of the father that covers the filth of the son. A sinner cannot make a robe of righteousness with his own good deeds and religious merits. Only through the righteous work of salvation that Jesus

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accomplished can he stand before God.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself the sins of our whole lifetime. Carrying those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and so He received the judgment of sin, and He rose from the dead. The person who knows and believes in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, is washed of all his sins and is clothed with the righteousness of God.

The ring shows his restored status as a son, and the sandals show that he has become a person who can live in his father's house again. All of this was not a reward earned by the son's labor but the love and grace the father bestowed.

The father said that the son who had returned was a person who had been dead and was alive again, a person who had been lost and was found again. To receive the remission of sins is not simply a matter of gaining comfort of heart. It is the soul that was dead in sin receiving life and being restored as a child of God.

6. The older son, whose heart was far away even while he was at home (15:25–32)

'Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf." 'But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never

transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him." 'And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."'

General interpretation of the text

The older son, returning from the field, learns that a feast has been held for his brother, becomes angry, and refuses to go into the house. Just as the father went out to meet the younger son, he goes out to the older son in person as well and urges him to join the feast.

The older son complains that though he has served his father for a long time and has never disobeyed his commands, his father has never given him even a young goat for himself. He was looking at his relationship with his father from the viewpoint of a transaction of his own service and reward rather than of love.

Moreover, he calls his brother not "my brother" but *"this son of yours"* and refuses the relationship. At this the father calls him *"your brother"* and restores the relationship of brothers.

The father tells the older son that he has always been with him and that all he has is his. But he explains that it is right to rejoice for his brother, who was dead and is alive again, who was lost and is found.

The younger son became a lost person by leaving home and sinning, but the older son, even while he was inside the house,

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was far from his father's heart because of his self-righteousness and anger. This parable shows that not only visible sins but also religious pride and mercilessness toward others can block one's relationship with God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must remember the grace of salvation rather than our own merits

The older son was with his father in body, but he did not know his father's heart. When he heard that his brother had returned, rather than rejoicing together, he became angry and refused to go into the house.

He asserted that he had served his father for many years and had never disobeyed his commands. On the grounds of his own labor and deeds, he demanded a reward from his father. Moreover, he despised his returned brother by not calling him his brother but speaking of him as his father's son.

The older son shows the hearts of the self-righteous Pharisees and scribes. They thought that they were serving God, but they did not rejoice when sinners were saved. Because they regarded their own legalistic deeds and religious labors as righteous, they did not understand the heart of God, who receives sinners by grace.

This word is a warning to born-again saints as well. This is because, on the grounds that we have served the gospel for a long time, we can come to regard our own labor as righteousness, compare ourselves with others, and harbor a heart that demands a reward from God. When self-righteousness arises, the righteousness of the Lord who saved us is hidden, and we come to judge our brothers and sisters.

The father went out in person to the angry older son as well and urged him. And he told him that all he had was already his. The older son was with his father and enjoying his father's house, but because he counted only his own labor rather than grace, he did not enjoy that abundance.

The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has already become one of the people of the kingdom of God and has received eternal life and the Holy Spirit as gifts. Service for the gospel is not a price paid to buy the kingdom of God. It is taking part in the will of the Father out of gratitude for the grace that saved him.

The father said that since the brother who had been lost had returned, it was right to make merry and be glad together. The greatest concern of God the Father lies in seeking and saving lost souls. The saints, too, must rejoice over one soul hearing the gospel and receiving the remission of sins, rather than counting their own positions and rewards.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 15 conveys

The three parables of Luke chapter 15 share a common flow: 'lost, found, and joy.' The sheep was found by the shepherd, the drachma was found by the woman, and the son who had left home was restored by the love of his father. Salvation begins with God, who seeks the lost sinner.

Jesus, who is God, came to this earth in the body of a man in order to seek sinners. When He received baptism from John the Baptist, He took upon Himself all our sins; He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and He rose from the dead.

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This is the perfect salvation God has accomplished by the water and the Spirit.

Like the younger son, a sinner must acknowledge his own sins and helplessness and turn from his own righteousness and mistaken faith. And he must know and believe in his heart the fact that Jesus has solved all our sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. God clothes the person who believes in this gospel with His own righteousness and restores him to the place of a child.

The person who has received the remission of sins must not count his own labor and reward like the older son. He must remember that he, too, was a person who had been lost and was found by the Lord. He must use the material things, time, and strength God has given to seek lost souls, and when one person receives the remission of sins, he must rejoice together with God and the Church.

Luke chapter 15 asks us: Are we in the place of the Pharisees, who hold on to their own righteousness and complain about sinners, or are we taking part in the joy of the Father, who seeks lost souls, remembering the grace that sought and saved us? The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must live with their hearts set on the work of saving souls, which the Lord regards as most precious. ✉

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

God, who seeks and saves the lost sinner

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 above, we looked at each passage of Luke chapter 15 side by side, through the general interpretation of the text and through the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look in detail at the heart of God, who seeks the lost sinner; the grace that restores the sinner who has returned; and the faith that abandons its own righteousness and takes part in the joy of saving souls.

The parables of the lost sheep and the lost drachma, and the story of the younger son who left his father and the older son who did not know his father's heart even while he was at home, are not words separate from one another. All these words show the fact that God is the One who seeks lost sinners and restores them to the place of children, and that those who have been saved must not boast of their own righteousness or condemn others but must take part in the joy of one soul returning.

The expository sermons that follow, going along the flow of the text, look at how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took upon Himself the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation through the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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Jesus, who receives sinners and saves them with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.'" (Luke 15:1–2).

Luke 15:1–2 is the direct occasion on which the parables of the lost sheep, the lost drachma, and the two sons that follow were given. To know why Jesus repeatedly spoke of the heart of God, who seeks one lost soul, we must first look at the contrasting attitudes of the tax collectors and sinners who drew near to Jesus and of the Pharisees and scribes who complained as they watched.

The sinners who drew near to hear the word

The phrase *"all the tax collectors and the sinners"* in the text shows that many people who were despised and rejected in the religious society of that time gathered to Jesus. Those who were treated as sinners by people drew near in order to hear the word of Jesus.

Because the tax collectors of that time collected taxes with the power of Rome behind them, they were treated like sinners by the Jews. But we must think separately about the fact that they were called sinners socially and the fact that all people are sinners before God. The Pharisees and scribes who were respected by people were also sinners, born as descendants of Adam and living with sin in their hearts. Only, because they relied on their own religious deeds and knowledge, they did not realize that they themselves were sinners.

The purpose for which the tax collectors and sinners drew

near to Jesus was *"to hear Him."* The way for a sinner to be saved begins with hearing the word of God. As long as one holds on only to one's own thoughts and religious experience, one cannot know what kind of sinner one is before God, nor how God has accomplished salvation.

The person who hears the word must realize his own sinful state and accept in his heart the salvation God has prepared. One receives the remission of sins not by the outward experience of having been in the same place as Jesus or having eaten with Him, but by the faith that believes the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Jesus, who received sinners

Jesus did not push away the tax collectors and sinners who came out to hear the word. He received them and ate with them. People kept away from them because of their past conduct and social reputation, but Jesus saw them as lost souls who had to be saved. He received them close to Him so that the sinners could hear the word of salvation.

Jesus received sinners not in order to leave them as they were in sin, but in order to save them from sin, and so He received them close to Him. The mercy of the Lord is not a love that compromises with sin; it is the love of salvation that lets sinners hear the truth and obtain the remission of sins.

The Pharisees and scribes did not understand this heart of Jesus. They complained, *"This Man receives sinners and eats with them."* In their eyes, keeping away from sinners and setting themselves apart looked like righteousness. They regarded themselves as closer to God than the tax collectors and sinners because they knew the Law and kept religious rules.

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But the heart that pointed a finger at others as sinners while thinking of itself as righteous was what actually put distance between them and God. The tax collectors and sinners felt their own lack and came close to Jesus to hear the word, but the Pharisees and scribes held on to their own righteousness and criticized the saving work of Jesus. Outwardly they seemed to serve God well, but they did not take part in the heart of God, who seeks those who are lost.

The three parables Jesus went on to speak reveal the hearts of these two groups. In the parable of the lost sheep, the shepherd goes out to find the lost sheep, and in the parable of the lost drachma, the woman lights a lamp and sweeps the house to find the lost money. In the parable of the two sons, the father has compassion on the son who left home and comes back and receives him, and he also goes out to the older son, who cannot rejoice over his returned brother, and lets him know the father's heart.

The common emphasis of these three parables lies in the fact that God seeks the lost sinner and rejoices when that sinner returns and is saved. The lost sheep, the drachma, and the son who left home show the person who, like the tax collectors and sinners, must realize his own lost state and receive salvation. On the other hand, the older son, who could not rejoice over his brother's return even while he was in his father's house, reflects the self-righteousness and complaining of the Pharisees and scribes.

Abandon your own righteousness and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The people who are lost before God are not only those who

have committed particularly great sins in the world. All people have become distant from God because of sin, and no one can make a way back to God by his own strength. In the world there are differences in deeds and social reputation, but no one can wash away the sin of his heart and become righteous before God by his own good deeds and religious life.

Jesus is not One who only comforted sinners with words and left the problem of sin as it was. Before this event, Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. Therefore the Lord, who looked upon the sinners who had drawn near to Him, was the Savior who had actually taken upon Himself their sins.

Carrying the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself through His baptism, Jesus was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and so He received the punishment and judgment of all those sins. Then He rose from the dead, overcame sin and death, and completed salvation. This gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished through His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, is the perfect way of salvation that brings sinners back to God.

A person does not wash away his sins little by little by repeating prayers of repentance every time he sins. True repentance is to turn from the thinking that relied on one's own deeds and one's own righteousness, to acknowledge that one is a sinner who would perish without the grace of God, and to believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

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Receive lost souls and preach the gospel of salvation

Just as the tax collectors and sinners drew near to Jesus, people must not run away from the Lord because of their sins but must come forward to hear the word. One must not think that one cannot come to Jesus because one's past is too shameful and one's sins are many. Jesus did not come to save those without sin; He came to save sinners from sin.

At the same time, one must not trust in one's own religious life and good deeds like the Pharisees and scribes. The facts that one has attended church for a long time, knows the Bible well, and has a church office and service cannot be grounds for the remission of sins. If one despises sinners, thinking oneself better than others, one will end up, like the older son, unable to take part in the joy of the Father even while being near the Father's house.

The Church today must not discriminate against people on the basis of social status and reputation, appearance and education, or past sins. It must receive and respect people so that anyone can come to hear the word of God. While actually caring for those who are suffering and marginalized, it must serve them so that they can hear and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Church must clearly preach sin and judgment, and it must also fully preach the way of the remission of sins that Jesus has already completed. True love for sinners is to serve them with the truth so that their souls may realize their sins, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and be saved.

The person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not despise those who have not yet been saved. It is because he knows the fact that he himself was originally a sinner lost to God, but Jesus sought him,

received him, and saved him. Rather than feeling superior when he sees the faults of others, he prays that those souls, too, may hear the word and be saved, and he preaches the gospel patiently.

The person who preaches the gospel must open his heart and the way so that a soul who wants to hear the word can hear the truth sufficiently. The purpose of preaching the gospel is to serve lost souls so that they may believe in their hearts in the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, and receive the remission of sins.

Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin through the blood and death of the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed salvation for sinners. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins and becomes a child of God, regardless of his past sins and social reputation. The person so saved does not despise other sinners like the Pharisees; he receives them with the heart of Jesus, lets them hear the word of salvation, and rejoices together over one soul returning.

The Lord, who seeks one lost soul to the very end and saves it

"So He spoke this parable to them, saying: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents

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than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:3–7).

The direct occasion on which Jesus spoke this parable appears in verses 1–2 above. The tax collectors and sinners drew near to Jesus to hear the word, but the Pharisees and scribes complained that Jesus received sinners and ate with them. They thought that keeping away from sinners was holiness, but Jesus showed through the parable of the lost sheep that seeking and saving sinners is the heart of God.

The shepherd, who goes after the lost sheep until he finds it

Jesus gave as a parable a man who owned a hundred sheep. One of them left the flock and lost its way. A sheep is an animal that, once it loses its direction, finds it hard to return to its shepherd by its own strength. If it sees grass ahead, it can keep going without knowing the danger, and once it is far from the flock and the shepherd, it is exposed to the dangers of fierce beasts, cliffs, and hunger.

Since the transgression of Adam, all people are born under sin and are beings who have lost their way before God. Because the lost sheep cannot find its shepherd and return by itself, Jesus, the Shepherd, comes to find it first and saves it.

The lost sheep is still the possession of the shepherd and a precious life. In the words "*my sheep which was lost*" is contained the heart of the shepherd, who does not give up on that sheep. God planned the work of salvation in order to find again the people who had become distant from Him through sin and make them His own people, and He came to seek sinners first.

The text asks whether the shepherd does not "*go after the*

one which is lost until he finds it." The shepherd did not search for a while and then give up. He went searching until he found it. This word shows how clear and earnest the will of God to save sinners is. God did not merely set up His will to save sinners; He actually sent His Son into this world.

The salvation accomplished through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection

The shepherd who seeks the lost sheep shows that Jesus Christ came to seek sinners. Jesus is not One who only commanded sinners from afar to come back on their own. In order to save the people placed under sin and death, He Himself put on the flesh of a man and came into this world.

As He began His public ministry, Jesus received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Through that baptism He took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. The sinless Son of God, by receiving all the sins of sinners passed on to Him, fulfilled the righteousness of God that saves those who are lost.

When Jesus received baptism, the Holy Spirit came upon Him like a dove, and God the Father testified of Jesus that He was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. The work of saving lost people is the work of the triune God: God the Father planned it, God the Son, Jesus, accomplished it through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and the Holy Spirit testifies to the truth of that salvation.

Carrying the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, Jesus was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and so He received the punishment and judgment of all sins. On the Cross He said, *"It*

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is finished!" and after He died, He rose again on the third day and overcame sin and death. Jesus is the perfect Savior, who is alive even now.

The person who believes in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. To obtain the remission of sins and new life in this way is for the sheep that was lost to meet its Shepherd and Savior.

What the shepherd did after finding the lost sheep is also important. The shepherd did not scold the sheep and tell it to walk back by itself. *"When he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing,"* and so he returned. The sheep that had lost its way and was exhausted and hurt came home carried on the shoulders of the shepherd. The sheep did not come back by its own strength; the shepherd found it, took responsibility for it, and brought it back.

This scene shows the fact that salvation is accomplished not by human labor and merit but by the righteousness Jesus completed. A sinner cannot wash away his sins by the Law and good deeds or by repeated prayers of repentance. When he believes in the salvation Jesus completed through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, he is clothed with the salvation of the Lord and comes to live in gratitude for the grace that sought and saved him.

Heaven rejoices when a sinner turns back

The shepherd did not stop at rejoicing alone after finding the sheep. He came home, called together his friends and neighbors, and said, *"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was*

lost!" The joy of finding a life that was lost is a joy that cannot be kept to oneself. When one sinner believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins, it becomes a joy to God, and it also becomes a joy to the Church of God and to those who believe.

Jesus made the meaning of this parable clear with the words *"one sinner who repents."* Here, repentance does not mean confessing one's wrongs with the lips and then walking the same road again. Repentance is to turn back from the road on which one has left God and relied on one's own thoughts and one's own righteousness.

A person must first acknowledge the fact that he is a lost sinner before God. He must accept the fact that he has sin and that without the salvation God has accomplished he cannot but be judged. And he must turn from relying on his own deeds and religious merits and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. This is the true repentance by which a sinner returns to the bosom of salvation.

If one says that one believes in Jesus and yet still has sin in one's heart, does not know how Jesus removed one's sins, and has no assurance of the remission of sins and of the Holy Spirit, one must look back and ask whether one is a sheep that has met its Shepherd. One does not escape from the lost state merely by the facts that one attends church, has become a baptized church member, and holds a church office and service.

Saving faith is not a faith that vaguely acknowledges only the Cross of Jesus. It is to believe in one's heart the fact that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in order to take upon Himself all my sins, that carrying those sins He died shedding His blood on the Cross, and that He rose again and became my eternal Savior. When one believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus becomes my Shepherd and I

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become one of the people of God.

"Ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" reveals the self-righteousness of the Pharisees, who regarded themselves as righteous and complained about Jesus receiving sinners. It also shows the fact that God rejoices even more greatly when one sinner who was lost turns back to the gospel than over the righteous who have already believed in the gospel and received the remission of sins. The person who knows the joy of God does not envy the one soul that has returned but rejoices together.

Seek lost souls with the heart of the shepherd

The person who has already received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not envy or look down on a person who has been newly saved. It is because he knows the fact that he, too, was originally a sheep that had lost its way, and Jesus sought him and saved him. He treasures the one soul that has newly returned, cares for him together so that his faith may grow in the word of God, and rejoices.

Believers and the Church must seek, with the heart of the shepherd, the souls that are still in a lost state and open up opportunities for them to hear the word. They must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately so that such a person can realize that he is a sinner and believe in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Lost souls are not revealed by appearance and social circumstances alone. There are people who seem to lack nothing outwardly but are tormented by the problems of sin and death and are seeking the word of salvation. Believers must attentively look after the souls that suffer because of their sins and seek God,

and preach to them the gospel they need.

Just as the shepherd went after the lost sheep until he found it, believers must pray, be patient for a long time, and preach the gospel. They may preach by meeting people in person, or they may use various media such as books, writings, and audio. Though the methods differ, the content to be preached is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The purpose for which the Church exists does not lie in enlarging its own size and fame, either. Building a large church building, expanding the organization, and being recognized by people cannot be the final purpose of the Church. God has left the Church in the world so that it may preach the gospel to lost souls and serve them so that they may receive the remission of sins and return to the bosom of God.

Luke 15:3–7 shows the love of God, who seeks the lost sinner to the very end, and the joy when one soul is saved. Jesus Himself came to seek sinners, took upon Himself all sins through the baptism He received from John, was judged through the blood and death of the Cross, and rose again and completed salvation. The person who has believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and become a child of God gives thanks to the Lord who sought him, preaches the gospel to other lost souls with the heart of the shepherd, and rejoices together with God when one sinner returns.

God, who seeks lost souls, saves them, and rejoices

'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls

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her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.' (Luke 15:8–10).

Luke 15:8–10 is the second parable, following the parable of the lost sheep that came before it. To the Pharisees and scribes who complained about Him for receiving sinners, Jesus spoke one after another the parables of the lost sheep, the lost drachma, and the two sons. All three parables have the same center: God seeks the people who are lost, and He rejoices when they return and are saved.

He treasures even one lost drachma

In the parable of the lost sheep, one sheep out of a hundred was lost, and in the parable of the lost drachma, one drachma out of ten was lost. In the parable that follows, one of two sons leaves his father's house. That Jesus spoke repeatedly of the one that was lost shows the fact that to God not even one soul is a trivial being that may as well disappear.

The drachma was a unit of the currency used at that time, and one drachma was a sum comparable to a laborer's wages for one day. The woman lost one of her ten drachmas. She was not satisfied with the remaining nine just because one had disappeared. Because the one that was lost had also been her own possession and had value, she was determined to find it.

The value of a person before God is like this, too. In the world one person may seem to be no more than one among countless people, but God made each person in His own image. God does not regard it as a small matter that a person has become distant from Him because of sin. He wants to find that one

person, save him from sin, and make him one of His own people.

The lost drachma does not even know by itself that it is lost, nor can it go to find its owner. A lost sheep can sense danger and cry out, but a coin does not even know where it has fallen. This scene shows the fact that a sinner may fail to realize his own spiritual state even while he is away from God.

Lost souls are not found only in places far away from us. Whether inside or outside the Church, the person who does not know how Jesus removed his sins and still has sin remaining in his heart must hear the word of salvation. It is not one's history of attending church or one's knowledge of the Bible that removes sin; only by knowing and believing the salvation Jesus accomplished, as the word says, can one receive the remission of sins.

The heart of God, who searches carefully until He finds

To find the lost drachma, the woman lit a lamp, swept the house, and diligently searched every corner. Her searching through the whole house until she found it, instead of waiting for the coin to appear by itself, shows the earnest heart of God, who is determined to find one lost soul.

God has the word of salvation preached through the Church and the believers who have been entrusted with the gospel. The Holy Spirit makes the person who hears the word that is preached realize his own lost condition and the salvation Jesus accomplished. God seeks sinners and meets them through the word and the gospel.

Man-made religion demands that one make oneself holy through such deeds as good works, repeated confession of sins,

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fasting, and service. But human deeds cannot remove the sin that has entered the heart. The word of God reveals that people cannot wash away their sins by themselves, and at the same time it makes clear how God sent His Son and saved sinners. The person who believes the word comes to abandon his own righteousness and religious zeal and to accept the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished.

He saves sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

God sent His Son to this earth in order to seek sinners. Jesus did not tell sinners to make themselves clean first and then come to Him. In order to seek and save the people placed under sin and death, He Himself put on the flesh of a man and came into the world.

When Jesus turned thirty, He received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Through that baptism He took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. The sinless Jesus received baptism not because He had sin, but in order to receive the sins of lost sinners passed on to Him and save them.

Carrying the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself through His baptism, Jesus went to the Cross. By being nailed to the Cross and dying shedding His blood, He received the punishment and judgment of sin in our place. Then He was buried, and on the third day He rose from the dead, and so He overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

Jesus taking upon Himself the sins of mankind through His baptism and His dying shedding His blood on the Cross are one connected work of salvation. Jesus carried the sin of the world

that He that had been passed on to Him through His baptism, received its judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed eternal salvation for sinners. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

The lost drachma did nothing to regain its value. Because the coin was still precious to its owner even after it was lost, the woman searched diligently and placed it in her own hand again. In the same way, salvation is not a matter of a person proving his own worth by good deeds; it is God seeking the sinner, cleansing him with the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and restoring him as one of His own people.

Jesus made the meaning of this parable clear with the words *"one sinner who repents."* True repentance is not pleading, every time one sins, that one has done wrong and so washing away that sin little by little; it is to turn from relying on one's own deeds, one's own righteousness, and man-made religious doctrines, and to believe the word of God.

A person must acknowledge the fact that he is a sinner lost before God and that he cannot escape from sin by his own strength. And he must believe in his heart the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead and saved him. This is the repentance that takes place before the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Repentance is accompanied by denying one's own thoughts. One must turn from the heart that insisted that one was right rather than the word of God, from the thinking that made one's own religious life the grounds of salvation, and from the faith by which one consoled oneself that one was already saved even while there was sin in the heart. It is not adding the gospel as one

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more thing while holding on to one's own thoughts; one must lay down one's mistaken faith and accept only the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Rejoice together over the salvation of one soul

That the woman said, *"Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!"* after finding the drachma shows the fact that salvation is the joy of God. God is not One who reluctantly accepts a sinner who returns. When a soul that was lost believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins, God rejoices first.

Jesus said, *"There is joy in the presence of the angels of God."* This means that one sinner repenting and being saved is an event to rejoice over in heaven as well. In the world he may be one person whose name is not even known, but for that person to receive the remission of sins and become a child of God becomes a joy before God and the angels.

Just as the woman called her friends and neighbors and rejoiced with them, the Church of God also rejoices together over one soul being saved. Remembering the fact that we, too, were originally lost people but were found by the Lord and received the remission of sins, we must treasure the soul that has newly returned and care for that person so that he may grow in the word.

The person who has already received the remission of sins must take part in the work of God, who seeks lost souls. Since we cannot tell from a person's outward appearance alone who is seeking salvation, we must preach the word so that as many people as possible can hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We may preach by meeting people in person, or we may use

books and writings, audio, and various media. What matters is to preach the word of the gospel so that sinners may accurately hear and believe in their hearts the salvation Jesus accomplished through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The purpose of the Church does not lie in enlarging its own organization and fame, either. The place and the finances the Church has, the abilities of its people, and its various media must be used as tools for preaching the gospel to lost souls. For one soul to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins is a greater joy to God than the outward growth of the Church.

This word also makes each individual look back at his own faith. More important than the history of having believed in Jesus for a long time is knowing and believing, through the word, how Jesus removed my sins. Jesus received baptism from John in order to take upon Himself my sins, died shedding His blood on the Cross in order to receive the judgment of those sins in my place, and rose from the dead. The person who believes in this salvation in his heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes one of the people of God.

Luke 15:8–10 shows the heart of God, who seeks lost souls, through the woman who searches carefully for the lost drachma until she finds it. God has completed salvation for sinners through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, and He has this gospel preached through the Church and the believers. When a sinner turns from his own righteousness and mistaken faith and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God makes him His own child and rejoices. Those who have been saved, too, must take part in the joy of God, preach the gospel to lost souls, and live a life of rejoicing together when they return.

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The Father, who restores the sinner who has returned as a righteous child

"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" 'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." 'But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry. 'Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe

and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf." 'But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him." 'And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."'" (Luke 15:11–32).

This parable is the answer of Jesus to the Pharisees and scribes, who complained, *"This Man receives sinners and eats with them"* when the tax collectors and sinners drew near to hear the word of Jesus. In the parables of the lost sheep and the lost drachma that came before, the joy of the shepherd and the woman who found what was lost was emphasized; in this parable, the heart of the father who receives the sinner when he returns and the heart of the older son who cannot accept that joy are revealed together.

This word is commonly called 'the parable of the prodigal son,' but the text begins with the words *"A certain man had two sons."* It was not only the younger son who had a problem. The younger son left home and became distant from his father, and the older son stayed at home but did not know his father's love and joy. The one became distant from his father through prodigality, and the other had become distant from his father in heart by putting forward his own labor and righteousness.

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If you leave the father and live as you please, you lose everything

The younger son demanded his portion even though his father was still alive. Rather than living together with his father, he wanted to receive his father's property and live as he pleased. This shows the sin of human beings, who have received life and everything from God and yet want to live for themselves without God. People did not make their own life and health, time and talents, wealth and wisdom by themselves. All of these were received from God the Creator. But sinners, even with the things God has given, use them for their own desires and glory rather than loving God and serving His will.

The father did not stop the son's demand but divided his livelihood to him. God made human beings as personal beings, and He does not hold them back by force. The person who leaves God and lives as he pleases comes to taste the fruit of the road he has chosen.

Not many days later, the younger son gathered his possessions and left for a far country. The far country shows the state of living according to one's own desires, having left the love and rule of the father. A sinner who has left God thinks that he has gained freedom, but in reality he becomes a slave of sin and desire. At the end of the road of living as one pleases without God are the emptiness and death of the soul.

It was not only money that the younger son wasted. Along with the property his father had given him, he also wasted his own time, health, and life. Using the life and talents God has given only for one's own flesh is likewise wasting one's life before God. Since a person's life is not his own but was received from God, he must know who gave that life and for what it must be used.

After he had spent all his property, a great famine even arose in that country. When he had wealth, many things seemed to satisfy him, but when what he had was gone, there was no longer anyone at his side to care for him. The world cannot satisfy a person's soul forever. Money and pleasure, honor and the recognition of people can gladden the heart for a while, but they do not solve the problems of sin and death. The hunger of a soul that has left God cannot be filled with the things of the world.

He attached himself to a citizen of that country and came to feed swine. Since swine were unclean animals to the Jews, the situation of feeding swine shows how low and wretched a state he had fallen into. He tried to fill his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, but no one gave him even that. The freedom he had tried to gain by leaving his father's abundant house ended in the end in hunger worse than that of the swine and in servitude.

Come to yourself and return to the father

At this point the younger son *"came to himself"* and came to see his own condition. Turning back begins first with awakening from the delusion that one is living well. A sinner must know that his soul, having left God, is placed in death, and that he cannot solve that problem with his own strength and the things of the world. The person who does not know that he is sick does not seek a physician, and the person who does not know that he is a being who will perish because of sin does not seek the Savior.

But merely the thought of realizing one's wrong is not enough. The younger son said, *"I will arise and go to my father"* and he actually arose and went back. True turning back does not end with grieving over one's own misery; it is to abandon what one relied on and return to the father. Repentance before the

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gospel, too, is not merely shedding tears and tormenting one's feelings. It is to acknowledge that one has no righteousness by which to be saved and to come back to believing in the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ accomplished.

The son confessed that he had sinned against heaven and against his father. Sin is not only the harm done to people; it is rebellion against God. He thought that he was no longer worthy to be treated as a son. So he intended to ask not to be received as a son, but to be made one of the hired servants. Even while seeking his father's grace, he was still thinking of a place where he would live by his own labor, like a person who works to receive wages.

The father restores the son who has returned as a complete child

Yet while the son was still a great way off, the father saw him first. The father did not discover him only when the son had come up to the door of the house and knocked. He recognized his son from afar, had compassion on him, and ran to him. Without questioning the son's dirty clothes and shabby appearance, he fell on his neck and kissed him. This shows the compassion of God toward the lost sinner.

The father received with joy the son who had turned back from the road of death and returned. The grace of God saves the person who was dead in sin, brings him back to God, and lets him live again within the love and rule of God.

The son confessed that he had sinned against heaven and against his father and was not worthy to be called a son. He had come back intending to ask to be received as one of the hired servants, but the father did not treat him as a hired servant. He

immediately commanded his servants to clothe him with the best robe, put a ring on his hand, and put sandals on his feet.

The father did not keep the returned son as a hired servant. The son thought that he had to make up for his wrong by his own labor, but the father restored him to the place of a complete son. This is the grace of God. A sinner does not become a child of God by paying for his past sins with his own prayers and tears, good deeds and service. He becomes a child by accepting through faith the salvation God has accomplished.

The best robe the father put on him completely covered the son's dirty and shabby appearance. Seen from the dimension of the gospel, a sinner cannot cover his shame with his own righteous deeds; he must be clothed with the righteousness of God that Jesus Christ accomplished. God is not One who waits until a sinner has become clean by washing away his sins little by little and then receives him. He washes away all the sins of the person who believes in the righteousness Jesus completed and acknowledges him as righteous.

The best robe, the ring, and the sandals together show that the father accepted the returned son not as a servant or a hired servant but as a complete son belonging to his house. God, too, covers the shame of the sinner who believes in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, makes him righteous, and restores him as His own child so that he may enjoy the blessings of the kingdom of God.

The father killed the fatted calf and held a feast. For a sinner to be saved is the joy of heaven. In the two parables before this, too, when the lost sheep and the drachma were found, the neighbors were called to rejoice together. Here, too, the father said, *"Let us eat and be merry."* God does not reluctantly accept it when a sinner who was to perish is saved and returns. He rejoices and makes merry together with His people.

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This grace, given freely to sinners, was accomplished by Jesus Christ Himself paying the price. God the Father sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, into this world. By receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world, and carrying those sins He was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and so He received the judgment of sin in our place. Then on the third day He rose again and overcame sin and death. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God.

The words of the father, *"This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found"* clearly show the state of the sinner and his salvation. A sinner who has left God is spiritually dead even though he is alive in the flesh. But when he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins, he passes from death into life. Before, he was a lost person cut off from God, but now he becomes a child who has returned to the bosom of God.

The son who has returned to his father's house no longer lives according to his own desires in a far country. The person who has truly received the remission of sins, too, turns from the road of wasting his life for himself and lives serving God, who gave him life and everything. That service is not the labor of a hired servant trying to earn wages; it is the service that a child restored by grace offers out of gratitude for the Father's love.

Self-righteousness keeps one from taking part in the joy of the father

Now the focus of the parable moves to the older son. On his

way back from the field, the older son heard music and dancing and learned the fact that his brother had returned. But instead of rejoicing together, he became angry and refused to go into the house. This reflects the Pharisees and scribes, who complained when they saw sinners coming to Jesus. Outwardly they kept the commandments of God and thought that they were close to God, but they did not know the heart of God, who saves sinners.

The older son said to his father, *"These many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time."* Here, in the word 'serving' is revealed a heart that regarded itself not as a son but as a servant. He did not enjoy living with his father as a grace in itself; he thought that he had to receive a reward for his labor. The younger son took his father's property and left home, but the older son, even while at home, calculated what belonged to his father as if it were wages for his own merits.

The older son put forward his own obedience and compared his brother with himself. He complained that his father had never given him even a young goat, yet had killed the fatted calf for his brother, who had devoured the property with harlots. The person who relies on his own righteousness thinks that the grace of God is unfair. It is because he cannot rejoice when a person who has lived more wickedly than himself receives the same remission of sins and salvation.

But before God, the prodigal sinner is not the only sinner. The person who regards his own deeds as righteous, condemns others, and rejects the grace of God is also a sinner. The sin of the younger son was easily seen in the eyes of people, but the pride and self-righteousness of the older son were hidden inside his religious zeal. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is necessary not only for the prodigal person but also, without fail, for the person who relies on his own religious deeds.

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The older son called his brother *"this son of yours."* He did not accept his brother as his own brother. But the father said, *"It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."* The father urged the older son, too, not to stay outside the house in anger but to take part in the father's joy. This was also an invitation given to the Pharisees and scribes, who criticized Jesus for receiving sinners.

The father said to the older son, *"Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours."* The older son was already with his father and was able to enjoy all that his father had. And yet he did not trust his father's love and thought that he had received nothing. When a person, even while he is within the grace of God, is caught up in his own merits and in comparison with others, he fails to enjoy the grace he has already received and comes to complain.

The parable ends with the older son standing outside the house, unable to accept his father's joy. His body was in his father's house, but because he held on to his own righteousness and merits, in his heart he was a person who had already left his father. God tells not only the openly revealed sinner to return; He also tells the religious person who believes in his own righteousness to lay himself down and come into the feast of grace.

Believe in the grace of the father and rejoice together

The Church must treat the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of all his sins as a righteous child whom God has received. It must look not at his past but at the salvation Jesus accomplished

through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and rejoice together over the work by which God restored him as a child.

The person who has received the remission of sins, as a child who has returned to the Father, uses the life, time, and talents God has given for the gospel. Even the person who has labored in the Church for a long time must not make his own career and labor his righteousness; he must remember the grace of God, who entrusted him with all that work and enabled him to carry it out. Service for the gospel is not a condition for being loved by God; it is the fruit of gratitude for the salvation and love already received.

This parable shows that however far a person has gone away, the compassion of the father who waits for and receives him is greater. The younger son could not turn back the life he had wasted, but he could return to his father. A sinner, too, cannot erase his past sins by himself, but he can return to God, who has washed away all his sins through the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The center of this word does not lie in the prodigal son having changed splendidly by his own strength. It lies in the love and grace of the father, who brought his dead son back to life and regained the son he had lost. When a person lays down his own righteousness and merits and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, God clothes him with the righteousness of Christ, gives him the Holy Spirit, and receives him not as a hired servant but as His own righteous child. The person who believes in this grace enjoys the joy of the gospel in the Father's house, and when another lost soul returns, he makes merry together with the Father. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 15

[Question] 1. What parables about recovering what was lost are recorded in Luke chapter 15?

Luke chapter 15 records the parable of the lost sheep, the parable of the lost drachma, and the parable of the lost son, which is commonly called the parable of the prodigal son. Through the joy of recovering what was lost, the three parables show how greatly God rejoices when one sinner repents and returns to God.

These parables were given against the background of the Pharisees and scribes complaining that Jesus received sinners, when the tax collectors and sinners drew near to hear the word of Jesus.

In the first parable, the shepherd goes searching until he finds his one lost sheep, and after finding it, he rejoices, lays it on his shoulders, returns, and rejoices together with his neighbors. In the second parable, the woman lights a lamp, sweeps the house, and searches diligently to find her one lost drachma, and after finding it, she calls her neighbors and rejoices together with them.

In the third parable, the younger son wasted the property he had received from his father in a far country and then fell into want. He realized his sin and returned to his father, and the father saw his son while he was still far away, ran to him, embraced him, and welcomed him as a son who had been lost and was found again. On the other hand, the older son did not take part

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in this joy, so the father urged him, too, that it was right to rejoice together over the brother who had returned.

The common flow of the three parables is losing, finding, and joy. Jesus taught that receiving sinners is not something to complain about, but a matter of seeking and saving lost souls and rejoicing together.

God sent Jesus in order to prepare the way for lost sinners to return. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. By believing in this gospel, a sinner receives the remission of sins and becomes a child of God.

Therefore, the saints must not put forward their own righteousness and merits; they must preach the gospel to lost souls and take part together in the joy of heaven when one person returns to God.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 15 verses 6–7, how did the shepherd express his joy at finding the one sheep that had been lost?

After finding the one sheep that had been lost, the shepherd rejoiced, laid it on his own shoulders, came home, and called together his friends and neighbors and rejoiced with them. He said, *"Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!"* and Jesus said that likewise, when one sinner repents, there is great joy in heaven as well.

"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he

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comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:4–7).

Jesus connected this scene directly with the repentance of one sinner. God does not regard one person among many as trivial, and He treasures the return of one soul that had been lost. The word that the repentance of one sinner becomes the joy of heaven also reminds us that we must not give up on one soul because the number is small, nor select whom to preach the gospel to according to people's circumstances and status.

Repentance is to acknowledge one's own sin and one's lost condition, to return to Jesus, who came to seek sinners, and to believe in the salvation God has prepared. A sinner is not saved by paying the price of his sins with his own merits or deeds; he receives the salvation Jesus accomplished by faith.

Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for lost sinners to return to God. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, a person receives the remission of sins and is accepted as one of the people of God. The scene of the shepherd finding the sheep, holding it, and bringing it back shows the love of Jesus, who took upon Himself the burden of sinners and saved them, and it leads to the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus actually accomplished.

The Church and the saints, too, must take part in the shepherd's searching and joy. Rather than only criticizing a lost person for not returning, we must first go to him and listen to what he says, and preach clearly and patiently the gospel God

has prepared. The gospel is not news to be preached only to people of a particular disposition or circumstance; it is open to all sinners. We must not use people's suffering and vulnerability as a means of evangelism; we must respect each one as a person whom God loves and serve him with practical love.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 15 verse 7, what did Jesus mean when He said that heaven rejoices more greatly over the repentance of one sinner?

This word means that when one sinner who was lost realizes his sin and returns to God, God and heaven rejoice greatly. God does not judge the value of a soul by the number of people or by social status, and He regards it as very precious when one person who was lost repents and is saved. This does not mean that He loves the ninety-nine less; it is a word that emphasizes the special joy of recovering the person who was lost.

"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

In the background of this parable is the event of the tax collectors and sinners drawing near to hear the word of Jesus. The Pharisees and scribes complained that Jesus received them and ate with them. To those who were displeased with the repentance of sinners, Jesus taught that a sinner returning is not something to criticize but something to rejoice over together with heaven.

The expression *"one sinner"* emphasizes the value of one soul. God does not regard a person lightly just because he is only one person among many. It is precious, too, when many people gather and the Church grows, but we must not miss the one

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person hidden behind the numbers who realizes his sin, believes in the gospel, and returns to God. Just as the shepherd went after the one sheep until he found it, God treasures the person who is lost.

The word *"repents"* does not end merely with regretting one's wrongs or feeling sad. It is to acknowledge one's sin and one's state of having left God, and to turn from mistaken thoughts and ways and return to God. That said, repentance is not an act of paying the price of sin with good deeds or of making oneself worthy to be saved. True repentance acknowledges that one cannot save oneself with one's own righteousness and merits, and goes on to believe in the salvation God has prepared.

Nor does the joy of heaven arise because a sinner has become an admirable person by his own strength. Heaven rejoices because a person who was lost has believed in the salvation Jesus accomplished, received the remission of sins, and returned to God. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world once and for all by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for lost sinners to return to God. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, a sinner receives the remission of sins and becomes one of the people of God.

The saints who have already been saved must also make the joy of God their own joy. We must look back and ask whether we are rejoicing only in worldly success and wealth while remaining indifferent to the salvation of one soul, and we must take part in the work of seeking lost people through prayer, service, and preaching the gospel. When one person receives the remission of sins and returns, the whole Church must give thanks, welcome him, and help his restoration in faith.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 15 verses 8–9, explain the content of the second parable, the parable of the lost drachma.

When a woman lost one of her ten drachmas, she lit a lamp, swept the house, and searched diligently until she found it. After finding the lost drachma, she called together her friends and neighbors and shared her joy, saying, *"Rejoice with me."* In verse 10, Jesus made the meaning of this parable clear with the word that when one sinner repents, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God.

"'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'" (Luke 15:8–10).

The drachma was a silver coin used at that time. One drachma was considered a sum equal to a day's wages of a young man at that time. What is clear is the fact that even with nine remaining, the value of the one that was lost did not disappear, and that the woman actually labored to find it.

The woman lit a lamp and swept the house to find the lost drachma. She did not look around for a moment and then stop; she went on to *"search carefully until she finds it."* This action shows a zeal that did not regard the one that was lost lightly but looked carefully until it was found. The scene of the woman lighting a lamp and sweeping the whole house thoroughly to search shows that we must labor to find lost souls and preach the gospel widely. The center Jesus emphasized is a searching that does not give up until what was lost is recovered.

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In the previous parable, the shepherd went searching for the lost sheep in the wilderness, and here the woman searched for the drachma inside the house. The place and the method differ, but the flow is the same. One was lost, she searched until she found it, and after finding it, she shared that joy with her neighbors. By speaking the two parables one after the other, Jesus showed again and again the heart of God, who treasures and seeks one lost sinner.

The way for a sinner to be saved does not lie in correcting his conduct and paying the price of his past sins by himself. God sent Jesus in order to save lost sinners. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for sinners to return to God. A person acknowledges that he cannot be saved by his own strength, and by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit he obtains the remission of sins and new life.

After finding the drachma, the woman called her friends and neighbors and told them to rejoice with her. When one sinner repents and is saved, it becomes a joy to God, and it becomes a joy in the presence of the angels of God as well. The Church and the saints, too, must not dig up the past of a person who has newly returned or compare him with themselves, who have believed for a long time; they must give thanks and rejoice together over the work by which God sought and saved him. Welcoming must not end with greeting him for a moment; it must go on to helping him with love so that he may believe in the gospel and grow healthily in the word.

Therefore, the parable of the lost drachma is the story of a woman who lit a lamp and swept the house to find her one lost silver coin, searched diligently to the very end, and after finding it, called her friends and neighbors and rejoiced together.

Through this, Jesus taught the fact that God treasures even one lost sinner, and that when that sinner repents, believes in the gospel, and returns, it becomes a great joy in the presence of the angels of God. This joy is the joy of salvation that the Church, too, must give thanks for and enjoy together.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 15 verse 12, what did the younger son in the parable of the prodigal son demand from his father?

The younger son demanded that his father give him *"the portion of goods that falls to me."* That is, he asked his father to divide to him in advance the share of the property that would fall to him. The father divided his livelihood to each of his two sons, and a few days later the younger son gathered all his possessions and left for a far country.

"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living" (Luke 15:11–13).

In the words *"that falls to me"* appears an attitude that regards one's own share as a right. He set his heart first on the property that would come into his hands, rather than on the love and protection he had enjoyed together with his father and the responsibilities he had to take up in his father's house. The problem was not so much receiving the portion itself as under whose will and for what purpose he intended to use it. He did not intend to use what he had received well, together with his father; he made it a means of escaping from his father's authority

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and carrying out his own plans.

Verse 13 shows through his actions where the heart of the younger son was directed. Not many days after receiving his portion, he gathered all his possessions and went to a far country, and there he wasted his property with prodigal living. This shows that he did not intend to stay with his father and manage the property according to his father's will, but intended to enjoy his father's property as he pleased. He put what he would receive from his father ahead of his relationship with his father himself, and he made his own desires the master of his life.

This scene reflects the heart of the sinner who wants to enjoy without God the life and body, time and talents, material things and relationships that God has given. If one loves the gift itself more than God, who gave the gift, and uses what one has received as if it were one's own absolute possession, then even if one appears free outwardly, one's soul becomes distant from God. This portion makes us think not only of the life and body, time and wealth God has given us, but also of the grace of the remission of sins and the blessing of living as children of God. Even the person who has received the remission of sins, if he leaves God in his heart, can waste the grace he has received and fall into a wretched life like the younger son, and so he must keep his faith in God.

God sent Jesus in order to open the way for lost sinners to return. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and saved sinners by rising from the dead. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart, a sinner receives the remission of sins and becomes a child of God. Salvation is not a price a person earns by making amends for his life; it is the grace God bestows on the person who believes in what Jesus accomplished.

The saved saints, too, must look back and ask whether they are using the body, time, and wealth they have received from God like a portion meant only for their own desires. This does not mean, however, that they should throw away all their property or give up their daily lives. They must faithfully care for their families and the work entrusted to them, use what they have received with thanksgiving, and share responsibly in loving their neighbors and serving the gospel.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 15 verse 14, what hardship did the younger son come to suffer after wasting all his property?

After the younger son had wasted all his property, a great famine also arose in that country, and only then did he begin to be in want. To make a living, he attached himself to a citizen of that country and came to feed swine, and he tried to fill his stomach even with the pods that the swine ate, but no one gave him even that, and so he reached a plight so hard that he was about to starve to death.

"And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 'But when he came to himself, he said, 'How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger!" (Luke 15:13–17).

The order of events in the text is clear. The younger son first

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wasted all his property with prodigal living in a far country. After that, a great famine arose in that country, and only then did he begin to be in want. Therefore we must not reverse the order and say that he lost his property because of the famine. The famine was not something he brought about, but because of his choice to live as he pleased and use up his property, he had no margin to endure the disaster, and his want became all the deeper.

His want was not a mere inconvenience. He attached himself to another person and came to feed swine, and though he wanted to fill his stomach with the pods, there was no one who gave them to him. To the Jewish audience, the scene of feeding swine would have shown even more vividly how low and wretched a plight he had reached. He was so hungry that he tried to eat even the pods that the swine ate, and he reached such a wretched plight that he could even be pushed out from that place without getting anything to eat. This scene shows how deep a want a life that has left God finally falls into.

Want becomes not the end of the story but a turning point. However, suffering itself does not automatically bring a person to repentance or save him. Even after going through hardship, one can despair or become obstinate. What was important for the younger son was not only his hunger but his response: he *"came to himself,"* thought of his father's house, acknowledged his sin, and actually arose and returned to his father.

God Himself prepared the way of salvation by which sinners may return. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for sinners to come to God the Father. A person does not buy the remission of sins with the merit of making up for his failures; he receives the remission of sins and new life by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. The

response of faith is to hear that grace, accept it, and return to God.

This word urges us not to put off returning to God until we have lost everything. Even when our circumstances are comfortable, we must not make our property and abilities the master of our lives, but must use them rightly as things God has entrusted to us. If we have already realized our wrong way and choices, we must not go farther out of concern for saving face or out of fear, but must hear the word and return. Admitting failure is not an act of paying the price of salvation; it is honestly acknowledging our own state of needing grace.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 15 verses 17–18, what did the younger son, faced with starvation, think and resolve to do?

Faced with starvation, the younger son thought of the fact that in his father's house there were many hired servants with bread enough, while he himself was about to starve to death in a far country. And he resolved to arise, return to his father, and confess that he had sinned against heaven and against his father. Verse 17 shows what he thought, and verse 18 shows what resolution that thought led to.

"'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" 'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him'" (Luke 15:17–20).

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The words *"came to himself"* indicate that the younger son at last began to see his situation rightly. He had squandered in a far country with prodigal living all the property he had received from his father, and having met a great famine as well, he had come to feed swine and could not get even the pods. Now he realized where he was and at the end of what road he had arrived. This expression does not mean that he produced salvation by his own strength; it means that he realized his wrong direction and began to turn his heart and his steps toward his father.

The first fact he thought of was the contrast between the abundance of his father's house and his own hunger. In his father's house even the hired servants had bread enough, but he was in such want in a far country that he said, *"I perish with hunger!"* Before, he had thought mainly of the portion he would receive from his father, but after losing everything, he remembered *"my father"* and his father's house. In these words is revealed a heart that thinks again of the relationship he had left and of the place to which he could return.

He decided to return to his father and say, *"I have sinned against heaven and before you."* The word *"heaven"* here refers to the presence of God. He did not merely say that he had failed in managing property; he acknowledged that leaving his father and living according to his own desires had been sin before God and before his father. Repentance is not merely regretting an unhappy outcome; it is acknowledging that one's direction and actions in leaving God were sin, and returning to God.

The grounds on which a sinner can return to God the Father lie not in a person's resolution or restitution but in the salvation God has prepared. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for sinners to come to God. A person acknowledges his sin and

helplessness, and by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished he receives the remission of sins and new life. Salvation is not obtained by the merit of having repented; it is received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed.

Therefore, the younger son thought of the fact that even the hired servants of his father's house had bread enough while he himself was about to starve to death, and he resolved to arise, return to his father, and confess his sin before God and his father. His turning back began with his hunger as the occasion, but it did not stop at a thought; it led to acknowledging his sin and to an actual return. This word teaches us that when we realize our want and our wrong way, we must not try to establish our own merits, but must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has prepared through Jesus and return to the Father of grace.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 15 verse 18, against whom did the younger son decide to confess that he had sinned?

The younger son decided to confess that he had sinned *"against heaven and before you."* The word *"heaven"* here refers to God. Therefore he intended to acknowledge that he had sinned against God and, at the same time, had sinned against his own father.

We must distinguish the point in time of verse 18 precisely. At this point the younger son had not yet made his confession before his father; in his hunger he had come to himself and was planning what he would say when he returned to his father. That is why he says he will *"go to my father, and will say to him."* In

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verse 20 he actually arose and returned to his father, and in verse 21 he spoke in person the confession he had planned.

The word *"heaven"* is not a word that refers to the physical sky or to angels. In this context it is an expression that refers directly to God. Therefore the words *"against heaven and before you"* are not calling on one object twice; they are a confession that acknowledges together the sin committed before God and the wrong done to his earthly father. The fact that sin harms not only one's relationship with God but also one's relationships with people is contained in these short words.

Here, *"I have sinned"*—rendered in some translations as 'I have obtained sin'—does not mean that he obtained sin like some object; it means 'I have committed sin.' The younger son did not merely say that he had met with misfortune, nor did he merely regret the outcome of his want. With his own mouth he acknowledged the fact that he had done wrong before God and his father. Repentance includes moving away from the attitude of shifting all responsibility onto circumstances and other people and honestly acknowledging one's own wrong before the word of God.

The grounds of the remission of sins are not a person's confession or restitution but the salvation God has accomplished. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for sinners to return to God. A person does not hide his wrong before God and people, and by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished he receives the remission of sins and new life. Confession and responsibility are not conditions that add anything to the merit of the gospel; they are the response of believing in grace and returning.

Therefore, the ones against whom the younger son decided

to confess that he had sinned were, in the words *"against heaven and before you,"* God and his own father. He did not reduce his prodigality to mere misfortune or a failure in managing property; he acknowledged it as sin committed against God and his father. But neither that confession nor the labor of a hired servant became a merit that bought forgiveness. A sinner must acknowledge his sin, receive the grace of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed, and responsibly set right the wrongs he has done to people—not as the price of salvation but as the fruit of repentance and faith.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 15 verse 20, what did the younger son do right away after realizing his sin?

After realizing his sin, the younger son arose and returned to his father. He did not stop at thinking of his father's house and resolving to confess his sin; he actually left the far country and went toward his father. While he was still a great way off, his father saw him first, had compassion on him, ran to him, fell on his neck, and kissed him.

"'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" 'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him" (Luke 15:17–20).

The words *"And he arose"* in verse 20 indicate that his

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realization and resolution led to actual action. He did not just think and stay as he was in the far country; he arose from where he was and changed his direction. Repentance must not end with a regretful feeling or a right resolution alone; it must appear as the response of faith that turns from the way of having left God and comes to Him.

In particular, the place the son went back to was not another country with better conditions or a new job; it was *"to his father."* His fundamental problem did not lie only in his surroundings being bad or in his having chosen the wrong job. At the center was the severed relationship: he had left his father, lived as he pleased, and wasted his property. Therefore it could not be solved merely by looking for other conditions; he had to acknowledge his sin and return to his father.

The text shows the father's welcome even more warmly and actively than the son. While the son was still far away, the father saw him first and had compassion on him, and he ran to him, fell on his neck, and kissed him. He did not receive the son only after the son had arrived at the door of the house and explained himself sufficiently or had worked for a long time as a hired servant. The father's welcome began from the grace that had compassion on the returning son and received him.

The grounds of salvation that this parable points to, likewise, lie not in the merit of the return the sinner carried out but in the gospel God has prepared. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for sinners to return to God. A person acknowledges his sin and helplessness, and by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit he receives the remission of sins and becomes a child of God. Faith is not an act that adds to the price of salvation; it is the response that accepts the salvation Jesus accomplished.

We, too, must examine whether we are staying only at thoughts and resolutions while knowing what is wrong. We must not rationalize sin or try only to change our surroundings; we must acknowledge our sin to God, believe in the gospel, and return to Him. The saints who have already believed must also, when they realize a wrong before the word, not make excuses but actually turn back and obey.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 15 verse 20, how did the father act when he saw the younger son returning?

When the father saw the younger son while he was still far away, he had compassion on him, ran to him, fell on his neck, and kissed him. The text shows the father's actions in the order 'see → have compassion → run → fall on his neck → kiss.' Before the son had fully arrived at the house and explained all his wrongs or made restitution for the property he had lost, the father recognized him first, went close to him, and welcomed him with love.

The father *"had compassion"* on his son. He did not first calculate the property that was gone or sneer at his son's shabby condition. Seeing the situation of his son, who had become wretched through sin and prodigality, he had compassion on him. This compassion was not a feeling that arose because he did not know the wrong; it was the heart of a father who would not leave his son lost, when that son had realized his wrong and was returning.

Moreover, the father ran to his son. He did not keep his distance until the son came close and knelt or proved that he was qualified to work as a hired servant. While there was still

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distance between the two of them, the father moved first and closed that gap. This shows that the love of the father who welcomes the returning son did not stay in thought or words alone but appeared in active deeds.

And the father fell on his son's neck and kissed him. This was not a formal greeting that reluctantly allowed him to come home; it was an expression of love that did not reject the son but received him close. The father did not make him stand before people and put him to shame before letting him in, nor did he say that he would embrace him only if he explained his past in every detail. By embracing the son who had returned, he showed in action the restoration of the relationship that had been severed.

The father in the parable shows the heart of God, who rejoices when a lost sinner returns and receives him. The father's actions of running, embracing, kissing, and restoring the son's status reveal the compassion and grace of God, who willingly receives the sinner who has returned. The center lies in the fact that God has compassion on the person who realizes his sin and returns, and that He receives him by grace before that person has paid the full price with his own merits.

The grounds on which God receives sinners as righteous are not that He declared sin nonexistent without any basis. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for sinners to return to God the Father. A sinner does not buy the Father's love with his own tears or confession, labor or good deeds; by acknowledging his sin and helplessness and believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, he receives the remission of sins and the grace of becoming a child of God.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 15 verse 24, how did the father describe the younger son who had returned?

The father described the younger son who had returned with the words *"this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."* This does not mean that the younger son had actually died physically and been resurrected; it means that he had been in a lost state, cut off in his relationship after leaving his father, and that by turning back and returning he had come to be with his father again.

"But the father said to his servants, 'Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.' And they began to be merry" (Luke 15:22–24).

The father first called him *"this my son."* Before returning, the younger son had intended to say that he was no longer worthy to be called a son and to ask to be received as one of the hired servants. Even after he actually returned, he confessed that he had sinned against heaven and against his father. But the father did not classify him merely as a hired servant or make him recover his status through labor; he declared him his own son. The son did not buy back his qualification as a son by repaying the property he had lost; the father received him into the place of a son with love and grace.

"*Was dead and is alive again*" is an expression that carries a relational and spiritual meaning within this parable. Even in the far country the younger son was physically alive and moving about, but he had left his father and lived according to his own desires, and he was cut off from his father's house and from the

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relationship. From the father's point of view, such a state of having left and of all contact being cut off was the same as being dead, and the son's returning and the relationship being restored was the same as coming back to life.

The expression *"was lost and is found"* likewise indicates severance and restoration from the father's point of view. The son was not a being erased from his father's concern or love; he was a lost son who had left his father's house and been far away. When he came to himself, arose, and returned, the father said that he had found him again. This means a restoration of the relationship between father and son, deeper than the mere event of a family member changing his address and then coming home.

This flow is connected with the whole of Luke chapter 15 as well. The shepherd called his friends and neighbors and rejoiced after finding the lost sheep, the woman rejoiced together with others after finding the lost drachma, and the father held a feast when his lost son returned. In the three parables, losing, finding or recovering, and the joy enjoyed together are repeated. Jesus taught that one sinner repenting and returning to God is not something to complain about but something God and heaven rejoice over.

The grounds on which a sinner obtains life from spiritual death and becomes a child of God, too, are not his own merits. Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead opened the way for sinners to return to God. A person does not produce life with his own good deeds or tears; by acknowledging his sin and helplessness and believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, he receives the remission of sins and new life.

[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 15 verses 31–32, with what words did the father urge the older son, who harbored discontent?

The father confirmed the older son's place and relationship, saying, *"You are always with me, and all that I have is yours."* Then he urged him, *"It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."* It was an exhortation not to look at the returned brother as a rival but to take part in the joy of the father who had recovered his lost son.

"'And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."'" (Luke 15:31–32).

This word follows the scene in which the father went out of the house in person and pleaded with the older son. The older son, learning that a feast had been held for his brother, became angry and would not go in. The father did not leave him alone or drive him away at once; he came out and asked to talk with him. And he called him *"Son"* and still treated him as his own son. In this calling and pleading is contained the love that seeks to turn even the complaining older son back into the father's heart and joy.

The first exhortation is *"you are always with me."* The older son put forward his own labor, saying that he had served his father for many years and had never transgressed his commandment. But rather than thinking of what pleased his father, he had set his heart on the portion and reward he would receive. Even if he had worked in his father's house for a long time, if he could not rejoice over the return of his brother who had been lost, his labor cannot be called service that was one

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with his father's heart. Reminding him that he had always been with him and that all he had was his, the father urged him not to put forward his own labor but to take part in the father's joy.

The way the older son and the father refer to the younger son is also contrasted. The older son did not call him his brother; he called him *"this son of yours,"* the one *"who has devoured your livelihood with harlots."* He kept his distance from his brother and defined him only by his failure. But the father said, *"Your brother."* It was an exhortation not to deny the relationship but to take part in the joy of restoration, since the one who had returned was not only the father's son but still the older son's brother.

Therefore, the words *"It was right that we should make merry and be glad"* are not a demand to force a smile for the sake of the festive atmosphere. The father wanted the older son to understand his values and his heart and to look at the returned brother not as a rival but as family recovered. It is not telling him to praise his brother's prodigality; it is telling him to rejoice together over the fact that his brother realized his sin, returned, and was restored to the place of a son.

The younger son realized his sin and returned, but the older son, even while he was already in his father's house, put forward his own labor and righteousness and did not take part in the father's joy. This shows that even the saints who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins can become distant from the heart of God if they live only for their own benefit. The saints must turn from their own righteousness and merits, be of one heart with God, who rejoices when lost souls return, and take part in the work of preaching the gospel.

Therefore, the father reminded the older son that he was always with him and that all he had was his. And he urged him

that the one who had returned was still *"your brother,"* and that since he had been dead and was alive again and had been lost and was found, it was right to rejoice together. This word was an exhortation to the older son to abandon his own righteousness and rejoice over his brother's restoration with the heart of the father. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The work of the triune God, who saved the lost sheep

< Luke 15:1-7 >

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.' So He spoke this parable to them, saying: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."

The word of Luke chapter 15, from verse 1 to verse 32, which we will look at today, is made up of three themes. In the word we have read today, there appears the story of a man who had a hundred sheep, lost one of them, and searched for that one sheep. The second is the story of a drachma lost inside the house. It is the word that a woman lost the money, and since it could not be seen however much she searched, she moved out the wardrobe, pulled up the floor covering, swept and wiped, found it, and rejoiced.

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The third is the story of a father who had two sons. The younger son asked for the share that would fall to him, took it and went out, went astray, and squandered it all. Only when he had wasted his property and had no way to make a living and was about to starve to death did he return to his father. It is the word that the father received the prodigal son who had returned. If these three parables are tied into one, they are all stories of seeking what was lost. The lost sheep, the drachma lost inside the house, and the son who went out, became a beggar, and returned—these three.

The owner, who goes out to search for the one that is lost

Today I will share the first parable, that is, the word about searching for one sheep out of a hundred. When Jesus was on this earth, He was a warm-hearted One, who received sinners, treated them kindly, and gave them food to eat. As for His appearance, Jesus was very lean and very tall. His was not a look that people would call handsome. He deliberately came in such an ordinary appearance. If He had been too handsome, all the women in the world would have followed Him, and then when would the Lord have been able to do the Lord's work? Because Jesus is a very wise One, I believe that He even took on an appropriate outward appearance and ministered on this earth.

Let us read verses 3 and 4 once. *"So He spoke this parable to them, saying: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?"* It is the word about seeking the lost sheep.

When the owner found the lost sheep, he rejoiced, laid it on

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his shoulders, came home, called together his friends and neighbors, held a feast, and said that he had found his lost sheep. Through the parable of the lost sheep, the Lord asks you and me. He asks whether you might be a lost sheep. He says that if you are a lost sheep, He has come to find you. It is the word that He has come to find you and protect you, to remove your sins, to give you new life, and to bless you.

Verse 4 says, *"Having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them."* Even if the ninety-nine are doing well, when one leaves the flock and disappears, would not the owner's heart be drawn to the one lost sheep, and would he not go out to find that sheep? From what is visibly seen, it is the story of a shepherd going out to find one lost sheep. But God sees it differently.

Who is the lost sheep today?

The purpose for which Jesus came to this earth is to save sinners from sin and make them His own people, to hold them in His bosom, and to let them live happily in the kingdom of God. Then, among the people who believe in Jesus in this world, who is the lost sheep? What kind of person is it? Today there are people who say that they believe in Jesus well, and yet have no Holy Spirit in their hearts. When they come to church and are gathered together, they seem to have faith, but when they are alone, their hearts are lonely and desolate like a lost sheep. To be honest, they have no assurance of salvation either. Why are those people like that?

They believe in Jesus, so why are they like that? Satan the Devil never leaves alone the people who believe in Jesus. In the parable of the sower, too, the deceiver came first, sowed his seed, and passed on. When the sprouts came up and grew, many tares

came up among them, and the disciples of Jesus asked whether they should pull out the tares. Jesus told them to leave them alone. He told them to let them be, since He was afraid that in pulling out the tares they would pull up the wheat as well.

The seed of falsehood that Satan sowed in advance

Dear fellow believers, there are truly many false ones in this world. If you knew exactly the history of how falsehood spread, you would be astonished at how such a thing could happen. The year Jesus was born is called A.D. 1. In the Western calendar, His birth was taken as the starting point, and it was said that with the birth of Jesus the age of the Old Testament ended and a new age began, and so that year was fixed as A.D. 1.

The English word 'history' is sometimes explained as 'His story,' that is, the story of Jesus Christ. It is the history of Jesus Christ, the history of the Creator, and the history of the One who came to save sinners. His birth was made the starting point of A.D. 1. When Jesus turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and took upon Himself the sins of mankind, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and so He accomplished the work of saving mankind from sin; then He went up to heaven and promised that He would come again.

From that time the disciples of Jesus began to go throughout the whole world and preach the gospel. So the people who believed in Jesus became exceedingly many.

But at that time Israel had lost its nation, and its people had become refugees. A people without a nation are called refugees. Those people who had lost their nation and been scattered were the very lost sheep. In the time of the early Church, the servants

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of God and the saints suffered so much persecution. They were even caught and put to death. The more severe the persecution was, the more the saints hid in the catacombs, the underground burial caves. They hid inside the caves by day and came out at night to do business. Doing business, they bought rice, and covering themselves with sheepskins as if they were animals, they went into the caves, cooked food for their children, and fed their husbands as well. Hiding in the caves, the saints kept themselves alive in that way.

Meanwhile they bore a great many children. Even in the midst of hardship they raised them all. It was because the number born had to be greater than the number killed out of the hatred of the Romans in order for the people to be preserved. So they increased their numbers by conceiving and bearing children again and again.

The soldiers and emperors of Rome caught and killed the people of Israel as a pastime. Nevertheless, the people of Israel bore many children and lived passing on their faith. Then, in the early fourth century, Emperor Constantine appeared in Rome.

Rome was a people that was morally dissolute. They went out to foreign lands, waged war, took people captive, and used the men as slaves and the women as their maidservants. Their sexual culture was too dissolute. So Rome actually had no soldiers of its own nation. They bought people of other nations to defend their nation, and the men of their own nation constantly did dissolute things. Then Rome came to fall.

Around that time Constantine became emperor and unified the Eastern and Western Roman Empires. He saw that if he was to carry out a policy of leading the people of this nation well, he needed a religion that would give the hearts of the people a center. Up to that time the Romans had believed in Greek mythology as their religion, and that religion was lewd and

dissolute.

But among the people they had caught and killed in great numbers there were Christians. Those people really lived cleanly and had faith. So they proposed making Christianity the religion of Rome. They called in philosophers and told them not to do it just as the people of the early Church believed, but to make a Christianity that anyone could believe. They told them to make the most universal religion. They told them to make a religion that people could believe in together even while holding other religions. What was made in that way is Catholicism, whose name means 'the most universal.'

The name Catholic itself means the most universal. Even a person who believed in Buddhism was enabled to believe together in the Christian doctrine that the pope of Rome made through the philosophers. One could bring along the religion one had believed in before, just as it was. Only, the religion of Rome was said to be Christianity. They said that if one believed in Christianity, they would make one a government official, cut one's taxes, give one various benefits, and make one's business prosper. They dispensed favors.

So everyone, without exception, became a Christian. That religion that people made has come down to this day. The same is true of the things that split off from it through the Reformers along the way. It is the most universal religion. It is different from the Bible. What people made by policy is the Christianity of today.

Why sin piles up in the heart even after believing for a long time

Dear fellow believers, people have gone to church believing

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Christian doctrine. One becomes a catechumen and then a baptized member. When the Apostles' Creed is laid open and one is asked whether one believes according to this creed, one answers that one believes it just as it is. To become a baptized member, one is asked whether one will keep the Lord's Day, and one answers that one will keep it.

One is asked whether one smokes or drinks. If one answers yes, one is asked whether one will quit from now on, since smoking and drinking are forbidden in the church. A definite answer that one will quit is obtained. And one is asked whether one believes that Jesus is one's Savior, and one answers that one believes. One is asked whether one believes that Jesus is the Savior who died shedding His blood on the Cross for you and saved you, and one answers that one believes. Then one becomes a baptized member and is given baptism. Then one has officially become a Christian church member.

When one becomes a baptized member, one gains the right to vote when the church elects elders or ordained deacons.

At first they were told that one is saved if one only believes in the Cross of Jesus, and they accepted those words as they were and believed. And they believed, thinking that the sins they committed afterward would be remitted if they offered prayers of repentance. They believed the doctrine of repentance, they believed the doctrine of sanctification, and they believed the doctrine of justification. The doctrine of justification is that although I have sin, God regards me as having no sin because I believe in Jesus, and they believed that doctrine as well.

But a long time passed. It is clear that I believe in Jesus, but I quietly think about myself: am I a born-again person or not, am I a person who has been saved? When I first believed in Jesus, my heart felt good and was glad. But after believing in Jesus for ten years, twenty years, there is more sin in my heart, and sin has

piled up. I have become a nominal church member.

When one thinks about Jesus by oneself, one is not a person who has been saved. One is a sinner before God. The only thing that is certain is the fact that there is sin in one's heart. One has not been born again, one does not know the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and one does not really know how Jesus saved oneself.

That person who has sin in his heart and has no assurance of salvation is precisely the lost sheep before God. In our eyes, among a flock of sheep, the sheep that has left the flock is called the lost sheep. But the person who has sin in his heart, the person who has no assurance of salvation, the person who has no Holy Spirit in his heart, even while coming to church and even while worshiping at this very hour, is the lost sheep.

Therefore, there is something you and I must think about first of all. It is the question of whether I am a lost sheep. I do believe in God, but I must put to myself the question of whether I might be a lost sheep that has not been saved before God.

If one is a lost sheep oneself, what must one do? There are many words in the Old Testament that prophesied about Jesus, and one must know exactly how, according to those prophecies, Jesus saved you and me in the age of the New Testament. In order to know that salvation, I will look up the word of God and share it with you.

The triune God, who appeared when Jesus was baptized

Let us read Matthew 3:16 and 17. "*When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God*

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descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"

This is what happened when Jesus received baptism from John. When Jesus had received baptism from John and was coming up from the water, the heavens were opened, and the Spirit of God came down like a dove upon the head of Jesus.

And a voice was heard from heaven. It said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* Dear fellow believers, I ask you to picture this scene in your hearts as if it were a three-dimensional image.

When Jesus had received the laying on of hands from John the Baptist, gone down into the water, and was coming up, the gate of heaven opened. And the Holy Spirit came down like a dove, a bright light shone, and a gentle atmosphere hung in the air, and from heaven God the Father said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*. God the Father was saying that the One who had just been baptized was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased.

When Jesus had received baptism from John and was coming up out of the water, three Persons appeared: Jesus, who had received baptism and come up from the water; the Holy Spirit, who came down like a dove; and God the Father, who said in words that this was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased.

The saving work of God, who saves the lost sheep, is the saving work that the triune God planned and accomplished together. It was not something Jesus did alone. God the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus accomplished it together. God the Father, holding that plan of salvation, sent His Son to this earth and had Him born as a man, borrowing the body of Mary. And when He turned thirty, God had Him receive baptism from John

the Baptist and take upon Himself the sins of mankind, be hung on the Cross and die, and rise again, and so He made Him our Savior.

One cannot reach salvation by the prophecies of the Old Testament alone

Dear fellow believers, there are several kinds of lost souls before God. The person who did believe in Jesus but does not know how Jesus removed his sins is also a lost sheep. Another kind is the people who believe only in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament there are many words that prophesied about Jesus. Isaiah 53:4 says, *"Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted."*

It is the word that He bore our sins and suffered our pain in our place and so saved us. Then would one not be saved just by looking at the Old Testament alone? The Jews of today believe only in the Old Testament. So, saying that God will come and take upon Himself their sins, receive the judgment for their sins in their place, and save them, they are waiting for a savior other than Jesus.

They do not believe in Jesus. Still waiting for the One who appears in the Old Testament, they do not believe that Jesus is the Savior. They call that savior the Messiah. But Jesus is precisely the Messiah. The word Messiah means the Savior. As it is written in the Bible, the things that happened in the court of Pilate were all recorded by the scribe. So those events actually remain on record. The ones who shouted to crucify Jesus were their very own ancestors.

Dear fellow believers, in Matthew 3:16 and 17 of the New

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Testament there appears the scene in which Jesus receives baptism, the Holy Spirit comes down, and God the Father says, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."* This work of the triune God puts the final period on the saving ministry for you and me, who were lost.

Who sent Jesus? *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. God the Father so loved the world that He sent His Son to us and had that Son receive baptism from John.

Why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind

Dear fellow believers, if we do not believe in what Jesus came to this earth and did, we do not believe in Jesus. Jesus was born on this earth as a man and received baptism from John. Let us read Matthew 3:13 to 15.

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

Jesus came to this earth, came from Galilee to the Jordan, and tried to receive baptism from John. Verse 14 says, *"And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?'"* It is a natural thing to say. It is because John the Baptist is not God. But since John the Baptist is the greatest among those born of women, he is the representative of mankind.

Jesus tried to receive baptism in order to receive baptism

from the representative of mankind and so receive all the sins of mankind passed on to Him, and in order to become a sure Savior.

So Jesus commanded John the Baptist. Verse 15 says, *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him."*

Jesus came to this earth and received the baptism given by John the Baptist in order to remove the sins of all people and to take our sins upon Himself. When He had received baptism, gone down into the water, and was coming up, the heavens were opened and the Holy Spirit came down like a dove. And God the Father sent forth a voice from heaven and said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."*

He was saying that His Son had now taken your sins upon Himself.

We must respond to the Lord's question

Dear fellow believers, there are many people on this earth who believe in Jesus. But what is the reason Jesus spoke this parable in today's text of Luke? It is because there are lost sheep. There are lost sheep who, even though they have believed in Jesus, have not yet met the Lord. It is the word that there are people who really ought to receive the remission of sins and enter the kingdom of heaven, who ought to be changed into the image of God since they were originally made in the image of God, but who have not yet been changed.

We must examine whether those people might be you, whether I might be one who has not yet been changed. For those people who have not yet been changed, the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and took upon His own body the

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sins of mankind. And His going down into the water speaks of the death of the Cross, and His coming up out of the water speaks of the resurrection. It is the word that in this way He has saved you and me from sin.

Dear fellow believers, when we were in the state of lost sheep, the Lord came to this earth for the lost sheep. He received baptism from John, bore the sin of the world, was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and died and came back to life again, and so He saved us from sin. This salvation is our final salvation.

It is the salvation that God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit planned together. We must believe in this salvation. For the lost sheep, the Lord, according to the will of the Father and together with the Holy Spirit, received baptism from John the Baptist and took our sins upon Himself, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead, and so He saved us. On the Cross He said that it was finished.

Jesus said that it was finished and died. On the third day after His death He rose again, forty days after His resurrection He went up to heaven, and He promised that He would come again. And He said that He commands us to give baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. It is the word that since the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit planned to save us and accomplished exactly what They had planned, we are to give baptism in that name to those who believe.

Jesus received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so He saved you and me. Thus, from the state of lost sheep, we have come to meet Jesus Christ, the owner of the sheep. It means that we are to know and believe that we have become people who are saved.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus took upon Himself your sins and mine by receiving baptism from John, carried the sin of the

world away, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose from the dead, and so He saved you and me. If we believe in that Jesus, we become the people of Jesus and His sheep, and the Lord becomes our Savior.

Jesus came to save you and me and accomplished salvation in this way. Now He lifts those who believe onto His shoulders and says that He has found the sheep He had lost. It is the word that He rejoices, saying that He has found the sheep that had almost died, and holds a feast in the village.

Let us all read Luke 15:7 together. *"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance."*

Dear fellow believers, we must repent. Even if I have believed in Jesus, who was hung on the Cross, if I do not know the baptism Jesus received from John, that person, too, is a lost sheep. Satan the Devil deceived people, saying that it is enough to believe only in the Cross. Will one be saved by believing only in the Cross? One will not be saved. Will one be saved by believing only in the Jesus Christ who appears in the Old Testament?

For example, Isaiah 53:4 says, *"Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows."* What would happen if, while claiming to believe this word, one did not confess of that Jesus—who came to this earth in the age of the New Testament, received baptism from John the Baptist and took upon Himself the sins of mankind, was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood while bearing the sin of the world, and rose from the dead and became our Savior—"You are my Savior and my God"? Would one be saved without believing in that Jesus?

However many the words of promise and prophecy in the Old Testament may be, one must know the fact that in the New Testament Jesus has saved us, and one must meet that Jesus. And

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one must believe in that Jesus as one's own Savior. One must believe in that Jesus, who took upon Himself my sins, received the judgment for my sins in my place, shed the blood of His own life in order to give me new life, rose again, and is alive even now. Only by believing in that Jesus does one become a sheep that was lost and has met its shepherd.

Otherwise one can never be saved. Dear fellow believers, I ask you to know the fact that there are many people in this world who claim to believe in Jesus. The false one, that is, Satan, came first, sowed the seed of falsehood in A.D. 325, and left. He sowed man-made Christian doctrine, and people have believed that doctrine until now. Have those people received the remission of sins in their hearts? Even while believing in Jesus, they have become sinners, become greater sinners, and become still greater sinners. They have merely become nominal religious people; have they ever become righteous people with truly not even one sin in their hearts? They have never become righteous.

So the Lord, knowing all their circumstances, called them lost sheep in the Bible. He spoke of it with a parable. It is the word spoken about you and me. In the old days I, too, had sin in my heart while believing in Jesus. Even while believing in Jesus, I preached in a state of having sin.

I was not a person who had been saved. So when I was together with people, I seemed to have faith. But when I was alone, it was different. On rainy days at the prayer house, when I was tending the fire in the furnace of my room and thinking about myself, the fact would come to mind that I had never truly met the Lord. My heart was very sad. When I went to the chapel and met the people who believed in Jesus together with me, I too was a person who believed in Jesus, and I was a person who believed in Jesus well. But when I thought about it alone, I had never clearly met the Lord through the word.

Then, after much time had passed, I met the Lord through the word. In today's text the Lord asks you. He asks whether you were a lost sheep. And to you who are lost sheep, He asks whether you know that He received baptism from John the Baptist and took your sins upon Himself, bore the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, died, and came back to life again, and became your Shepherd and your Savior. And He asks whether you believe.

Dear fellow believers, we must answer yes before Jesus. To the first question we must answer that I was a lost one. To the second question we must answer that I was not a sheep of Jesus, that I was one who had not yet met Jesus, and that I am one who has never passed my sins on to Jesus.

And thirdly, Jesus asks, "Do you believe that I took your sins upon Myself through the baptism I received from John, died shedding My blood on the Cross, came back to life again, and saved you?" To that question we must respond, "Yes, I believe in You; I believe that You are my Savior." Only then does one become righteous.

Respond to the Lord's call at this very moment

Dear fellow believers, how savage an age this is! Before long a nuclear war could break out. Of course, it is something that can happen only if Jesus permits it, but right now tension has risen so high that threats to use nuclear weapons are being exchanged among the great powers. If a nuclear war breaks out, everything is over. Even without nuclear weapons, people are dying from natural disasters alone.

Dear fellow believers, now is not the time to hesitate. We were lost sheep. Every one of us, without exception, was a lost

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sheep. And the Lord came to find the lost sheep, and in order to save those sheep from sin, He received baptism from John and received our sins passed on to Him. And He carried the sin of the world away, was nailed to the Cross, and before He died He said that it was finished. He said not to worry, that He had become our Savior, that it was finished, and He died. And He rose again and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God.

Now the time for the Lord to come is near. We must now believe. We must respond to the Lord's question. We must answer, "Yes, You are the Christ, and You, Lord, are my Savior." We must confess: You are my Savior, who received baptism from John for me, died on the Cross, and rose again; I believe that You are my Savior.

I believe that the Lord took my sins upon Himself. I believe that He shed His blood on the Cross for me, died, and came back to life again. Only when you confess and respond like this do you become people who have met the Lord. And you become people who can go to the kingdom of the Lord whenever the Lord comes.

When all is said and done, every one of us, without a single exception, was a lost sheep. But now we surely believe that Jesus, who came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, is our Savior. Through that faith we have become children of God. Therefore we are now doing the work of God.

Dear fellow believers, I ask you to respond to the Lord's call. There is no reason to be stubborn. I know well that even in our church there are many people who remain in the old doctrines. Because in the old days they believed only in the Cross and relied only on the doctrine of the Cross, the doctrine of repentance, and the doctrine of sanctification, and went through

many experiences, joys, and sorrows within them, they still hold on to the faith that believes in those doctrines just as it is.

Then one day an evangelist who had the gospel of the water and the Spirit came and preached, and they accepted this gospel as well. They accepted it because the gospel of the water and the Spirit was also right. But if you are still holding on to your old faith just as it is, then, because that old faith sucks up the nourishment of the field of your heart, you have not met the Lord.

Today, at this hour, at this very moment, we must believe in that Jesus, who received baptism from John in order to become the Savior of you and me. One cannot be saved by believing only in the LORD God of the Old Testament. The LORD God prophesied that He would send His Son in the future and remove your sins. But the One who actually fulfilled that prophecy is Jesus. Jesus came to this earth, took your sins and mine upon Himself, and made us people without sin.

It is Jesus who received the judgment in our place, died and came back to life again, and gave us new life. Dear fellow believers, what will you do? Let us take this hour to confess to God. Jesus asks you. He asks, "You were lost sheep; I came to this earth because I loved you and wanted to save you, to become your Shepherd and your Savior; I received baptism from John the Baptist in order to take your sins upon Myself, went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world, was nailed to it and shed My blood, died and came back to life on the third day, and now I live forever and have become your Savior. Do you believe in Me?" How will you answer? I ask you to answer, "Yes, I believe."

If you do not believe, you are a lost sheep. What becomes of a lost sheep? Is it simply free? No. A wolf comes and devours it. A snake comes, coils around its neck, and kills it, or bites it to death. Disease is waiting, and a cliff is waiting. Everything is an enemy.

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Dear fellow believers, this is not a light matter that you may believe or not believe as you please. You must throw away your pride before God. Dear fellow believers, if you have sin, where do you go? You go to hell. It is a burning hell. You come to dwell in the place that burns with fire and brimstone. Brimstone is what comes out when a volcano erupts. When a volcano erupts, flames keep rising from it. And when the fire goes out one day, the residue that remains is brimstone. Dear fellow believers, it is going into the fire that is not quenched. So there is no need for us to stand on the side of the Devil.

If the Devil gives our hearts an unbelieving heart and a heart that hinders, we must drive him away with these words: "Satan, I command you in the name of Jesus Christ, get away; in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ I command you, Satan, get away, you liar; you opposed and deceived God, and now are you trying to deceive us too? I surely believe that Jesus has become my Savior." We must drive him away like this.

Jesus is the Savior, the original Creator, and my Shepherd. He was born on this earth for me and took my sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John. And He bore my sins on the Cross, died in my place, rose from the dead, and is alive even now. He is my God.

If I only open the door of my heart and believe, He becomes my Savior, does not rebuke my sins, and holds me in His bosom. Why would I refuse the Lord, who holds me in His bosom? I love the Lord. And I believe in the Lord. Thank You. I believe and give thanks that the Lord has become my Savior. I hope that you will become people who confess with this faith. I want the salvation God has given and the love of God to dwell fully in your hearts. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Seek those who are lost and preach the gospel

< Luke 15:1-10 >

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.' So He spoke this parable to them, saying: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. 'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'"

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We must devote ourselves to the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We have greeted a new year. Looking back on the year that has passed, there are many things we could not finish and many things we regret. But rather than merely having a new heart because the year has changed, we come to think about how we should do the work of God.

We are not people who live only day by day like mayflies. We come to think about what kind of life we should live from now on and what way of living is right before God. We also think about how the churches across the whole country, how all of us, should live. Before God we must abandon our individual greed. And we must know what God has told us, and we must preach the gospel of eternal truth, more precious than the whole world, which God has entrusted to us.

Many people do not know this gospel of the water and the Spirit. This year, too, we come to think that we should concentrate on preaching the gospel rather than on multiplying and enlarging churches. With what plan should we live in our hearts? With what goal should we live? As it was last year, so this year too we must live for the preaching of the gospel.

All of us exist for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You and I must preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which our Lord has saved us. We must devote ourselves to this work.

With a year before me, I think about how I should live before God while preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. First, the thought comes to me that I must prepare for the Second Coming. Looking toward the day our Lord comes, I must prepare my heart. The last days are approaching. Second, I have the heart that I must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit

even for the sake of one soul.

In these last days we are people who could follow the world, but I think of the motto that we must not follow the world but follow the Lord alone. This motto is not something that ends in words; it is what we ought to do. We must follow not the world but God. We must not concentrate on building ourselves up; we must live for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. There are still far too many places where this gospel has not been preached.

The kings of the earth unite and oppose

It seems to me that from now on the adversaries may rage all the more against the preaching of the gospel. It occurs to me that if they advertise on broadcasts that we are wrong, it will go out over the whole country and be made known to all nations. We, too, have now come to be carried on broadcasts.

However much they try to slander us, there is nothing to slander us with. If they slander us, that itself becomes the preaching of the gospel. It is because this gospel of the water and the Spirit is itself light. They slander us, saying that we claim to have no sin while believing in Jesus. But as they tell that story, in the end it becomes preaching the Bible. The slander itself is a good thing. It is a good thing as long as we do not merely follow the world.

We have the heart to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit even more faithfully from now on, and the heart to do it more systematically. The day the Lord comes is approaching, and the world is now uniting into one. Uniting into one, they are trying to oppose the Anointed before God. But He who sits in the heavens is laughing.

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In Psalm 2 David wrote a psalm saying that the kings of the earth unite as one and oppose the LORD's Anointed. But it said that He who sits in the heavens laughs. It said to kiss the Son, lest you perish in the way.

In David's time, too, the whole world united together and opposed the people of Israel. The surrounding nations such as Amalek and the Philistines united together and opposed them. And now that word of prophecy is being fulfilled. They are doing things that make Him who sits in the heavens laugh.

The kings of the earth are uniting. Nation unites with nation. Religion unites with religion, and denomination with denomination. And with their united strength they oppose those anointed by the LORD. They oppose the truth of Jesus. Opposing the truth is their purpose.

The heart of God is contained within the word of God

Christianity is uniting, and now the Bible may even be changed. We have truly arrived at a strange world. We come to think about whether the gospel could change because the Bible changes, and the thought comes that in these last days we will be persecuted even more. If many people rewrite the Bible, will we not be branded as wrong if we do not change the Bible?

Right now some denominations use a newly paraphrased Bible. Other denominations are trying to make a Bible in their own way. And the Bible Society has produced a new Bible. But it is said that the Bible they produced has some two thousand mistranslated places and has to be revised again. Then various denominations say that they will translate the Bible again themselves and put it out, and they quarrel with one another over

the copyright.

It is said that there are twelve million Christians in our country, but will only they read the Bible? If one holds the copyright to the Bible, the profits from selling the Bible are enormous. Looking at that money, the denominations say that they must translate the Bible themselves.

What is there to translate in the Bible? It is enough to read this Bible. This Bible is truly well translated. A Bible close to the original text was translated into Chinese characters, and those Chinese characters were translated again into Korean. Because of that, the meaning was conveyed well.

It is written, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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 1:1–2)*. How full of condensed meaning and how well translated it is! The Bible is verbally inspired. It is not only the words themselves that are there; the heart of God is contained within the word of God.

So I believe that the Korean Bible is exceedingly well translated. A Bible close to the original text was rendered into Chinese characters, and those Chinese characters, which are ideographs, were rendered into Korean. It is truly well done. As one comes to know by studying it, it is hard to translate this well. One cannot translate with meaning so condensed as this.

People who know English say that they will try translating the Bible. But it is said that what they translated over some twenty years has been rendered backwards and has to be revised entirely. The heart of God is hidden in the word of God, but they did not express that heart well. It is not accomplished by translating literally. One must translate the sense. A right translation is one that fully reflects in the letters the heart contained in the original text. Merely looking up words and

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transferring them is not translation.

It is said that a poor workman blames his tools. Because they have not been born again even while believing in Jesus, they do not know the Bible, and because they do not know the Bible, they find fault with the Bible. Just as a poor workman blames his tools, Christians today do nothing but blame the Bible.

When a new translation comes out, it cannot be used. It is like reading a novel. It has no meaning. Because everything has been unraveled in a fleshly way, there is nothing more to preach. As soon as one reads it, one need only say amen and put it into action. It has been translated so that there is nothing more to know and nothing more to realize. How dry and tasteless it is! How much meaning is contained in that one verse, *"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)*?

In preaching the gospel there is truly much pain

I think about how this year will go and how we should live. The world is uniting, but life is becoming more pressed. The nearer the end comes, the more wisdom we must have. We must be prudent, we must be pure, and we must be wise.

Dear fellow believers, do you know how many things Satan the Devil does to oppose us? Everything opposes the saints and opposes God. If one comes into contact with the wrong literature or booklets, one's faith becomes completely corrupted. If one so much as reads such a booklet once by mistake, one's faith is finished. There is countless poison inside them. That poison invades our souls. It devours and removes the pure word of God and muddies it.

There are many such enemies. There are many things that make our souls go wrong. There is no telling how much care one must take even in doing one single thing. One must be alert. That is exactly what it means to be wise. One must be exceedingly alert. It does not work to live as one lives in the world.

There is no telling how meticulous the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be. There is no telling how much one must prepare and how well one must place things in the right positions. We must not suppose that the preaching of the gospel will happen by itself. We must prepare. Only then can we preach the gospel. If we are clumsy, we cannot preach the gospel.

There is no telling how much labor is needed in the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in order to have what is needed ready in time, deal with things, and keep them from going wrong. That is why the gates of the city of Jerusalem in the kingdom of heaven are all jewels and gates of pearl. Pearls do not come into being by themselves. When a foreign substance gets into an oyster and it hurts, the fluid it secretes to wrap around that foreign substance hardens and becomes a pearl.

In preaching the gospel there is truly much pain. It hurts very much. We must bear and endure that pain. The preaching of the gospel grows together with this pain. Without pain there can never be any preaching of the gospel.

When an oyster has its mouth open, something like a pebble gets lodged in its flesh and does not come out. How much it must hurt to hold that pebble for a whole lifetime! In our lives, too, each of us has pain. It is not that there is no pain in serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit and going forward. Everyone has pain.

We must throw away the heart that wants to live without pain. Holding on to pain and following the gospel is the posture of an

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evangelist. Without pain, without patience, without wisdom, without faith, what gospel could we preach? When we live bearing and enduring that pain, a pearl forms within it. It means that the fruit of souls being saved is borne.

We must go out to seek the lost sheep, but who is the lost sheep?

I come to think about how to live this year and what way of living is right before God. Then what way of living the rest of our lives is right? To concentrate on seeking lost souls and to bring those souls before God is what we must do as we live in this world from now on.

We have read two of the three parables. He said, *"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!'" (Luke 15:4–6).* We must go out to seek lost souls, the lost sheep.

Then what kind of sheep is that lost sheep? He said that if one loses one sheep, one leaves the ninety-nine in the wilderness and goes out to seek that one, but what kind of sheep is the lost sheep? Not all people are lost sheep.

The lost sheep are the people who commit sin in this world and cannot bear it because of that sin. They are people who go so far as to take their own lives because of sin. Even now we see such people in this world. The thought comes: there really are such people, and such a person needs this gospel. For instance, does not a person sometimes come to such a state when it is

exposed that he has taken what belongs to others? I thought that such a person needs this gospel. When one has fallen into sin and cannot get out, one hears the gospel, believes, and receives the remission of sins.

We must go out to seek the lost sheep, but who is the lost sheep? It is not the ordinary people of the world. It is the soul that is truly placed in a situation where it cannot but die. But how are we to meet such a soul? That is why the Bible says, if one loses a coin, will one not sweep the house and search? We must seek the lost sheep, but how can we meet that person? There is no way to meet him.

And we must direct our attention to that lost sheep. We must not pick quarrels with the ninety-nine that are not lost; we must set our attention on the lost sheep.

We must think about the method of evangelism. Ninety-nine out of a hundred were born under the rule of Satan the Devil, but because they have not committed any particularly great sins, they are not people who would die by their own hand. It is useless to try to touch such people. Our Lord, too, did not go to such people. He went only to the people who were lost.

When we preach the gospel, if we needlessly pick a quarrel with a person who is not lost, he does not come back. But there are people who truly seek the Lord. All of us must go out to seek that lost sheep.

We must seek lost souls as one lights a lamp and sweeps the house to search

How could we know who commits what sin, and who is trying to take his own life because of sin? There is no way to know. Even the city we live in is this wide, so how could we

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know? Are we to investigate house by house? There is no way to do that. Then what should we do? Just as He said, if one loses money, will one not sweep the house and search until one finds it, we must search diligently.

Dear fellow believers, in order to find the lost sheep, we must really rummage diligently, as one sweeps the house to search. When one wants to find money, one must move out the wardrobe, shake out the bedding, pull up the floor covering and look underneath, and sweep and search even the places one normally does not look. We do not know which soul will be saved. We must not preach only to the people we know; we must preach widely so that all people may know. Literature evangelism is a very good thing. Those who are truly seeking get caught by it.

I will give one example. In a certain small city, I had the brothers write a text and make stickers. They put them up diligently. I had told them to put them up in every restroom, and it seems they put them up in lodging houses as well. Everyone who came into the restroom saw the sticker, but they passed it by without interest, thinking that some strange church had put it up.

But in a certain city, a man who ran a tailor's shop saw that sticker. This man was a deacon of a church. He did the work of taking orders for suits from foreign merchants staying at lodging houses and sending the suits to them. Because our country is cheap, they come and have many suits made. As this man went around such places, he committed many sins.

That morning this man sat down in the restroom, and right in front of him was the sticker. It said: Do you still have sin every day even though you repent of your sins? Do you have sin even though you weep? However much you repent, does sin remain in your heart? Sin remains because you have not received the remission of sins. If you want to receive the remission of sins,

hear the word. And you must be born again. Here is a church that can preach to you the word that will make you born again—and the name and telephone number of the church were written there.

That man was caught by those words, whether he has sin however much he offers prayers of repentance. The pastor of his church told him to offer prayers of repentance, but however much he offered prayers of repentance, the sin remained just as it was.

In the morning a telephone call came. He asked whether this was that church, and I said yes. He said that he was in the restroom just then, that our church had put up a sticker there, and that his heart was just like that, and he asked whether he would really receive the remission of sins if he went there, and whether he might please come. I said that we welcomed him. He asked whether he might come in the morning, and I said he might come in the morning.

This man came in the morning and said: I have sin and I am so tormented that I could die; it is not that I commit more sins than ordinary people, but even though I repent every day, it does not work; I am a deacon of a church; will you teach me the way easily? Plowing the field of his heart, I talked with him all morning. It became lunchtime.

I said, let us eat lunch and then continue. He was older than I, and yet he was sobbing. He said, if I go away from here without receiving the remission of sins, I will die; please teach me the way. I said I would teach him, but that I could not do it without eating. He said it was all right not to eat, so I told him that I had no strength and could not do it. We ate and then shared the word until four in the afternoon. At the end of fellowship from morning until four in the afternoon, he received the remission of sins.

After he went back, he telephoned out of joy. He said, can

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my heart be this glad? There is no sin in my heart; I am so glad; can the world be this glad?

It is by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that sin disappears from our hearts

Then how on earth were the sins of that one man remitted? What was it that he sat and listened to from morning until four in the afternoon? It was not a method of repenting better. It was the word about how the Lord had already dealt with those sins.

The Lord, though He is the Son of God, put on the body of a man and came to this earth. And in the year He turned thirty, He went out to the Jordan River and received baptism from John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the representative of mankind and one born of the line of the high priest. In the age of the Old Testament, the high priest laid both his hands on the head of the sin offering. Then all the sins of a year that the people of Israel had committed were transferred just as they were onto that offering.

In exactly the same way, when John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and gave Him baptism, the sins of the whole world were transferred just as they were onto the body of Jesus. What did Jesus say then? He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The word that He fulfilled all righteousness means that by receiving all the sins of the world passed on to His body without leaving even one behind, He met all the conditions of salvation. And so the next day John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Look at today's text here once again. It says that when the

shepherd found the lost sheep, he rejoiced, laid it on his shoulders, and came home. He laid it on his shoulders. Our Lord did exactly the same. By receiving baptism from John, He carried all your sins and mine on His shoulders and went up the hill of Golgotha.

He was nailed through His hands and feet, pierced in His side with a spear, poured out all His blood, and died. Since it is said that the wages of sin is death, He who had carried all the sin of the world received all that judgment of death in our place. That is why at the end He was able to say, *"It is finished!"* And on the third day He rose again from the dead and became our eternal Savior.

So it was only natural that, however much that man offered prayers of repentance, his sins remained just as they were. It is because sin does not disappear by weeping; it had already been transferred to Jesus. Only when one believes in one's heart that it has been transferred does sin disappear. The reason he said that there was no sin in his heart was that he believed that fact. This very salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Only lost souls can believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We must diligently seek the lost sheep. The ninety-nine are not lost sheep. One leaves them in the wilderness and goes. When they are left in the wilderness, the Devil comes and devours them all. They are deliberately given up to be devoured. Such is the will of God.

If people do not accept His word, God tells Satan the Devil to perform false miracles, and He permits him, saying, take them with you and go to hell together. Second Thessalonians chapter

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2 says as much. The reason people perish is that they are deceived by falsehood because they do not receive the love of the truth. God has permitted Satan the Devil to do that work.

But we must seek the lost sheep, the person who knows his sins and wants to receive the remission of sins. We must preach the gospel to such a person. How are we to find such a person? Is there a way to find such a person? We do not even know the people in the houses in front of and behind us, so how could we find him?

It is in order to find such people that we make eBooks and audiobooks and deliver them. It is to find such a person, not to find and save the ninety-nine. We prepare everything in order to find that person who is truly lost.

Nothing can be done for the person who does not accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Such a person is a person who would not believe even if Jesus appeared and said, I am Jesus. He would try not to believe by making any excuse whatever: what kind of Jesus is so shabby, what kind of Jesus is so ugly, what kind of Jesus is so thin, what kind of Jesus is so short?

But the person who knows that he is truly a lost sheep and is honest and sincere before God knows that he is a lost soul and seeks. Seeking and seeking and seeking, when he meets something similar he falls into it, and when he meets something more similar than that he falls into that too, and at last he meets the real thing.

For what should you and I live? This year, too, we must testify to the gospel in order to find the lost sheep, and we must devote the rest of our lives to that work. We make preparations for the sake of one soul. We do it for all people, but in the end we do it for one lost soul. Such a heart must be in the hearts of pastors and in the hearts of the saints.

We do not know how many lost sheep there may be even in

one neighborhood of ours. It is because it is one in a hundred. You must know that we prepare everything in order to teach according to that person's needs. It seems to be something universal, but it is not universal.

Our Lord seems to have come down to save all people, but in fact He came down to save the lost sheep. Our Lord came down for all people, but in fact those people do not accept Him. Only when seen from the outside does it seem that He came for such people; it is not universal.

People think that the Christian faith is something universal. But the saying that one is saved if one believes in Jesus is not universal. How one must believe in Jesus and how one is born again by believing—this way is a secret. And this word enters only into the person who is lost. It does not enter into the person who is not lost. We supply according to what that soul needs.

There are truly so many things I want to do. It is not that I do them because I am great, but because I can see what that soul needs. It is because that soul absolutely needs it. But people want what is neat and what is universal. The gospel is not something all those people need.

What is needed is not something neat. There are a few things that that person absolutely needs. But when people try to do one thing, they try to fit the whole into a standard format. If one only tries to fit a standard, it cannot become something true and it cannot become something essential.

Focus on one lost soul

Dear fellow believers, in doing evangelism we must have the heart that goes out to seek the lost sheep. We must go out to seek the one lost sheep. He said, would we not go searching for what

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is lost until we find it?

He said, *"There will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7)*. One real sinner repents. He turns to the Lord, saying: I am a sinner; I have not received the remission of sins before God; I have sin in my heart; save me; how did You, Lord, save me?

And so he comes before the evangelists and hears the word of God that they preach to him. Hearing the word that the Lord has saved him in this way, he turns to the Lord. It is in this sense that He said that when one sinner repents, there is more joy in heaven than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance.

If one hears this word wrongly, it is easy to think that He does not rejoice over the righteous. But since God said that it is more than the joy over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance, He rejoices over the ninety-nine as well. Only, He rejoices more over that one person who repents and returns than over the ninety-nine. It means that such is the heart of our God.

Once we have repented, we must never again repent wrongly. This does not mean that we should not confess and admit that we have sinned. We were bound by the sins of the world, and then we repented and turned to the Lord. So we accepted salvation before the Lord. But if we repent yet again before the Lord, we are now going to the world. He spoke of the ninety-nine who need no repentance.

The righteous have nothing to repent of. It does not mean that they should not admit that they have sinned; it means that if the person who has turned to God turns away again, it is hell. The word repentance means turning back.

What the people of the world misunderstand is that they confuse confession and repentance and use them

interchangeably. It seems they think that saying, I was wrong, please forgive me, is repentance. Those words are asking for forgiveness; they are not repentance. Repentance is when I have been stubbornly going my own way and then turn back, realizing that I must not go this way. Looking back while going on, saying that one was wrong, and then going on that same way again is not repentance.

Confusing repentance and confession, people say that those who are born again do not repent. But there is no one who repents as well, confesses as well, and turns back as well from what is wrong as the born-again person.

Truly, when we preach the gospel, we must bring sinners to repentance. And when one sinner repents, it becomes joy in the presence of the angels of God. We are the very messengers of God. There is no telling how glad we are when we see a sinner realize his sins, come back before the gospel of Jesus, and turn back by believing in the gospel. In our hearts that is the gladdest thing of all.

You and I must do the work of seeking the lost sheep. We must not harbor useless thoughts and make plans about how to build up the church this year or how to establish our own way. To go out solely to seek the one lost sheep of God is the will of God.

This year, too, we must go out to seek the one lost sheep. Who has lost the way? Who is truly a lost sinner before God? Who is truly tormented because of his own sins? We must search carefully.

Do not keep talking to someone who is not even tormented because of sin and so suffer persecution. If you bring medicine to a person who is wounded and in pain, that person is grateful and holds out the wounded place. But if you go to a person who is not even wounded and rush at him with a knife, you get bitten

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instead. A real physician knows the wound that is inside and opens that area.

The lost sheep we are to seek are sheep whose souls are wounded. There are people who have no wound outwardly and have not committed any great sin, but who in their hearts are so tormented because of their own sins. We must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to such people.

Some people, because the sins they have committed pain their hearts so much, become excessively bound to cleanliness. The more severe the wound of the heart, the more so, and the heart falls into confusion and one may even fail to function as a person. Ordinary people, too, have such an obsession with cleanliness. When the soul becomes dull, that obsession also disappears. But the person who has not received the remission of sins before God truly cannot bear it after he commits a sin.

I, too, was like that before I was born again. I was tormented by sin every day, thinking that I should not do such a thing on the Lord's Day, that I had to keep the Lord's Day holy, that even when a guest came I should not buy something and entertain him. I went and washed in the morning and went and washed in the evening. Come to think of it, Christian believers have been caught by an obsession of the heart with cleanliness. Then it is tormenting. And then one dies. One cannot even look at people. It is because one's own sins press down on oneself. And among such people there will be those who have received the remission of sins. Only such people can receive the remission of sins.

If God opens the way and I come to go to where those who are sick in heart are, I think I could help them, too. Among those who are sick in heart, too, there are many who have received the remission of sins and gained peace. They say that when they read our books, their hearts become refreshed. It is truly so. When one looks at the truth, the heart becomes clean, but with other

books, because the Devil works in them, the heart becomes stifled and afraid. When one reads a book by a born-again person, God works within it. That is why the head becomes refreshed.

Even to help a person bound by demons, one must have faith. When a few born-again people sit together and preach the word of God, the Devil is shaken. Then we preach the word all the more and resist him with prayer. We hold on until it is over, saying, Satan the Devil, get away.

When one sinner repents, there is such great joy. You and I, as we continue to live from now on, must not do other things. We must focus on preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, on the preaching of the gospel. We must not focus elsewhere. Focusing elsewhere is corruption and the way to ruin. If we do not focus on the gospel, we are deceived by Satan the Devil.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit may seem simple, but this gospel is precious and is a secret. Whether we eat or drink, we must focus on saving lost souls. Church events, too, must be focused on preaching the gospel, and we must live our life of faith fitted to preaching the gospel to lost souls. He said, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God, and the preaching of the gospel is precisely the glory of God.

When we speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the people of this world, they ask whether we are only now talking about the basics. We must get the basics right. We must focus on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Sunday school, the youth group, the young adults, the adults, and the women's group—all the brothers and sisters across the whole country—must focus on saving one lost soul.

For lost souls we must pray, we must make literature, we must hold prayer meetings, we must offer material things, and we must invest body and heart and everything. For the sake of

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one lost soul, that is. We must not do it in order to raise up our church and enlarge our denomination. That in itself is wrong. Enlarging a denomination is not serving God but serving oneself.

When a church has settled down to some extent, one wants to have things neatly furnished, doesn't one? I, too, have that kind of heart, wanting to make the church building neat. But if we put outward appearance first, the saints turn away. We come to pursue the desires of the flesh. We stop directing our attention to lost souls and lose the precious heart.

As we go forward preaching the gospel, we must pursue and supply the things needed for that work as each need arises. That is the right way. I ask you to keep in mind that supplying what is needed for the preaching of the gospel as each need arises is the right thing. It must not be that we take care of all our own affairs and have no interest in lost souls. We must pray for lost souls, take an interest in them, and make supplication whenever we meet; if we do not, our individual faith dies.

We must go out to find who the one lost soul might be, and we must seek what that one soul needs. Today you and I must focus on one lost soul. We must pursue what that soul needs and invest for that soul. That very work is the will of God.

This year we must live like that. Until the day our Lord comes, we must live like that. It does not work just because the church is neat. We do what is absolutely necessary in order to preach the gospel. Building the training center in haste, too, is in order to preach the gospel. It is not so that we can gather among ourselves and hold a get-together.

We must preach the gospel there. Even if we cannot preach the gospel in ordinary times, at the time of a retreat we gain a great many souls. The summer retreat and the winter retreat are opportunities for harvest. We pray for that harvest.

It is not that we are trying to do something neatly. It is

enough as long as there is no hindrance to preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It must never be that there is a hindrance to preaching the gospel. Even if the outward appearance is unimpressive, as long as there is no hindrance to preaching the gospel, that is sufficient. But if there is a hindrance to preaching the gospel, we must by all means make things neat.

Dear fellow believers, let us know the will of God, have the heart of God, and live according to that will in this new year we are greeting as well. I ask you to know the fact that we must incline our hearts to the gospel. Do not set your hearts elsewhere; we must incline our hearts to the preaching of the gospel. And we must pray and invest everything.

If the Church loses this mission, it makes no difference whether it exists on this earth or not. There is no need for it to exist on this earth. The reason He has left us in this world is that He has entrusted this work to us, asking us to preach His gospel and to seek lost souls. That very work is the heart of the Lord. It is the purpose of the Lord. It is what the Lord desires. Blessed is the servant who knows the will of his master and does it. There is punishment for the one who knows the will of his master and does not do it. Let all of us become those who know the will of the Master and do it. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who seeks those who are lost

< Luke 15:1-32 >

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.' So He spoke this parable to them, saying: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. 'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.' Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his

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possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. ‘But when he came to himself, he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” ‘And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.” ‘But the father said to his servants, “Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” And they began to be merry. ‘Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, “Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.” ‘But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, “Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But

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as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.” ‘And he said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.”’”

How are you? In the Bible, God sought the lowly. Our God said that when we invite guests and serve them food, we should invite not the rich but the poor. He said that then we would be repaid at the resurrection of the just. Why is that? It is because if we invite the rich and serve them food, the rich repay us, and so there is no reward to receive before God. That is why our Lord said such a thing. Look also at the people who met our Lord. The Lord saved the lacking and the weak rather than the great and the outstanding.

In Luke chapter 15, which we read today, too, tax collectors and sinners came to Jesus, and Jesus received them and shared the word and food with them. Although Jesus had also gone to the house of a Pharisee and eaten there, the people Jesus actually received were tax collectors and sinners. Those who came before Jesus were people like tax collectors. That is, they were people who had sin. The word says that Jesus received such people. It says that among them, He received even the most openly revealed sinners.

When our Lord was on this earth, He shared food with tax collectors and sinners. He also preached the word of God to such people. Then the Pharisees and scribes complained about Jesus. Our Lord knew that complaining heart and spoke to them with three parables.

The shepherd, who goes out to seek the one sheep lost out of a hundred

He spoke three parables, and the first spoke of the salvation of God, who seeks the one sheep lost out of a hundred. He said, *"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:4–7).*

Our Lord said in the parable that a certain man had a hundred sheep and lost one of them. Then, it said, the shepherd leaves the ninety-nine in the open field and goes to find the one that was lost.

This word means that among all the people in this world, God seeks the one who is truly lost. It is the word that God goes to find the one who is truly a sinner before God, the one who wants to seek God, the one who wants to have the sin in his heart remitted before God, the one who knows that he is a sinner, the one who knows that he is one who will go to hell, the one who knows that he is a lost one before God.

In this world there is a population of as many as 5.8 billion. But when God looks, the one who is lost is about one in a hundred, one in ten thousand. None of them are sheep that have lost their home; they all live without any problem. But for some souls, their own sins become a desperate problem.

There are such souls: the person who has lost his home, does not know where he should go, does not know what he should

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believe, where God is, or how he should believe, and so is earnestly seeking God. It is precisely such souls that God seeks.

What did our God say He does with the person who has no problem as he lives? He used the expression that the person who has no problem even in his soul is left quietly in the wilderness. The reason our Lord came to this earth, He said, was that He had not come to call the righteous, but had come to call sinners and make them righteous. The person who does not regard the sin in his soul as a problem, even though he has it, does not seek his own Savior, that is, the Lord who came by water and blood.

The sinner the Lord seeks is the one who truly wants to receive the remission of sins. The Lord came for such a sinner—one whose sin in his heart pricks his conscience, who is pricked because of the sins he has committed, pricked because of the evil in his heart, pricked because of past sins, pricked because of the sins of his present life, and who suffers pangs of conscience before God.

But ninety-nine out of a hundred suffer no pangs of conscience. They have no pangs of conscience at all. They simply trust their own hearts, have no pricking or pain from the conscience God gave them, and regard themselves as having no problem. God wanted to save such people as well. But the person God sought was the sinner, and He wanted to make sinners righteous. That was the purpose of the Lord. In fact, all people are people who must receive the remission of sins and must all be saved. But He is telling us that the person actually saved by God was one out of a hundred.

Dear fellow believers, I know that this first parable is a parable directed at the people of the whole world. It is one in a hundred. When we look at the Old Testament, it says that one from this city and one from that city are saved. Many people are living in this world, but the people the Lord has truly met are

that few. Our Lord is also telling us that the people who go to hell in this world are that many.

Dear fellow believers, if a shepherd who is tending sheep leaves them in the wilderness just as they are and goes out to find the one lost sheep, what becomes of the sheep in the wilderness? They all become food for wolves and food for jackals. To put it simply, many people are going down the road of destruction, the broad road. It is the word that many people, after living on this earth, enter the road of destruction and are destroyed by God because of their sins and the wages of those sins.

When God looks, how many are the people who are destroyed? How many are those who are lost? He is telling us that many people are born on this earth, but how rare are the people who have received the remission of sins.

God, who seeks the one lost drachma

As the second parable, He is speaking the word about seeking one lost drachma coin. He said, *"'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.'" (Luke 15:8–10).*

In the first parable, God sought one out of a hundred, that is, the one who was lost. In the second parable, one out of ten coins was lost, and He found that one and rejoiced. Both parables were about seeking the lost person; they were about seeking the sinner.

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God seeks sinners, brings them to repentance, and makes them believe in Jesus Christ. And so He has them receive the remission of sins and makes them righteous. When He clothes them with the grace of the remission of sins and saves them, God is glad, and the servants of God are also that glad. When the servants of God, too, find one lost soul, they call their neighbors together and rejoice with them.

The first, the second, and the third are all words about saving sinners. Many people are living on this earth. Among them there is the real sinner, the one who is lost. There is the one who has realized desperately the fact that he cannot but go to hell and the fact that he has not been saved. There is the one who, regarding himself as one who cannot but be destroyed, has no will to live and no hope, the one who has no hope apart from God. It is the word that God seeks such a one through His servants.

Dear fellow believers, there are many people on this earth, but we must go out to seek those who are lost, those who truly have no hope apart from God. Those whose hearts are broken and whose hearts are wounded, those who are having such a hard time because of the sins they have committed, those who cannot but go to hell, those who think that they are going to hell, those who have no righteousness of their own, those who long for the salvation of God—we must go out to seek such people and save them.

It does not work to preach the gospel to just anyone. We must find the person who is lost before God, the real sinner, and preach the gospel to the person who needs Jesus. There are people who say, ‘I do not need Jesus. I can eat well and live well even without Jesus. Even without Jesus I am not the least bit anxious, and I have nothing to be tormented about because of sin. I am fine.’ Dear fellow believers, the Lord did not come for such people.

There are people who are born on this earth and live in vain without satisfaction. They are people who find no satisfaction even when they drink, sing, and dance, no satisfaction even when they pursue pleasure, no satisfaction even when they pursue philosophy, and no satisfaction even when they pursue religion. There are people who truly want to meet God. They are those who hope to meet the truth and, with that truth, to gain freedom and to gain joy and satisfaction. It means that God is seeking such souls, who want to meet the true truth that does not belong to this world and to gain satisfaction. And He has told the servants of God to go out to seek such souls.

Our Lord did not tell us to preach the gospel to the rich or those who hold power in this world. He tells us to seek those who are truly lost before God, those who are marginalized in the world, those who are in a wretched place. It was the word to seek those whose hearts and souls and bodies seek the grace of God, to preach the gospel to them, and to have them saved.

The heart of the father, who welcomes the son he had lost

The third parable is the story of two sons. It says, *"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want" (Luke 15:11–14).*

In this third parable two sons appear. It is the story that the younger son took his property, went out, squandered it all with

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prodigal living, and became an utter beggar. This son tried to live in the world by his own strength, but he could not make a living. He even ended up living by doing the work of carrying slop to the pigs. He tried to eat even that slop without the owner knowing, but he was not allowed even that.

So, recalling the old days—'how abundantly the workers of my father's house eat their fill of food'—he wanted to return. And when he returned, the father came out without even putting on his shoes, fell on his neck, and kissed him. And he put a ring on his finger, put sandals on his feet, and brought out the best robe and clothed him with it. And he killed the fatted calf and held a feast with the people of the village.

But when the first son came back and heard the sound of the feasting and the music, his heart was uneasy. He wondered why his father was holding a great feast just because that younger son, who had squandered all the property, had come back. He harbored a complaint in his heart: I have always worked hard in my father's house, and yet he has never given me any treat or held a feast for me, so why does he hold such a feast just because my brother, who squandered all the property, has come back?

But what does the father say? He said, Son, all that I have is yours, so why do you complain? He said, since your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found, is it not right to hold a feast? The word of this third parable is a word spoken to the saints in the Church and to the servants of God.

The servants of God and the people of God, those who received the remission of sins first, serve the Lord in the Church with all their strength in the midst of difficulties. Then it seems that He would recognize them at least a little, but He does not recognize them; they even hear rebukes every day, and there are only many words telling them to do this and do that. But then, by some chance, a person who was living prodigally in the world

hears the gospel, receives the remission of sins, and comes to the Church. Then that person is so lovable that one cannot bear it.

Seeing that, the people of God who received the remission of sins first become jealous. They do not know the heart of God. I regard myself as one who, as soon as I came into the Church and received the remission of sins, has been devoting myself this much and serving so well. But the newcomer, I think, has only been saved and still has a long way to go to become like me. And yet He dotes on that person, does not know what to do for him, and pours all kinds of attention on him, so that scene did not satisfy me and I was discontented.

Dear fellow believers, even we can see that the attitude of this first son is wrong. This word is spoken to the servants of God, to the older brothers who received the remission of sins first and came into the Church. These older brothers have truly labored much. Nevertheless, when a younger brother has come back, they must rejoice because of that brother and must not regard the holding of a feast as strange in the least. They must rejoice together. That is, they must know the heart of God.

The heart of God is a heart that holds a feast when one lost sinner returns and is saved. Bringing a dead person back to life is the heart of the Father. It means that bringing a wretched person back to life and making him blessed and happy is the love of the Father. Therefore, the brothers and sisters who received the remission of sins first and the servants of God must have the heart of the Father. We must have the heart of our God.

Religion can never give people satisfaction

The younger son lived prodigally in the world and then wanted to eat the pods that the swine ate, but he could not get

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even those pods. So he turned his heart. He said, I am starving to death here; rather than die like this, I will return to my father's house. It means that he came back saying, though I am my father's son, I will become one of the hired servants and work.

In fact, all human beings are children of God, made in the image of God. Strictly speaking, they are those made by God as His vessels. They are precious souls who all become the people of God and children of God in Jesus Christ. But these people pursue the world, pursue wealth, pursue pleasure, and then pursue religion.

Here, that he wanted to eat more of the pig slop but could not get even that slop and said, *"I perish with hunger!"* was speaking of the religion of this world. Dear fellow believers, religion can never give people satisfaction. Religion only makes people work; it does not give satisfaction. It keeps telling them to do something.

But God is different. Though He makes those who have become the people of God work, the grace that gives the remission of sins gives satisfaction to our souls before He tells us to do anything. It brings us the remission of sins. The people who could not gain satisfaction in the end even in religion and were starving to death have come back before Jesus Christ and gained true satisfaction for their souls.

Dear fellow believers, were you able to gain satisfaction in the religions of this world? You were not. No religion gives satisfaction. Were you not lost souls as well? Were you and I not lost souls as well? We were the one lost sheep out of a hundred sheep, the one lost drachma out of ten drachma coins, and the lost younger son of the two sons. Is everyone like that, or not? It is truly so.

You and I, too, were among those who were lost

Dear fellow believers, did you have no problem at all? Were you able to live well even without God? Even though you had sin in your heart, were you able to have that problem solved through the religions of the world? You were not. We were one of those who were lost.

Dear fellow believers, we must recognize the fact that all of us were one of the people who were lost before God. We must know that we were exactly such people. This word is not a story about other people; it is the story of you and me. We were the very ones who were lost. To be lost speaks of death. To be lost speaks of destruction. To be lost speaks of ruin.

Dear fellow believers, what happens when one sheep leaves the flock of a hundred? It goes to a dangerous place and meets a cliff, and because there is grass below that cliff, looking only at the grass, it keeps going down to nibble it and falls and dies. It keeps going on into the broad open field and is devoured by a wolf or a jackal. It meets a fierce beast, a leopard, a bear, a lion, or a tiger and is killed. It was exactly such a thing that He was speaking of.

The one lost coin and the younger son all point to you and me. We were people who could not but go to hell. But our Lord met us and saved us.

How did the Lord seek us and rescue us?

Then how did the Lord seek us, who were lost, and rescue us? For a shepherd to find a sheep, he must go out into the wilderness, and for a woman to find a coin, she must light a lamp and sweep the house. It is not simply sitting and waiting for it to come; one

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must go out in person. Our Lord, too, did not sit on the throne of heaven but came down in person all the way to this earth.

The Lord, though He is the Son of God, put on the body of a man and came to this earth. And in the year He turned thirty, He went out to the Jordan River and received baptism from John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the representative of mankind and one born of the line of the high priest. In the age of the Old Testament, the high priest laid both his hands on the head of the sin offering. Then all the sins of a year that the people of Israel had committed were transferred just as they were onto that offering. In the same way, when John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and gave Him baptism, the sins of the whole world passed on to the body of Jesus just as they were.

What did Jesus say then? He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The word that He fulfilled all righteousness means that by receiving all the sins of the world onto His body without leaving even one behind and taking them upon Himself, He met all the conditions of salvation. And so the next day John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

The shepherd who found the lost sheep laid that sheep on his shoulders and came home. Our Lord, too, carried our sins on His shoulders and went up the hill of Golgotha. He was nailed through His hands and feet, pierced in His side with a spear, and died shedding His blood. Since it is said that the wages of sin is death, He who had received all the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John received all that judgment of death in our place. That is why at the end He was able to say, *"It is finished!"*

And on the third day He rose again from the dead. He rose again and became our eternal Savior. If the Lord had not risen

again, we would have no hope. Because He is alive, we, too, live, and because He overcame death, we, too, obtain eternal life.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe that the Lord met us and removed all your sins and mine with the water and the blood? What would it be like if Jesus had not taken upon Himself all our sins through the baptism He received from John and had not received the judgment on the Cross in our place? If God had not sent Jesus and accomplished that work for us, what hope would we have? We could not but be destroyed.

However excellent we may be, however well we may think, and however bright our minds may be, it is of no use. We must know that however decent a person one may be, we were all one of those who were lost. And we must know that the One who sought that lost one, laid him on His shoulders, and came back is our Lord.

Though a person toils and strives his whole life, all he gains is destruction

Dear fellow believers, human life is born weeping and departs weeping. When we were born from our mother's womb, we were born knowing nothing, but its end was destruction. We were born with the fate of entering the fire of hell. In the midst of such a fate, our Lord saved us. That salvation is the remission of sins.

Dear fellow believers, we must realize the grace of our Lord. There is no telling how great that grace of our Lord is. Apart from the Lord, how could we be saved? Apart from the Lord, how could we set our hearts at rest, enjoy peace of heart, and live joyfully? Apart from the Lord, how could there be any laughter?

Dear fellow believers, apart from the Lord we are wretched.

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We harbor evil thoughts in our hearts, and people cannot trust one another. Distrust runs rampant, no one can trust anyone, and people deceive and are deceived. They try to live well, but they end up being swindled. A certain rich man built a house, but he could not live in it, and someone else came and lived in it. Even the wealth he had, someone else took it all away. We could not but live such a wretched and miserable life. That very life was our human life, and it was you and I.

Dear fellow believers, does life go well because we make an effort? Because a person is born and works hard, does everything go as he wishes? The saying that if you try, you can do it is the word of the Devil. People have lived their fill on the saying that if you try, you can do it, but did the many who lived before us and passed away all live happily and then go to the public cemetery?

Let us hold out a microphone and ask once. Let us ask, "I am sorry to disturb your sleep here in front of your grave, but I would like to ask you one thing." If we ask whether they made diligent efforts while they were alive on this earth, they will answer that they made diligent efforts. Then if we ask whether they believed the saying that if you make a diligent effort, you can do it, they will say that they believed it. If we ask whether they tried to do as that saying said, thinking that they could do anything if they tried, they will say yes. They will say that they believed those words and tried hard.

But if we ask whether it turned out as that saying said, they will say that it did not. If we ask how much they achieved, they will say that they did not achieve a single thing. If we go to another grave and ask, the answer will be the same. Even if there are hundreds of thousands of graves and we go in front of every one of them and ask, they will all answer that they came here without achieving their wishes one hundred percent. There is not

one person who achieved them.

If a person achieved even a tenth of what he strove for, that person is happy. Even a tenth, that is. Dear fellow believers, people have made many efforts, but though they toil and strive their whole lives, they have nothing of their own. It was not a matter of being able to do it if you tried.

The person who has met Jesus and received the remission of sins has had his status changed and become a child of God

Dear fellow believers, the person who is lost before God must meet God. Only then does God bless him, lead him on the blessed road, clothe him with the best robe, and put a ring on his hand.

Putting on the ring speaks of a change of status. His status has changed and he has become a child of God. Clothing him with the best robe speaks of his having become righteous. Putting sandals on him means putting on him the sandals of the gospel, and it means the blessing of being able to have and enjoy all that belongs to God the Father. Dear fellow believers, does it happen because a person makes an effort? It is not accomplished by effort alone.

If a person is to do well, first he must meet the Shepherd. He must meet Jesus. He must meet Jesus and receive the remission of sins. He must have all his sins remitted. Jesus is our Savior. He took all our sins upon Himself. He took upon His own body all the sins you and I committed through the baptism He received from John, and received the judgment on the Cross, and so He saved you and me.

Only the person who has a shepherd of his own, the person

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who has the Lord, enjoys peace. The Shepherd leads him on the way, to green pastures and beside still waters. Only from that time does the sheep that has met that Shepherd come to have its fill, obtain rest, and live under safe protection.

Dear fellow believers, are you and I not thankful that we have met the Lord? If we do not know how to be thankful for having met the Lord, would that not also be a problem? Then we are exactly the same as the first son. We fall into exactly the same place as the first son, who did nothing but complain. You and I were sons who, like the younger son, were lost and found again.

Dear fellow believers, when Jesus received baptism from John, He took our sins upon Himself. And He received the judgment in our place on the Cross and shed His blood. This very faith is a tremendous thing. I ask you not to think of it as nothing special. It is tremendous. Where could you go to hear such a word? To what denomination could you go to hear such a word?

Dear fellow believers, the tabernacle speaks of a model of Jesus. The gate of the court of the tabernacle was made by embroidering it with blue, purple, and scarlet thread. Going further inside, there is the door of the Holy Place, and that door, too, was woven and embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet thread. Going further in from there, there is the veil that divides the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place, and that veil, too, was of blue, purple, and scarlet thread. Even the last wall behind the mercy seat inside the Most Holy Place was woven and embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet thread. Dear fellow believers, it does not work to believe in Jesus vaguely. One must believe in the gospel of the blue, purple, and scarlet thread.

What is it to believe in Jesus? First, one must believe that Jesus received all our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. Second, one must believe

that He received all the judgment in our place while shedding His blood on the Cross. And the saints must receive the remission of sins and come into the house of God and live there. Living in the house of God, they must do the work of the Father. Also, they must take what belongs to the Father as their own and live by faith. God the Father is the Father who supplies us with what we need according to our needs.

Dear fellow believers, though our having received the remission of sins may seem to be nothing much, it is by no means a small thing. As time passes, one comes to know how great a grace it is. If, having received the remission of sins, one despises this grace and so goes back to the world again, it becomes nothing at all. One becomes more wretched than before. All the diseases one had before come back, and all the sufferings one had before come back. They come back more than before and torment the person. I ask you to keep your wits sharp.

We are all lost souls before God

Above all, we must know the fact that the Lord delighted in and saved such weak people, such sinners. Also, we who have become workers, those who received the remission of sins first, must go out to seek lost souls. It is the word that we must find such souls and bring them. People are still living in this world, but there are many people who are lost. There are many people who think that they are not lost souls even though they are lost souls.

They are all lost people. They are all sinners. They are all people who must receive the remission of sins. But the people who have received the remission of sins are extremely rare. Jesus came to find the person who truly regarded himself as one who

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could not but go to hell. He removed all the sins of such hopeless people. And He saved them with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He did not come to seek the person who says, ‘I am fine in this world. I can do without Jesus.’ Even if He comes to such a person, He merely drops by and passes on.

Dear fellow believers, I ask you not to strive too hard to do well by the people in this world who eat well, live well, and have much money. Such people eat well and live well even without Jesus and then go to the warm place. But there are people who, even though they have wealth on this earth, have money, enjoy great riches, and have a religion, do not enjoy satisfaction. There are people who want to find some true god, people who truly want to receive the remission of sins in their hearts. There are lost souls. There are people who know the fact that they themselves are lost. We must go to such people and preach the gospel.

Two kinds of people come into our church. One kind is the people who come with the heart that they are not lost. However much you talk to such people, they say, ‘Not me.’ Such a person is not a lost person. Because he is not a lost person, he cannot be saved either. In fact, such a person is not saved. It is because he is not one who is lost.

But some people come in thinking that they are lost. They say, I have sin, life in the world is too hard, and I do not know what is what, so I wish someone would save me. Such a person is precisely a lost person.

When we tell such a person the word of God, he acknowledges before the word that the word is right and that he is exactly such a person. To such a person, we need only preach the word. When we preach the gospel to him, that Jesus has saved him with the water and the blood, he believes in Jesus just as it is and becomes one of the people of God. Such a person

becomes righteous and becomes a child of God. Such a person can live forever in the kingdom of God.

Dear fellow believers, there are two kinds of people. There are two kinds of people in the church, and there are two kinds of people outside in the world, too. You and I, those who have already received the remission of sins—what kind of people were we? Of the two kinds of people, we were those who had been lost.

Though we preach the gospel to them, those who have not yet received the remission of sins are people who do not know that they are lost. Until they realize the fact that they are lost people, we must plow the field of their hearts. Until they realize that they are lost, we must plow the field of their hearts and wait again. And we must go out to seek them.

Do you believe that you and I, who have already received the remission of sins, were originally lost? And do you believe the fact that God sought us and we have been saved? It is truly so. Such people are saved. We give thanks to the Lord, who saved us. And let us become such servants who go out to seek the weak, those who are lost. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The one who is united by faith receives blessing

< Luke 15:1-32 >

"Then all the tax collectors and the sinners drew near to Him to hear Him. And the Pharisees and scribes complained, saying, 'This Man receives sinners and eats with them.' So He spoke this parable to them, saying: 'What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, "Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!" I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance. 'Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, "Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!" Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents.' Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his

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possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. ‘But when he came to himself, he said, “How many of my father’s hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, ‘Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.’” ‘And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, “Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.” ‘But the father said to his servants, “Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found.” And they began to be merry. ‘Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, “Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf.” ‘But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, “Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But

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as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him.” ‘And he said to him, “Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.”’”

When today passes, the new year comes around. Greeting the new year, people started the year with a new heart and swelling dreams. In that way we have sent off another year and come to greet a new year.

Up to the twentieth century, people developed many things. Science, religion, philosophy, literature, medicine—they developed everything. And they thought that in the twenty-first century there would be even more astonishing development, safety, and abundance. Many people, whenever a new year began, went out to watch the sunrise and made wishes as they looked at the rising sun. There were also people who made wishes to the gods they believed in. In the midst of that a year began, but that year has passed, and now a new year begins.

When a year begins, people cherish new dreams, and then they experience those dreams turning to bubbles and vanishing. So they become anxious. But for the born-again person there is hope. Whatever becomes of the world, we born-again people have hope because we know that that day has drawn near.

It is said that the sun rises and sets, and having set, rises again. Even if a year passes, the time that has passed was only a year, and within the time of God it is nothing. When tonight passes, the sun rises again tomorrow. Then the new year begins, and when December 31 of that year comes, the sun rises and sets again. And the next year comes.

The time of God keeps going, and at the time God wants, everything is accomplished according to the plan of God. We believe that it is so. Rather than placing great meaning on sending off and greeting a year, we look toward when the will of God will be accomplished under the grand plan of God. And we regard the time when that will is fully accomplished as the final terminus, yet we regard that terminus not as the end but as the first gate that opens a new beginning. That is why we have hope.

This year, too, God bestowed His grace and had us open the mission school. When I think that in the new year He will have us open the mission school and finish it well, and that the Lord will work through those workers, there is joy in my heart.

The Lord rejoices when one lost soul returns

Today we have read the word of Luke chapter 15. Here we see Jesus speaking in a parable. He said, *"What man of you, having a hundred sheep, if he loses one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness, and go after the one which is lost until he finds it? And when he has found it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing. And when he comes home, he calls together his friends and neighbors, saying to them, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep which was lost!' I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:4–7).*

The heart of the Lord is like this. When one lost soul is found again, and that person hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and meets the Lord, he comes back before the Lord, becomes a child of God, and is saved from destruction. Then, it says, the

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heart of the Lord is glad beyond words.

The Lord loves all the people of this world. But when He finds a lost soul, He rejoices that much. When one lost soul returns, He is that glad.

We are preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to this world. But we do not really know who is a lost soul. Our Lord, too, said in the parable that when a man has a hundred sheep and finds again the one lost among them, he rejoices.

There are many people in this world. Among them, who is the lost person in the sight of God? When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to a lost person and he accepts the gospel and receives the remission of sins, God rejoices that much. He holds a feast. Every time God finds that one lost soul, He rejoices like that.

God wants all the people of this world to be saved. But the souls that come back before God are not so many. What is more, the souls that know that they are lost are even fewer.

What we must do is go out to seek lost souls. It is the work of finding those souls, having them meet the Lord, and bringing them into the kingdom of God. You and I, the servants and saints of the churches across the whole country, preach the gospel to the whole world.

We must keep on going out to one lost soul

There are truly many lost souls all over the world. We are preaching the gospel to those souls through books. Overseas, we send these books to those who absolutely need and want them. So many people are being saved, and we are receiving a great response. When they are saved, how much God must rejoice over the work we are doing! We must know that the work we are

doing accords with the will of God.

Every time our Lord finds one lost soul, He rejoices and is glad. It is like leaving the ninety-nine in the wilderness and going out to seek the one that is lost. In the sight of God, the lost souls in this world are one in ten thousand, one in a hundred thousand, one in a million. In some countries, one person in a million returns. Even so, the Lord rejoices over that one soul returning.

I know that the interest of the Lord lies solely in lost souls. In the new year, too, we must not stop the work of preaching the gospel. We clearly believe that God rejoices when He finds lost souls and when those souls return. Therefore we, too, have done the work of going out to one lost soul throughout this year.

During this year we have preached the gospel much to the world. In the month of December alone, about four thousand books went out to those who needed them. Those books went into more than a hundred countries. Among those who received and read those books, there are many who have come back before the Lord. There are many who are curious about the gospel, and many who volunteer to work.

One person was a truck driver who came across our books. He said that these books are truly amazing books for preaching the gospel. And he said that if we sent him these books, he would go all over his country and place the books wherever people could sit and read. He, too, wanted to do this work.

Another person said that his friend was the host of a radio program. He said that on that broadcast there was a segment in which books were sent free of charge to the people who sent in postcards and were selected. He said that if we sent him books, he would send them to that broadcasting station and have them distributed, and he asked whether we could send five hundred copies. I said that if it was true, we could send as many as he

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liked, and that I would check. There are many such things.

As we go on, the latter is becoming better than the beginning. As the word says, though your beginning was small, yet your latter end would increase abundantly, good news keeps coming.

We are preaching the gospel through books toward the lost souls of the whole world. I know that in every country the lost souls will come to meet the Lord through these books.

One person said that he, the father, received this book and took it to his son who was in prison. That son read this book and liked it so much, but he could not bring the book out with him. So he said that since both his son and he had been greatly affected by reading this book, if we sent books, he would distribute many of them in the prison. These are all ordinary people. They are individuals, neither pastors nor theologians.

Much such news is heard. It is refreshing news, like a bowl of cold water drunk in a summer drought. There is so much such news that by now it has come to be taken for granted. Everyone who has read the books gives a good response. People who have believed in Jesus for a long time give such a response. Some have even said that they would polish the translation free of charge and have sent in manuscripts they had revised.

So there are many people responding to the preaching of the gospel to the world. They say they will do this work together, they will do the polishing free of charge, and they will distribute the books. Just as we prayed, such people are rising up in every part of the world. I am truly thankful. I believe that through such people the lost souls of the world will be saved and come back before the Lord.

Just like the heart with which He said that He rejoices when one sinner repents, God is doing these things through us all over the world, and I am truly thankful.

The Lord has clothed us with the robe of salvation

Second, today's text is a word spoken to born-again people. A born-again person fell into the flesh, took all his property and went out, lived prodigally, and wasted all his property. Then later he realized that he had gone wrong before God, and he came back before God. He spoke of what God does at that time.

When the person of God who had lived prodigally and wasted all his property came back, what did God do? He said, *"Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet."* And He said, let us hold a feast, since he was dead and is alive again and was lost and is found.

This word is about the person who, after being born again as one of the people of God, went out into the world, lived prodigally, and then came back before God. When he had lost his property, his health, his good looks, and everything, and realized, 'Only now do I see that I really did wrong,' and came back before God, God received him. And what was the first gift He gave? He clothed him with the best robe.

That is, the Lord clothed him with the robe of salvation, which says that He has removed all his sins. He made that heart clean again. He confirmed his salvation again, saying that even so, you are one of the people of God.

How was the robe of salvation that He put on us made?

Then how was that best robe made? It was not a robe the returned son had made and brought. It was a robe that had already been prepared in the father's house. Our robe of salvation is like that, too. It is not a robe we made and put on; it

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is a robe the Lord Himself made and set aside.

The Lord, though He is the Son of God, put on the body of a man and came to this earth. And in the year He turned thirty, He went out to the Jordan River and received baptism from John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the representative of mankind and a person born of the line of the high priest. In the age of the Old Testament, the high priest laid both his hands on the head of the sin offering. Then all the sins of a year that the people of Israel had committed were transferred just as they were onto that offering.

In exactly the same way, when John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and gave Him baptism, the sins of the whole world were passed on just as they were onto the body of Jesus. Then Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The word that He fulfilled all righteousness means that by receiving all the sins of the world passed on to His body without leaving any behind, He met all the conditions of salvation. And so the next day John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).*

Bearing those sins, the Lord went up the hill of Golgotha. He was nailed through His hands and feet, pierced in His side with a spear, poured out all His blood, and died. Since the wages of sin is death, He who had received all the sin of the world passed on to Him received all that judgment of death in our place. That is why at the end He was able to say, *"It is finished!"* And on the third day He rose again from the dead and became our eternal Savior.

That best robe was made in this way. He received the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the full price with the blood of the Cross, and confirmed that work with the resurrection. What we must do is

not to make that robe and put it on, but simply to wear it as the Lord puts it on us. This salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"Put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet"

Second, He put a ring on his hand. A ring means the promise of engagement and marriage. It means that the Lord has promised all good things to the people of God. He has promised to guarantee the future of born-again people.

He said, I will always be with you. He also promised the Millennial Kingdom and the new heaven and new earth. He said that He would be with us in the midst of all tribulation, that God would be our Shepherd, and that the Lord would protect us and bless us. He also pledged that we would live together with God forever.

God makes promises to the people of God. When a person, after being born again, realizes that the preaching of the gospel is truly precious and comes back, what does God do? He makes a promise. He pledges, 'If you are with Me and come back before Me, I will do such and such things for you.'

God has made many pledges to us. He pledged that when the tribulation comes, our Lord will come and take us away. He also pledged that He will give us the Millennial Kingdom and let us reign there as kings and live for a thousand years. He pledged that when the thousand years have passed, He will let us enter the eternal kingdom of God and live happily with God forever. For born-again people there are the pledges God has made. For you and me there are promises.

And third, He said to put sandals on his feet. It means that He gives us the strength and blessing to preach the gospel. He

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puts on us the sandals of the gospel. The person who has been born again, united with the Church and with God, and come back before God following the word of truth receives the blessing of being able to serve the gospel.

God clothes born-again people with the robe of salvation. Second, He makes them the pledge of every blessing. Third, He puts on them the sandals with which they can serve the gospel. He gives them such qualification and grace. This is exactly what He was speaking of.

Do not divide what is mine from what is the Lord's

After we were born again, we, too, sometimes wandered and lived prodigally. Even if we did not leave the church, there were many times when we thought such thoughts in our hearts. But even when we leave God and try that, there is nothing to be gained. We wasted all that we had. We wasted even all that we had received from the Father, and nothing was left. Later we had to live eating even the slop that the swine ate, and we reached the point where we could not eat even that slop.

When a person who has received the remission of sins leaves God, he reaches that state. At first, putting forward his own rights and claims and saying, mine, mine, it seems good to go out and live. But he ends up wasting it all. Then later he realizes the love of God, comes to know that the word of God is the truth, and comes back. When he comes back, God first brings out the best robe and clothes him with it, second puts a ring on his hand, and third puts sandals on his feet.

This word is a word spoken to you and me. That you and I can serve the gospel, that we have received the promise of many blessings from God, that we are clothed with the robe of

righteousness, that though we are lacking we have no sin—all of this is what our Lord has clothed us with. Apart from the Lord it could never be. Through the Lord we are here now. Just as He said that every good thing in heaven and on earth comes from above, all of this has come from God.

After being born again, do you and I not perhaps have this kind of heart? Does it not seem that if I use my rights, what is mine, and my strength for the Lord I will suffer loss, and is your heart not divided, thinking that what is mine and what is the Lord's are separate? In reality it is not so. It is not that what is mine and what is the Lord's exist separately. In fact, everything has come through the Lord.

What I have lived on and what I have received until now have come from the Lord. And in the future, too, we cannot live on what we have now alone. In the future we must live having more. So we pray and receive from the Lord. We must receive from the Lord and use it for the Lord, keep one household with the Lord, and live a life in which what is mine is the Lord's and what is the Lord's is mine. Then the Lord gives us the grace to serve the gospel, gives us blessings, makes us pledges, and clothes us with the robe of righteousness. He bestows all that grace in our lives.

Our hearts must not leave the Lord. Whether we are lacking, or capable, or incapable, everything of ours has come through the Lord. That we believe in the Lord, follow the Lord, and preach the gospel is a great blessing the Lord has given us. We must know this fact. Also, we must keep in mind that God has made us the promise of blessing, believe that promise, and live in hope. We must believe that our being clothed with the robe of righteousness came about by the amazing grace of God.

And so we must come back before God, be united with God in heart, go out to seek the one lost soul in whom God delights,

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and do what pleases God. We must really have faith in our hearts and work not with a divided heart but with a united heart. When we do, we always feast and are glad and joyful.

He also said to kill the fatted calf and hold a feast. He said, invite the people of the village, kill the calf and hold a feast, play music, and let us eat and drink together and celebrate. And He said that this son was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.

God speaks of two things. He rejoices when He finds a soul that was completely dead because of sin. He also rejoices when one whom He had already found leaves home and then comes back again. All of us fell under the first case. But in the second case, there are many who have not yet come back. There are still many whose hearts are divided from the Lord.

When these divided people unite their hearts with God and live regarding what is the Lord's as theirs and what is theirs as the Lord's, they come to take part in this feast. They come to be clothed with the best robe, receive the pledge, put on the sandals of the gospel, and receive the grace of being able to preach the gospel. And in the midst of that they hold a feast. When one soul returns, the heart is glad and joyful, and we hold a feast both physically and spiritually. A feast is a symbol of joy. It means continuing to live a joyful life. God has promised and has also given you and me such a blessed life.

Do spiritual arithmetic

God does this for those who truly believe in God, fully believe the word of truth, and believe all the words God has pledged. Are you not dividing your own household from what is the Lord's? True union is a life in which what is mine is the

Lord's and what is the Lord's is mine. That very life is a life united with the Lord.

Even after meeting the Lord, there are many times when we think that what is mine is mine, with the same heart as the prodigal son who appears here. There are many times when we try to do as we please with what is ours. But if we live with that heart, we end up squandering it all. Since what is mine is the Lord's and what is the Lord's is mine, whenever the Lord needs it we give it up, and whenever we need it we ask the Lord. Then we come to keep one household together with the Lord and continue to live a life of feasting together with the Lord. God has given us such a blessing.

But people do not really know this deep truth. Because they do not know it, they do fleshly arithmetic. They are good at figuring in the manner of three plus two equals five. Because of that arithmetic they misunderstand. They calculate that this way I lose and that way I lose. Because they do such arithmetic, union does not take place.

Dear fellow believers, we must do spiritual arithmetic. Has not everything of yours and mine, all our life, all our property, come through God? Do you think so as well? It is truly so. Everything has come through God. There is not one thing that has not come through God. Health, life, material things, all our circumstances—everything has come through God.

But there are many times when our hearts do not acknowledge this fact. Dear fellow believers, the father rejoiced over the prodigal son who returned and received him. We must know that when we are united with God, we live together with God. It means that we live a life of feasting every day.

Dear fellow believers, the born-again person eats better and lives better than the people of this world. Even among the people in the church, the person united with the Lord, the person united

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with the Church, united with the gospel, and united with the preaching of the gospel, eats better and lives better. The person who lives taking care only of his own things does not eat well, and even what he has, the locusts eat it all up. Money drains away to useless places. It all drains away in hospital bills and this and that.

The people in the Church eat well and live well. That said, I do not mean that this body has come into the church. I mean that the heart is united. I am speaking spiritually.

The Lord rejoices in the gospel being preached to the whole world

By all means, whether it is a prodigal son who has returned or a sinner who has returned and received the remission of sins, God rejoices that much and is that glad. You and I, too, must think about whether we are such people. And now, as older brothers, we must first be united with the Lord in heart.

And so we must rejoice and be glad because of those souls who receive the remission of sins and return after us. Following the example of the Father's heart, we must become mature older brothers and older sisters who rejoice when the Father rejoices and grieve together when the Father grieves.

We must become mature people whose hearts are united with God, and since we do not know when the Lord will come, we must work with the heart of the Lord. Working with such a heart, I ask you never to forget these three graces—the best robe, the ring, and the sandals He put on us, as they appear in today's text—and also that He killed the fatted calf and held a feast.

I ask you never to forget the word before that, either. Do not forget, either, that the prodigal son took all his property and went

out and lost it, and later could not eat even the pods and lost everything he had. All of these are words given to you and me. From now until the day the Lord comes, let us be united and live by faith.

I know that there are many who have not yet been able to be united because they have no faith. Dear fellow believers, whatever you do, I ask you to be with the Lord. When you preach the gospel, when you work, when you run a business, when you trade—since He said, whether you eat or drink, do all to the glory of God—I ask you to do everything together with Him. I ask you to design and plan together with Him. Then you prosper.

There is a framed motto that reads, 'The master of this house is Christ, who is not seen with the eyes.' The master of us and of this house is the Lord. Your master, too, is our Lord. Dear fellow believers, I ask you to be with the Lord. The work of preaching the gospel to the whole world is itself the work of being with the Lord.

We do the work in which the Lord delights. Even if it does not seem to add up by human calculation, we do this work. We do it by faith, believing that God will surely bless it and make it go well. The work of preaching the gospel to the whole world is a work that cannot be carried out if we reckon it by calculation alone. But if we do spiritual arithmetic and are with the Lord, we can do as much as we like. I believe that if only three hundred people unite their hearts for the Lord, God will give a blessing more than enough to preach the gospel to the whole world hundreds of times over.

Dear fellow believers, we must believe that the word of the Bible is the truth. We must not try to live by our own strength alone. Have you ever had your strength run out completely? Once your strength has run out completely, you come to be united with God, and then God will work together with you.

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Even if it has not yet run out completely, if you believe that what is yours is the Lord's, if you have such faith, plan your work together with the Lord. Then He will be with you.

Dear fellow believers, the life in which we succeed is a life together with the Lord. When we live like that, the Lord blesses everything. I ask you to live with faith. Dear fellow believers, I ask you never to despise the word of truth of God. Every single verse of the word of the Bible tells us of amazing wisdom and understanding and of the way to be blessed.

When the prodigal son came back before the Lord, he was able to recover his status. He was able to receive many promises and guarantees. He received the grace of serving this amazing gospel of the Lord. He also received the blessing of living and feasting together with the Lord. I ask you to keep this grace in mind. If there is anyone who has not yet come back, I ask you to come back by faith.

I hope that there will be no case of calling what you have your own, living prodigally, wasting it all, becoming an utter beggar, and barely coming back. While the older brothers have all along been living and feasting, the one who comes back late has to labor more for a while. Even in a house of feasting there is an order of men and women, old and young.

I ask you to be united. I ask you to become one with the Lord by faith, design your life, and live by faith. This is what I want to say to you. It is so for me, and it is so for you. The Lord tells us to seek out the lost souls of the whole world one by one and preach the gospel to them. He tells us to do this work. He has entrusted this work to you and me.

In the new year, too, let us do much work. There are still many lost souls around us. We must seek lost souls. I ask you not to seek the souls that are not lost. If you keep going to a person who is not even lost and say that you will find his home

for him, you are instead taken for a person trying to seize him and carry him off. But if you look carefully and talk with people, there are people who are lost. There are people who say, 'I really want to meet God, but I cannot meet Him. I have gone to this church and that church, but I do not understand.'

There are still countless such people in the world. Dear fellow believers, do you not want to do what pleases God? Let us do it together. Let us do it uniting our hearts with the Lord. Being a prodigal is by no means a good thing. But after being born again, everyone becomes a spiritual prodigal once. Whether inside the church or outside, everyone becomes a prodigal once.

Dear fellow believers, only when the heart comes back does one truly come back. Come back. Be together. Work together. We will preach the gospel to the whole world. Seen by faith, the world gospel has already been preached completely. We will send books to all the people of the world.

In preaching the gospel to the whole world, do we run about in body, grab hold of people, and preach? No. We put the gospel into books and send them as one sends letters. Is not e-mail a letter as well? When we ask an individual whether he would receive a letter and then send it, he reads it and is astonished and turned upside down. When it goes to laypeople, they will be even more astonished and turned upside down. They say that it is a truly amazing book. Some, their pride wounded, turn away from it. But when our books go out, people will be greatly astonished.

In particular, when they read the book about the Holy Spirit, they will say, I was sure that I had received the Holy Spirit, but was the spirit I received not the Holy Spirit? And they will overturn the life of faith they have led until now. And they will take the book to their pastor and say, read this book once; what I received was a fake.

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The Holy Spirit speaks within the word, in quietness. The Holy Spirit does not work in a place where people shout loudly and make a noisy commotion. In a place that is noisy and disorderly, the Holy Spirit is not present; instead, demons gather.

Dear fellow believers, do not say, mine, mine. I have nothing of my own. When I first met the Lord, I, too, thought only about what I would eat, what I would drink, and what I would wear by my own strength. But as I preached the gospel, I saw—where is there anything of mine? The work of God is truly great and wide and there is much to do, so where is there mine and yours? Everything must be used for the gospel.

Dear fellow believers, there is no one who has nothing of his own. Also, the thought that this is mine comes into the heart a great deal. But from the moment we start taking care of things as our own, we become utter beggars. Dear fellow believers, everything has come through the Lord, is used for the Lord, and is used together with the Lord. When it is so, we become rich. We become spiritually rich and physically rich.

Dear fellow believers, let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Do not be daunted by the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world. I have already preached the gospel to the whole world completely by faith. It is all finished. It is all accomplished. You may say that we have not yet preached it completely, but it says, *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* By faith I have met all the people in the world. I have met the people of many countries and talked with all of them. Now only the process remains; everything is finished.

Dear fellow believers, have faith. Have faith and be united. The person who is united lives in these last days. The person who is not united becomes a prodigal and is ruined. In the future there may still be the work of sinners returning, which is the first

case, but in the second case, if the period during which a prodigal has gone out and comes back grows long, he may never be able to come back forever. Until now it has been possible because it is the age of grace. But in the future it will not be so. The world will not permit it. The world is savage. From now on, let us keep our wits sharp and live.

The new year is coming. I think about how widely the gospel of the water and the Spirit will be preached when the new year comes, and how greatly this gospel will work. I can see that work with my eyes, and I have hope in that work. People go to the sea to watch the sunrise, saying they are going to greet the sun. It is not an exaggeration to say that I grew up by the seashore and lived watching the sun rise from the sea every day.

When I finished the dawn prayer, came out of the chapel, and went down the hill, the sun would rise from the sea as if dancing. I lived watching that scene every day. But even if one watches the sun rise every day, nothing remains in the heart. We must look to the Lord in our hearts.

The Lord rejoices over those who return, and He rejoices in the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? I will close the message here. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The faith that knows and believes the will of God revealed in the word

< Luke 15:8-10 >

"Or what woman, having ten silver coins, if she loses one coin, does not light a lamp, sweep the house, and search carefully until she finds it? And when she has found it, she calls her friends and neighbors together, saying, 'Rejoice with me, for I have found the piece which I lost!' Likewise, I say to you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner who repents."

In three days it is Buddha's Birthday. In our country there are many people who believe in Buddhism, and those people keep that day. Buddhism came from the son of the king of a certain tribe in India. That prince harbored doubts about the birth, aging, sickness, and death of human life, and he went out into the world to find out the reason. In the course of that he went through many hardships, lost his parents and lost his country, and became utterly exhausted in body and mind. What he said he had realized was the saying that what exists does not exist, and what does not exist exists. From that realization the Buddhism of today came into being.

When a person is in too much pain and hardship, he wants to deny reality. The heart that wants to deny reality is in everyone.

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So that prince, too, left his tribe. Because birth, aging, sickness, and death—a person being born, growing up, growing old, and dying—were problems that would come upon him, he came to think a great deal. So, agonizing, he asked himself, 'How can I solve this problem?'

The doctrines of religion that people have made

What was made in the end is the doctrine of Buddhism. The first thing it speaks of is the doctrine of reincarnation. It says that a person is born, lives, dies, and is born again in the next world, whether born as a person or born as an animal. It says that one is born, lives, and dies, and is born again, lives, and dies, going around in turns. The doctrine of reincarnation is that one lives in turn, going around forever without dying, once as a person and once as an animal.

And they say that to wash away their sins, one must carry a mal of barley on one's head, walk a road of ten ri, and plant one grain of barley in the ground. It is said that each time one plants one grain of barley, that much sin disappears. So removing a person's sins is nearly impossible. Therefore they hope that by living well while they live in this world, when they are born again the poor person will be born in a rich house, and the person who lived and died without power will be born in a king's family in the next life and live holding power. They made such a doctrine, saying that in order to be born into a better life, one must live good while living in this world.

Having made the doctrine of Buddhism, people strive to fulfill that doctrine. In order to be born again into a world better than reality, they make efforts and do good. It seems that many religions are all like that. What religions have in common is

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believing in doctrine. People make doctrine with human thinking, and they believe it themselves and keep it themselves.

Seen with such eyes, in A.D. 325 Emperor Constantine of Rome called the philosophers together and had doctrine made, but he himself did not believe it. It was because he himself was a priest who served the sun god. Then in his last years, facing death, he received baptism and converted to Christianity, and then he died. He made it himself and believed it himself. All religions are like that. People make doctrine, and people fall into that doctrine and flounder in it, and live and die.

The woman who found the one lost drachma

In the word we read today, one drachma out of ten was lost inside the house. The drachma is a unit of money in Greek, and one drachma is a day's wages of a young man. The woman lost that money inside the house.

She lost one out of ten. So she swept and wiped the house and searched, shaking everything out, wondering whether it had gone under the floor covering, whether it had gone under the wardrobe, or whether it had gone into the trash can. At last she found it and held a feast together with the people of the village. He said that likewise, when one sinner repents, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God. He spoke of it in the parable of the lost money.

These days, when I ride in a car, there are many lanterns hanging in the streets because the Buddhists are holding the lantern festival. Looking at those lanterns, I think to myself. The prince of a tribe in India had something he realized in his own way, and he made for himself the doctrine that if one lives well in this world, one is born in a better place in the next life.

So the thought comes to me that Buddhist believers have fallen into that doctrine and are doing good in their own way. Because those who believe in Buddhism think that if they do evil in this world they will be born worse in the next world, they make many efforts to live good. So those people are respected people in the world of religion.

There are many people in Asia who believe in Buddhism. In a place like Taiwan, the power of Buddhism is great. The Buddhism of Taiwan is a Buddhism that has entered deeply into social life. So it is very different from the Buddhism of our country. In our country, when a person dies, the body is carried in a hearse, but there they carry it in the trucks they drive around in. They even load a piano and play the piano as they ride along in the vehicle. They play music, sway their bodies, and make a commotion so that the deceased who is going to be buried in the grave may be glad.

So when a person dies, a feast is held in the house of mourning. They play music, drink, and dance. And when the burial is done, rich people prepare a house in which the person who died and was buried can live when he comes back to life. They put a refrigerator in it and a bed as well. So when one looks at a public cemetery, the person without money has only a grave, and the person with money has a house. What is peculiar is that as they carry the corpse along, they go playing the piano so that the deceased may be glad. It means that it has become a Buddhism that belongs to society.

In our country Buddhism is different. The Buddhism of our country pursues attaining enlightenment, being liberated from this world, and becoming a god oneself. In a way, the Buddhism of Taiwan seems better than the Buddhism of our country. But it is not my business to say do this or do that.

It seems that those who believe in Buddhism are the best

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among those who believe in the religions of the world. Why is that? It is because their doctrine is like that. Since it says that if one does not live good, one is born badly in the next world, they try to live good if they can. They made it themselves and believe it themselves.

Then what about Christianity? Was Christianity not also made by the emperor of Rome? So they believe according to doctrine, try to live according to doctrine, and try to receive the remission of sins and go to heaven by acting according to doctrine. But since living according to doctrine does not go well, they strive and struggle. Then which could we say is better or worse—Christianity, the Buddhism of our country, or the Buddhism of Taiwan? They are all the same. In that they are doctrines of religions that people have made, they are all the same.

They said, let us return to the word, but no one has returned

Then how should we believe? God planned, made, carried out, and accomplished the universe and all things, human beings, and everything. To look at the word of the Bible that records all those things and believe according to the word is the faith of the born-again person. To believe according to the word of the Bible is to believe rightly. In the old days the Reformers, too, knew well that the Christian doctrine Emperor Constantine had the philosophers make was not sound.

At that time they did not know the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit recorded in the Bible. But the believers of the early Church knew it and believed it. Yet when the doctrine was made, those people were excluded. So the Reformers said

that since Christian doctrine was not sound, let us return to the Bible. Saying, let us go as far as the word of the Bible goes and stop where the Bible stops, let us believe according to the word, they raised the movement of the Reformation. But no one has returned to the word.

In A.D. 325 the emperor of Rome made Christian doctrine through the philosophers, and people believed it as it was. From there Catholicism came into being, and from there the Reformers also came out. After the American continent was discovered, they boarded ships and went there. They escaped to that place to flee persecution.

When they went and lived there, winter had nearly come, and the weather was cold and there was nothing to eat. There were native people there, and wild animals must have been swarming as well. So they were living relying on God and praying, and the native people saw them, had pity on them, and helped them.

They gave them food and gave them protection as well. So they arrived around autumn, kept Thanksgiving, and passed the winter there, and with the help of the native people they got through the winter safely. And among the people who had escaped on that ship there were French people, English people, and Portuguese people. Capable people from various countries of Europe had escaped, and those people had been leading craftsmen and technicians in their own countries.

Those people informed their families and the kings of each country by letter that they had succeeded in America. They said that they had come to the American continent and succeeded in settling, and that they were on good terms with the native people. The kings of each country who received and read the letters of success thought like this: if there is such a vast land, would not the one who goes in first and takes it be the owner of that land? So they loaded soldiers and weapons onto large ships, put nobles

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and religious leaders on board, and went into that place.

When they went in and looked, they saw that if they only drove out the native people there, it would become their own land. The Puritans who had gone in first had become friends with the native people, but the people who later went in on warships from each country became people who waged war against the native people. So they waged war and drove the native people off to one side. Since the land was so vast, they took the land in the manner of 'here is France, there is England, here is Portugal.' And they caught and killed all the native people. Thus the America of today came into being. It is a nation that various powers united to make.

There is a reason I am telling this story. Theologians, bishops, and priests of the Roman Church also went into that place in great numbers. With much money they established schools, established hospitals, and built roads. Those works piled up, and the America of today came into being.

The point of my telling you this is as follows. In America there are many Christian believers, and it seems that they believe in Christianity well, but when one looks at the inside, they are all believing the Christian doctrine brought from the Roman Church. It means that they are people who believe not the word of the Bible but Christian doctrine.

So, in the way their ancestors did, before they invade another country, they always send missionaries first. And while doing many good works, they invite the ambassador of their own country and establish exchanges. And they try to become the masters of that country by planting a great deal of their own country's religion there.

So there are many countries in the whole world that do not like America. It is because if a country accepts their religion, they come to that country and try to reign as kings. We have no

need to slander them. Only, we must know the fact that even today there are more people who believe man-made Christian doctrine than people who believe according to the word of God.

Believing doctrine and believing the word of God are different

You, too, were like that. There may be some who say, 'I believed according to the word,' but when you look at this word, do you know its meaning? Do you not fail to know it? You did not believe according to the word; in the old days you, too, believed Christian doctrine. They said that if you offer prayers of repentance you receive the remission of sins, that if you believe in Jesus you are saved, and that if you believe in Jesus well you go to heaven. Those words are all Christian doctrine as well. Within that, have you ever heard a sermon that you must be born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit? You have not.

Is it not too astonishing? It is a truly strange thing. This matter is a mystery. In the word of the Book of Revelation, it says that the harlot put on splendid clothing, bore many names, and enjoyed all the pleasures and everything of the world, and it calls that matter a mystery. It calls it the mystery of the harlot. In order to plunder the people of the world, they made Christian doctrine, drew people inside it, taught them, and in the end plundered them. They reign as kings themselves.

So even if people believe in Jesus, they do not receive the remission of sins; they only become people belonging to that denomination. You and I, too, once lived as such people. Here it says that there were ten drachmas, one of them was lost and found again, and there was rejoicing together with the angels of God.

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It is the content that God rejoiced that He had found us, who were lost, saved us, made us the people of God, and let us live in the kingdom of heaven.

Let us read the word of John 3:16 together. We must return to the word of God. It is that we confirm through the word how the Lord came to save us and removed our sins, believe through the word, are saved through the word, enter the kingdom of God, and live enjoying the love of God.

The whole of salvation is contained in John 3:16

It is John 3:16. *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* We are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and we do not suffer destruction because of our sins but obtain everlasting life. By believing in the love of God the Father, who so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, believing in the love of Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, and believing in the salvation He has given us, we become people who do not perish because of sin but have obtained everlasting life, and so we become happy people. John 3:16 speaks of precisely that salvation.

The Bible is not difficult. The word that God so loved the world means that He loved each and every one of you and me who live in the world. So He had His Son receive baptism from John the Baptist and passed our sins on to Him, had that Son receive the judgment of sin, die, and rise again, and so He saved us through that Son and gave us everlasting life. The world that appears here is a word that refers to you and me.

But if one believes according to Christian doctrine, one takes the word that God so loved the world merely as meaning that He

loved the people of the world. But to speak concretely and in detail, it is the word that He so loved each and every one of us.

God the Father had His Son Jesus receive baptism from John and passed our sins on to Him, had His Son receive the judgment for our sins, and had Him rise from the dead, and so He completed the work of saving us through that Son. The Bible speaks of the completion of that salvation.

Therefore, when we look at the word of the Bible, know what this word says, and believe, believing in Jesus becomes very comfortable and clear. If we know and believe, we become people who are saved and enjoy everlasting life. So how good it is! In the one verse of John 3:16 is contained everything—how God saved us, how He loved us, how He removed our sins, how He passed judgment on our sins, how He brought us back to life from death, and how He enabled us to live an eternal life.

Man-made doctrine is like opium

How clear it is! If one only realizes this word properly, one receives the remission of sins. But the church members who believe Christian doctrine today weep and wail every day because of their sins, beat the ground, and offer prayers of repentance. They fast and pray until their whole bodies are damaged. If one believes the doctrine of a man-made religion, one is ruined. One goes to hell.

If one believes the doctrine of a man-made religion, one becomes unhappy. That is why a certain philosopher said that religion is opium. At first it seems good for a while, but if one keeps believing it, one becomes tormented, becomes unhappy, and is ruined. Dear fellow believers, when you think about it quietly, is it not so?

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Having lived life to some extent, I think that saying is quite right, too. Opium is a narcotic, and when one is injected with a narcotic, at first dopamine comes out in the brain and one feels good. It makes one think of heaven. Dopamine comes out when a person feels his very best. Even if only a little of that dopamine comes out, one is glad, but with narcotics a hundred times, a thousand times as much pours out all at once.

Then for a few hours it is good. But when one wakes up, only torment remains. They say that there is a hormone called dopamine in a person's nerve cells, and once that hormone has all been secreted, it comes out no more. From then on one cannot feel any pleasure. They say it is like a living hell. They say one feels depressed and afraid, it seems as if demons appear and kill one, it seems as if snakes are coiling tightly around one's body, and only negative thoughts come.

The saying that religion is opium is said of the doctrines of man-made religions. We can meet God by knowing and believing the truth and the will of God revealed in the word of God. And we must live enjoying the everlasting life and eternal joy that God gives.

The Bible is the word God has spoken

This is possible only when one believes in God. Why must we believe the word of the Bible? It is because the word of the Bible is a record of the words God has spoken, and so it is the word of God itself. One may ask how we can know that the Bible is the word of God. The word of the Bible was recorded through the servants God had set up.

The Pentateuch was recorded by Moses. Then, since Moses had not even been born when the heavens and the earth were

created, how could he record it? It is because the Spirit of God was in Moses, governed the heart and thoughts of Moses, and let him know that God had made the heavens and the earth in this way.

So Moses recorded it like this: *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 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. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness" (Genesis 1:1–4)*. Moses went on recording Genesis in this way.

Dear fellow believers, the sentences are very precise. If we had been there when God created the heavens and the earth, we could not have written in such orderly sentences. When God made the universe and created the heavens and the earth, the earth came into being and light came into being and there must have been a tremendous noise, and if one recorded it as one saw and heard, the sentences would become confused.

But God set up His servant and moved the heart and thoughts of that servant by the Spirit of God and had him record it. Therefore this word of the Bible is the word of God. And in this word of the Bible prophecies are recorded, and the words in which those prophecies were fulfilled are recorded together with them.

Not one jot or one tittle has been wrong until now. Until now there have been people who dug into archaeology in order to prove that the Bible is not the word of God and is mistaken. But in the end they all fell on their knees.

Dear fellow believers, we are people who believe the word of God. Because we believe the word of God, we live as we do now. In the word of God are the answers to all problems. But

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people do not believe the word of God; they believe their own thoughts and their own stubbornness. So even trying to solve one problem is hard. They are confused, they fight, and they quarrel. If the people of the world want to obtain peace, they need only believe in God and the word of God. Then peace is achieved at once.

It is because Jesus Christ has solved all the problems of human beings. Also, one must not do evil to others. After we are born again, God gives us the Holy Spirit as a gift. When the Holy Spirit is in the heart, one does not harm the other person.

As we do some work, a quarrel may arise. But if we consider the other person's position, too, and gather our hearts together, saying, 'Let us live solely as God is pleased. Let us fulfill the will of God,' all human problems are solved. Even wars are all solved. Truly, our God is a God of love, a God of truth, and a good God.

Only when one denies oneself does one accept the love of God

Let us read John 3:17 together. *"For God did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world, but that the world through Him might be saved."*

God the Father did not send His Son into the world to condemn the world. Then why did He send the Son of God? Did He send Him to rule over us or to watch over us? No. God the Father sent His Son in order to rescue us from sin, destruction, and the curse and save us.

Since the Son of God came to this earth as the Savior, there is no reason at all for us not to believe in Him. There is no need to argue about whether He is right or wrong. God the Father so

loved the world. He gave His Son, removed our sins, made us the people of God, and blessed us to enjoy everlasting life.

When God looks, this earth and this universe are very small. But through human beings, who resemble the image of God, He revealed fully who God is, what He has done, and that He is truly a good One. Through that work of sending His Son to the people living on this earth and removing our sins, we can know who God is. God is a God of love. We can know and believe the fact that God is love.

Because people like Christian doctrine, I reestablished Christian doctrine and published a book. I gave it the title 'The Elementary Faith of Christians.' Though I gave it that title, inside it I recorded fully, together with Bible verses, the things God planned and did in everything.

It is completely different from the Apostles' Creed you knew in the old days. Dear fellow believers, when you look at the record of Christian doctrine and look up those Bible verses, they are all different from what the Apostles' Creed says. There is hardly anything that is the same. It is in a sorry state.

Thinking that someone ought to write Christian doctrine again correctly, I made up my mind that I must settle this part. You did not attend seminary, and you did not learn Christian doctrine. So I wrote a book so that you could know it more surely than a person who attended seminary for a hundred years.

When you read that book, you become a person equipped with deep knowledge of the faith. Such a book is not something just anyone writes. Booklets on the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not something just anyone writes, either. Knowing and writing are different. Knowing and believing are also different. It is not an easy thing. God must permit it. I do it because God has given me the Holy Spirit. Even now, it is because I read this word and know what this word says that I am telling it to you. If

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one does not know its meaning, one ends up copying and preaching other people's books without any burden of heart. I, too, was like that in the old days.

But now, when I look at this word, I come to know, 'Here is such a truth.' God sent His Son into the world not to condemn but to save, and He gave His Son so that we might obtain everlasting life.

Let us all read verse 18 together. *"He who believes in Him is not condemned; but he who does not believe is condemned already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God."*

Dear fellow believers, God loved you, sent His Son, and passed our sins on to that Son through the baptism John gave. And He had His Son nailed to the Cross so that He received in our place the punishment for our sins, and had Him rise from the dead, and so He brought us back to life from death and gave us everlasting life. But if we do not believe in that good God, we become people who go to hell because of our own sins. We become people who are judged because of our own sins. Dear fellow believers, if a person born into this world claims to believe in Jesus and yet has not received the remission of sins in his heart and remains a sinner and so comes to go to hell, there are two reasons for it.

First, it is because he believed in Jesus according to Christian doctrine. Doctrine cannot clearly testify to the fact that God so loved the world. It is because it remains at the level of theory. Second, he goes to hell because he loves the evil in his own heart and so does not believe in Jesus and does not accept the love of Jesus. Human beings were born with sin from birth. They were born as sinners. They were born with sin and evil in their hearts. Human beings are a breed that does evil.

So what comes up from the heart is always evil. Evil keeps

coming up from within: ‘He is trying to deceive me. That person is lying.’ When someone says that God loves us, the thought comes up, ‘He is trying to use me.’ Therefore one must deny oneself.

Let us all read verse 19 together. *“And this is the condemnation, that the light has come into the world, and men loved darkness rather than light, because their deeds were evil.”*

What kind of person is the one who believes in Jesus, but does not have his sins remitted? First, he is a person who believed in the religion called Christianity and did not have his sins remitted. Second, what kind of person is the one who is condemned? He is a person who, though the light has come into the world, loved darkness rather than light because his deeds were evil.

It is the word that, being born a sinner, he loves sin more.

Because the heart that loves sin is great, and so one does not accept the love of God, who is light and who is love, one goes to hell. One is judged for sin. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? People say, ‘I want to believe in Jesus, but I cannot quite believe.’ People say, ‘I want to believe, but what can I do if I cannot believe?’

The reason one cannot believe lies in the fact that, having been born evil and loving evil too much, one rejects the light of one’s own accord. Therefore one goes to hell. To believe in Jesus and obtain salvation, one must deny oneself. One must admit, ‘This is what I am. I am such an evil person. I am a breed that does evil.’ One must rebuke oneself, saying, I command you in the name of Jesus, Satan, get away. One must rebuke the Devil within oneself, saying, Satan, get away. And one must believe in the love of Jesus Christ and the fact that He is God.

God so loved the world. Jesus is God, who made the universe, and His saving us is precisely the love God bestowed toward us.

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God is a God of love. God is a good God. Then why do we not accept that love?

In order to save us, He was born on this earth, and when He turned thirty, He took our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the greatest among those born of women, that is, the representative of mankind. And He was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood. For whom did He do that work? Did He receive baptism and die because Jesus had sin?

That Jesus came to this earth, received baptism, and was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood was not because of His own sin. Because He had taken your sins and mine upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, He was nailed to the Cross in order to receive in our place the punishment that you and I were to receive, and so He received that punishment in our place.

It may be hard for us to believe in Jesus. Because we are a breed that does evil, we dislike good and dislike the truth. So in Christian movies there is a scene in which, when a cross is held right in front of a demon-possessed person, that person trembles like an aspen leaf and collapses. It is a scene that shows the fact that Satan the Devil hates the light of truth. Just as Satan the Devil hates the light of truth, in the heart of a person who has not received the remission of sins, too, there is a heart that dislikes what Jesus did.

It is so because we inherited sin from our ancestors. Therefore you must dislike that heart within you. You must rebuke it, saying, Satan the Devil, get away. Only when you accept and love the love with which God loved you are you saved. Therefore you must overcome yourselves.

My heart insists that I am right, so what is it like to break that heart? Does it not hurt? It hurts too much, wondering why I must

break my own assertion when I am right. Even so, if my breaking it is for the sake of harmony, for the sake of peace, and beneficial, I must break it. I must break it decisively, saying, 'However right I am, it will not do. Let me not press my assertion. However right I am, if I press this assertion, I cannot follow the Lord.' Then the heart is so sore and painful. The heart is not visible to the eyes, but it hurts and is tormented so much. One cannot eat, and water does not go down the throat. One wonders whether one must break one's own thought, one's own assertion, and one's own heart when one is right. That work of breaking one's own assertion is called having one's personality broken.

But there are not many people who break their own assertions. That is why the Lord said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me."*

One must break oneself. The person who cannot break himself is not a person who loves the Lord but becomes one who belongs to the Devil. You may ask whether a person can become one who belongs to the Devil. He can. If one takes the side of the Devil, one becomes one who belongs to the Devil.

If one takes the side of God, one becomes one who belongs to God. Dear fellow believers, that is why we must resist our own evil and mistaken thoughts, that is, the evils that come up from within, the exact opposite of what the Bible says. When you rebuke yourselves, saying, Satan, get away, that evil heart shrinks and retreats. You must not regard even the evil heart you have as lovable because it is your own. You must resist it. You must drive it away. And you must believe in the Lord.

A person must hate his own evil heart. And he must be thankful that God loved you and me. He must accept the love of God. And he must believe in God and in the love of God. Believing is not difficult. If one denies oneself, it is easy. It is

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hard because one tries to follow Jesus while holding on to one's own evil just as it is. Such a heart must simply be ignored. One must drive it away, saying, Satan, get away. When a thought that is not right comes up from within me and tries to assert my own thinking, I, too, command myself. I rebuke it, saying, Satan, get away. That is how I have followed the Lord to this day.

I am not much better than you just because I am who I am. I, too, can sometimes think wrong thoughts and do wrong deeds. At such times I realize that I have gone wrong, and saying, Satan, get away, I break myself and deny myself. And I take hold of the word that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. Dear fellow believers, the Lord said, come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

We must believe in the love of God. Because the Lord is our Savior, He is called by the name Jesus. He saved us by the ministry of the Christ, that is, by that ministry and that way in which God loved us. So He became our Savior.

Therefore we call Jesus our Savior. And we say that we believe in Jesus. But this faith is in reality believing in God. By believing in God, believing in the love of God and accepting that love, abandoning our evil and hating our evil, liking the love of God and liking the salvation God has given us, and hating our evil thoughts, we become people who reach salvation. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? I believe.

Dear fellow believers, when one loses one drachma and finds it, one has lost and found a young person's wages for one day. A shameless person would wipe his mouth and say nothing, but how good it is to hold a feast and rejoice together, saying that since I have found the money I had lost, today I will treat everyone! Our God, too, rejoices when you and I believe in God,

when we believe in the love of God and are saved.

God holds a celebration together with His people and His servants, saying, ‘I have found the sheep I had lost.’ How good a God He is! We must hold a celebration together with that good God, give thanks, and preach the gospel as well. We must unite well with one another, follow the will of God, and live doing our utmost in the work of seeking lost souls. I give thanks to God. I will close the message here. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

God, who restored faith to us

< Luke 15:11-23 >

"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" 'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." 'But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry."

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Looking at today's text, we come to think about how much we were lost lives before God. Having lost God, how prodigal we were, and what sheep wandering in sin and iniquity we were! We come to think about how much hardship we went through and lived, having lost our way and lost God.

We were those who had lost God

You and I were those who had been lost. We were those who, without even knowing God, had lost Him, and who, like this younger son, had left God and lived prodigally, committing all kinds of sins. Having lost God, how many sins did we commit as we lived our whole lives? It is necessary to know the fact that one was a lost one.

We must recover before God the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must examine whether or not we were lost before God. We must recover the faith that believes in God, meet God again, and live in God.

Luke chapter 15 speaks much about being lost, and it is not a story about other people; it is the story of you and me. We were those who had lost God because of sin. Having lost God, how many sins did we commit? Because of our sins we could not even go before God, and we were those who could not dare to call God our Father.

When one leaves God, one commits all kinds of sins

"And the younger of them said to his father, 'Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me.' So he divided to them his

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livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country" (Luke 15:12–13), and there, with prodigal living, he wasted that property.

Since Adam and Eve departed from the faith that believes in God, how prodigal we are and how we sin! Without the faith that believes in God, one commits all kinds of sins. What kind of sins are they? They are beyond what words could ever fully express.

We sin our whole lives, and how much do we sin? What kind of sins are the sins this younger son committed while living prodigally? He is committing sin with full determination. We do anything and everything that is wrong before God. Picking out only what is bad and doing it is our human life. Such a person is precisely the one who is lost before God.

When we think of the sins we have committed before God, truly our sins are too many. If it were only one or two sins, we could at least speak of them, but we are a mass of sin through and through. Though the outside looks clear, the inside is as filthy as completely hardened filth. And how filthy are our thoughts as well! How many filthy thoughts do people who think apart from God have! To commit such sins our whole lives is our iniquity.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, if we do not recover the faith that believes in God and live in faith, we live our whole lives committing such sins. That is why our Lord carried the sin of the world away. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus bore all the sin of the world and paid the wages of that sin on the Cross.

Does it seem that it is over once one has received the remission of sins? Then why do all sorts of thoughts arise? We must recover faith. We are people who have lost faith. The person who has lost faith commits all the sins the younger son commits. Did not the younger son take the money and go and

commit every kind of iniquity?

The one who knows that he has no righteousness of his own returns

The younger son had committed many sins and was in such torment because of those sins. Everything he had had run out, and now he had lost every blessing. Because he was in such torment, this son thought: in my father's house there are many hired servants, and there is bread enough, so that even the hired servants eat their fill, but here I am starving to death.

The younger son is now returning to his father, having realized that he has no righteousness and nothing to be proud of, that he is lacking, that his thoughts and heart are filthy, and that he is one who has left God and commits sins of prodigal living.

Dear fellow believers, when one knows that one is a lacking and filthy human being, one returns by faith. And one recovers faith. It means acknowledging oneself and returning before God. The person who knows that his deeds are not good and that he is lacking and not good returns before God.

What kind of people are those who call God their Father? They are people who acknowledge that they are a mass of sin. They acknowledge themselves before God: 'I am a mass of sin, committing sin my whole life, and an evil person.' And by believing in God and believing in their hearts in the salvation of God, the blessing of God, and the love of God, they recover their position.

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What is the restoration of faith?

What is the restoration of faith? It is to acknowledge before God that one has absolutely no righteousness of one's own. The person who acknowledges that he has not even one righteousness to put forward before God, that he has only sinned, that he has nothing at all to be proud of, and that he is a person who cannot but die and cannot but go to hell, is the one who recovers faith.

Those who recover faith are those who have a right relationship before God. It means that they are people whose faith has been restored, who, through believing in God, have all their problems solved and come into God, and who now live before God not as lost ones but as those who have met God.

Those who acknowledge themselves before God are those who have met God and no longer lose Him. So they have fellowship in God and form a relationship with God. Even people who have been saved can lose God.

There are people who confess in their hearts, 'God, I believe in You. When I had become a sinner and could not but go to hell, You removed all my sins and saved me. Lord, I believe in You.' Those who meet God by faith are those who have recovered faith.

We human beings are people who have lost faith before God. Since Adam and Eve, all mankind has lost the faith that believes that God loved them and blessed them, and that God made us His children and loved us. We must recover this faith.

That God loved him, saved him, and made him His child; that Jesus took upon Himself all his sins by receiving baptism from John, paid the wages of those sins on the Cross, and became his Savior and his Father; and that He met him—this faith must be restored.

God has never once forgotten us

The faith of the younger son was restored. It is not that he returned because his deeds had changed. The younger son first left his father. What he did after that was to live prodigally. Then he came to know his own state.

Then he came to himself and returned before God. He arose by himself and said, *"I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" (Luke 15:18–19)*. He obtained the faith that believes in God.

By arising by himself, confessing his lack before God, and returning before God, God clothed him with grace. God had already been waiting for the younger son to return, and He had been loving him.

The younger son may have lost God at some point, but God never once forgot the younger son in His heart. He never once lost him.

Only, the younger son had known before that God loved him and that he was surely a son of God, but after leaving God he suffered greatly and committed many sins. Later he came to starvation and reached a plight in which he could not get even the pods. The younger son knew that his state after leaving God was a state of exceedingly base sin. So he resolved to return before God.

God must become my God

God loved us and saved us. It means that God has become the Savior of you and me. And it means that this God is the Lord

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of you and me and has become our Shepherd. The Lord is your God, and we are His people.

Dear fellow believers, the person who believes in God as his own God is one of the blessed people. We have been saved. It does not end with having been saved; the faith that believes in God as one's own God must be restored. Before, one did not believe in God as one's own God, but now the faith that believes in Him as one's own God is restored, and one believes in God, relies on God, and lives before God. The person who believes in his heart that God has become his own God is the one whose faith has been restored.

God brought out the best robe and clothed the younger son who had returned, put sandals on him, and put a ring on him. He killed the fatted calf and said, let us eat and be merry. He said, *"My son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*

In order to save us, God slaughtered His only Son. That Son took upon Himself the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist and was judged on the Cross. Through that work God lost His Son. That Son died. In order to gain us as sons, God put His own Son to death. And He raised Him again from death.

Through the salvation of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, the relationship between us and God has been restored. Now God has become our God, that is, the God of you and me. In that way our faith has been restored.

We are the children of God, and God is our God. God has saved you and me and become our Father.

What does it mean that that relationship has been restored? It is that He says, kill the fatted calf and let us eat and be merry. Jesus Christ removed all our sins of prodigal living, all the iniquities we commit, through the baptism He received from John and through the Cross. So we have become His people, and

God has become our Savior God.

'God, I believe in You. I believe that You are our Savior.' I believe that the Lord received all our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, and so removed them all. The place where faith is restored is precisely salvation, and the life in which faith is restored is precisely the life of faith. To have God become one's own God, and to believe in Him as the God who has removed all one's sins, is faith.

Though we are lacking, we believe that the Lord has removed all our sins. God is my God. He is my Lord. He is my Savior. God is my Shepherd. It means that the restoration of the relationship with God is precisely salvation.

The relationship between oneself and God must be restored. It must be fully restored, with nothing in the heart that stands in the way. It is to know that God is not a God who is far away but the God who has removed all one's sins. God is not the God of strangers; He is the God of the one who knows his lack, returns before God, and believes that God loves him and has removed his sins. Through that faith the relationship is restored.

Dear fellow believers, it means that we need that relationship in which faith has been restored. It means that since we have been saved, we must believe in God, who has removed all our faults and sins and all the sins of the world, as our Savior, our Shepherd, our very own God.

Dear fellow believers, God wants us to live holding the faith that believes in God as our own God, as our own Savior. When we live before God, how should we live? It is to live believing in God as our own God. It is to confess, You are the Christ, the Son of the living God. When we live believing in Him as our own God, God has intimate fellowship with us, helps us, leads us, and blesses us.

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We are people whose relationship has been restored. You and I are people who have returned to God. Those who believe the fact that God has removed all their sins through the baptism He received from John and through the Cross are people whose relationship has been restored. The faith of the heart, too, must be restored. Faith must not leave God. The person who has lost faith is a person who has lost God, and the person who has faith is a person who has found God and believes in God. Dear fellow believers, do you have the faith that believes in God? We must live holding faith.

God has given us such faith. He has given us the truth of receiving the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He has given us the faith that He has made us His children. He has given us the faith that we are His. Dear fellow believers, do you believe with that faith God has given?

When we live before God with the right faith, our lives become right lives of righteousness before God, and we come to receive all the blessings of God.

When the heart leaves God, one becomes exactly like the younger son. Even after receiving the remission of sins, if the heart leaves God, one is exactly like the younger son. Why did the younger son leave? It was because he despised God and did not believe. It means that, taking the portion that would fall to him, he did not believe in God but became independent and lived a life of living as he pleased. Because this younger son did not believe, he lived a prodigal life, lived a cursed life, and lived a wretched life. It was because he did not believe.

Dear fellow believers, the text is telling us how wretched one becomes when faith leaves God. It is telling us how wretched we are when we do not believe in God with our hearts. On the other hand, it is also telling us how blessed the younger son was when he returned before God.

God is our God. It means that He is the God of those who believe, and that He has become the God of those who have no righteousness of their own and of sinners. God has clothed us with the robe of righteousness and made us righteous, made us the people of God, and blessed us. It means that He has torn down every wall that stood in the way in our hearts, so that we may never leave His people forever.

Dear fellow believers, God is our God. He is the God of those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. God has removed all our sins. Just as a calf was sacrificed and a feast was held, Jesus Christ has removed all our sins through the baptism He received from John and through the Cross, so that we have come to be able to enjoy a feast before God, and our relationship with God has also been restored.

After the younger son returned before God, he never left God again. Above all, it means that his heart did not leave God. It means that he believed that God truly loved him, that God had removed his sins, and that God was loving him unchangingly. And it means that he believed that God had solved all his faults.

God sacrificed His Son for us, the younger sons. He had His Son receive baptism from John, and so He passed on to that Son all our curses and iniquities—we who could not return and could not but be cursed—and removed them cleanly. So He made it possible for us to return before the Lord at any time, and made it possible for us to recover faith if we want to.

It means that the Lord has opened the way so that anyone who wants to believe in God as his own Savior, anyone who wants to return before God, may return at any time. It means that for this He has removed all our iniquities, faults, and curses through the baptism He received from John and through the Cross.

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God is the God of you and me. It means that our God has become the God of such people, who have many faults, are weak, and had left God. We must never forget that He seeks and seeks again the lost soul, and that He meets, blesses, and loves at any time the person who believes in God as his own God.

God the Father received us without any condition

Dear fellow believers, do you believe in God as your own God? Are you not merely believing in Him as the God who removed your sins, without believing in Him as your own God? We must believe in our hearts that God is our own God. To believe in Him as one's own God is precisely the restoration of faith.

The person who believes in his heart that God is his own God, lives in this world with that faith, preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, gives glory to God, and lives receiving help from God, is the person whose faith has been restored before God and the person who has received blessing. The heart must never leave God. One must not fall away from the faith that believes in God. Though one's deeds may be lacking, one must hold the faith that believes.

What happens after one has received the remission of sins? We see people going back to the state of the younger son because their hearts do not believe in God. God has surely loved them and removed all their sins, but the reason they, on their side, leave God, fall into sin, and fall into the curse again is that in their hearts they do not believe in God as their own Shepherd. If we believe in God with our hearts and believe by faith that God is our own God, God never forsakes us.

Whatever lack there may be, before God there are all riches,

blessings, and joy. Therefore the person who believes in Him comes to possess and enjoy riches, glory, blessings, and joy together. And in the midst of that he lives with the Father, rejoicing for a lifetime, forever.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe in God with your heart? Do you believe that God is your God? Do not become the younger son. Believe with your heart. Whenever we believe in God with our hearts and return, He has solved all our problems and has prepared riches, glory, joy, and happiness. I ask you to believe that He is such a God.

Looking at this younger son, I think that we human beings must recover the faith that believes in God. God is not One who only whips us, nor is He One who charges our sins to us or curses us. Because He loves us, He wanted to solve our sins and faults Himself and to become our Shepherd. And He wanted us to believe in God and recover the relationship of faith with Him.

We must take the first step of faith. We must believe in God with our hearts, believe in God, who has solved all our problems, recover faith, and set out. And we must go forward following the word. After that, God will lead us. It means that we need in our hearts the faith that believes in God. It means that we need the faith that believes and follows, the faith that believes and goes to seek God.

The best robe, the ring, and the sandals

When the younger son believed in God and came before God, God cleanly removed the sins he had committed, killed the fatted calf, and blessed him. He granted him everything the father had. He granted him to have and enjoy all those things.

Dear fellow believers, we must believe in God. We must not

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assert our own righteousness but come before God by believing in God and receive blessing. If we assert our own righteousness before God, we are taking the side of the Devil. We human beings have absolutely no righteousness before God. If we have any righteousness, it is because God gave us righteousness; in ourselves there is not one bit of righteousness.

We must return to God. How do we believe in God with our hearts? We believe in Him as the God who has removed all our sins through the baptism He received from John and through the Cross. And we believe that He is our God. We believe in Him as the God who blesses us and leads us and gives us all that He has.

Faith must be restored and we must form a right relationship with God. Only when the heart is restored to a relationship of faith before God do we receive blessing. The servants of God and all the saints of the churches across the whole country must believe in Jesus—who received all our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John and was judged on the Cross, and so removed all those sins—as the God of salvation. Also, they must believe in Him as the righteous God who leads and blesses them and passes on to them as an inheritance all that God has. That is restored faith.

Dear fellow believers, how you know God is important, and how you believe is important. The father told the servants to bring out the best robe and put it on him, and to put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And he said, *"Bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."*

Was there any condition for the son to return? Did He say, 'You lived prodigally and lost all your property. Only if you find all the property you lost and come can you be restored'? What condition was there? There was not one condition. God was satisfied merely that he believed in God and returned, confessed

and acknowledged himself, and believed in God and His love. And He gave him every blessing. He stripped off all the old filthy clothes and clothed him with the robe of righteousness.

What is the best robe? It is the robe of righteousness. He stripped off all the iniquity we committed while living as slaves of evil, that is, the rag-like clothing of our deeds, and clothed us with the robe of righteousness. There was not one condition.

And He put a ring on his hand. The ring was the sign that he had become a son. A person of noble status had a stamp engraved on a ring, called a seal. In ancient Rome the nobles put on their sons a ring engraved with the father's seal. One could tell the son's status by the ring he was wearing. It means that He sealed the one who believed in God and returned as a son of God, as a child of God. It means that God acknowledged him.

It means that though before he did only iniquity, now He has given him the blessing of being able to do righteousness. He says, kill the fatted calf and let us eat and be merry. We must eat and be merry in our hearts through that Lord—Jesus Christ, who sacrificed Himself for us and saved us, who took upon Himself our iniquities by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again on the third day after His death, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God; Jesus Christ, who has removed all our sins; Jesus Christ, who has become our God; Jesus Christ, who has become our Savior; the Lord, who has become our Shepherd.

We must believe in what the Lord has done and in the promise God has made, and follow God with that faith. To receive and enjoy all the blessings God has given, by the faith that believes in God, and to rejoice, is faith and is the life of faith.

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Believe in God with your heart

I am concerned that you might perhaps leave or lose God in your hearts and come not to believe in Him. We have received the remission of sins. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, and by paying the wages of those sins on the Cross He removed our sins. He is not only our God of salvation but also our Shepherd. We must hold the faith that we are the children of God and that God gives every blessing. I am afraid that that faith might leave our hearts.

Why is that? It is because if one does not believe in God with one's heart, one comes to suffer what the younger son suffered. It is because one comes to commit iniquity in wretchedness, lose everything one has, and become a pitiful person. Therefore, I ask you to believe in God with your hearts. I ask you to believe with your hearts and follow God. Though your deeds may be lacking, you must never give up the fact that God is your own God.

We are people for whom a right relationship with God has been established. As we live on this earth, there are difficulties. In this world there is not only sin but also various temptations, tribulations, and difficulties. In any circumstances we must live believing that God is our own God. When we do, all problems are solved within the faith that believes in God.

If we lose the faith that believes in God, we become the lost younger son again. God is the Savior of you and me and the God of you and me, who have been saved. We must believe that He is the God who, as our Shepherd, blesses us, leads us, and protects us. And we must believe in our hearts that His love is unchanging forever, and by recovering that faith we must live our lives in the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe in God with your heart? No one can see believing with the heart. But the relationship

between God and oneself is clear. That person surely believes in God. When one comes to God by faith, God answers him and blesses him.

But if one does not believe with one's heart, God regards it as uncomfortable. When one does not believe, what can He do? He says, "Why do you not believe in Me? If you do not believe in Me, what work could I do for you? Even if I do some work for you, because you do not believe in Me you think it a coincidence, and you say that it turned out so because you did well, and so I cannot help you. When you do not know Me, how could I help you?"

We believe in God with our hearts. We believe that God is our Savior. We believe that God is the One who blesses us. Only when there is faith in the heart do we come to know clearly, at each moment, what work God has done for us and what work He does for us next. It means that we feel, 'God is doing this work for me. God wants me to go this way.' It means that we live on this earth feeling that we live in God.

But if one does not believe in God, even when God does something for one, one neither knows nor feels what He has done, and so one's discernment grows dim and one falls by oneself into the road of destruction, into the road of sin. It means that it is so because one does not believe.

If one believes, because one feels how God speaks to one, how He leads, and how He works, one comes to live responding to that. Even when one has done wrong, one prays, 'God, help me. It is true. I am lacking. It will not do unless You bless me. Though I am lacking, bless me and help me.' Then God says, "Yes, you believe in Me. Though you are lacking, I am the God of mercy, so I will help you," and He blesses.

It means that one feels God blessing. And it means that one believes in that blessing. And it means that one trusts Him more

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and more. Through that, one lives receiving His help, solving all problems in Christ. To live like that is precisely the life of faith of the one whose faith has been restored.

If we believe in God with our hearts, we can feel the work God does for us and we can make supplication. It means that if one does not believe with one's heart, if one leaves God in one's heart, from then on one can discern nothing. I ask you to believe in God with your hearts. I ask you to believe in Him as your own God. I ask you to believe in Him as the God who has saved you. I ask you to believe in Him as God, the Shepherd who helps you.

Such a person is the one whose faith has been restored. Just as the younger son returned before God, received blessing, and ate and drank and feasted with God, such a person comes to live a joyful life with the Lord his whole life.

Dear fellow believers, do you clearly believe in God? With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. One must believe with the heart. God has done everything. It is because we do not believe that we drift away. Being united with God by faith, we come to take and enjoy all that He has. I believe in God. I praise God. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The master of our life is God

< Luke 15:11-24 >

"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" 'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." 'But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is

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found."' And they began to be merry."

Luke chapter 15 tells us three things. The first is the word about seeking the lost sheep. He asked whether, if one loses one sheep out of a hundred, one would not go searching for it. The will of the Lord, who seeks His own sheep, is contained in it.

The second is the parable of the ten drachmas. The drachma is a unit of money, and He asked whether, if one loses one of those coins, one would not sweep and wipe the whole house clean and search.

The third is the word we have read today. After the younger son left home, he squandered all the property he had and came back. The conclusion of the three parables is one. It is that when the one who was lost is found, the Lord rejoices.

The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge

The Lord said, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge, But fools despise wisdom and instruction."* The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge.

What is the most basic and fundamental thing among the things we know? It is fearing the LORD God. It is fearing, respecting, and loving God. The Bible says that this fear is the beginning of knowledge.

A person must have that heart that fears God.

In the text, a certain man had two sons. The younger of them said to his father, Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me, and the father divided his livelihood to them. Not many days after, the younger son gathered all his possessions together,

went to a far country, and there wasted his property with prodigal living.

Seeking the one sheep when one out of a hundred sheep is lost, seeking the one coin when one out of ten coins is lost, and losing and finding the younger son of the two sons—these are all the same word. It is the word about seeking lost souls.

What is the property that we waste?

The younger son asked for the portion that would fall to him, took all the property of his share, and left home. And with prodigal living he wasted all that property. When we hear that someone wasted property, we think only that he took money, went out, and spent it all.

The word of the text is like that, too. But we must think a little more about the word property. What is our portion, and what is our property? What is our wealth before God?

This son, just as the word says, wasted his wealth with prodigal living. But for you and me, I know that everything we have—our bodies and health, what we have learned, our knowledge and wisdom, and so on—was received from God. He is speaking of the scene in which the younger son wastes everything with prodigal living and comes back.

The Bible says that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. But do people not disregard the wisdom of God and the knowledge and wisdom the Church teaches? Dear fellow believers, what is it for us to sin before God? For a person to be born, grow up, and then live having left God is itself sin. That whole life of living apart from God is like this younger son. It is like spending all one's wealth with prodigal living and blowing it away.

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Dear fellow believers, you and I were made by God. But we do not use the youth, wisdom, understanding, and everything God has given for the Lord; we spend it all in the world. And we spend it all in committing sin with prodigal living and lose everything. Later we get diseases in our bodies, blow away all the property we have, and even die in accidents. To blow away what God has given in that way is a great sin before God. It is truly a great sin.

I met the Lord in my twenties. I have lived until now since meeting the Lord, and the years have passed quickly. Before I knew it, it has been nearly forty-five years.

Before I met the Lord, I did this and that, studied, thought about making money, and did various things. But after I met the Lord, I preached the gospel right away.

And I did the work of serving the gospel. Until now I have never once done work that was unrelated to the gospel. I do not know how much of my life remains, but I will live for the gospel.

But when I look at young people these days, even among us there were young people who left home. Dear fellow believers, a person who believes in God and has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit still lives his life only for himself afterward. He uses his body for himself and uses all the talents and abilities God has given for himself. There are many people who live not knowing the fact that using them only for oneself is sin.

If God has given you and me some ability, knowledge, and health, how should we live?

Jesus received our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and died receiving the judgment of those sins, and rose from the dead, and so He saved us. If we believe in that gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must know God all the more, and even if one does not

believe, a person must know the God who made him.

If God made me and God is my Master, then I ought to know what His will is, submit to Him, and live for Him. I must live according to His will and then leave this world.

The master of our life is God

Dear fellow believers, when there were a hundred sheep and one was lost, the owner went out to seek the sheep and finally found it.

One of the two sons was lost and found. Then who is the owner of the sheep? Is it not God? Who would be the master of the life of the sheep?

It is God. Even if the sheep has much wool and is expensive, its owner is God. Then who is the owner of money? It seems that I am the owner of money, but the owner of money, too, is God. The master of our life is God, the owner of the wealth we have is God, and the owner of the abilities we have is God. Everything belongs to the Lord. It is right to live for the Lord with what belongs to the Lord. To live like that is to fear the LORD. It is to fear, love, and respect the LORD God, who exists by Himself.

But the whole world says to live for oneself. It says to live without being bound by anyone. And it says to leave God. It says to leave one's parents, leave the people who oppress one, and live as one pleases. But what is the result of having lived as one pleases? It is prodigal living. It is squandering everything one has. It is losing everything. The master of our life, the Master of you and me, is God.

God has given you and me life. He has given us health. He has given us time. He has given us the Church. And He has given us the work of God. He has given all of it so that we may do the

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work of God. But people do not do that work, do not even try to do it, and do not know that it is sin. Dear fellow believers, it is a great sin. Whether one knows God or even if one does not know God, to live only for oneself is a great sin. Originally, human beings are beings who resemble the image of God.

From the time God made human beings and placed them in the Garden of Eden, He made them in His own image. From the time God made us, He had a purpose. He made us so that we might live enjoying together with Him all the riches and glory He enjoys.

When God made us human beings, He made us as His children. He made us so that we might live enjoying together all that He enjoys in His house. But people are born and live without thinking of God, who created them. How can one live believing only in the gospel of the water and the Spirit while forgetting the Creator?

We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins, and live giving thanks. And in our hearts we must always ask, 'Who is my Master, who is the One who gave me life, and what does He, who intervenes in my life, want me to do?' We must think of God, who is my Master, the Master of life, and the Master of everything, and we must fear, love, and respect God and live according to His will until we go.

But even after hearing the gospel, people say, 'I do not know God well. Still, now that I am saved, it is enough if I go to heaven when I die.' Dear fellow believers, the person who has received the remission of sins must know who God is.

If one does not know who God is, the remission of sins is not accomplished. Even if one knows and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one must know that Jesus is God and that He is our Master. He is not only the One who gave us new life; He is also the One who gave us the life of our bodies.

If one does not think of that God and does not keep that God in one's heart, that person is not a person who believes in God.

If we have been born again, the greatest question is who Jesus Christ is. We are thankful that He saved us, but who is the One who saved me? If He were a created being, we could just say 'Thank you' as a courtesy and be done with it. But He is God. He is the King of kings and Lord of lords, the Judge, the One who gives everlasting life, the Master of the kingdom of heaven, and the Creator. Therefore we must live every day thinking of Him. As I do this work, I must think that I am doing the work of God.

Whether the work entrusted to me is running errands or the work of a technician, I must regard myself as now doing the work of serving God. It is to live with such a heart.

Working step by step is fearing God

It is to live by fearing God, with a heart that respects, loves, and fears Him. At some times we do it with a loving heart, and at other times we do it with a fearing heart. When greed arises in my heart and I want to live only for myself, I fear God, asking, 'Is it right for me to have such a heart and such thoughts?'

We must take firm hold of our hearts, saying, 'Such greed is not right. Satan, get away.' We take hold of our hearts again, saying, 'I must do as the Master tells me.' And with a respecting heart and a loving heart we do the work of God. Since I am doing the work of God, whether I do much or little of that work, whether I do it well or poorly, I am still doing the work of God.

Because we do it with a heart that respects and loves God, the very work we are doing becomes the work of fearing God. Since we do this work because we fear, love, and respect Him,

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all the time we spend working becomes time spent worshiping God.

Dear fellow believers, do you regard work as work and serving God as something separate? It is not so. In the course of our lives, each and every step we are now taking, each movement of our hands, and all our serving is the work of fearing God.

If a person born into this world as a human being does not know the Creator who made him, the Master who created him, he is like an animal. How could living without knowing the One who made him be called being human? How could not living loving, respecting, and fearing the One who made him be called being human?

How could such a person be called a human being who resembles the image of God?

Because we are those who were made by God, we cannot but love, respect, and fear God.

God has saved us with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which His Son accomplished through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. God loved us. Our Master loved us. When we had fallen into sin and fallen into destruction, He came to us and found us.

That work of coming to us is the love of God. That work of finding us is the salvation God has given us. It is to know and accept that love and salvation. Knowing and accepting it, we are saved.

In our life of faith and in every single movement of ours, there is not one thing unrelated to God. All of it is related to God. Dear fellow believers, what we eat, what we wear, and what we think are all related to God. Dear fellow believers, why must we eat food properly?

It is because only when our bodies are healthy can we serve

God. It is not in order to make our bodies healthy and use them for sinning. We take medicine and eat good food in order to make our bodies healthy and carry out well the work God has entrusted to us. We must discern our food well and eat, and we must take good care of our bodies.

There is a reason we must make our surroundings good, too. We need good surroundings in order to serve God well, to uphold the will of God, to love God at least while we are alive on this earth, to respect God, and to carry out the work God has entrusted to us.

The apostle Paul said, *"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* It is all a right word. The apostle Paul, too, thought his whole life of Jesus, who was his Creator, the Master who made him, the Master of his life, and the Master who gave him salvation. For Him he ate and drank and thought, preached the gospel, and suffered persecution, and he lived for Him until he went.

We can meet the apostle Paul when we go to the kingdom of heaven. We can meet Peter as well. We, too, will go to the kingdom of heaven in the future. God does not treat us just carelessly.

It is the word that He is the Master who made you. So when we pray and call out 'Lord,' we are in fact calling Him 'our Master,' for the very word 'Lord' means 'Master'—the One who owns us. We are calling Him my God, the Master of my life, the Master who saved me. That is what we mean when we call Him 'Lord.'

The younger son, who returned to his father

But this younger son here took everything he had, went out,

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and with prodigal living wasted that property. What is prodigal living?

It is living a completely dissolute life. It is living a life that is the exact opposite of the will of one's master. It is living using everything for oneself. So, living prodigally without any relation to God, he lost all his property and became a beggar.

After the younger son had squandered everything, he went to a certain person of the world and attached himself to him. He lived feeding swine in that man's house, and he was so hungry. As it happened, a famine had struck the region where he was living, so that even when he worked he could not receive wages. He was deeply grateful just to be given work and to get a little food to eat. In the future, when the world becomes hard, there will be no such thing as a salary.

One will be deeply grateful just to be able to eat and live. In the future such a famine will come. So that son, being hungry and having nothing at all to eat, ate the pods. When one strips the husks off barley to make barley grain, powder comes out, and when one sifts that powder, barley bran falls out. When the swine ate, he, too, scooped it up and ate it.

Then he was caught and driven out. He was so sorrowful and tormented. Then, thinking it over, he thought, how much food there is in my father's house, how full the people who work in my father's house eat, and what good food they eat. The thought came to him, 'And yet here I am, unable to eat even the pods, and being driven out.'

He thought, I must return to my father. He was worried whether his father would receive him. Even so, the only way for him to live was to return to his father. So he gave up the place of a son and made up his mind that even if his father received him only as one of the hired servants working in his father's house, he would work in that house.

He said, ‘I will not claim that I am my father’s son; I will be deeply grateful if only he lets me work.’ Going back with such a heart, when his father’s house came into view, he hung his head low. He trudged along, thinking, ‘What if he does not receive me?’ But ever since the son had gone out, the father had always been waiting for his son. He had always kept his son in his thoughts. So when he slept at night, he would tell the servants not to close the gate completely but always to leave it a little open.

He also told them not to lock the door. He said, what if my son comes back at night, sees the door locked, thinks that I have locked it to keep him from coming in, and just goes away? He had always given such instructions, and at last the son came back. While he was still a great way off, the father looked, and it was his own son.

Parents recognize their own children. However much like a beggar he looks, and even if he comes with his hair unwashed and disheveled, they recognize him. The father, who had been in his room, ran without even putting on his shoes, embraced his son, and said, ‘Welcome back, welcome back.’ The son, having no face to show, said, ‘Father, I am sorry. I am sorry that I lost all the property and have become such a beggar.’

The father said, ‘It is all right. It is enough that you have come back.’ The son said, ‘Father, I wish you would regard me as one of the hired servants. I cannot bear to be treated as my father’s son.’

Though he was his father’s son, he asked to be treated as one of the hired servants.

He said, ‘Even so, I will come into this house and live doing my father’s work.’ The father said, ‘No, no,’ and touched his son’s face, rubbed his face against it, and kissed him. Patting him on the back and embracing him, he said to the household,

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‘Children, all of you, come out and see. My son whom I had lost has come back.’

He said, ‘Since this son has come back, let us kill a calf and hold a feast.’ He told them to bring out the best sandals and to bring out the best robe. He had him washed and clothed, put sandals on him, and had music played. This appearance of the father is precisely the heart of our Master. It is the action and the love of the Master of you and me. It is the word that shows how much He loves us.

The son says, *“I have sinned against heaven and in your sight.”* Dear fellow believers, to take what one has, go out, and live without loving the father, to live without respecting the father, and to live without fearing the father are all sin.

We must return to God. We must return, be held in His bosom, and know how great His love is. God has not loved us only with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because He is our Master, He looks after us as the apple of His eye and pays attention to us at all times, night or day. He has assigned angels to us. Though they are not visible to our eyes, each one of you has an angel.

God has angels protect and guard us. But people say, ‘Once God has saved me, that is enough; if from then on He restricts my freedom, will I put up with it?’ and they act wrongly. They do not keep God in their hearts; they keep the world in their hearts and keep sin in their hearts, and they live regarding the world and sin as if they were the purpose of their lives. If one lives like that, in the end one is destroyed.

One not only dies spiritually but is actually cursed and becomes a complete beggar in this world as well. Dear fellow believers, the person who does not yet believe is a person like the younger son. But if one lives like the younger son even after believing, one must turn back.

If we know God, we must know how to love God, know how to respect Him, and live fearing Him. If a person does not know such courtesy and propriety and has not acquired the posture of life, then even if he has been saved, it is not right.

If one has truly met the Lord, one cannot but love the Lord all the more. Dear fellow believers, whatever we achieve in the flesh, would we be satisfied?

If we love the Lord, His love abounds in our hearts, and we never thirst.

The heart is not empty but refreshed and blessed. He makes our souls prosper and makes our bodies prosper, and He guards us. By having us do what is right at all times, He fills us with self-respect. And He has us do the work of loving and saving souls, as our Father does. He has blessed us with such a life.

Dear fellow believers, not only have we been saved, but what does God become to you and me? Who is God to you and me? He is the Master. He is the Master of life, the Master of love, the Master of protection, the Master of blessing, and the Master of everlasting life.

He is everything to us. We receive because He gives. He loves us, but we, too, must love Him. Only when we love facing each other does that love become truly a completed love.

It is said that God is love. God, saying, ‘I am the Master of love,’ permitted us difficulties for a little while in order to complete that love. By meeting Jesus Christ and loving Jesus Christ, we can know what true love is.

The person who has met God knows how to love. He also knows how to live together with other people. We do everything in order to benefit others. It is not in order to take what belongs to others.

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The price paid by the one who despises God

That is why it is said that the fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. We must have the beginning of knowledge. The beginning of all knowledge is that the LORD God is the Master of my life, the Savior, the Master of love, and the One to be feared.

He is also the Judge. After knowing this fact, we must accept the wisdom of God. How should we live the rest of our lives?

We must live the rest of our lives practicing the love of God. We must live preaching the gospel to others and doing the work of serving the gospel. Then how should we live? We must live listening to the instruction of God. We must live receiving teaching. We must live learning.

If one does not listen to what others say and does not try to learn the word of God, one is like an animal that perishes. We must live with a learning posture.

God teaches us everything through this person and that person. We must listen to instruction. We must have a learning heart. Even in the world there is a saying that if one does not learn, one is worse than an animal.

We must learn. We must learn in life, and we must learn in the Church as well. We must learn through those who go before us, and we must learn through those who come after us as well.

We must know how much our God, that is, our Master, loves us, gives us new life, blesses us, and protects us. We must also know how right a work He has entrusted to us. That He has entrusted us with the work of God does not mean that we are only to work. We must know that God has entrusted us with work in order to give us blessing in spirit and body through that work.

It is not over once one has done the work of God. If one

carries out that work even in the midst of hardship and difficulty, faith arises. And one's heart comes into communion with God.

If we love and respect the Lord and strive to live according to the will of the Lord, blessings begin to follow in the flesh as well.

He said that whoever wants to follow Him cannot follow Him unless he forsakes his parents, brothers, and children. This word does not mean to forsake one's family deliberately. If they keep us from following the Lord, there is nothing to be done. At that time we must cut them off and follow the Lord.

He said that to the person who has lost many things He gives many things. He said that even in this life God gives blessings and attaches many family members to him. God surely fulfills that promise.

I can guarantee it. The person who lives for the Lord is not ruined. The person who loves the Lord never goes naked. The person who lives respecting the Lord is never disregarded by others. The person who lives fearing the Lord receives honor.

But the person who, even after being born again, disregards the Lord, does not love Him, does not respect Him, does not fear Him, and lives as he pleases, receives a price corresponding to that.

Dear fellow believers, do you know why we must fear God? It is because God is the Judge. Even a person who has been saved stops the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit and leaves, saying, I do not care anymore, I will live for myself.

He said that if one lives like that, on the last day God will say, you said that you did not know Me, so I do not know you either, and He will cast that person out before the angels. Dear fellow believers, do not think lightly of God. Do not underestimate Him. Do not despise Him. God is not One to be taken so lightly.

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He said, *"He who denies Me before men will be denied before the angels of God."* At the judgment the angels stand by.

He says, you accepted the salvation I gave you on this earth, and yet you said that you did not know Me and lived as you pleased in the world and then came. If one says, Lord, did You not save me? He says, but did you not say in your life that you did not know Me? If one says, no, He says, then did you live for Me, did you live loving Me, respecting Me, and fearing Me? If one says, no, but I accepted the salvation the Lord gave, He says, you accepted salvation, but what about the rest, did you not live as you pleased?

He says, I gave you salvation because you were so pitiful, but do you despise Me, do you make light of Me? Since you said before people that you did not know Me, I do not know you either.

In the parable of the talents, too, the one who received one talent hid it in the ground, and when the master came, he dug up the ground and handed over the one talent just as it was. The person who does not serve the Lord after being saved is precisely such a person. He said to cast the unprofitable servant out into the outer darkness. We can see that He said to treat him exactly the same as one who does not believe.

Dear fellow believers, prodigality is not some other thing. Trying not to use what God has given me for God, and trying to use it only for myself, is precisely prodigality. That is squandering. That work of using it only for myself is opposing God and not respecting God.

And then the end is hell. Dear fellow believers, what will you do? Should we not, as a matter of course, live loving, respecting, and fearing God? That is the right way. We must live by that way.

Why God has given us the Church

We must live fearing God every day. Speaking in terms of theory, the gospel is very easy. After that, we must bind our hearts to the work of fearing God.

Only when we fear God do we come to know how to love, respect, and fear Him, and come to live the rest of our lives with such a heart. God gives blessing to such a life. But if one lives without knowing how to fear God, one becomes like an abandoned child. One ends up becoming one who belongs to the Devil.

The Devil ends up becoming their master. The Devil makes them adversaries and makes them slander the Church of God and be reviled. Then on the last day they go to hell. Dear fellow believers, I know that there are people who claim to believe in the gospel and yet do not serve the gospel. Are there not people around you, too, who say that they believe in the gospel? But would the Lord acknowledge such a person? I will leave the judgment to you. The Lord never acknowledges him.

That is why the apostle Paul said, *"Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel."* What the apostle Paul said means exactly this. I, too, since meeting the Lord, follow the Lord because if I do not do the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world, I must bear the price of the blood of those who go to hell and that curse. You may ask whether one goes to hell if one has been saved and has no sin but does not serve. If one does not love the Lord, does not respect Him, does not fear Him, and does the work of opposing the Lord, one goes to hell.

One goes to hell one hundred percent. It is recorded in many places in the Bible. If you ask me to find them, I can find them all for you. That is why God has given us the Church.

Because apart from the Church one cannot serve God loving,

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respecting, and fearing Him, God has given the Church of God on this earth.

Without the Church one cannot love God. Without the Church one cannot respect God. Apart from the Church one cannot fear God. Why is that? It is because faith arises through hearing the word of God. If one neither hears the word, nor worships, nor praises God, nor prays, nor meets brothers and sisters, one ends up becoming a person of the world.

That is why God has given this period and shares His love with the people of God, and they with Him. When He says, I have loved you this much, we respond, 'We, too, love the Lord.'

Dear fellow believers, let us live fearing God. Do you understand? Let us all live fearing God together. Fearing God is the right way. It is absolutely the right way. I do not know how much of my life remains, but I will live fearing God until I go. I hope that you, too, will live like that.

Why must we live fearing God? It is because one is acknowledged in the world to come and acknowledged in this world as well. If one does not live like that, one becomes an utter beggar in this world and becomes the most wretched of the wretched.

One is trampled in the world, and one is never acknowledged in the kingdom of God either. What kind of person do you want to become?

I hope that you will become those who receive the blessing of God. I hope that God will give you such blessing. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

We must know what we ourselves are like

< Luke 15:11-32 >

"Then He said: 'A certain man had two sons. And the younger of them said to his father, "Father, give me the portion of goods that falls to me." So he divided to them his livelihood. And not many days after, the younger son gathered all together, journeyed to a far country, and there wasted his possessions with prodigal living. But when he had spent all, there arose a severe famine in that land, and he began to be in want. Then he went and joined himself to a citizen of that country, and he sent him into his fields to feed swine. And he would gladly have filled his stomach with the pods that the swine ate, and no one gave him anything. 'But when he came to himself, he said, "How many of my father's hired servants have bread enough and to spare, and I perish with hunger! I will arise and go to my father, and will say to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you, and I am no longer worthy to be called your son. Make me like one of your hired servants.'" 'And he arose and came to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. And the son said to him, "Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son." 'But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the

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fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found." And they began to be merry. 'Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf." 'But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him." 'And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."'"

In Luke chapter 15, which we have read today, the parable of the prodigal son who returned is recorded. A certain man had two sons, and the younger asked his father to give him the portion that would fall to him. When the father divided his livelihood to each of them, not many days later the younger son gathered all his possessions together, went to a far country, and wasted all that property with prodigal living. And in the end he came back.

Our flesh commits sin until it dies

Here there are two sons, and the younger son refers to our flesh. And the first son refers to our soul. If the younger son refers to our flesh, then what is our flesh like? A person commits sin from the time he is born until he dies. It is just like the younger son going out with his own portion and squandering it all with prodigal living. I hope that we will know that our flesh is such flesh until it dies.

If the prodigal son who returned here had had even a little of the property he inherited from his father left, he would not have returned. This younger son is a person who wasted it all completely, lived attached to a place where pigs were kept, tried to get even the pigs' slop to eat, and could not get even that.

What does this parable tell us? It tells us what a person's flesh is like. A person has flesh and a soul. But a person's flesh, the body received from God, commits sin until it dies. It is that he came back only after he had completely wasted everything with prodigal living. The flesh commits sin until its breath is cut off.

A person's flesh is like this younger son. Just as the younger son received the portion that would fall to him, went out, and wasted it all, a person's flesh is also lacking before God until it dies. It is truly lacking.

Is there anything righteous in a person's flesh? Is there anything better in a person's flesh? A person has a soul and flesh, and the flesh goes against God at any time. If it is not ruled by the spirit, it goes against the will of God at any time. And it commits sin until it dies. You and I must know what kind of flesh our flesh is.

Dear fellow believers, even though we know what our flesh is like, we keep forgetting it and place our expectations on it

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again. Even while knowing, ‘I am originally such a person. I am a person who commits sin until I die,’ we keep forgetting that fact.

It is said that the memory of a fish lasts three seconds. Your memory and mine are like that, too. Every now and then we place our expectations on ourselves. We think, ‘No. I can do well; it is only this time that I did wrong.’ So we often forget, and then we look at ourselves and are disappointed.

It is that you look at your flesh, not your soul, and are disappointed. You are disappointed, thinking, ‘I am not originally such a person.’ But that disappointment itself is wrong. Even though the flesh originally commits sin until it dies, one is disappointed in one’s flesh and forgets that fact. One thinks, ‘I am not originally such flesh.’

That is why one is disappointed in oneself and is deceived by oneself. And while doing so, one looks only at one’s flesh more and more, is disappointed, and finally becomes discouraged. And one becomes discouraged, thinking, ‘I am such a person, so what kind of life of faith could I live? I cannot do it. I have been saved, but I cannot follow the Lord. I cannot follow Him.’

“No longer worthy to be called your son”

We must know that the younger son is precisely our flesh. And we must believe it. Here there was a father who had two sons, and the younger son left home with his own share of the property. He went out and wasted it all. Only when he had wasted it without leaving anything, and nothing remained, did he at last think of his father and think of the hired servants of his father’s house.

He said, ‘In my father’s house there are many hired servants,

and even they eat and drink abundantly and work, but I am starving to death here.' He said, 'Now I will go to my father, confess my sin, and give up my position as a son. I am such a person, so how could I be called my father's son? I will rather ask him to regard me as one of the hired servants.' And he said, 'I must work there as a hired servant and at least keep myself from starving.'

Dear fellow believers, if we who have received the remission of sin know the lacking of our flesh, we cannot dare to call God Father and claim an inheritance or rights as a son. If one sees the true face of one's flesh, if one knows that one is a person who commits sin until one dies, one cannot make claims to the Father, and one comes to have the same heart as this younger son.

Whether it is my flesh or your flesh, if we look only at that flesh, it cannot but commit sin until it dies. There is no righteousness at all before God. If He would only let us work as hired servants in the kingdom of God and at least keep ourselves from starving, if He would only give us some work to do in the Father's kingdom, we would simply be moved and thankful; that is the only heart we have. Your heart and mine are like that.

Though we have received the remission of sin, like this younger son we took what God had given us, went out, and wasted it all. In reality, our flesh commits sin until it dies. But when we admit before God the evil of the flesh and that we have wasted everything, and admit that we have sinned and that in the flesh we cannot be called righteous, and go forward to Him, God receives such a person. He restores our status, holds a feast, and enables us to work in the Father's house in the status of a son.

If we look from verse 19, it is recorded like this: *"I am no longer worthy to be called your son,"* make me like one of your hired servants; and he arose and returned to his father. But when he was still a great way off, his father saw him and had

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compassion, and ran and fell on his neck and kissed him. The son said, *"I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son."*

Truly, our hearts must be like that before God. The words, I am no longer worthy to be called your son, are words spoken after seeing what one is like. Your remission of sin begins from seeing what you yourself are like. It is to see oneself, who is truly lacking and commits sin until one dies, and to say this before God.

These are the words of a person who has seen what he is like. It is not that he glanced at it for a moment. A person who sees his present self, sees his past self, and sees even his future self can say such words. He is a person who can lay his flesh before God and say, I am no longer worthy to be called the son of God the Father, a person who sees himself nakedly as he is and speaks before God.

Dear fellow believers, we must have this kind of faith. We must be people who admit that there is nothing at all in our flesh that is admirable and nothing to expect from it. We must admit what we are like: though God gave us the flesh, it is lacking and weak, lives only for itself, wastes everything, lives nothing rightly, and lives only for itself.

We must become people who truly know that, who know what our flesh is like before God, and who can never say, in the flesh, that we are righteous or that there is anything right in us. Dear fellow believers, you must see your flesh accurately. If you do not see it accurately, you become again like the younger son who left home, and after you do wrong, you become heartbroken and discouraged and give up the life of faith. It is because you look at yourself and because you have no faith.

If we truly see what our flesh is like, what kind of people do we become? We come to have the heart that returns to God and

asks Him to make us one of the hired servants. We have nothing to put forward, neither our own righteousness nor any excellence of our flesh. We only go before God the Father and tell Him of our lacking. The heart that wants never to leave again and to live, if only He will let us call the Father our Father—the person who lives the life of faith with such a heart is a true person.

We should live the life of faith knowing what we ourselves are like. We must admit that there is nothing to expect from our flesh. That is, when we see that our flesh is evil and commits sin until it dies, that it has wasted everything with prodigal living, and that we are useless in the kingdom of God, and go forward, we receive the grace in which God the Father puts the best robe on us, puts a ring on our hand, puts sandals on our feet, and kills the fatted calf so that we eat and are merry together.

Dear fellow believers, when we know that we ourselves are evil, when we know that there is no righteousness in our flesh, we go before God. If we think that there is something right and something good in us, we cannot go before Him. How could we go? If there is something right in us, what need is there to go before God, and what need is there to believe in Jesus? What need is there to believe in God? Since we have so many admirable things.

Only when we clearly admit that we are truly lacking, can do nothing, and are human beings who commit sin until we die do we go before God. Such a person believes in Jesus. Such a person becomes righteous. Such a person receives precious blessing before God.

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The best robe is the robe of righteousness, that is, the robe of salvation

If we look at today's word, when he realized what he was like with such a heart, bowed his head, and went before God, He said to bring out the best robe and put it on him, to put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet, and to kill the fatted calf and hold a feast.

The Father did so for the one who knows his own lacking, who knows that he is one who commits sin until he dies, who knows that his was a life in which he wasted everything he had with prodigal living, and who admits that in the flesh, without the help of God, he is nothing but a sinner. He put the best robe on him, put a ring on his hand, put sandals on his feet, killed the calf, and held a feast with the people of the village.

When we honestly admit what we are, saying, 'I am the younger son. I commit sin until I die with what I have inherited from God. Mine is a life of prodigal living; there is nothing right or good in me, and I am a person who is lacking until I die,' and go before God hoping for the grace and salvation of God, God brings out the best robe and puts it on us.

Dear fellow believers, what would the best robe be? Is it not the robe of righteousness? It is the robe of righteousness that He puts on the righteous, that is, the robe of salvation. Our Lord came to this earth to save you and me, who could not but go to hell because of sin. And He has put that robe of salvation on us.

Our Lord said, *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matthew 9:13)*. He calls sinners and makes them righteous. What does God do for the person who knows that he is one who cannot but go to hell, who admits before the word of God that he is a sinner, and who admits that there is nothing right in him? He puts this robe of salvation on him.

That robe is the robe the Lord Himself has made

Then who made that best robe? It is not a robe that the returning son made and brought. It is a robe that had already been prepared in the father's house. Our robe of salvation is also like that. It is not a robe that we made and put on, but a robe that the Lord Himself has made.

Though the Lord is the Son of God, He came to this earth in the body of a man. And He went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the representative of mankind and one born in the line of the High Priest. In the Old Testament age, when the High Priest laid his two hands on the head of the sin offering, the sins of the people of Israel passed on to that offering. In exactly the same way, when John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and baptized Him, the sins of the whole world passed on to the body of Jesus just as they were.

At that time Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The words that He fulfilled all righteousness mean that by taking over all the sins of the world onto His own body without leaving any behind, He fully met the conditions of salvation. And so the next day John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*.

Bearing those sins, the Lord was hung on the Cross. His hands and feet were nailed, His side was pierced with a spear, He shed all His blood, and He died in our place. The wages of sin is death, and He who bore all the sin of the world received all that judgment of death in our place. And after three days He rose again from the dead and became our eternal Savior.

That best robe was made like this. He washed away our sins

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with the baptism He received from John, paid the price in full with the blood of the Cross, and confirmed that work with the resurrection. There is not a single thread here that we can add. All we have to do is to put on the robe just as He puts it on us. This salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, God gives salvation to the person who has wasted everything like the younger son, to the person who has completely lost his own righteousness. Otherwise, the person who thinks that he still has something good, something virtuous, and something right cannot return before God. Even if he returns, he cannot be saved. He gives this salvation to the person who admits that he is truly one who cannot but go to hell.

What is the best robe for all the people of this world, including you and me? What would be the best gift? It is this robe of salvation. Among the gifts God has given us, the gift of salvation is the greatest.

Dear fellow believers, people say that clothes are wings. If God had not put this robe of salvation on you and me, we could not go about, for shame. What would it be like if He had not put on us that robe which the Lord prepared by accomplishing salvation—by coming to this earth, receiving baptism, taking away all the sin of the world, and dying on the Cross in our place? No matter how excellent a person may be, he cannot go about with his clothes off. We must believe that God has put the robe of salvation on those who could not but go to hell and could not but be destroyed.

Dear fellow believers, it is not that you or I are somewhat decent people in the flesh. The younger son here wasted everything he had taken out. What does it mean that he wasted it? It means that he lived only for himself. To have wasted it completely is precisely to have committed sin before God. When the father passed on the property to him, he should have lived

well with it, but he wasted it all. He committed sin. And he commits sin until he dies.

Are you and I people who commit sin until we die, or not? We are truly people who commit sin. Some may say, do you speak of this gospel again today? But the more we hear this word, the more it makes us live.

Dear fellow believers, we must confess before God. We must confess that we are people who commit sin until we die. Not only you and I but all the people on this earth must confess like that. When we do, God puts on us the robe of salvation, the robe of the remission of sin.

The ring means that one's status has changed

And He put a ring on his hand. The ring has to do with status. When people marry, too, they put on a ring. And the son puts on the ring that the father gives him, saying, 'You are my son.' And He puts sandals on our feet, makes us serve the gospel, and makes us workers. And God holds a feast. He calls the people of the village, kills the calf, and says, 'Let us eat, drink, and be merry.' When the younger son who had squandered everything came back, God the Father treated him this generously.

God is speaking of your salvation and mine. He said, *"This my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."* In fact, we were those who were dead. We were dead ones who had nothing right in us. Those who were dead have risen again. God lost us and found us again.

If we look at the Bible, the older son, who had been in the field, came back and asked. He was told that a feast was being held because his brother had come and his father had received him safe and sound. The first son said, Lo, these many years I

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have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him. He resented and complained a little. The father said, Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours; it was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found.

Dear fellow believers, we can say that the first son is our spirit that has been saved. Because God has given the Holy Spirit to those who have received the remission of sin, our spirit serves God and follows God at any time. But that does not mean that He holds a feast for us because we have done well. It is different from His gathering the people of the village and holding a feast for the one who was dead and is alive again.

Our spirit rejoices when people receive the remission of sin and return. It is glad together with them. If we look at it in terms of spirit and flesh, the flesh is this younger son, and the spirit is the first son. We are precisely those who have both of these two aspects together. What belongs to God the Father is precisely ours, and it is right to rejoice when people receive the remission of sin and return.

The sandals were put on us so that we would go around preaching the gospel

There is a reason why I am speaking this word to you today. A person has spirit and flesh; a person's flesh is like the younger son, and a person's spirit is like the first son. No matter how well we follow the Lord by faith, the Father does not hold a special

feast for us. He does not rejoice greatly as He did when the younger son returned. He loves us quietly.

I am sharing this word today in order to say one thing to you and to myself as well. It is that we must do the work of saving souls. It is that we must fight the spiritual warfare. No matter how well our flesh tries to live, it cannot live well as it wishes, and even if it has lived well, it becomes a life that has lived only for its own flesh and wasted everything. It is a life that commits sin before God. That is why I am telling you that we must diligently do the work of saving souls and fight the spiritual warfare.

Even if we try living for ourselves, it comes to nothing but committing sin before God. Even if our flesh serves God, there is not much for it to be praised for. Nevertheless, you and I have been saved. Under one Father there is both the first son and the younger son. Then what should we live for? I am telling you that we must live for God, for the salvation of souls, and for the spiritual warfare.

Though we have been saved, the younger son took the property, went out, and wasted it all. This flesh still does only what it wants. Whenever there is a chance, it does only what it wants. Your flesh and my flesh are like that. So we must live thinking about what we must do before God, what warfare we must fight, and what we must live for.

Even though you and I have not left the Church, are we not, like the younger son, following what our flesh likes? Everyone is like that without exception. One person has his heart captured by clothes and follows them, and another has his heart captured by music and follows it. Each one follows his own hobby. This younger son is like that.

You and I actually have both of these. The younger son, the flesh, goes all the way to the end, and the first son follows and

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serves the Lord inside the house. It is said that the spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. The apostle Paul also said, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)*. The flesh ceaselessly follows only the flesh, and the first son serves the Lord inside the house.

Our spirit, inside the house, thinks of what pleases God. When God commands, it says, 'Yes,' and follows and obeys. But what about this flesh that I have? It still follows what it likes. Does it follow it, or does it not?

In one person there are both the aspects of the first son and the younger son, and both sons are the sons of one father. Because we have both of these two, we must fight the spiritual warfare.

What happens if we do not fight the spiritual warfare, if we do not do the work of saving souls? The heart serves the Lord, but the flesh takes out everything the father has given and uses it only for the flesh. That is why you and I must fight the spiritual warfare.

In this world there are very many people who, like the younger son, have left the father and cannot return. There are people who, even after squandering everything they had, do not know what they are like, do not even realize that fact, and wander about, unable to return. We must fight the spiritual warfare that saves such people and brings them to the Father.

What is it that you and I must do? What is it that we must do after receiving the remission of sin? It is precisely the spiritual warfare. We must fight it ceaselessly. We must ceaselessly do the work of saving souls. We must do the work of saving our families. In our country, too, there are many souls that must be saved. We must do the work of saving these souls. We must do the work of saving souls overseas as well.

Dear fellow believers, the people who have not returned and

have not put on the good robe are captured by a sense of inferiority. What is a person like when he has not put on good clothes? A person who does poorly at his studies is captured by a sense of inferiority because he does poorly at his studies, and a person whose clothes do not look good compares himself with others and is captured by a sense of inferiority. There is no one who would not be captured by a sense of inferiority.

But, dear fellow believers, He said that when one returns to the Father, He puts the best robe on him. When one puts on the best robe, even if one's clothes do not look quite good, even if one's looks are somewhat lacking, even if one's learning is somewhat lacking, if one just wears one good robe, everything is hidden and all is covered. Right now people are captured by a sense of inferiority, bound by sin, and going to hell. We must do the work of saving them spiritually.

In the one who has received the remission of sin, there are both spirit and flesh. Your flesh and my flesh still go toward committing sin, toward living only for themselves. But what about your soul? The person who has received the remission of sin says that the word of God is right when he hears it. He says that the word of God is the truth and serves the Lord. Then how should we live? We must preach the gospel and do the work of saving souls. We must live for this work.

He brought out the best robe and put it on him. What did He do next? He put a ring on him. The sinner became righteous. He became a child of God. When one becomes a child of God, one becomes different. One's status becomes different. Before, one was a sinner, but now one has come to wear a ring. One is righteous. One is a child of God.

If we know that we have become the children of God, if we know that we have put on the best robe of salvation, we do not envy anyone in the world, no matter how good the clothes he

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wears. If we know that we have become the sons of God, our hearts are not shaken even when we see the powerful people of this world. Right away we come to think, 'What are those people boasting of? What are they showing off like that on the road to hell?'

Our status has become different. It is, 'I belong to God. I am a son of God and I belong to Christ.' Even children who have been intimidated in the world get out of that sense of inferiority when they know that they have received the remission of sin. Even if people of the world show off, saying that they have power or that they are good-looking, it is a vain thing. The person who has not received the remission of sin, however hard he tries, is a sinner and a servant of the Devil, and because he is not a child of God, he goes to hell.

The person who has received the remission of sin gets out of the sense of inferiority completely. What does it matter if one is not good-looking? People feel gratified when they see someone who seems to be more lacking than themselves. They feel relieved when the other person makes a mistake rather than when he is proper. It is that they compare themselves with each other and try to get out of the sense of inferiority for a moment. Dear fellow believers, what does it matter if you are not good-looking, or if you are like this or like that? You are children of God, you have been saved, and you are righteous.

What we must do is spiritual warfare

He also said to put sandals on his feet. When one puts on sandals, one walks about. Is there anyone who puts on shoes inside the room? Shoes are put on us so that we would go around. He puts them on us so that we would go around preaching the

gospel and go around meeting souls.

When I was young, I always went around wearing one pair of black rubber shoes. Because I hated the look of those shoes, I used to slide on rocks and rub them against the rocks so that they would wear out quickly. Then, when I came home with the shoes torn, I was scolded by my mother. Later, when she bought me a pair of sneakers, I thought those shoes were too precious, so I tried them on inside the room and could not fall asleep at night. In the morning I went out wearing them, and where no one could see me, I took them off and carried them in my hands. If you hear this now, you may not quite understand it, but that is how I lived.

Dear fellow believers, in this world there are people bound by demons, people captured by a sense of inferiority, and sinners. Even if they change their outward appearance, inside they are all people captured by a sense of inferiority. We must fight the spiritual warfare. We must preach the gospel. What must we who have received the remission of sin do? We must preach the gospel to souls. The work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is precisely the spiritual warfare, the work of saving souls, and the work of fighting against the Devil. We must live for this work.

Even though one has received the remission of sin, there is nothing at all noble or admirable about one in the flesh. After the younger son took the property, went out, and blew it all away with prodigal living, where did he end up living attached? He lived attached to a place, doing the work of carrying the pigs' slop. When one is hungry, even that slop looks delicious.

We must really preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even in the flesh of the one who has received the remission of sin, there is nothing noble. It is exactly the same as this younger son. Dear fellow believers, is it exactly the same as the younger

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son, or is it not? It is truly the same. In the one who has received the remission of sin there is the first son and the younger son, but is there some other son in between? Is there anyone who has a third son who is a mixture of the first and the younger? There is only spirit and flesh; there is no middle. There is no such middle that is noble, spiritual, and also fleshly.

Dear fellow believers, flesh is flesh and spirit is spirit. They are completely different. In the flesh one squanders everything, and in the spirit one's heart serves the Lord. Then what must we do? We must preach the gospel. What happens when we preach the gospel? We fight the spiritual warfare, fight against the Devil, and rescue those souls from the Devil. And so they come to live the life of righteousness.

When we do the work of God, serve the Lord, and preach the gospel to souls, we act as sons. We keep on preaching the gospel and nurturing. We tell the one who has received the remission of sin, 'You are precisely a person like the younger son. You, too, are worthless in the flesh and a person who commits sin until you die.' And regarding the aspect of the first son, we teach him, 'Because you have received the remission of sin, you are a child of God.' When we nurture and teach like that, and when we preach the gospel together, we live as befits the sons of God.

You and I are the ones who preach the gospel and fight the spiritual warfare. We must preach the gospel. We must fight the spiritual warfare. I will close now.

Dear fellow believers, do you think that if you receive the remission of sin, do something diligently, hear the word for a long time, and polish yourself, you will attain enlightenment, so that your flesh will no longer follow its desires and you will become like an angel without anything dirty in your heart? No. Only when we fight the spiritual warfare can we become like angels and become workers. Only when we fight the spiritual

warfare, only when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, do we become sons who live rightly in the status of sons.

I hope that you will become such sons who live rightly. I hope that you will admit yourselves before God and become right sons. I hope that you will preach the gospel and do the work of God, rescue people from the Devil, rescue them from the sense of inferiority, and rescue those captured by demons. We must preach the word to make them know the truth, pray for them so that they will believe for themselves and be saved, preach the gospel to them, and fight the spiritual warfare.

A son must live as befits a son. We must become such sons who never again live prodigally and waste everything we have, but truly become workers of the Father's kingdom. This very life is the will that God the Father desires for us. I will close the message here. ✉

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Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

Receive the remission of your sins

< Luke 15:21-32 >

"And the son said to him, 'Father, I have sinned against heaven and in your sight, and am no longer worthy to be called your son.' 'But the father said to his servants, "Bring out the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet. And bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for this my son was dead and is alive again; he was lost and is found."' And they began to be merry. 'Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he heard music and dancing. So he called one of the servants and asked what these things meant. And he said to him, "Your brother has come, and because he has received him safe and sound, your father has killed the fatted calf."' 'But he was angry and would not go in. Therefore his father came out and pleaded with him. So he answered and said to his father, "Lo, these many years I have been serving you; I never transgressed your commandment at any time; and yet you never gave me a young goat, that I might make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours came, who has devoured your livelihood with harlots, you killed the fatted calf for him."' 'And he said to him, "Son, you are always with me, and all that I have is yours. It was right that we should make merry and be glad, for your brother was dead and is alive again, and was lost and is found."'"

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On this earth there are many lost souls. God keeps attaching souls to us who have the gospel, and He delights in the work of souls being saved. The Lord saves souls through the Church.

Today I would like to speak about the part where one's own righteousness is broken by faith in the Lord and one is saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord speaks, contrasting the older son, who was full of his own righteousness, with the younger son, who had lost all his own righteousness.

The older son, who had much righteousness of his own

God does not delight in the person who has much righteousness of his own, the person who has much goodness of his own. The older son is opposing God with the thought that he has much righteousness and goodness of his own.

The older son says that he has never once transgressed his father's commandment, so why does the father love the younger son, who squandered his livelihood with harlots? And he opposes the father, saying that the father has never even killed a young goat and held a feast for him.

The older son did not know the heart of the father. So he could not unite his heart with the father. Because he thought that he had never once transgressed the commandment of God, he had much righteousness of his own before God.

If we read this text carefully, we see the older son, who, without uniting his heart with the father, puts forward his own righteousness and grieves the heart of the father. Like the older son, those in the Church who have much righteousness of their own and much goodness of their own do not obey the gospel of

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the Lord. Of the younger son, who had lost all his own righteousness, and the older son, who was full of his own righteousness, it was the older son, who had much righteousness of his own, who did not obey the righteousness of God and grieved the heart of the father.

If one has much goodness of one's own, one cannot be united with God

Dear fellow believers, even if one has been saved and lives the life of faith in the Church, the person who has much goodness of his own cannot please God. Friction always arises between him and God. It is because he does not acknowledge that the righteousness of the Lord is higher than his own righteousness.

The reason why a certain person causes great problems in his life of faith in the Church is that he has much righteousness of his own. If one has much righteousness of one's own, one cannot be united with God. What one thinks is good and what one thinks one does well can become one's own righteousness. Even among those who have been born again, the person who has much righteousness of his own cannot please God.

Each of us in the Church has at least one thing of our own goodness. So there are times when we oppose God with our own goodness without even knowing it. The person in the Church who regards himself as lacking and as having nothing good of his own gives thanks for whatever it may be and does as he is told.

But we see people who, while living the life of faith after being saved, regard their own goodness as higher than the goodness of God and are unable to give thanks. Because they

keep putting forward their own goodness, they cannot give thanks for the goodness of God. It is because they are under the delusion that they are better than God.

The person who has his own righteousness opposes the will of God and of the Church. Because such a person has much goodness of his own, the good guidance of God does not please him. It is a wrong heart and a wrong deed. The goodness of God is more right and higher than our goodness.

Since the Lord, our Savior, has saved us from sin, the Lord is worthy to receive praise and glory. It is right for us to praise the Lord in our lives and to praise His goodness and His guidance. But we often oppose God with our own goodness. Let us throw away human goodness. Human goodness is a dirty thing. Human beings are dirty sinners, but the Lord took those dirty sins upon His own body by receiving baptism from John. Only the Lord is good.

What must be broken first after one is saved

Dear fellow believers, what is it that must be broken first after one is saved? Our goodness and what we have done well, our own rightness, and the thought that we have obeyed the commands of the Lord must all be broken. It is the grace of God that we have become righteous.

If we believe the fact that God is truly high and that He has saved us, we come to know the fact that no matter how well we do and how much goodness we have, it is nothing before God.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe that the righteousness of God is better than human goodness? How can we compare our goodness, our doing well, and our rightness with the goodness of God? God took all our sins upon Himself in order

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to save us. How could we compare our tiny goodness with the goodness of God, who took all our sins upon Himself? Dear beloved saints, if a person knows the goodness of God, his own righteousness is nothing.

If one knows the highness of the Lord, one knows one's own lowness. Play freely in the Lord and row to your heart's content on that wide sea. If we know the fact that we enjoy all that is His because He has saved us, we come to live giving thanks in the grace of God, with no reason to become arrogant and no reason to become servile.

Even those who have been saved, as they live in this world, often act like the older son before God. There are many times when it seems that God gives us nothing and yet takes away what is ours, and when it seems that He does not help us. There are many good things on this earth, and it seems that He keeps us from going toward those good things, and there are times when it seems that the Father is blocking our blessing.

Dear fellow believers, God is leading us into the way of righteousness with love. God is the Father who helps us, and the One who saved us is the Lord. And the Lord is leading us into the way of righteousness, the good way.

Faith in the Lord breaks our righteousness

The righteousness of the Lord is revealed through our faith in the Lord. By the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the righteousness of the Lord is revealed and human goodness is broken. When human goodness is broken, one comes to truly believe in the Lord and to know the fact that He is the Savior.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus Christ took all our sins upon

Himself. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Jesus Christ took all our sins upon His own head. And He carried His Cross and received on the Cross the judgment for all our sins. He took upon Himself all the sins and trespasses we commit throughout our lives and received the judgment in our place.

Dear fellow believers, if we know the fact that Jesus Christ is our Savior, our righteousness is broken before God. The hymn that says the world and I are gone and only the Lord who redeemed me is seen is precisely the hymn that comes from that faith. It is that we come to stand firmly on that faith.

Faith breaks our righteousness, makes us know our lacking, and makes us stand in a low place. Even if we want to become low, we cannot become low. But the love of the Lord has saved us, and God has become our Father and we have become His children. If we believe the fact that Jesus Christ has clothed us with the robe of righteousness and made us righteous, we become low.

God has clothed us with the robe of righteousness

Dear fellow believers, God has put the shoes of the gospel on us so that we would preach the gospel, and He has made us live the life of righteousness. That work is accomplished only by faith in God.

Have you received the remission of sins? Do you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus Christ took all your sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John? There is no greater love than that Jesus Christ took all our sins upon Himself. There is nothing greater than that love with which God has saved us.

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What god has ever loved the creatures he made so much? In order to save those creatures from the sins they commit throughout their lives, He Himself became a man. He gave up the throne of glory and took all their sins upon Himself in their place. Could there be any love greater than that love?

Dear fellow believers, do you believe in the Lord? Do you have faith in the Lord? The Lord is our Savior. When we believe in the Lord, we truly become those who are in the love of God and in the righteousness of the Lord, and the righteousness of the Lord becomes our righteousness. Therefore, we come to know the fact that whatever we do well on this earth is nothing. And we come to give thanks to the Lord and to praise and serve Him by faith. Faith makes us get out of weakness.

If the older son had truly believed in the love, the sacrifice, the goodness, and the rightness of the father, he would not have been angry and refused to go in. We have no righteousness. Only by believing in the Lord can we please the Lord. The Bible says, *"Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23)*. That is right. Everything that is done without believing is sin.

Because we have been saved, we can serve the Lord and follow the Lord by the faith that believes that fact. Believing that the Lord is my Savior, and that He took all my sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, then received the judgment on the Cross, rose again, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God—this is the faith that pleases the Lord.

Have faith that believes in the word rather than works

Only when we stand firmly on the righteousness of God and are in faith can we please God. Only the person who believes in

God, the person who believes that God Himself came to this earth and took our sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, can please God. That faith makes us serve God and praise Him highly. It is not works but faith that does so.

When it comes down to it, we human beings lack good deeds, lack strength, and are arrogant. Whether one is admirable or unimpressive, whether one is arrogant or less arrogant, all are exactly the same. Before God, all are arrogant, all are foolish, and all are evildoers.

Many people think that they believe in the Lord. But we see that throughout history the people of sincere faith have indeed been very few. There are many people who say that they believe in Jesus Christ and people who say that they follow Jesus Christ, but the people who sincerely believe in the Lord are few.

Dear fellow believers, God is pleased with our works, too, but there is something He is more pleased with than works. When we have faith in God, the faith that believes all the facts God has done, God is pleased and blesses us. Faith makes us receive blessing, and faith makes us people of faith. It is not works that make us people of faith. Just as it is from faith to faith, faith makes us people of faith.

If one believes in God, one reaches righteousness and becomes a person who testifies to and praises the righteousness of God within the righteousness of God. If one does not believe in God, one falls to the position of the older son. The younger son's circumstances and position could change because his own righteousness had been broken. He believed the fact that God loves me and the fact that the righteousness of God is abundant, and returned; God clothed him with His own righteousness, and the younger son became righteous before God. To lose all one's own righteousness and to receive and put on the righteousness of the Father is right faith.

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If one has faith in God, one believes all the written word. One believes the written facts. When one acknowledges that the word is right, one reaches faith in the Lord. Such a person is a person whose own righteousness has been broken, a person who believes in God, and a person who knows his own lacking. He believes that he has been saved by the merit of Jesus Christ, and that if Jesus Christ had not taken his sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, he could not but be destroyed. And he is thankful for the fact that He took away the sin of the world.

Dear fellow believers, I hope that you will have faith rather than works. The person who believes that the righteousness of the Lord is higher and more perfect than his own righteousness believes in the righteousness of God. And he throws away his own goodness. He regards his own goodness as a piece of old rag and believes in the goodness of the Lord. Such a person of faith is the person who throws away his own righteousness and knows how to please the Lord.

Dear beloved saints, do you have the faith that believes the word of God as it is revealed in the Bible? If we believe the word of salvation that has saved us, our thoughts change as well, and our stubbornness and our own righteousness are broken. Once it has actually been accomplished by faith, the fact is revealed that what we believed before was nothing.

When one knows the truth, one reaches faith

Dear fellow believers, why is it that one is not saved? Why is it that salvation is not accomplished? It is because one does not know the truth. It is when one surely knows the word of the truth that one reaches sure faith. It is not that one stops at merely

knowing, but that one reaches faith from faith.

It is that faith is precisely what saves you. It is that the truth leads you even to the kingdom of heaven. The truth makes us the descendants of Abraham, the descendants of faith. Like Abraham, we come to be blessed on this earth as the people of God through faith.

Believing in God, His word, and the truth is precisely faith. Faith changes us and makes us the children of God, and through faith we receive the help and blessing of God. If the truth is taken out of us, we are like corpses. We say that we are alive, but in reality we are dead. We are those who have a form of godliness but deny its power.

Dear fellow believers, you need the faith that believes in the truth of the Lord. I tell you once again that faith is accomplished through the word of the truth and arises from that word.

If the righteous, as they live on this earth, abide in the word before God, believe the word as it is, and live by faith, God helps every part of their lives, including their families and workplaces. What parent wants his own children to go wrong? Even parents in the flesh are not like that; how much less would God the Father ever just leave His children alone?

Do not think of God as a frightening being. I hope that you will believe the fact that God is the One who wants us to do well, who wants us to come out of sin, and who delights in blessing us.

Why does salvation go back and forth? Salvation stands when one believes. We must grasp, according to the word of the truth, how our sins passed on to the Lord and how the Lord received the judgment. When we grasp it accurately with our hearts, the word of the truth is connected to faith. Then faith comes to stand firmly. The reason why faith in salvation goes back and forth is that one does not know the word of the truth

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and does not base oneself on that word, so that one's heart is shaken.

Dear fellow believers, when we pray the prayer of faith before God, too, if we pray believing by the word the fact that God is my Father, we receive an answer.

Let us give thanks for the joy of salvation in Jesus Christ

In the text, He says, *"Bring the fatted calf here and kill it, and let us eat and be merry" (Luke 15:23)*. God sent His only begotten Son and had Him receive baptism from John, the representative of mankind, and thereby had Him take all our sins upon Himself, and He saved us. God is saying that He has saved us like this.

He says, let us eat and be merry. God has loved us, and we, too, believe in that love and in the work that God has accomplished. It is that we should be merry together in God. It is that we eat and are merry in Jesus Christ by faith and give thanks for the joy of salvation.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe in this salvation with your hearts? Can you rejoice and be glad with your hearts? If you do not believe, you cannot possibly be glad. And you cannot take part in that feast. God delights in the one who has returned and delights in the one who has believed and been saved. Whether you know and believe this fact or do not believe it depends on you. If you truly believe, it becomes yours the moment you believe. It is not a matter that depends on God but a matter that depends on you.

It is said, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His*

name" (John 1:12). Receiving Him depends on the faith that believes in the word of the truth. If you know that the Lord has loved you and saved you like this, I hope that you will believe, for that fact is the truth.

It is the truth that Jesus Christ removed our sins with the baptism He received from John. It is true. Jesus Christ has made us righteous and has actually taken our sins passed on to Him. The Bible says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, and He shed His blood on the Cross in our place and rescued us from death so that there would be no more judgment. He completely and flawlessly ended the judgment of sin so that we would never again be tempted by the Devil and never again become the servants of sin. And He has perfectly saved us. The accurate word of the truth makes our conscience clear and clean. And it makes us receive salvation without the slightest gap.

It is said, *"Then He adds, 'Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more.' Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:17–18)*. It is also said, *"By that will we have been sanctified through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Hebrews 10:10)*. That is right. We have been sanctified through the offering once for all. Jesus Christ came to this earth and removed our sins at one time. He took upon Himself all the weaknesses of our flesh and all our dirty thoughts and deeds, and removed them perfectly.

It is that one reaches faith through believing in God. It is that one is saved by believing in the word of the truth, which is the basis of faith.

It is said, *"The LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:6)*. The Lord took upon Himself all our sins, the sins of all the people of the world, and died. And He rose again and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God as the Judge.

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And He has prepared the kingdom of heaven and is waiting in order to give rewards to those who believe in Him. Therefore, our sins, our lacking, and our weakness cannot be a problem before God.

Jesus Christ took upon Himself all our trespasses, our weakness, our lacking, and our wrong thoughts. He took upon Himself both the sins we commit knowingly and the sins we commit unknowingly. Even so, is there sin? If there is sin, there is only that sin of not believing. Do you know what kind of sin the sin of blaspheming the Holy Spirit is? It is not believing the work that God came to this earth and did.

It is said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, all sins will be forgiven the sons of men, and whatever blasphemies they may utter; but he who blasphemes against the Holy Spirit never has forgiveness, but is subject to eternal condemnation" (Mark 3:28–29).* Not believing the fact that Jesus has removed sin is disobedience and opposing God. The sin the Bible speaks of is not believing the work God has done and His word. And the sins we commit are called trespasses. The Lord took upon Himself both sins and trespasses.

Dear beloved saints, believing in the word of the truth is faith. We must believe not by leaning on experience but on the basis of the word. All faith that is not based on the word collapses. One can neither know the will of the Father, nor can faith stand. But if one takes root on the word, faith stands firmly. The one who builds his house on the rock does not collapse but grows well and bears fruit. God grants fruit in that person's life and begins to help every part of his life.

It is said, *"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26).*

How is one's own righteousness broken? One's own righteousness is broken through believing in God. By faith in God, our own goodness becomes like a mere piece of rag, and we come to know the fact that we ourselves are nothing and that the One who truly loves us is God.

The word is God

It is said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. Faith begins from knowing the truth. When one knows the truth, faith arises and one is saved from sin. It is said, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)*.

God sent His Son to this earth. He had all our sins taken upon the body of that Son and had Him receive the judgment, and so He saved us from the curse. Believing that word is faith. Believing the word of the revelation of God is faith. Could it be faith to believe unconditionally only in Jesus on the Cross, without even knowing how one's sins passed on to Jesus? Before one is saved, no matter how much one's emotions surge and it seems that the Holy Spirit has come upon one in fullness, it is not true faith.

By what word have you received the remission of sin? How did Jesus Christ take away your sins? How did He resolve them? Do you have the faith that believes that word? The gospel of the water and the Spirit leads you to the kingdom of heaven, makes you be born again as the children of God, and makes you receive blessing.

It is the word that saved us; no god of this world has saved us. The word is God. God, who is the word itself, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus, who is the word come in the flesh, are all God.

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It is said, *"'Behold, the virgin shall be with child, and bear a Son, and they shall call His name Immanuel,' which is translated, 'God with us.'" (Matthew 1:23)*. Jesus Christ came to this earth in the flesh, took all our sins upon Himself, received the judgment, and then ascended to heaven. God is with us through the Holy Spirit and is with us through the word.

The written word is God, and the word has personality. As we read the word, our hearts are pricked, the sin in our hearts disappears, and the word lives and works. That is why, when we look at the word, our hearts become pure and clean. This word, too, is God, just like the Holy Spirit, who accurately points out sin, righteousness, and judgment. This word is precisely God. All the wisdom that discerns good and evil, truth and falsehood, comes from the word.

We cannot break our own righteousness by ourselves. Through believing in the Lord, our righteousness is broken, and we can serve and follow the Lord and receive blessing. ✉

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CHAPTER

16

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Luke Chapter 16

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

Luke chapter 16 asks what we will use the wealth and the life entrusted to us by God for, and whether we are ready to stand before God after leaving this world. The parable of the unjust steward and the word about the rich man and Lazarus show that we must live connecting our present life with the eternal kingdom of God.

1. The steward facing dismissal (16:1–2)

“He also said to His disciples: There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, ‘What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.’”

General interpretation of the text

The steward of a rich man is accused of wasting his master’s property. The master orders the steward to report on what he has managed and informs him that he can no longer be entrusted with the duties of a steward.

The steward was not a person who owned his master’s property but a person entrusted to manage it for a certain period.

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Therefore, he had to explain to his master how he had used the property and take responsibility for it.

This setting shows the awareness of a steward: the wealth and opportunities given to a person are not absolute possessions either, but things entrusted by God. Everyone must take responsibility before God for how he has used what was entrusted to him.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We are stewards entrusted with what belongs to God

A certain rich man had a steward who managed his property. But when it was heard that the steward was wasting his master's goods, the master told him to settle the work entrusted to him.

The property the steward managed was not originally his. He had only been entrusted with it by his master for a while. It is the same with our life, health, time, material possessions, and talents. They are not things we made ourselves and can own forever, but things God has entrusted to us while we live in this world.

Because a person thinks that what he has is his own possession, he uses it according to his own greed. But a steward must one day give an account before his master of how he used what he was entrusted with. When a person faces death, he must lay down everything he was entrusted with in the world.

Therefore, what matters is not how much one has. What matters is for what purpose one has used what God entrusted. Even if one has much property, if one uses it only for one's own desires, one can become a steward who wastes his master's goods. On the other hand, even if one does not have much, if one uses it faithfully for the gospel and souls, one can become a wise steward.

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2. The shrewd response of the unjust steward (16:3–8)

"'Then the steward said within himself, "What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." 'So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And he said, "A hundred measures of oil." So he said to him, "Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty." Then he said to another, "And how much do you owe?" So he said, "A hundred measures of wheat." And he said to him, "Take your bill, and write eighty." So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light."

General interpretation of the text

The steward worries about what he should do after being dismissed. Because he lacked the strength to dig and was ashamed to beg, he prepares so that people will receive him even after he is dismissed.

He calls those who owe his master and reduces part of their debts. There are various interpretations as to whether this was the steward giving up his own commission or arbitrarily cutting down his master's property.

The master commended the steward not because of his dishonesty but because of the shrewdness with which he realized the crisis and prepared for the future. Jesus did not teach His disciples to imitate his dishonest actions.

If even the people who belong to the world actively prepare for their own future, the person who belongs to the kingdom of God must use the time, wealth, and opportunities given at present all the more wisely.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit— We must prepare now while looking to the eternal kingdom

The steward knew the fact that he would soon lose his position. He called those who owed his master, had their bills changed, and prepared so that they would receive him after he was put out.

His reducing the debts without his master's permission was clearly a wrong action. Jesus did not say to imitate that deception and falsification of documents. What the master commended was not the steward's injustice but the quickness with which he knew that little time remained for him and prepared for the future.

The people of the world, too, diligently use their wealth, time, and abilities for their own future. They prepare businesses, plan for old age, and secure a place to live next. If so, the saints who believe in the eternal kingdom of God must live their present lives with an even clearer purpose.

The stewardship entrusted in this world is not eternal. A person does not know when God will take his life away. Therefore, the saved saints must not use their possessions only for the satisfaction of the flesh, but must use them for the work of the gospel being preached and souls receiving the remission of sins.

This does not mean to pile up good deeds and secure the qualification to go to heaven. Salvation is not something one

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receives as the price of offering material things or doing good deeds. First, one must know the salvation Jesus accomplished, believe it with the heart, and receive the remission of sins. After that, serving the gospel with what has been entrusted to oneself is the wisdom that prepares for the eternal future.

3. Use wealth faithfully (16:9–12)

"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus says to make friends by unrighteous mammon. This does not mean to buy salvation or people's favor with money. It means to use the wealth of the world, which cannot be possessed forever, to help one's neighbors and for the kingdom of God.

A life that has used wealth for sharing and mercy toward the poor shows that the person has accepted the values of the kingdom of God. Wealth will one day disappear, but a life lived loving God and giving to one's neighbors has eternal meaning.

The person who is faithful in small things is faithful in great things as well, and the person who is unjust in small things is unjust in great things as well. One's attitude in using money can

become a test that reveals that person's faith and character.

If one cannot handle the wealth of the world faithfully, it is hard to be entrusted with the true riches of the kingdom of God. When one faithfully manages what is not one's own, one can also bear the greater responsibility God entrusts.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Wealth must be used for the gospel and souls

Jesus said to make friends by unrighteous mammon. This does not mean to win people's favor with money or to buy salvation by paying money. The wealth of the world is not eternal, and when it is combined with human desires, it easily becomes a tool of unrighteousness. But depending on how that wealth is used, it can also become a useful tool for the gospel.

To preach the gospel, actual material resources and labor are needed. Material resources can be used to help those who preach the word, to prepare the literature of the gospel and various means of delivering it, to build churches, and to care for souls in difficulty. If through such work one person hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins, then wealth that will disappear has been used for the work of eternal life.

That said, the person who has offered much material wealth does not automatically have great faith. God does not look only at the amount but at whom that person serves as his master and for what purpose he uses it. The person who is faithful according to the will of God from small things on can be entrusted with great things as well.

What we have originally belongs to God. Our health, our

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ability to work, and the circumstances in which we can earn money are all things God has permitted. Therefore, the daily life of the saints is not separated from the gospel either. Working at home, laboring at the workplace, and running a business can also be connected to the work of the Lord if their purpose lies in serving the kingdom of God and the gospel.

4. One cannot serve God and mammon (16:13–15)

"'No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.' Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus says that one servant cannot serve two masters. One cannot make both God and wealth the master of one's life at the same time.

It does not mean that wealth itself is evil. Wealth is a tool that can be used for God and one's neighbors, but it must not become the master that decides the security, value, and purpose of one's life.

The Pharisees, who loved money, heard this word and derided Jesus. They looked righteous before people, but God

knew the greed and motives in their hearts.

Wealth, position, and religious honor that are highly esteemed by people are not necessarily valuable before God as well. God looks not at outward reputation but at what the heart loves and relies on.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must serve God alone as the Master of our lives

Wealth is a tool the saints should use, not a master they should serve. When money becomes the master of one's life, a person calculates profit before the word of God and comes to regard his own security and possessions as more important than the salvation of souls.

The Pharisees who heard the word of Jesus derided the Lord because they loved money. Outwardly they looked like religious people who kept the law well, but in their hearts they loved wealth and the recognition of people. They tried to make themselves look righteous before people, but God knew their hearts.

Here the figure of the person who is rich in heart is revealed. The person who is rich in heart does not necessarily mean only a person who has much property. It is a person who thinks that his own knowledge, ability, and religious deeds are enough even without seeking God. Because his heart is high and full of his own righteousness, he does not admit the fact that he needs the salvation of God.

One can be materially rich and yet humble one's heart before God and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Conversely, one can be materially poor and yet love money, rely

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on one's own thoughts, and refuse God. The problem is not the amount in one's bank account but who the master of one's heart is.

The person who serves God as his Master does not judge his own worth by how much or how little money he has. He believes that God will supply what he needs, and he uses the wealth entrusted to him for the kingdom of God. But the person who serves wealth as his master tries to use even God as a means to obtain his own material things and success.

5. The kingdom of God and the permanence of the law (16:16–18)

"'The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus says that the age of the law and the prophets continued until John the Baptist, and that since then the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached. This means that, with John the Baptist as the turning point, a new age of the kingdom of God through Jesus has begun.

The word that people press into the kingdom of God can be understood to mean that they actively respond to that invitation. Depending on the translation, it is also seen to mean that the

kingdom of God advances powerfully even amid strong opposition.

The fact that the kingdom of God is proclaimed does not mean that the law of God has become meaningless. Jesus does not abolish the law but reveals the true will of God contained in it.

The word about divorce rebukes the practice of that time in which men easily put away their wives for their own convenience. To break off a marriage lightly and marry another person is an act that damages the covenant made before God. However, rather than judging every situation of divorce by this verse alone, it must be understood together with other related texts of the Bible.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The promise of the law was fulfilled by the salvation of Jesus

Jesus said that the law and the prophets were until John. This does not mean that the word of the Old Testament and the law of God were abolished after John the Baptist. It means that the time had come for the work of salvation, which the law and the prophets promised and prophesied, to be actually accomplished through John the Baptist and Jesus Christ.

The law reveals that a person is a sinner before God. The prophets prophesied that the Savior would come and save sinners. And John the Baptist, the last prophet of the Old Testament and the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus took all the sins of mankind upon Himself. Bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and so He received the

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judgment of sin and rose from the dead. The salvation of God to which the law and the prophets pointed was fulfilled by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Now a sinner must not try to fulfill the righteousness of the law by his own works, but must know the righteousness of God that Jesus fulfilled and believe it with his heart. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in this way receives the remission of sins and enters the kingdom of God.

But the fact that the gospel is preached does not make the word of God void. Jesus said that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. The grace of the gospel is not a permission to commit sin as one pleases.

The word that follows about marriage shows this point as well. A person cannot, according to his own desires, take lightly the order of marriage God has established, or change the word to suit his own convenience. The parallel passages make clear that marriage is a relationship in which God joined a man and a woman as one flesh, and that this relationship is broken because of the hardness of human hearts. However, the individual problems of actual marriage and divorce must not be condemned by this one verse alone but must be examined carefully within the parallel passages and the word of the whole Bible.

6. The rich man and Lazarus (16:19–26)

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to

Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 'Then he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." But Abraham said, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.'"

General interpretation of the text

A rich man wore fine clothes and lived luxuriously every day, but in front of his house lay Lazarus, sick and starving. The rich man knew of the existence and the suffering of Lazarus, yet he showed no mercy.

After the two men die, Lazarus is comforted in Abraham's bosom, but the rich man comes to be in the place of torment. Their positions and circumstances in the world have been completely reversed.

This story does not mean that all the rich are judged and all the poor are automatically saved. The problem of the rich man was not his property itself but that he turned away from the suffering neighbor whom God had placed right at his gate.

After death, a great gulf lies between the two men, and neither can cross over to the other. This is a warning that how one responds to God and one's neighbors while alive is important, and that after the judgment that choice cannot be reversed.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Faith in the righteousness of God matters more than possessions

The rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen and lived luxuriously every day. Lazarus, with his sick body, lay at the rich man's gate and tried to fill his stomach with what fell from his table. Seen with the eyes of the world, the rich man looked like a successful person and Lazarus like a failure.

But after the two men died, completely different results appeared. Lazarus entered Abraham's bosom, and the rich man was tormented in Hades. This does not mean that all the poor go to heaven and all the rich go to hell.

The text does not say that the rich man committed more sins than Lazarus. Nor does it say that Lazarus was saved by the merit of enduring poverty and disease well. What divided the end of the two men was whether they had faith in the righteousness of God.

That Lazarus entered Abraham's bosom is interpreted to mean that, like Abraham, he had faith that believes the word and the promise of God. Conversely, the rich man regarded what he had in this world as enough, and neither sought nor believed in God. His real problem lay not in the fact that he had much money but in that his heart was rich and high and he did not accept the word of God.

Therefore, the rich man shows the person who is rich in heart, who regards God as unnecessary. He is a person who relies on his own wealth, knowledge, position, and religious deeds and turns away from the problem of his soul. Lazarus shows, more than the outward condition of having nothing, the person who knew that he needed the salvation of God and believed the promise of God.

The great gulf between heaven and Hades indicates the fact that after death the result cannot be changed. This uncrossable severance shows the condition of human beings, separated from God because of sin. A person who has sin cannot cross that gulf and enter the kingdom of God by his own strength, wealth, and good deeds.

Jesus solved precisely that problem of sin. By receiving baptism at the Jordan River He took all our sins upon Himself, was judged in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins by the righteousness of God that Jesus fulfilled and obtains eternal life.

7. Hear Moses and the prophets (16:27–31)

"'Then he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."'"

General interpretation of the text

The rich man asks that Lazarus be sent to warn his brothers so that they would not suffer the same torment. But Abraham answers that they already have the word of Moses and the prophets, so they must hear it.

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The rich man insists that if a dead person rose and went to them, his brothers would repent. But Abraham says that a person who does not hear the word of God will not accept it even if a dead person rises.

God has already made known sufficiently, through the Scriptures, justice and mercy and the responsibility to care for the poor. The problem is not that people cannot believe because there is no sign that is more amazing, but that their hearts are stubborn and they do not obey the word already given.

This ending also hints at the resurrection of Jesus. Even when the evidence of the resurrection is given, a person who has closed his heart may not believe. What matters is not demanding a greater sign but hearing the word of God, repenting, and practicing it.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must hear the word of salvation while we are alive

The rich man, tormented in Hades, belatedly worried about his five brothers. He thought that if Lazarus were brought back to life and sent, his brothers would repent. But Abraham said that they had Moses and the prophets, so they must hear them.

This word says that the opportunity to be saved is given while one is alive. After death, one can neither go back and believe, nor pay the price of one's sins with one's wealth and good deeds. Therefore, one must not put off hearing the gospel until tomorrow.

People think that they could believe if they saw the miracle of a dead person coming back to life. But a heart that does not accept the word of God does not believe even after seeing an

amazing miracle. A person is not left unsaved because of a lack of miracles and mysterious experiences; he cannot believe because he regards the word God has given as lower than his own thoughts.

The word of Moses and the prophets reveals the sins of people and testifies to Jesus Christ, who was to come. Today, according to that promise, the word of the salvation that Jesus came and accomplished is being preached. A sinner must know and believe with his heart the fact that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and then rose from the dead.

Faith does not begin from a marvelous experience but from hearing the word of God. One must admit that one is a sinner, and hear and believe the righteous salvation God accomplished through Jesus. This is the faith of Abraham and the faith that Lazarus had.

The saints who have received the remission of sins also have a responsibility. It is because, like the five brothers of the rich man, there are people around us who have not yet heard the word. Instead of sending the dead back, God has placed the saved saints and the Church in the world and has caused the gospel to be preached through them.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 16 conveys

The first half and the second half of Luke chapter 16 are connected as one message. The parable of the unjust steward says to use wisely what has been entrusted in the world for the eternal future. The word about the rich man and Lazarus shows the end of the person who relied only on the wealth of the world

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and did not prepare for the salvation of his soul.

We must not make wealth the price of salvation. No matter how much material wealth, time, and labor we offer, we cannot wash away sin with them. A sinner must first know and believe with his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

The person who has believed in this gospel and received the remission of sins serves God as his own Master. Wealth becomes not a master but a tool to be used for the gospel and souls. The saints must not waste the life, health, time, and material possessions entrusted to them only for the world that will disappear, but must use them to serve the gospel so that even one soul may receive the remission of sins and enter the everlasting home.

Also, one must not judge the eternal result by one's present circumstances. One cannot conclude that a person is a person of faith blessed by God just because he is materially rich, nor is a person abandoned by God just because he is poor and sick. What truly matters is whether one's heart is high and rich and one is refusing God, or whether one knows that one needs the salvation of God and believes in the righteousness of God.

Now, while we are alive, is the time to hear and believe the word of God. After believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sins, we must not divide our hearts between God and wealth, but must hope for the kingdom of God and serve the gospel and souls with what has been entrusted to us. ✉

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

A life that uses wealth wisely and prepares for the eternal kingdom

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 above, we examined each passage of Luke chapter 16 through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit side by side. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will examine in detail the life that uses wisely the wealth God has entrusted, the word that one cannot serve God and wealth together, and the reason why we must hear and believe the word of salvation while we are alive.

The parable of the unjust steward, the rebuke of the Pharisees who loved money, the word about the law and the kingdom of God, and the story of the rich man and Lazarus are connected to one another in one flow. All these words show the fact that we must not make wealth the master of our lives but must use it wisely for God, the gospel, and souls. They also teach the fact that before the judgment comes, we must hear the word of God already given and believe in salvation.

The passage-by-passage expository sermon that follows examines, following the flow of the text, how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and

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completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

The wise steward, who uses wealth for the gospel and souls

"He also said to His disciples: 'There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward." 'Then the steward said within himself, "What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." 'So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And he said, "A hundred measures of oil." So he said to him, "Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty." Then he said to another, "And how much do you owe?" So he said, "A hundred measures of wheat." And he said to him, "Take your bill, and write eighty." So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. 'And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your

own? 'No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.'" (Luke 16:1–13).

It is wisdom to prepare for the kingdom in which we will live in the future

Jesus spoke this parable to His disciples. That the text begins with the word *"also"* shows that it continues from the word of the previous chapter. In Luke chapter 15, the younger son wasted the property he received from his father, and in chapter 16 it is said that the steward wasted his master's goods. The expression 'waste,' which runs through the two chapters, reveals together the figure of those who spent what they received from their father and their master as they pleased. The focus of this parable is on how we manage what God has entrusted and how we prepare for the eternal kingdom in which we will live in the future.

A certain rich man had a steward who managed his property. The steward was not the master but a person entrusted with managing his master's goods. But it was heard by the master that he was wasting his master's property. The master called the steward, ordered him to settle the accounts of what he had managed, and said that he could no longer be entrusted with the duties of a steward.

The steward realized the fact that he would soon lose his position. Having no strength to dig and being ashamed to beg, he tried to secure in advance people who would receive him even after he stepped down from his position. So he called those who owed his master and had them rewrite their bills of debt. He had

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the one who owed a hundred measures of oil write fifty, and the one who owed a hundred measures of wheat write eighty.

The master commended this unjust steward for having dealt shrewdly. What he commended was not the steward's injustice but the quickness with which he realized the fact that his present position would soon end and prepared for what came after. Jesus taught that the children of light must also have, for the eternal kingdom, the sense of purpose and the preparedness that the people of the world pour into their own future.

The people of the world, even though they know the fact that wealth and position are not eternal, plan meticulously and labor for the benefit of their own future. But the person who believes in the kingdom of God, even though he knows that the eternal kingdom lies before him, is apt to live only for his present desires and comfort. The children of light must know where they belong and where they will live in the future, and must live with a clear purpose toward the kingdom of God.

"Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon"

Jesus said, *"Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon."* Unrighteous mammon, unlike the eternal true riches, refers to the material things that are used for a while in this world. The wealth God has entrusted becomes a tool that bears eternal fruit when it is used for the work of preaching the gospel and saving souls.

The word *"make friends for yourselves"* means that a disciple who has received the grace of God should use the wealth entrusted to him for the preaching of the gospel and serve so that sinners hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. It is not buying salvation with wealth, but

the saved person gaining souls and leaving eternal fruit by using wealth for the gospel.

The work of preaching the gospel does not need only the people who teach the word. Wealth is also needed for the work of making and delivering gospel books and other books, for the work of preparing places and means to preach the gospel, and for the work of caring for the workers and helping souls in difficulty. When believers use for such work the wealth they have gained by working honestly, even though the wealth disappears, the souls who have heard the gospel and been saved and the fruit of faith are connected to the kingdom of God.

The word *"they may receive you into an everlasting home"* shows that the fruit of wealth used for the gospel is revealed in the eternal kingdom of God. Even though the wealth of this earth disappears, the souls who have heard the gospel and been saved through that wealth and the fruit of the faith that served the gospel remain forever.

The life that uses wealth for the gospel is the fruit of faith borne by the person who has believed in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished and has received the remission of sins freely. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River, Jesus took all the sins of the world upon His own body.

Bearing all the sins of the world that He took upon Himself with His baptism, Jesus was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and so He received all the judgment of sin; and He rose from the dead, overcame sin and death, and completed salvation. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, not by the merit of his own property or good deeds but by the righteousness of God that Jesus fulfilled, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

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The person who has been saved freely like this uses, with thanksgiving, the wealth, time, and strength entrusted to him to serve the gospel and souls. This is the life of faith that makes friends by unrighteous mammon and prepares for the eternal kingdom.

Be faithful in what is least

Jesus said that the person who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much. What is least refers to the things entrusted for a while on this earth, including wealth, and the true riches are connected to the gospel and the eternal work of the kingdom of God. One's attitude in handling wealth reveals one's faithfulness in the work entrusted by God.

The fact that wealth is smaller than the eternal truth does not mean that it may be handled carelessly. It is hard to entrust a more precious responsibility to a person who is not honest even in small things. One cannot say that one lives for the gospel while taking other people's money lightly, cheating in accounting and taxes, not repaying debts, or using the things of one's workplace as if they were one's own. The person who serves God must be honest in every process of earning, managing, and using money.

"What is another man's" refers first of all to the master's property entrusted to the steward. Applied spiritually, the property and time, health and talents a person has are all not eternal possessions that came from himself, but things entrusted by God for a while. A person brought nothing into the world, and he cannot take anything with him when he leaves. The person who uses what God has entrusted honestly and faithfully can also treasure the true and eternal inheritance.

A life that uses wealth wisely and prepares for the eternal kingdom

Supporting one's family, honestly repaying debts and paying taxes, looking after one's health, and preparing what is needed are also responsibilities entrusted to a steward. Helping neighbors in difficulty, working diligently to benefit others, and using wealth for the preaching of the gospel are also a life that rightly manages what God has entrusted. One must not make wealth the master of one's own desires but must place it under the will of God.

One cannot serve God and mammon

Jesus said that a servant cannot serve two masters. It is not the word that one cannot possess both God and wealth, but that one cannot serve both God and wealth as the highest master of one's life at the same time. When wealth becomes the master, a person puts profit before the word of God and judges truth and love by money. But when one serves God as one's Master, wealth becomes a tool for accomplishing the will of God.

The finances of the Church, too, must be managed transparently and honestly and must be used responsibly for the work of preaching the gospel and serving souls. Leaders and workers must know that the wealth of the Church is not their own possession but what God has entrusted, and must manage it faithfully.

Individuals, too, must examine their own income and expenses by faith. They must look back on whether the purpose of earning money lies only in showing off and endless consumption, or whether they are using it to take responsibility for their families, help their neighbors, and serve the gospel. Even with a small income, if one knows it as what God has entrusted and uses it honestly, one can live the life of a faithful

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steward. Even with much property, if one abandons the word of God for fear of losing wealth, then wealth has become that person's master.

Luke 16:1–13 teaches us not to live only for this world, which will soon end, but to look to the eternal kingdom God has promised and use wisely what has been entrusted to us. The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, and has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, does not make wealth the master of his life. He is honest and faithful even in the small things God has entrusted, and uses wealth for the gospel and souls. This is the life of the wise steward, who uses the wealth God has entrusted for the gospel and souls, and serves not wealth but God alone as his Master.

We must abandon our own righteousness and believe in the unchanging gospel

"Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, also heard all these things, and they derided Him. And He said to them, 'You are those who justify yourselves before men, but God knows your hearts. For what is highly esteemed among men is an abomination in the sight of God. 'The law and the prophets were until John. Since that time the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is pressing into it. And it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. 'Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:14–18).

A life that uses wealth wisely and prepares for the eternal kingdom

Those who justify themselves before men

Jesus said earlier that a person cannot serve God and mammon. Since wealth is not something a person possesses forever but something God has entrusted for a while, it must be used faithfully to serve the will of God and souls. But the Pharisees, who loved money, heard this word and derided Jesus. It was because, though outwardly they looked like people who served the law and God, in reality they regarded wealth and the recognition of people as more precious.

Jesus rebuked them as *"those who justify yourselves before men."* The Pharisees made themselves look righteous on the basis of their religious knowledge and deeds, their position and reputation. But a heart that can be hidden from people cannot be hidden from God. God knows not only the form of godliness revealed outwardly but even what that person loves and relies on.

What Jesus rebuked is the heart that places the religious recognition gained by one's own righteousness and hypocrisy above the judgment of God. Even if one receives praise from people for being righteous, if in one's heart one loves wealth and refuses the word of God, such recognition has no value at all before God. True faith lies not in being exalted by people but in accepting with the heart the word of the truth that God has testified.

A person easily thinks that he is right even while holding on to his own desires as they are. He can package his greed for wealth as the blessing of God, and insist that he keeps the truth even while despising others. But the word of God strips away the outward form of godliness that people have made and reveals the greed and arrogance in the heart. A sinner must not build his own righteousness by comparing himself with others, but must admit the sin of his own heart, which God knows.

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Enter by believing in the gospel of the kingdom of God

The law and the prophets promised and testified to the Savior who was to come, and that testimony reached an important turning point in the ministry of John the Baptist. John the Baptist did not stop at prophesying the Christ who was to come, but testified to Jesus, who had actually come into the world, and baptized Him.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of all the people of the world upon His own body. At the time of the text, Jesus had already received baptism at the Jordan River and was bearing the sin of the world, and He was going the way of bearing the punishment of sin by being hung on the Cross with those sins and dying shedding His blood. Afterward Jesus actually died on the Cross and rose again on the third day, and so He overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

As the sin of the world was passed on to Jesus through John the Baptist in this way, and Jesus, the substance of salvation, appeared, the gospel of the kingdom of God began to be preached clearly. A sinner is not saved by completing the demands of the law with his own works, but enters the kingdom of God by believing in the righteousness of God, which Jesus fulfilled by taking sin upon Himself with His baptism and by the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection.

The word *"everyone is pressing into it"* means that whoever hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes it with his heart enters the kingdom of God by faith. Instead of holding on to wealth, the recognition of people, and his own righteousness, a sinner must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished. Salvation is not a reward earned by human good deeds and merit but a gift of grace that God has completed and given.

The word and salvation that never change

Jesus said that it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one tittle of the law to fail. The word of God never changes, and the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water, the blood, and the Holy Spirit never changes either. Even if the world passes away, the truth of salvation, which Jesus completed by taking all sins upon Himself with His baptism and by the Cross and the resurrection, does not disappear.

The law makes a person realize what kind of sinner he is, but it does not wash away sin. Jesus took all sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and so He fulfilled the price of sin that the law demands. Therefore, the person who believes in the gospel does not build his own righteousness by the works of the law, and he treasures the word of God and His will.

That Jesus went on to speak about marriage and adultery shows the fact that the word of God cannot be changed according to human desires and convenience. A person cannot regard himself as right just because he has completed the outward procedures while putting away his wife and marrying another according to his own desires. God says that such a thing is adultery and demands that the covenant of marriage be kept faithfully.

A person must not justify his own actions by picking out only the words that are advantageous to him, but must honestly look back on his own desires and responsibilities before the word of God. God knows every circumstance of the heart and of relationships that is invisible to people, and He looks not at the appearance of outwardly adorning oneself as righteous but at the sincere heart that believes and follows the word.

A person cannot wash away by himself any sin, including

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greed, self-righteousness, hypocrisy, and adultery. Jesus took all these sins upon His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross shedding His blood, and completed salvation by rising from the dead.

The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The person who has received the remission of sins admits his wrongs as sin, fulfills the responsibilities he must bear, and lives honestly and faithfully, putting the word of God before his own desires. Such a life is not a price for obtaining the remission of sins again but the fruit of faith that appears in the person who has already been saved by grace.

Luke 16:14–18 shows that the gospel is not a word that abolishes the law or makes sin light. A person's religious reputation or his own righteousness cannot save his soul. A sinner must abandon wealth, the recognition of people, and self-justification, and believe in the unchanging salvation that Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. The person who has believed in this gospel and received the remission of sins does not make the praise of people the basis of his own righteousness, but uses wealth rightly according to the word of God and lives honestly and faithfully in every relationship.

We must believe in the righteousness of God while we are alive

'There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a

certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 'Then he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." But Abraham said, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us." 'Then he said, "I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment." Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead"' (Luke 16:19–31).

What decides one's eternal destiny is faith in the righteousness of God

Jesus said earlier that a person cannot serve God and mammon. The Pharisees, who loved money, heard this word and derided Jesus, and regarded themselves as righteous before men. The word about the rich man and Lazarus that follows shows

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what the end of a life is like that holds on to wealth and its own righteousness and does not hear the word of God.

A rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen and enjoyed himself luxuriously every day. At his gate lay a beggar named Lazarus, suffering from sores. Lazarus tried to fill his stomach even with the food that fell from the rich man's table, and he was in such a wretched state that the dogs came and licked his sores.

The rich man's life was trapped within the good things and wealth he enjoyed. Even Lazarus, suffering at his gate, was outside his concern. But the fundamental difference that divided the eternal destinies of the two men was not the amount of their property but faith in the righteousness of God. The rich man, without believing in God and His word, pursued only a life of enjoying good things in this world.

Lazarus lived on this earth as a poor and sick person, but he believed in the word of God and His righteousness. Because he had faith that believed in the salvation God promised, he entered Abraham's bosom after he died. Abraham's bosom shows the eternal rest and comfort enjoyed by the person who believed in the righteousness of God. Lazarus seemed to have been abandoned by people, but he was a blessed person who belonged to God.

Whether a person's life has succeeded is not decided by how much wealth and honor he has gained in this world. What matters is whether he knew and believed in the righteousness of God while alive and obtained the remission of sins and eternal life. Even if one has possessed nothing, the person who believes in the righteousness of God is a blessed person, and even if one has had everything, if one does not have that faith, it is a life that has failed before God.

A life that uses wealth wisely and prepares for the eternal kingdom

After death, one cannot cross the great gulf

The rich man also died and was buried, but he was tormented in Hades. Jesus said that the rich man actually suffered in the flames of Hades and Lazarus was comforted in Abraham's bosom. After death there is judgment and comfort that cannot be reversed, and the great gulf shows that after death one cannot change one's own eternal state or cross over with the help of another person.

The rich man, tormented in the flame, asked that Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue. The wealth and position he had while alive, the respect of people, and the scale of his funeral were of no help to him at all. In this world the circumstances of Lazarus and the rich man were completely different, but after death those circumstances were reversed.

The great gulf placed between the two men shows the fact that sin divides the kingdom of God from the judgment, and that after death that gulf cannot be crossed. A person who has sin cannot enter the kingdom of God by his own strength or by wealth and merit. Therefore, a person must believe, while alive, in the righteousness of God that has washed away all sins.

While a person is alive, he has the opportunity to hear and believe the gospel. But after he has died with his sin unresolved, he cannot choose again the gospel he had refused, nor can he be saved by borrowing another person's faith and good deeds. Therefore, one must not put off the problem of salvation until one is old or facing death. Right now one must hear the word of God and solve the problem of one's own sin.

When the rich man heard that he could not change his state, he thought of his five brothers in his father's house. He pleaded that Lazarus be sent again to testify to his brothers so that they would not come to the place of torment. While alive he had no

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interest in the eternal destiny of other souls, but after experiencing the torment of the judgment, he wanted his family not to come to the same place. But that realization was too late.

We must hear and believe the word of God while we are alive

Abraham said that they had Moses and the prophets, so they must hear them. The law reveals the fact that a person is a sinner before God, and the word of the prophets testifies to the Christ who would come to save sinners and to the righteousness of God. A person had to realize his own sin through the written word and believe in the Savior God had promised.

The rich man thought that if a dead person rose again and testified, his brothers would repent. But Abraham answered that a person who does not hear Moses and the prophets will not be persuaded even if there is one who rises from the dead. Faith does not arise automatically because one has seen a marvelous experience or a shocking phenomenon. A stubborn heart that refuses the word of God does not abandon its own thoughts and its own righteousness even after seeing an amazing miracle.

The basis of faith is the written word of God. One must hear and believe with the heart the word God conveys through His servants and the Church, not an experience of having died and come back to life, or dreams and visions. The person who does not believe even after hearing the word does not believe even when he sees an amazing thing, but the person who accepts the word of God comes to believe the truth of salvation that the word testifies to.

At the time of the text, Jesus had already taken the sins of all the people of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from

John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River. Afterward, bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and so He paid the price of sin in full; and by rising again on the third day, He overcame sin and death and completed eternal salvation. This is the righteousness of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that a person must hear and believe without fail while he is alive.

A sinner cannot escape the judgment by his own good deeds and wealth, learning and religious career. He must admit that he is a sinner who will be judged before God, and believe with his heart the fact that Jesus removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes in this gospel receives the remission of all his sins, becomes righteous, and receives the Holy Spirit and eternal life as gifts. This is the true faith that God acknowledges and a successful life.

The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been saved does not judge other people only by the wealth of the world and outward circumstances. He thinks about whether that soul is a person who will receive the remission of sins and enter the kingdom of God, and he has compassion on the souls who do not yet believe in the gospel. He does not use the wealth God has entrusted only to satisfy his own desires, but uses it to serve suffering neighbors and to preach the gospel.

The rich man's worrying about his five brothers awakens the responsibility of the saved person to preach the gospel to his family and neighbors. After death, even if one worries about one's family, one cannot preach the gospel to them. While still living together, one must preach the word of God and make them know the gospel accomplished by the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Luke 16:19–31 teaches that the life of this world is not

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everything, and that a person must believe in the righteousness of God while he is alive. Jesus took all the sins of the world upon Himself with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again and completed eternal salvation. The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins and obtains the comfort and life of the kingdom of God. Therefore, the saved person must be spiritually awake, have compassion on the souls of his family and neighbors, and diligently preach the gospel of salvation while there is still an opportunity. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 16

[Question] 1. What lessons do the parables recorded in Luke chapter 16 convey?

Luke chapter 16 teaches that we must use wisely and faithfully the wealth and the life God has entrusted, and that we must hear the word of God while we are alive and prepare for the eternal kingdom by faith. Through the parable of the unjust steward, the word about the law and the kingdom of God, and the story of the rich man and Lazarus, this chapter shows that our present choices are connected to eternal results.

In verses 1–13, the steward came to lose his position because he wasted his master's goods, but he used the remaining opportunity to prepare for the future. Jesus did not say to imitate his injustice; He taught that just as the people of the world strive for their own future, the sons of light must live all the more wisely for the kingdom of God.

"No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon" (Luke 16:13).

The wealth, time, and talents the saints have are not their own forever but things God has entrusted. Therefore, they must not waste them only for themselves, but must use them faithfully for the work of the gospel being preached and souls obtaining salvation. Since one cannot serve God and wealth together as masters, wealth must not be something we serve, but a tool for accomplishing the will of God.

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In verses 14–18, it says that the law and the prophets were until John, and that after that the gospel of the kingdom of God is preached. This does not mean that the word of God has been abolished. Jesus said that not one tittle of the law would fail, and made clear that the covenant of marriage, too, cannot be lightly broken according to human desires and convenience.

The story of the rich man and Lazarus in verses 19–31 shows the importance of faith even more solemnly. The rich man lived abundantly in the world, but after death he was tormented in Hades, and Lazarus, who had been poor and sick, was comforted in Abraham's bosom. What divided the end of the two men was not the amount of their property but the question of whether they had heard and believed the word of God while alive.

'Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead"' (Luke 16:29–31).

Jesus took the sin of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead. A person must hear and believe, while alive, this gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible testifies to, and receive the remission of sins and eternal life.

Therefore, Luke chapter 16 teaches us to use faithfully the wealth and the life entrusted to us for a while for the benefit of the kingdom of God and the gospel, and to prepare for the eternal kingdom by hearing and believing the written word. We must not look only at our present circumstances, but must serve God as our Master and live a wise and purposeful life as befits those who have believed in the gospel.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 16 verse 1, explain what kind of person the steward was, through his actions.

This steward was an unfaithful and unjust person who wasted the goods his master had entrusted to him. Although he was not the owner but a person entrusted with the responsibility of management, he put his own convenience and benefit before his master's will.

"He also said to His disciples: 'There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward" (Luke 16:1–2).

The steward had no authority to use his master's property as he pleased, as if it were his own. He had to preserve the property entrusted to him, manage it profitably, and give a clear account to his master when required. But because he did not fulfill that responsibility, the master told him to give an account of what he had been doing and to step down from the office of steward.

That the master first told him to give an account of the work entrusted to him, before driving him out at once, is a scene in which the steward is called to account. What and how much he had been entrusted with, and how he had used it, had to be revealed. The person entrusted has authority, but that authority is always under the will and the reckoning of the master.

Only when he was about to lose his position did he think of his own future. After judging that he had no strength to dig and was ashamed to beg, he altered the bills of those who owed his master and secured people who would receive him. This action, too, was not an honest deed, but he quickly used the remaining opportunity to prepare for his own future.

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Here two aspects of the steward appear together. He was an unjust person who did not manage his master's property faithfully, but he was quick in preparing for the future, knowing that his circumstances would change. Through this contrast Jesus awakened the sons of light to their indifference toward the work of preparing for the eternal kingdom.

The reason Jesus spoke of this steward was not to commend his injustice. Since even the people of the world act so meticulously for their own future, He awakened us to how much more wisely and faithfully the people of the kingdom of God must live for the eternal kingdom.

Our time, wealth, and talents, too, are things God has entrusted. Therefore, we must not waste them only for ourselves, but must manage them so that they benefit the work of preaching the gospel and saving souls, in which God delights. Faithfulness is not stopping at doing the entrusted work as a formality, but doing our utmost with heart and strength so that the fruit of the gospel is actually borne.

The saints cannot take lightly the responsibility entrusted to them on the grounds that they do not have much. Everything, great and small, is what God has given, and what matters is how one has used what one has at present. The attitude of faithfully carrying out the work entrusted today reveals the faith that looks to the eternal kingdom.

In the end, this steward was unfaithful and unjust, but he was a shrewd person in preparing for his own future. The saints must look not at his injustice but at the wisdom with which he looked ahead to the future and used the remaining opportunity, and must use faithfully everything God has entrusted for the eternal kingdom.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 16 verse 1, what is the relationship between the master and the steward?

The master is the owner of the property, and the steward is a servant entrusted with managing that property. The steward is in a relationship in which he must preserve and use the goods profitably according to his master's will, and then calculate and report the work he was entrusted with and handled when his master requires it.

"He also said to His disciples: 'There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward" (Luke 16:1–2).

In the text, the master entrusted his goods to the steward but did not hand over ownership as well. When he heard that the steward was wasting his property, he called him, asked about the facts, and after having him give an account of the work entrusted to him, did not let him continue in the office any longer. This shows that even though the steward had considerable authority, he was always a person who was accountable to his master.

Since the steward could manage his master's house, storehouses, and transactions, he must have looked to others like a person with great authority. But the basis of that authority lay in the fact that the master had entrusted it. Once the master withdrew the office, he could no longer handle that property.

"And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" (Luke 16:12).

Through the relationship between the master and the steward, Jesus teaches the relationship between the saints and God. The life, time, wealth, and abilities we have originally belong to God,

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and we are stewards who have been entrusted with them for a while and use them. Therefore, we must not waste them with the thought that they are ours, but must first think of the will and purpose of the Master.

When the saints know this relationship, they can neither be arrogant because they have much nor be discouraged because they have little. What matters is not the size of the portion entrusted but whether one has used that portion in accordance with the Master's will. God requires faithfulness according to what He has entrusted to each person.

To be faithful in what God has entrusted does not simply mean to work busily. It is to do one's utmost with heart, wisdom, and strength so that through the entrusted work the gospel is actually preached and the benefit of souls obtaining salvation appears. The attitude of being faithful in small things and in what is another man's reveals the posture of faith that can be entrusted with greater spiritual work.

We must handle honestly the work entrusted to us at home, at work, and in the Church, and manage in a well-ordered way the wealth we have earned and the abilities we have gained. A life and wealth prepared in that way can be put to precious use when they are needed for the gospel. This is the posture of a steward who cherishes what belongs to his master as if it were his own affair and yet does not forget the master's purpose.

Therefore, the master and the steward are in the relationship of owner and manager, and the steward is a responsible servant who reports to his master and is evaluated by him. The saints must not consume everything God has entrusted as they please, but must use it faithfully to serve the kingdom of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 16 verse 8, who does *"the sons of light"* refer to?

"The sons of light" refers to the people who have believed in the salvation Jesus accomplished, received the remission of sins, and become the people of God. They are not people who belong to the darkness of the world, but people called to live in the truth and life of God.

"So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light" (Luke 16:8).

"The sons of this world" are the people who live centered on the life and profit of this world. They calculate relationships and wealth and act quickly in order to survive in their own generation and obtain future benefit. The unjust steward, too, thought about what would come after losing his position and used the remaining opportunity.

On the other hand, the sons of light are people who have come to know their own sins and the way of salvation through the word of God. Since they have believed in the righteousness Jesus accomplished and become the people of the kingdom of God, the purpose of their lives must also be different from that of the sons of this world. The future they look to is not only the comfort of this world but the eternal kingdom of God.

Jesus did not say to imitate the unjust methods of the people of the world. It means that if they prepare so wisely for the world in which they will live only for a while, the sons of light, who belong to the eternal kingdom of God, must live with an even clearer purpose and wisdom.

The people of the world plan and labor for a long time and concentrate their abilities in order to gain profit. But if the saints live without any purpose even though they know of eternal life

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and the work of preaching the gospel, they become less wise than the sons of this world. The word of Jesus awakens us from such complacency.

The sons of light are the people who have believed in 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, by being judged on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. They are faithful not in order to obtain salvation, but they serve the kingdom of God in gratitude for the grace of salvation they have already received.

Therefore, the saints must not become people who are wise only in the affairs of the world and indifferent to the work of the gospel. They must examine well the time, wealth, and talents God has entrusted, and use them in the most valuable way for the benefit of the gospel and the salvation of souls.

The wisdom befitting the sons of light is not to abandon all the affairs of the world, but to place work, business, and wealth under the purpose of the kingdom of God. One must do what is needed diligently and leave profit, and make that profit lead to the preaching of the gospel and to serving the needs of the saints.

In the end, the sons of light are the saints who have received the remission of sins and belong to the kingdom of God. Knowing that the opportunity before them is not eternal, they must live wisely and faithfully for the kingdom they will enter in the future and for God, the King of that kingdom.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 16 verse 9, what does the word "*make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon*" mean?

The word "*make friends for yourselves by unrighteous*

mammon" means to use the wealth of this world for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel. The saints must not pile up wealth only for themselves, but must use it wisely to serve so that people hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtain salvation.

"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home" (Luke 16:9).

That wealth is called unrighteous here does not mean that even money earned honestly is all evil. Wealth is a temporary thing that circulates in this world full of sin and disappears when the time comes. The saints must not become servants of that wealth, but must manage it as a tool God has entrusted.

The unjust steward used his master's wealth to gain people who would receive him after he was driven out by his master. Jesus spoke, citing not that unjust method but the wisdom of looking ahead to the future and using the present opportunity. The sons of light must use wealth for an even more right purpose, looking to the eternal kingdom.

The most important way for the saints to make friends by wealth is to serve the gospel. It is to help with what is needed for the preaching of the gospel, to serve the evangelists and the Church, and to use material things, time, and abilities so that people can hear the word of salvation. If through the gospel preached in that way one soul receives the remission of sins, then wealth has been used as a precious tool for eternal life.

This word teaches the life that is faithful for the kingdom of God. For the saints to use their present wealth, body, and time for the kingdom they will enter in the future is the wisest and most beneficial life for themselves as well.

Therefore, the wealth that serves the gospel does not mean only money that is simply given once. It includes doing the

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entrusted work well and leaving profit, building up one's business and living in a well-ordered way, and preparing so that one can continually help the preaching of the gospel. Not wasting what has been given, but using it according to the needs of the gospel, is faithfulness.

This word does not mean that one buys salvation or a place in heaven with money. The remission of sins is received by believing in 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, by receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. The work of using wealth for the gospel is the fruit of faithfulness borne by the person who has received that grace.

When we use wealth, we must examine whether it ends merely in the satisfaction before our eyes, or whether it leaves actual benefit for the progress of the gospel and the salvation of souls. Managing the entrusted wealth in a well-ordered way and using it with priority for the most precious work is the posture of a wise steward.

The work of helping people, too, must not end only in solving that person's physical needs, but must go on to serving so that his soul hears the word of salvation. The benefit of this earth is for a while, but the soul that has heard the gospel and received the remission of sins comes to live together forever in the kingdom of God.

Therefore, the word to make friends by unrighteous mammon is a command to use the wealth of the world, which exists for a while and then disappears, for the eternal kingdom of God. The saints must live a wise life by being faithful in the work of serving the gospel and saving souls with the wealth God has entrusted.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 16 verse 9, what is the benefit that comes to the person who has made friends by unrighteous mammon?

The benefit that comes to the person who has made friends by unrighteous mammon is to be received into the everlasting home when the wealth is gone. Even though the wealth used for the gospel on this earth disappears, the fruit of the gospel served with that wealth and the faithfulness God acknowledges remain in the eternal kingdom.

"And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home" (Luke 16:9).

The steward used his present authority in order to gain people who would receive him after he lost his position. The saints must use their present wealth and opportunities even more wisely than this, looking to the kingdom of God they will enter in the future. The person who has been faithful for the kingdom of God comes to obtain the benefit of his labor in the everlasting home the Lord has prepared.

The word *"they may receive you into an everlasting home"* also contains the picture of enjoying the joy of the kingdom of God together with the souls saved by the gospel. The labor of having served the gospel with wealth on this earth does not disappear, but remains forever as saved lives and fellowship.

The most precious fruit of wealth that has served the gospel is the salvation of souls. If someone hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit through that service and receives the remission of sins, then even though the material things of this earth disappear, the saved life remains forever. Therefore, the work of using wealth for the gospel is a wise life that turns what will disappear into eternal benefit.

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To be received into the everlasting home does not mean that one enters heaven by the merit of having offered material things. A person enters the kingdom of God by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and taking sin upon Himself, by being judged on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. The faithfulness of the saved saints is accompanied by the praise and the eternal reward God gives.

The Lord says that He will entrust more to the servant who has been faithful in small things. Therefore, the benefit of wealth used for the gospel cannot be calculated only by present material rewards. The blessing of being acknowledged by the Lord and taking part in the work of the eternal kingdom is greater.

Therefore, the benefit of this word does not lie simply in getting back more wealth in this world. It lies in the fruit of the preaching of the gospel remaining, in souls being saved, and in the saints themselves being acknowledged by God for a life of faithfulness to Him.

When the saints believe this fact, they do not hesitate over the work of the gospel merely at the thought of losing wealth. They serve gladly with the faith that they are using what will disappear for eternal work, and at the same time they seek wisdom so as not to waste the entrusted wealth but to leave greater benefit.

When we know that wealth is not eternal, we can use it for the gospel without stint, yet wisely and responsibly. To leave the benefit of the eternal kingdom with our present wealth is the true blessing that comes to the person who has made friends by unrighteous mammon.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 16 verse 10, what does the word, 'He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much,' teach us?

This word teaches the fact that the attitude of faithfulness shown in small things is revealed just the same when one is entrusted with great things. God looks at how a person manages what he has been entrusted with in inconspicuous work and in daily life, and entrusts more precious work according to that faithfulness.

"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" (Luke 16:10–12).

In the text, what is least includes the wealth and the work entrusted for a while in this world. Wealth is not eternal, but the attitude of managing it reveals that person's heart. The person who uses small wealth carelessly and does the entrusted work unfaithfully is likely to show the same attitude even when entrusted with greater spiritual work.

Faithfulness does not simply mean that one has spent much time or worked hard. It is to know the purpose the Master wants and to leave actual benefit by doing one's utmost with heart, wisdom, and strength. The saints must work while examining how much the gospel is preached and how much benefit souls obtain through the work entrusted to them.

Just because a person has worked many hours does not necessarily mean that he has been faithful. If he has reduced his master's property and failed to achieve the purpose of the work, he must reexamine his way of managing it. What matters is to

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actually leave profit and the benefit of the gospel through the entrusted work.

God has entrusted us with life, time, health, talents, and wealth. The person who carries out the work entrusted to him at home, at work, and in the Church honestly and responsibly, and uses all of it so that it benefits the progress of the gospel, is the person who is faithful in what is least.

The person who is faithful in small things cherishes what he has been entrusted with even when no one is watching, does not put off what needs to be done, and looks for ways to make the results better. Such an attitude appears not only in wealth but also in learning the word, serving the Church, and preaching the gospel to other souls.

God entrusts work according to each person's portion. One must not complain that what one is entrusted with at present is small, or wait only for a great office, but must accomplish the Master's will in the place one has been given. The experience of being faithful in small things cultivates the wisdom and faith to carry out greater work.

Such faithfulness is not an act that provides the price of salvation. It is a life offered in gratitude by the person who has been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John and taking our sins upon Himself, by being judged on the Cross, and by rising from the dead.

Therefore, we must not wait until we are entrusted with great work, but must be faithful, starting now, in the small work entrusted to us. To the person who seeks the Master's will in small things and leaves actual benefit for the gospel, God entrusts greater and true work.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 16 verses 11–12, explain the meaning of *"the unrighteous mammon"* and *"the true riches"* that Jesus spoke of, respectively.

"The unrighteous mammon" refers to the material things and property that are used for a while in this world and then disappear, and *"the true riches"* refers to the work of God, which saves souls by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By managing faithfully the wealth entrusted to them for a while and using it for the preaching of the gospel, the saints must serve the true work God entrusts.

"Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own?" (Luke 16:11–12).

To call wealth unrighteous is not to say that all money is evil in itself. Wealth is a small thing that is used in a world full of sin and can disappear at any time. But how we earn and manage that wealth and where we use it reveals our faithfulness and faith before God.

"What is another man's" ultimately means what belongs to God, which we have been entrusted with for a while and use. Since life, time, health, and wealth are all what God has given, the saints must not waste them as they please, but must manage them according to the Master's will.

Unrighteous mammon is necessary in order to make a living and is also useful for serving the gospel, but one cannot take it along when one dies. That is why Jesus spoke of it as what is least and what is another man's. Just because it is in one's hands now does not mean that it has become an eternal possession.

"What is your own" refers to the more precious mission of

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the gospel that God entrusts to a faithful person. If one fails to manage the wealth of this earth in a well-ordered way and fails to leave benefit for the gospel, it is hard to carry out faithfully the true work God has entrusted as well. The attitude of managing small wealth rightly becomes the preparation for carrying out greater spiritual work.

The wealth of the world cannot take the place of the gospel, but it can be used to help those who preach the gospel, to serve the Church, and to open the way of evangelism. Using wealth faithfully for such work is leaving eternal benefit with material things entrusted for a while.

Jesus accomplished true salvation by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, by being judged on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. The saints who have believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit do not serve wealth as their master, but live as stewards who use it for preaching the word of salvation.

When wealth becomes the master of one's life, a person has his heart captured by the work of gaining more and puts off the work of the kingdom of God. Conversely, when one serves God as one's Master, the purpose of earning and using money also becomes clear. While looking after the needs of daily life, one can give priority to the most precious work, the preaching of the gospel.

Therefore, the unrighteous mammon is the material things of the world entrusted for a while, and the true riches are the work of God, which saves souls by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The saints must earn and manage wealth faithfully, leave actual benefit for the preaching of the gospel, and carry out the true work God has entrusted.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 16 verse 18, what did Jesus say about divorce and remarriage?

Jesus said that whoever puts away his wife and marries another woman commits adultery, and that whoever marries a woman who has been put away also commits adultery. This is the word that makes clear that the marriage relationship cannot be lightly broken according to human desires and convenience.

"Whoever divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery; and whoever marries her who is divorced from her husband commits adultery" (Luke 16:18).

Just before this, Jesus said that not one tittle of the law would fail. The Pharisees regarded themselves as righteous before men and put forward only the form of the law, but God knows the human heart and the actual act of breaking the covenant of marriage. The act of abandoning one's spouse and uniting with another person does not become righteous before God just because the form of divorce has been completed.

Marriage is a precious relationship God has given so that a husband and wife would be faithful to each other and form one family. Therefore, a husband and wife must not abandon each other by putting their own desires first, but must keep the covenant with love and responsibility. Even when there is conflict, they must examine their own faults, respect each other, and seek the restoration of the relationship.

The word of Jesus reveals the heart that regarded one's spouse as an object for one's own possession or convenience. Since marriage is accompanied by the responsibility of living together, chastity, and care, to abandon one's existing spouse in order to fulfill a new desire is to wound the other person greatly and to break the relationship formed before God.

This word awakens us from the attitude of taking lightly the

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desires and unfaithfulness in one's heart while living an outwardly religious life. A person cannot make himself righteous by legal procedures or social reputation, and he must honestly examine his own heart and actions before the word of God.

For a husband and wife to keep the covenant of marriage, they must first examine the responsibility entrusted to themselves rather than looking only at the other's faults. They must build trust with words and actions, care for each other even in difficulties, and strive together to form a family in which God delights.

Even a person who has committed sin in the marriage relationship cannot settle the price of his sin by his own deeds. Jesus completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, by receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. The person who has believed in this gospel and received the remission of sins must not take lightly the grace he has received, but must keep the covenant of marriage faithfully.

The grace of the gospel does not remove the responsibility of marriage; it gives us the strength to acknowledge our self-centered hearts and to obey the word of God. The saved saints must show the grace they have received by loving and protecting their spouses and keeping faithfulness in word and deed.

Therefore, Jesus defined abandoning one's spouse and marrying another person as adultery. The saints must not regard marriage as a means for their own desires, but must respect it as a relationship formed before God and keep it with love, responsibility, and faithfulness.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 16 verses 20–21, in what condition does it record that the beggar Lazarus lived?

The beggar Lazarus lived in a condition of extreme poverty and sickness. He was full of sores and lay at the rich man's gate, he desired to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table, and the dogs came and licked his sores.

"But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores" (Luke 16:20–21).

Lazarus had neither a stable life nor enough food. Though he was near the rich man's house, he hoped to get even what fell from the rich man's abundant table and escape hunger. His sick body was not properly cared for, and his wounds were exposed as they were.

The text shows the condition of Lazarus in the form of poverty, disease, hunger, and neglect. He lay not inside his own house but at the rich man's gate, and he hoped to be fed not with a proper meal but with what fell from the table. The record that the dogs licked his sores makes his wretched condition even more vivid.

This picture stands in vivid contrast to the rich man, who lived luxuriously every day. The rich man enjoyed an abundant life, but he did not look after the suffering of Lazarus, who was right at his gate. The lives of the two men show how limited the human standards for judging success and failure in the world are.

The needs of Lazarus were not hidden far away from the rich man. Since he was right at the gate, the rich man could see him or know his condition every day. But the abundance of the rich man did not lead to the love that looks after suffering close at hand.

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But the poverty of Lazarus itself did not save him. Like Abraham, he entered the comfort of God by faith that believes the word of God. Whether rich or poor, one must hear and believe the word of salvation while alive.

Jesus completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by receiving baptism from John and taking our sins upon Himself, by being judged on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. Even a person who, like Lazarus, has nothing to show in the world receives the remission of sins and eternal life if he believes in this gospel.

Therefore, Lazarus was a person in a wretched condition, lying at the rich man's gate in hunger and disease. Present poverty and disease do not decide a person's eternal end, and what matters most is to hear the word of God and prepare faith while one is alive.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 16 verses 22–23, where did the rich man and the beggar Lazarus each arrive after they died?

After he died, the beggar Lazarus was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom, and the rich man, after he died and was buried, was tormented in Hades. Lazarus arrived at the place where the comfort of God is, but the rich man suffered anguish in the flame.

"So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom" (Luke 16:22–23).

Abraham is the father of faith, who believed the word of God.

That Lazarus entered Abraham's bosom shows that he, too, like Abraham, believed the word of God and was saved, and came to enjoy comfort and rest in the kingdom of God.

On the other hand, the rich man enjoyed fine clothes and an abundant table in the world and was even buried after he died, but none of that guaranteed the salvation of his soul. In the torment of Hades he looked at Abraham and Lazarus afar off. The property and position of this present life did not decide a person's eternal home.

The text records that after the death of Lazarus the angels carried him, but of the rich man it records that he was buried. Even if the rich man may have had the proper rites of a funeral in the world, after death he did not escape the torment of Hades. It shows that the treatment one receives before people and the result one meets before God may not be the same.

What divided the end of the two men was not wealth and poverty themselves but faith. Whether rich or poor, one must hear the word of God while alive, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, and receive the remission of sins.

Abraham's bosom, which Lazarus entered, is the place where one enjoys the comfort of God by faith. Just as Abraham believed the promise of God, Lazarus also had faith that believes the word of God. On the other hand, the rich man knew Abraham but did not accept that faith into his own heart.

Everyone, whether rich or poor, meets death. Property cannot prevent death, and poverty does not automatically become a qualification for salvation. What faith one had while alive is connected to the result after death.

Jesus saved sinners by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, by receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead.

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The person who believes in this gospel enters the kingdom of God with the same faith as Abraham, but for the person who does not believe, the judgment after death is waiting.

Therefore, after death Lazarus was comforted in Abraham's bosom, and the rich man was tormented in Hades. Since a person cannot prepare faith after death, one must hear and believe the word of salvation while one is alive.

[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 16 verses 24–25, what torment and situation does it record that the rich man was in, in Hades?

The rich man suffered severe torment and thirst in the flame of Hades. He pleaded that Lazarus dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue, but he could not obtain even that small comfort.

"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented." (Luke 16:24–25).

That the rich man asked for water shows how severe the torment he suffered was. While alive he had lived luxuriously every day, but in Hades he could not get even enough water to cool his tongue for a moment. He clearly knew that he was tormented in the flame.

Here, being tormented means suffering pain that is hard to bear. The rich man actually felt the flame and the thirst, knew his own situation, and earnestly sought mercy and help.

Abraham told him to remember the good things he had

enjoyed while alive and the evil things Lazarus had suffered. In the world the rich man enjoyed comfort and Lazarus suffered torment, but after death Lazarus was comforted and the rich man was tormented. Present circumstances do not continue forever.

Even after death, the rich man remembered the things of his lifetime. He also knew the fact that he had brothers, and he recognized Lazarus and asked for help. He was conscious of his own life and its present result, yet he was in a situation in which he could no longer change that result.

The reason the rich man was tormented was not that he had much property, but that he did not believe in the word of God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit while he was alive. Even though he enjoyed much property and a good life and had enough religious knowledge to call Abraham father, that could not take the place of faith in God. The rich man's failure to look after Lazarus, who was at his gate, was also a result of living only for himself without believing in God and His word.

Only after death did the rich man realize the result of having lived without believing the word of God, but he could no longer change his situation. The property and position he had enjoyed in the world, his religious lineage, and his good deeds could not free him from the torment of Hades. He had come to a situation in which he could no longer reverse the result of not having believed the word given to him while alive.

God has prepared the way of salvation so that sinners would not come to this judgment. Jesus completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, by being judged on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. A person must believe in this gospel while alive and receive the remission of sins and eternal life.

Therefore, the rich man suffered severe torment from the flame and thirst in Hades and obtained no comfort at all. This

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word awakens us to hear the word of God now, prepare faith, and believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

[Question] 13. In Luke chapter 16 verses 24–25, as can be seen from the rich man calling him *"Father Abraham,"* what was Abraham to the Jews of that time?

To the Jews of that time, Abraham was the forefather of the people of Israel and the forefather who received the covenant from God, and above all he was the father of faith, who was justified by believing the word of God. That is why the rich man called him *"Father Abraham."*

"Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented" (Luke 16:24–25).

God called Abraham and promised him descendants and land. Since the people of Israel came into being through Isaac and Jacob, the Jews regarded themselves as the descendants of Abraham and exalted Abraham as the father of the people.

Abraham was also the forefather who made a covenant with God. God said that He would be the God of his descendants and would fulfill His promise through them. So the phrase the descendants of Abraham contained not only a relationship of lineage but also the pride of being the covenant people.

"And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6).

The reason Abraham is the father of faith is not that his own

deeds were perfect, but that he believed the word and the promise of God. That Lazarus entered Abraham's bosom shows that he, too, was saved by faith that believes the word of God and reached the place of comfort.

Therefore, truly respecting Abraham lies not in exalting his name only, but in believing in the God and the word that he believed in. Abraham trusted the God who promised rather than his own ability, and he was justified by that faith.

But even though the rich man called Abraham father, that title and lineage did not save him. The fact that one's ancestors believed, or the fact that one knows the religious tradition, cannot take the place of one's personal faith. Each person must hear and believe the word of God with his own heart while he is alive.

The rich man recognized Abraham and called him familiarly, but while alive he did not obey the word of God with the same faith as Abraham. The fact of being a descendant of Abraham in the flesh and following in his footsteps by faith are not the same.

Today, too, one is not saved by a family of faith or church life alone. One must believe with the heart in 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, by being judged on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. The person who has this faith is the person who follows the faith of Abraham.

Therefore, to the Jews Abraham was the forefather of the people and of the covenant, and the father of faith. But it is not lineage in the flesh and a title, but faith that believes the word of God like Abraham, that makes a person take part in the promise of God and the blessing of salvation.

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[Question] 14. In Luke chapter 16 verse 26, what was the second reason Abraham gave that he could not accept the rich man's request?

The second reason Abraham gave that he could not accept the rich man's request was that there was a great gulf fixed between the two, so that neither could anyone pass from where Abraham and Lazarus were to the rich man, nor could anyone pass from where the rich man was to them.

"And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us" (Luke 16:26).

The first reason appears in verse 25. While alive the rich man enjoyed good things and Lazarus suffered evil things, but after death Lazarus was comforted and the rich man was tormented. The second reason is the great gulf in verse 26, which shows that the already fixed states of the two men cannot be changed by each other's help.

The great gulf blocked the way between Abraham's bosom and Hades so that no one could cross over from either side. This great gulf means sin, which blocks the way between God and sinners. A person who has sin cannot cross this gulf and enter the kingdom of God by his own strength or good deeds.

The rich man asked that Lazarus be sent to cool his tongue with water from the tip of his finger, but Lazarus could not cross that gulf, nor could the rich man come up to the place of comfort. Between the two places blocked by the great gulf, no help of any kind could pass.

While he was alive, there was an opportunity to hear and believe the word of God, but the rich man did not use that opportunity. After death he made a request to Abraham and sought the help of Lazarus, but he could not change the result

already fixed. This is the reason why the opportunity of faith given at present is precious.

Therefore, the time to hear the word of God and prepare faith is now, while we are alive. The rich man's brothers, too, were told to hear the word of Moses and the prophets rather than the testimony of a dead person. We must not put off the opportunity of salvation, but must know and believe through the written word what Jesus has accomplished.

Neither can the faith of one's family or ancestors change the state of a dead person on his behalf. Each person must know his own sin and his need of salvation before the word of God, and believe with his own heart the gospel that Jesus completed.

Jesus completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, by receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. A person must believe in this gospel while alive, receive the remission of sins, and pass from death into life.

Therefore, the second reason the rich man's request could not be fulfilled was that the great gulf between the two places could not be crossed from either side. This word teaches that since the result after death cannot be reversed, we must hear and believe the word of God now.

[Question] 15. In Luke chapter 16 verses 29–31, how did Abraham answer the rich man's new request?

Abraham answered that the rich man's brothers already had Moses and the prophets, so they must hear their word. When the rich man said again that if someone from among the dead went

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to them, his brothers would repent, Abraham said that a person who does not hear the word of Moses and the prophets would not be persuaded even if someone rose from the dead.

'Abraham said to him, "They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them." And he said, "No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent." But he said to him, "If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."' (Luke 16:29–31).

The rich man asked that Lazarus be sent to his father's house to testify to his five brothers about the torment he was suffering. He thought that if the amazing event of a dead person appearing happened, his brothers would believe and turn back.

But Abraham said that they had Moses and the prophets. This refers to the word of God recorded through Moses and the prophets. Since God had already made clear in that word sin and judgment, the promise and the way of salvation, a person must hear and believe that word.

The law of Moses reveals that a person is a sinner before God, and the word about the sacrifices and offerings makes us look to the Savior who would bear sin. The prophets testified to the Messiah whom God would send and to the salvation He would accomplish. Therefore, hearing the word of Moses and the prophets leads to believing in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

The problem lay not in a lack of evidence but in a heart that does not accept the word of God. A person who does not believe the word is only frightened for a moment even when he sees an amazing thing, and he can interpret it according to his own thinking. Conversely, a person who humbly hears the word comes to know through the Bible that he is a sinner and to believe in the salvation God has accomplished.

The rich man thought that if a dead person appeared, his

brothers would surely turn back, but Abraham answered that a heart that refuses the written word is not changed by a single sign. Faith begins not from the excitement of having watched a marvelous thing but from truly accepting the word of God.

Rather than the experience of a person who says he died and came back to life, one must believe the word of God recorded in the Bible. Today, too, the person who preaches the gospel must not put forward his own experience, but must accurately convey the salvation of Jesus Christ that the Bible testifies to.

The event of Jesus rising from the dead is different from a person's subjective account of an experience. It is an actual event of salvation that the Bible prophesied and the apostles testified to, and it confirms that Jesus overcame sin and death. But even this testimony of the resurrection may not be accepted by faith in a stubborn heart that refuses the word of the Bible.

Jesus completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by receiving baptism from John and taking the sin of the world upon Himself, by receiving the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead. The word of Moses and the prophets makes us look to this salvation, and a person must hear and believe this gospel while alive and receive the remission of sins and eternal life.

Today, too, God has the gospel preached through those who believe this word. The person who preaches the word must not put forward his own authority, but must serve so that the hearer knows and believes the salvation recorded in the Bible. The hearer, too, must examine whether the word the preacher conveys agrees with the Bible, rather than the preacher's human qualifications.

Therefore, Abraham's answer means that hearing and believing the word of God already written is more important than a special experience. We must believe in the gospel of the

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water and the Spirit that the Bible testifies to, and convey the same word clearly and faithfully to our family and neighbors who do not yet believe. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Be faithful in small things

< Luke 16:1-10 >

“He also said to His disciples: ‘There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, “What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward.” ‘Then the steward said within himself, “What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses.” ‘So he called every one of his master’s debtors to him, and said to the first, “How much do you owe my master?” And he said, “A hundred measures of oil.” So he said to him, “Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty.” Then he said to another, “And how much do you owe?” So he said, “A hundred measures of wheat.” And he said to him, “Take your bill, and write eighty.” So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. ‘And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much.”

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This year is almost over. When I think back on the second half of the past year, we came to serve the gospel in the grace of God, and God worked so that the gospel was preached. Our God gave us grace and gave us faith and enabled us to carry out many things. When I look back, the blessings God has given, both spiritual and physical, are truly many. God has enabled us to preach the gospel, has enabled us to live preaching the gospel, and there has been progress in the work of the gospel as well, so we give thanks before God.

The Lord tells us to be faithful in the work of the gospel

The word we have read today is a word you know well. The word "*the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light*" is the main point of today's text.

A certain man was working at a job, and his master said that he would reckon up that man's work for the year. He said that he would reckon whether he had done well or poorly. The Bible calls that man a steward. It means a person entrusted with keeping the storehouse. When the master reckoned it up, he had failed. He was about to be driven out by his master, and the rumor had already gone around that he would be driven out when the time came.

When the thought came to him that he would now be driven out, this man schemed. Since there were many people who owed this company and many subcontractors, to put it simply, he decided to alter their documents for them. To the one who owed a hundred measures of oil he said to sit down here and write fifty, and he put his seal on it. To the one who owed a hundred measures of wheat he said to write eighty. He altered the

documents and cut down their debts.

What did the Lord say about that man, who did what was not right? He said that the sons of this world, that is, the people who are not born again and live only in this world and then go, are shrewd, because when they are driven out of their jobs, they have prepared in advance a place to go.

This word is a parable. It is not a word telling Christians that they may alter documents like that. These days some groups even have people beaten. Since things are not going well in the evangelical circles, they have their church members beat people, and those who are called workers beat people, it is said. In one country in Africa, the leader is now in prison for having a person beaten to death, and in one region of India, it is said that a leader had his subordinates beat people, and it is not the leader but the church members who have been taken to the police station and are being investigated.

Then what, in the end, is the work such groups do? It is the work of extracting money. Abroad or at home, it is the work of extracting money. When it is hard for people even to make a living, how can they pay money? No matter what magic one performs, one has to have money to pay it. So perhaps they told them to beat people because they were displeased that people did not pay money, and for that they go to prison and go to the police station and have statements drawn up. In the end, what those people are after is money.

If we look at the text, a certain man had a servant, and that man was a person entrusted with managing the storehouse and all the household affairs of that house well. That is, he was a house manager. But when the master said, ‘Let us reckon it up once. Are you doing well, or are you doing poorly?’ and reckoned it up, he had failed. So the master was going to replace him, but this man had prepared in advance a place to go if he

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was driven out of here. That is why the Lord said that he was shrewd.

What would be the conclusion of the word that the sons of this world are more shrewd than the sons of light? The conclusion is to serve the Lord well. It may seem like an obvious word, but the Lord always tells us to be faithful. Why is that? It is because this word is the truth. He said, *"Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home,"* and then He told us to be faithful. He said, *"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much" (Luke 16:10)*.

A world that chases degrees and honor

Looking back as this year comes to an end, there is much that is unjust and much that is lacking. But even so, one thing is clear: the fact that the Lord has preached the gospel much to the world. How many books have gone in, and how many people are reading them even now and receiving the remission of sins by believing the word that Jesus took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John?

But yesterday a certain seminary in a country in Africa sent us strange documents and certificates. Because our address is written on the back of our books, a parcel flew in to that address. They sent a certificate appointing me as a visiting professor of their seminary and a certificate of a Doctor of Philosophy. But the format of the two certificates was exactly the same. So I told our people to find out whether they had a website, and they said there was no website. If so, it is an obvious matter. It seems they are trying to receive more books. One of the ways foreigners

swindle the people of our country is precisely that sort of thing.

People are dying to receive things like honorary degrees. It seems that, though it is neither a seminary nor a proper institution, they just set up a website on the internet and started something. Pastors and social workers of our country took large sums of money there, and it was said that all one had to do was listen to one hour of lectures; according to what came out in the news, they made a huge amount of money from the people of our country by that method. If it is ten million won per person, how many people must have paid? If you watch Christian television broadcasts, people appear who have received doctoral degrees and are wearing sashes saying they are Doctors of Philosophy. They receive such things just for the honor, in order to do such things or to get a job somewhere. The people of our country are extremely vulnerable to such things.

So what was sent from that country is one of two things, too. Either they are trying to receive books, or they are trying to form a relationship with us, receive books steadily, and do business. Of course, it is written in the documents that it was decided in a meeting among their professors. So I told our people to look into it.

Think about it. Who is there in the whole world who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Who is there who publishes this gospel in books? If they were really conscientious and honest people, they would have given an honorary doctorate such as a Doctor of Missiology, not a Doctor of Philosophy. In our country honorary doctorates are not well recognized, but abroad honorary doctorates are given to people who have made a contribution. For a school to give an honorary doctorate to a person who has made a contribution is a great honor for that school. The fact that the school itself gave a doctoral degree to such a person is that school's light and great glory.

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As I said in the early days, too, I have no reason to go out of my way to earn a doctoral degree. Even so, there is no one in the whole world who systematically sets forth and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and if they do not preach this gospel, it is a bad conscience and their fault. When I talked about this with the ministers, I cannot tell you how much we laughed. Until now we used to make jokes about doctorates, but we said that now we should not do that. In fact, it is something worthy of receiving a doctoral degree. But it is not I who receive it; it is the Lord who receives it, and the Church that receives it. And if there is such a thing, it is in any case a help to the preaching of the gospel. It is because the people of the world judge by looking at such things.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is being preached throughout the whole world

But degrees are a matter for them to handle, and we can preach the gospel as much as we like without a degree. The point is the seminaries. I told our people to find the reasonably good seminaries around the world on the internet and send all our books to them. I told them to send the books so that the people there would read and learn, whether they teach them or not, or else use them as textbooks.

But what is the characteristic of those people? It is that seminaries do not receive books. Even though there is a library when you go to a seminary, they do not receive them. In fact, if it is new scholarship, they should receive it all. A person who studies scholarship should receive everything. They should receive it, read it, and discuss whether what this person says is correct, whether this person was really the first to say it or

whether it was said from long ago, and whether what this person says is biblical or not. Only then can one say that one is doing scholarship. A person who does scholarship is such a person.

Just as one must know the enemy in order to know oneself, one must know everything correctly.

So if it is beneficial to the gospel, there must be this kind of thing and that kind of thing. If I look at what came by mail in the past, it seems there was news several times that some seminaries would use our books as seminary textbooks. In practice, what is there for professors at seminaries to teach? There is nothing. Professors have only been sent by their own denominations, and the textbooks are books on that field. It is the same at ordinary universities. Centering on a certain person's book, they recommend various scholars, discuss, write reports, and give credits.

So if professors are to teach the part about what the gospel of the water and the Spirit is, they will certainly use our books. There is no book more precisely organized than this for use as a textbook. Apart from the early Church in history, there is not a single book in which this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins in full on the Cross, and rose again—is explained this clearly. Therefore, they will use them much. They will use them much as textbooks.

So what if the professors at the seminary in that country agreed and sent the documents, and if there really is such a seminary and it teaches this gospel to seminary students? It is said that the population of that country is about a hundred million. Although it is in Africa, it is a highly developed country and a country with many resources. It is divided into south and north, and it is said that in the south there are many people who believe in Christianity and in the north there are many Muslim

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regions. If so, I think the gospel will be preached much. In any case, what is being preached is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so it is a good thing.

Looking back on the year, we give thanks

I am the one who preaches the word during the sermon, but in fact, it is all in the Bible. It belongs to the Lord. And if such a thing has happened, it has come to the Church. If the Lord keeps this world going a little longer from now on, what we have done will be recorded forever, in heaven and on earth.

Long ago the Puritans were not many in number. Even now, several hundred years later, we speak of the things they did to keep their faith. The work of the Puritans is a work known throughout the whole world. It is a work that not only the world knows but that the angels in the kingdom of heaven also see and applaud. The work we do is like that.

He said, *"Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home,"* and this year, too, we have been faithful in many ways. God gave, and we were faithful with all our strength, both spiritually and physically. If we look at the path we have traveled, there is no telling how many things there were this year, too. If we were asked to pick the ten biggest news items, we also have many. There were truly many events in the second half of the year. If we tried to discuss them all, there would be no end.

Because we will go and live in the kingdom of heaven in the future, investing there is the wise thing. The Lord is saying now that the one who invests in heaven is wise. Right now you and I, the ministers of the churches throughout the country, and the coworkers throughout the whole world are preaching the gospel

of the water and the Spirit. He said to make friends by unrighteous mammon, and we are serving the gospel with wealth that will rot and disappear, so we give thanks before the Lord.

Throughout the whole world, a great deal of the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit has taken place. About thirty thousand people visit the website every day, and many are downloading the e-books and audiobooks as well. Meanwhile, our work has increased and we have done much work, our circumstances have improved, and the souls who have been saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are also gradually increasing.

The work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is taking place amazingly

Dear fellow believers, if the professors at a seminary have decided to use this gospel as a textbook, it is a tremendous thing. If it was decided at a faculty meeting, it means that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached during lectures, so how much work will take place when this gospel is preached? Will not more work take place than through our working?

Right now we are speaking to a gathering of people who have received the remission of sins. Suppose there were someone here who had not received the remission of sins. Though my throat is not good now, could I speak quietly like this? Would I not shout and get worked up? How enthusiastically would you, and those next to you as well, go at it with excitement? It is that the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is taking place on an enormous scale.

When we look at the situation with the eyes of faith, the work of the gospel is taking place amazingly. The Lord told us to be

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faithful in this work, and as we are faithful, the Lord brings about much work. He said, *"He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much,"* and I know that you have truly been faithful in detail, even in small things. I believe that all this will come back to us as many blessings and fruits, both spiritual and physical.

In fact, it is only that it is not visible to our eyes. In the past we counted one by one whenever a gathering arose somewhere, but in practice there are so many now that we know only of those who send us mail, and the rest will each be preaching the gospel. Countless seminaries, individuals, and organizations will be believing and preaching this gospel, giving offerings for this gospel, and living for this gospel. There will be many people who, like you, work and minister full-time and live for this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

A pastor ministering in the Netherlands sent his testimony a while ago; have you read it? He is a person who collapsed greatly in the past, and while ministering to people going through hardship, he read our books and came to know that the Lord took all his sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, and received the remission of sins, he says. Now he knows that the work he did in the past was wrong, and he says he cannot tell how thankful he is before God. He says he read all our books from volume one.

When he asked us to recognize him as a branch of The New Life Mission, we told him to send his résumé stating what theology he had studied, if he had studied theology, and he sent it with even his past written out in full. Still, we have to screen him. We are not an organization that accepts just anyone fully into our ministry. So we told him that we would screen him and notify him, and he said that was fine. Right now his heart is on

fire. He says he preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit every day.

Long ago, when several women evangelists came in from a certain country, too, it would have been good if only they had worked properly, but they were swindlers. It seems that such a culture had formed in that country. Since they had no money and nothing to earn, it seems the best method was to come in as missionaries, attach themselves to someone, and squeeze out money. Even so, I have no heart to hate them as human beings. Even now, when I see the photographs, it is pleasant. When they were staying in our country, we used to invite them once or twice a year, and it was pleasant.

In any case, much of the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is taking place. As we send off the year, we give thanks. First, we are thankful that He has made us serve the gospel, and we are thankful in many ways. Ministers throughout the country and our ministers throughout the whole world, brothers and sisters and workers, who were faithful in small things and faithful in great things as well—you have truly worked hard. In practice, because you were faithful in small things, you came to be faithful in great things as well, and that is how these things have been accomplished to this point. If we had done no work at all and just sat still, saying that we had faith, not a single thing would have been accomplished. Even so, because we took on the challenge by faith, there were many things, and in practice the gospel was preached much to the world.

When tribulation comes, the gospel blossoms and bears fruit

Dear fellow believers, from now on natural disasters will

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occur, the danger of war will grow, and economic conflicts will arise between nations. Dear fellow believers, do you know that these things are gradually turning in gear with one another? It is that our work of preaching the gospel and the ruin of this world, things like the danger of war and natural disasters, are turning roughly together.

In fact, the work of the gospel took place first. After this gospel of the water and the Spirit has been preached widely while the world is quiet, what comes next is tribulation. When tribulation comes, what comes after that is sprouting and blossoming. And then bearing fruit.

Right now there will be various kinds of people: those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, those who have read the books, those who think, that is so, those who believe. But when the time really comes and tribulation comes and hearts become desperate, people take hold of this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then they really believe, read it again, have fellowship again among those who believe, and come to preach the gospel themselves. In the last days, regardless of whether natural disasters occur and people die, or the Antichrist appears and whatever happens, when life becomes hard, the gospel of the water and the Spirit blossoms and bears fruit. It is that such things are coming about. So we give thanks before God.

You, too, have worked hard. The ministers of the churches throughout the country have also worked hard. I believe that all these things have been accomplished because each of you was faithful in the place entrusted to you. We give thanks before God for the things accomplished until now, but we have not yet run to the end. I think that more work will take place from now on. And not only in thought, but we must carry out these things believing that in practice greater work will take place. We will carry them out well. Because this is not an age in which we can

always serve the gospel, we must work faithfully while there is time.

If one follows one's own selfish desires, nothing remains

I spoke of the ten biggest news items of this year. One of the things that happened in our Church is that many young brothers left. Truly many young brothers left. You may say, then, did the older people not leave? The older people must have left, too.

But if we think one by one about the young brothers who left, a common point comes out. What would it be? It is that they all followed their own selfish desires.

One brother, in order not to go into the army, went out together with another brother and tried to make a living doing installation work. But his mother said that she must send her son into the army without fail. In the old days there was a saying that a man becomes a real person after serving in the army. The son submitted papers and tried not to go, and the mother went to the Military Manpower Administration and told them to send her son, so it became a curious matter for the people at the Military Manpower Administration. The mother was trying to send him and the child was trying not to go, so whom would the Military Manpower Administration listen to? They listen to the mother. So he went into the army.

It is not a matter for us to get involved in. We tell them spiritually, but if a person does not want to, that is the end of it; it is not something for us to beg and plead about, and it is not as though the work of God will not go on because that person is absent. One brother was a brother who grew up in the Church learning a skill for many years, and when another brother left,

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he followed him out. It is nothing. If one only has the heart to learn, one learns it all in a month. Try going out into the world and earning other people's money. Where is there work that is not that hard?

Even in the Church we live this well. I still say this to our ministers even now. Even if you or I were to live only for ourselves, how much would we have to earn a month? To eat and live at this level and maintain this level, we would have to earn at the very least four to five million won a month. The National Tax Service counts four million won a month and up as the highest income bracket. Then is four million won money that comes purely into one's hands? After taxes and this and that expense are deducted, it does not even come to 2.5 million won. Can one run a car and live well on 2.5 million won? And yet the people of the world all live on that money. Even so, are we not serving the gospel well?

Many have left, but what will they do out there? One brother bought a used car and rented a house with money his mother gave him without his father knowing. But he has no money to pay the monthly rent, so his family has to give him money again, and a car is hard to keep running if there is no work. I am not lying. You are not one- or two-year-old children, are you? The point of what I am saying is not that you lack ability. It is that living for others is not easy. It is that doing everything I have to do and also living for others is not easy.

Another brother took out thirty million won in credit card debt, bought a car, and then had an accident. Since the accident was his own fault, as he patched things up here and there, twenty-five million won flew away, and that debt grew on his credit cards and has now exceeded seventy million won. It is said that he does not even know how much his debt is. It is because he has not one or two credit cards but many. Now he earns 1.4

million won doing transport work driving a truck. If he pays his rent, eats, and pays his taxes with 1.4 million won, will anything be left? It is not enough even for living alone.

It is not that I have some other intention in telling these stories. It is that life is in fact like that. Because people do not know, they live only for themselves and think that if they earn and live on their own, they will live well, but the world is not that easy. Dear fellow believers, earning 1.4 million won, earning 2.5 million won, earning five million won is not such an easy thing when you go out into the world. Our Church, too, has a salaried employee at five million won, but do you know how much work that person does? He is faithful to the death for fear of being fired.

A life lived for others is a truly wise life

It is said that the person who gave the most to the Salvation Army charity kettle this year gave thirty million won. It is a story that came out in the news. It is said that an elderly man put in an envelope, said that there were thirty million won in it, and walked on. Because his appearance was shabby, the Salvation Army took it as a joke, but after he had gone on, when they looked, there were three checks of ten million won each. It is said that he was the one who gave the most among those who gave at one time this year. Are we less than that man? We are living for the gospel every day. It is that we are living for others.

Dear fellow believers, even living only for oneself is hard, but living for others is an extremely hard thing. We are already those who enjoy the blessing of being able to live for others. It is that we are living for others without worrying about food, clothing, shelter, and a job. It is good if the young men and

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women marry among those whose hearts agree, among people of faith, live for the gospel, and live within this.

The father of one pastor used to worry in the past, but now he is extremely pleased. Why is that? It is that as a parent he does not need to provide anything. From a parent's standpoint, who could be as happy as a parent who has our ministers as their children? They live well according to the will of God, do not do bad things, do not worry about the problems of food, clothing, and shelter, and even as they live, they live for others. Dear fellow believers, where is there anything better than that?

Even if one tries living for oneself, one cannot properly live for oneself even in one's whole lifetime. There is no leeway. There are many people who would end up beggars right away if they did not work for just one month. Do not those who work at jobs lose their livelihood at once? The working life of the world is like that. Try not earning money for a month. It does not end with not earning money. Do you not have to spend money? If one does not work at a job, one spends even more money. One immediately becomes a debtor.

It is not that you and I are people of no worth. It is that when we reckon up your life and mine, the conclusion is like that. To earn five million won, one has to hang one's life on it. But we do not have to hang our lives on it, and living united with the Church, we do not have to worry about the problems of food, clothing, and shelter. And what about the fruit? It is that living for many people is good.

In today's text the Lord said that the person who lives wisely in this reality is shrewd. But if you and I today, who are the people of God, live for others, we are wiser. Dear fellow believers, living for others is the wisdom of living life. It is living rightly. Dear fellow believers, you must reckon it up well. If one misunderstands and fails to understand life rightly, life is such

that one lives wearily as a beggar one's whole life and goes without any reward.

Dear fellow believers, who knows? Even though the people of the world do not recognize us now, He said that not only I, who have preached the gospel to many places in the world, but you, too, will shine like the sun in heaven. It is that the Lord says we will shine like the sun. It is that the work you and I do is that precious.

Do not worry, but take on the challenge by faith

Dear fellow believers, God gives many physical blessings as well. Never worry. In fact, though it has been hard for us, too, as we have served the gospel until now, it is that we live our physical lives quite as well as the people living in the world. I am doing this work with that purpose. Do not worry and do not be intimidated. The world is being ruined, and yet the world looks splendid. Originally, when something is being ruined, it looks all the more splendid.

Dear fellow believers, do you know how many people take their own lives and how many people turn into robbers? It is said that a certain person, saying that his heart had been wounded, came out with a weapon and harmed people who had nothing to do with him, so that one person died and four people were hospitalized. The world is unstable now. There is no knowing what kind of world it will become before long. Where is the guarantee that the future will become brighter? When I preached on the Book of Revelation at length long ago, did I not tell you that such a world would come in the future? Then is that thing far off? Is it not coming soon?

We have been truly faithful to God in our own way, and God

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has brought forth much fruit for us, so we give thanks. We give thanks so much. Dear fellow believers, even when there are times when your hearts are shaken, I hope that you will carry it out well.

He said that the latter is better than the former. The Lord said that the wine brought out later tasted better than the wine brought out first. We are like that, too. As time goes on, we must become people who are united with the Lord and live by faith. It does not matter how we have done until now. I just want to live until the day the Lord comes. I want to live preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with you. Are we not all like that? Our hearts are full. Ministers who have the same heart as I will arise on an enormous scale from now on.

Until now we have done our utmost in faithfulness to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and God has brought forth much fruit for us, so we give thanks. We give thanks so much. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Make friends by unrighteous mammon

< Luke 16:1-13 >

"He also said to His disciples: 'There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward." 'Then the steward said within himself, "What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." 'So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And he said, "A hundred measures of oil." So he said to him, "Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty." Then he said to another, "And how much do you owe?" So he said, "A hundred measures of wheat." And he said to him, "Take your bill, and write eighty." So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. 'And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful

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in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? 'No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.'"

Let us divide the light and the darkness in our lives

Let us think once about how much of a life of light we ourselves are living, and how much of a life of darkness we are living. If we divide the light and the darkness in our lives, we can know how lacking we are. There is much to be corrected before God, and there are truly many parts that are lacking.

But we entrust that lacking to the Lord. The Lord has saved us and has even given us the opportunity to serve the Lord. Though we cannot live a life that is wholly of light, like Jesus or like the apostle Paul, and though we have many lacking parts, the question is how faithful we are within the portion of grace and faith God has given. We have the heart that we must truly be faithful, at least as much as the portion God has given.

The steward who was wasting his master's goods

In today's text Jesus speaks by giving one parable. A certain rich man had a steward, and it was heard by the master that he was wasting his master's goods. The master called him and said, *"What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward."*

Just as we are lacking, this steward, too, was a truly lacking

person. The Lord has given us time and has given us all the gifts needed for spirit and body, but we, too, are lacking in all those parts. The master called this man and said that he could now no longer continue in the office. He came to be driven out.

When the news that he was wasting his master's wealth reached his master's ears and he came to be driven out, this man begins to scheme. The master will surely send me out, and once I am driven out, I must go in among people and live. Then how will I secure a place to stay among those people? That is what he thought. So he called together all those who owed his master.

And then he reckoned with them. When he asked, how much do you owe our master, one said a hundred measures of oil. Then he told him to write fifty on the bill quickly. He said, I will alter it while I am in this position, so write it quickly. And when he asked another, how much do you owe, he said a hundred measures of wheat. Then he told him to take his bill and write eighty. In that way he cut down all their debts.

Then for whom did he do this? Since he was going to be driven out by his master anyway, he did it all for himself. He was going to be driven out and go in among people, so his hidden calculation was that if he cut down the debts of those many people who owed his master while he was still handling the office, would they not later receive him?

The Lord did not say that his conduct was right

But our Lord called this man an unjust steward. For a person entrusted with the storehouse and entrusted with the office to alter the bills and write fifty and write eighty is by no means a right thing. Jesus, too, said that it was not right.

Then why did the Lord tell this story? He is asking the people

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of God. He is asking, as you live on this earth, to what will you be faithful—will you be faithful to God, or will you be faithful to this world, which will drive you out in the end?

The people of this world, that is, the people who have not yet been saved, are extremely faithful to this world. Why is that? It is because this world is the place where they will live. That is why He says that the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light.

To what must we be faithful?

Then what about us, who have received the remission of sins? To what must we be faithful? Our Lord said to make friends by unrighteous mammon.

This world has already erased those who have received the remission of sins from its own family register. It has already driven them out. We are not the people of the world. Those who have not received the remission of sins do not welcome us. Then to what should we be faithful? Though our bodies live in this world, it is wise to be faithful to God.

While telling us this story of the unjust steward, the Lord is telling us clearly to what we should be faithful.

Then in what way should we be faithful? When we hold our hearts and thoughts up before God, they are not so whole. There are spiritual parts, but there are truly many parts that are not spiritual. If we were to reckon up that lacking one by one, we would have nothing to say before God and no face to show.

If so, to be faithful, with the time and the wealth the Lord has given us and all these things He has permitted in this world, for the kingdom of God, where we will go and live in the future, is precisely to be faithful for our own sakes.

This world is not our homeland. It is not the homeland where we will live. Those who are born again will be transformed into glorious bodies by the God of power and will live forever with the Lord in the kingdom of our Lord in the future. We do not live in this world forever.

Then, with all the gifts God has given us who live on this earth, to what should we be faithful? For us there is no way but to be faithful. What does the master want from the one entrusted with the storehouse, the one entrusted with the office? It is not to embezzle the goods but to manage them well and faithfully. And managing them faithfully is, in the end, the way that benefits that person himself.

Why does a person work at a job? People call it faithfulness, but in fact they do it for themselves. If so, where are we people going to live? We go and live in the kingdom of heaven.

So, as we live on this earth, whom should we serve through all the wealth, time, thoughts, hearts, and circumstances God has permitted? We must be faithful before the Lord. What is the wisest way of living for us who are born again and are managing the things of this world, entrusted to us for a while? It is to be faithful to the kingdom of God. It is to be faithful for the kingdom where we will go and live in the future and for the people of that kingdom.

Who rewrote our bill of debt?

But here there is something we must be sure to point out. That steward rewrote other people's bills with his own hand. Then what was it like for us? Before us, too, lay a bill that there was no way to repay. It is the bill of sin. The wages of sin is death, so it was a debt that we could not reduce by even a penny

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though we repaid it our whole lives.

It was not we who rewrote that bill with our own hands. The Lord Jesus came to the Jordan River and, by receiving the baptism John gave, took over that debt once and for all. That was precisely the ministry of John the Baptist. It was the work of passing all the sins of this earth on to Jesus. The debt that did not decrease by even a penny though we repaid it our whole lives was passed on to Him in its entirety by that one baptism.

And bearing those sins, He went up to Golgotha, was nailed to the Cross, and paid our debt in full, down to the last penny. He said, It is finished, and breathed His last. And on the third day He rose again from the dead. That resurrection is precisely the eternal evidence that our debt has been fully paid.

Therefore, what is written on our bill is not that a little has been cut off. It is written that it has all been repaid. This salvation is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are those who were bought at a price, and those who have not a single thing left to repay. Then what would be left for us? There is only one thing: to be faithful to Him who bought us.

"Make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon"

What would the word *"make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon"* mean? The things of this world are all unrighteous anyway and all stained with sin. What does He tell us to do with that wealth? He tells us to make friends. He said, *"That when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home."*

If we use what the Lord has given us in this world for the work of preaching the gospel, there is no greater faithfulness

than that before the Lord. What is required of those who have been entrusted is faithfulness. We must know, by weighing the light and the darkness well, what way of living our whole lives is wise.

What is that wise way? The wise life is to live not for this world but for God and for the kingdom of God. If we are faithful to this world and pile up all that we have in this world, does what we have piled up follow us when we go to that kingdom? It does not follow us.

But if we use what God has permitted on this earth for the gospel, when we have gone to that kingdom, our Lord says, *"Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things."* The Lord repays us.

Where will we go and live? We go and live in the kingdom of heaven. In the future the Lord will transform this weak body into a glorious body and enable us to enter and live in the kingdom of God. We have already received the remission of sins and are now living within that salvation.

To such people as us the Lord has entrusted one precious thing. What has He entrusted? It is the work of serving the gospel. To what must we be faithful? Must we be faithful for this earth, must we be faithful for this world? Or must we be faithful for the kingdom of God?

Would it not be the wise life to please the King of that kingdom, for the kingdom where one will enter and live in the future, by preaching the gospel to many people on this earth? I know that we must think deeply about what way of living our whole lives is wise.

We have received the remission of sins. Therefore, we are the people of God. The Bible calls us citizens of heaven and the saints of the Most High. We are the people of the kingdom of

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heaven. Then what should we live for? To be faithful for one's own kingdom one's whole life is the life of a wise person.

The word we have read today is precisely that word. The Lord goes on to say that no servant can serve two masters. He said that either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other, so you cannot serve God and mammon.

This word is not a word telling us to watch which way the wind blows and weigh things this way and that. It is a word telling us to live wisely while we live in this world. What is living wisely? He is saying that pleasing the King of the kingdom where we will enter and live in the future—precisely that life—is the wise life.

What is stored up on this earth and what is stored up in that kingdom

Dear fellow believers, do you believe? What should you live your whole life for? What should I live my whole life for? No matter how much one invests in this world, no matter how many good deeds one does, and no matter how many pitiful people one helps, if those people do not receive the remission of sins, they all end up going to hell. God does not acknowledge that work in the least.

Think about what is stored up on this earth. Suppose a certain person, as he died, gave the 500 billion won he had saved his whole life to a certain university as a scholarship fund, asking them to teach students who want to study but are in difficult circumstances, and then died. That work becomes being faithful for this world. Do you understand what I mean? It is a work that has nothing at all to do with God.

But if one gives not 500 billion won but even a very small thing—500 won—for the kingdom of God, for the expansion of that kingdom, which God desires; that is, if one uses it not as merit for the world but out of love for the expansion of the kingdom of God, the Lord commends that person. He says that person lived wisely and that He will entrust him with many things.

It is a story that the people of the world cannot understand. But just as that steward was shrewd and was commended, we, too, having received the remission of sins, must live wisely before God. It is to be faithful for the kingdom where one will go and live, and for the King of that kingdom. Even if we are not understood in the world, we must live wisely. The person who lives a wise life receives a clear reward in the kingdom where he will live in the future.

Just because one has earned money, one must not use it only for oneself. The Lord saved us and tells us to use our wealth wisely for preaching the gospel. We must live faithfully with wealth and with the wisdom of the word. And we must know how to use that wealth appropriately for the progress of the gospel.

Once time has passed, it cannot be turned back

It is not right if, because one has time and leisure, one has one's heart completely captured by the world and does one's best in chasing after the world. The person who preaches the gospel is a messenger of God and one who conveys the word. One must not have one's heart captured by the world just because one earns money, is healthy, and has time. One must do the work of saving souls and live a life faithful before God.

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It is because one tries to live only for oneself that the ten thousand won used for the gospel feels as precious as a million won or ten million won. But to devote oneself for that kingdom is a great glory that is connected to that kingdom. Do not be in debt to the world. What I hope for from you is only that you do your utmost in faithfulness.

To the life that is faithful, not for oneself but for souls, according to the will of God, a reward surely comes back. Once time has passed, it cannot be turned back. We must live each day wisely.

The life that is faithful to God is the life that is acknowledged in heaven. God delights in the one who is faithful in His work. That life is neither a life for oneself nor a life for the earth. It is a life for heaven and for souls. That is, it is using our bodies, which have received the grace of the remission of sins, for the Lord. The Lord surely repays us.

That is why He said to make friends by our wealth, that is, by unrighteous mammon. I hope that you will become those who make friends by your wealth, and who truly and preciously use the material things of this world and your bodies, time, and hearts all for the gospel. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Be faithful before God

< Luke 16:1-13 >

"He also said to His disciples: 'There was a certain rich man who had a steward, and an accusation was brought to him that this man was wasting his goods. So he called him and said to him, "What is this I hear about you? Give an account of your stewardship, for you can no longer be steward." 'Then the steward said within himself, "What shall I do? For my master is taking the stewardship away from me. I cannot dig; I am ashamed to beg. I have resolved what to do, that when I am put out of the stewardship, they may receive me into their houses." 'So he called every one of his master's debtors to him, and said to the first, "How much do you owe my master?" And he said, "A hundred measures of oil." So he said to him, "Take your bill, and sit down quickly and write fifty." Then he said to another, "And how much do you owe?" So he said, "A hundred measures of wheat." And he said to him, "Take your bill, and write eighty." So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. 'And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is

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another man's, who will give you what is your own? 'No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.'"

The steward who wasted his master's goods

The text we have read together today begins with the story of a certain rich man and the steward of his house. A certain rich man had a steward, and the word that he was wasting his master's goods reached the ears of his master.

Think once about the feelings of the master. He had entrusted his property and had it managed, but that property was leaking out to the wrong places. The word came to him that it was all being poured out on useless things and made to disappear. Should he leave this man as he was? After deep deliberation, the master finally made up his mind that he must withdraw that office.

But the steward, who sensed what was coming, makes a move in advance. He thinks within himself, where will I go if I am driven out of here? I have no strength to dig, and I am ashamed to beg. So he decided to make in advance people who would receive him after he was driven out.

He called in every one of those who owed his master. He had the one who owed a hundred measures of oil alter his bill and write fifty, and had the one who owed a hundred measures of wheat write eighty. He cut down what was not his but his master's, and bought people's hearts.

What the Lord commended was not that man's conduct

The text records that the master commended this unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. But the Lord by no means commended this man's conduct as having been done well. The Bible clearly calls him an unjust steward.

What the Lord pointed out was not his honesty but his hidden calculation. The people of the world use all their wits, like that steward, for their own future. They think that it is enough if only they themselves live well, if only their own affairs go well, and if only it benefits them. They think with such a heart and move with such a heart.

Then what is the problem? The Lord said that the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. He is asking whether we, the sons of light, are pouring out for the kingdom of God the zeal that the people of the world pour out for their own future. We must not be like that steward.

The meaning of the word *"make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon"*

Pointing out this passage and going on, the Lord says to make friends by unrighteous mammon and deals again with the problem of wealth. Wealth itself is not always only a good thing. Money is something to be used when it is truly needed; a person does not become happy just because he has much money.

The phrase unrighteous mammon means wealth that is mainly used for bad things. He tells us to make friends by that wealth. It is the word that you, too, while you live on this earth, should use with all your might the material things I have

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permitted you for the work of preaching the gospel. He says that when you use material things for the gospel, you, too, are acting truly wisely, like those people of the world.

But a stern word follows right after. He said that he who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much, and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. He asks, if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? It is the word that He will not entrust them.

One cannot serve God and mammon

And the Lord, saying that no servant can serve two masters, finally drives the nail home. He said, *"You cannot serve God and mammon."* It is that we must choose one of the two.

He is dividing it in two and asking: Will you serve God, or will you serve yourself? Will you do the work of God with the material things you have, or will you do your own work? Will you seek the benefit of God with everything entrusted to you, or will you seek your own benefit?

Let us bring this word into our lives and think about it concretely. Suppose that you and I are workers who purchase the Church's goods and are in charge of the accounting. To put it more simply, think of yourself as a person engaged in the work of purchasing goods.

What would you do when ordering goods? One person pays the full price the seller asks and does not cut a single penny. And as that seller installs the goods, he slips some money separately into the back pocket of the person who placed the order.

Another person, since it is not his own money but the Church's money, cuts the price as far as it can be cut, buys the

goods, and brings them into the Church. I am giving a very simple example. Which side is right? Without a doubt, the latter person is right.

Even though they know what is right, some people do not do so. The word in the text that the rumor was heard that the steward was wasting his master's goods is similar precisely to this kind of thing.

Even when entrusted with the same work, there are two kinds of people

Even when buying a single item while doing the work of God, there is the person who cuts the price as far as it can be cut and supplies it where the Church needs it. That person is a truly faithful worker before God.

But there is the person who, though the price could be cut, pays whatever is asked and fills his own pocket in return. Such a thing is very unjust. Dear fellow believers, is it something that can happen, or something that cannot? It is something that can very well happen.

The text tells us silently that among the people of God on this earth there are two kinds of people. And such things are things we often see with our own eyes, too.

Would the Church gain benefit through such a person? Rather, it loses much. The more authority is given to such a person, the more the Church loses. Such a person must be made to take his hands off that work, and it must be entrusted to someone else. Making him take his hands off it is also the way for that person to live.

The person entrusted with money must be truly faithful. When a person has not been entrusted with money, it is nothing.

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He says, of course one should handle it cleanly, should one not? But once he actually comes to manage money, a person changes. Most people waver here.

Therefore, the person who is clean with money is clean in everything. The person who is not clean with money is not clean in anything. That is how it is. What kind of people should we become? We must become people who seek the benefit of the kingdom of God in whatever situation. Dear fellow believers, do you agree?

What we have been entrusted with was not originally ours

But here there is something we must be sure to point out. A steward is not originally a person who manages his own things. He is a person entrusted with managing what belongs to his master. If so, whose were this life and this body and these material things that we now hold in our hands originally?

They were not originally ours. We were those who were born in sin, were to live in sin, and were to end in sin. Our lives were already mortgaged to death. The Lord paid the price and bought such people as us.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the Lord Jesus received the sins of the whole world passed on to His own body. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, Jesus received all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body once and for all.

And bearing those sins, He was nailed to the Cross and died shedding His blood. The wages of sin is death, so He Himself paid the price of those sins in full. And on the Cross He said, It is finished, and died, and on the third day He rose again from the

dead and confirmed forever that our salvation is true.

Precisely this salvation is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which He received our sins passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the Cross, and made us the living by His resurrection—has rescued us from sin. We are those who were bought at a price. Therefore, everything we have is not ours but belongs to the Lord, who bought us.

Precisely here is the reason why we are stewards. What would that very least thing be, of which He said that he who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much? It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the material things, and the work of each day that the Lord has entrusted to us. What is required of those who have been entrusted is faithfulness.

Work done with one's heart in it and work done haphazardly are different

If only we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we obtain salvation and go to heaven, and we are united with the body of the Lord and receive blessing. This salvation is already laid as the foundation. But what we actually live is the life of each day. It is a continuous life in which, when today passes, tomorrow follows again.

The time one can work during a day is in fact not so long. Even if one strives day and night, once the time for eating, the time for sleeping, and the time for washing and grooming are subtracted, the time for working does not amount to much. But if one does not put one's heart into that short time and does not concentrate, there is nothing to reap.

Therefore, whatever work you do for God, do it with all your

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heart. He said that he who is faithful in small things is faithful in great things as well.

What is called work is not only doing work by going out to the site and moving one's body. One works even while sleeping. Before going to bed, one pictures in advance by what method one will do tomorrow's work and how one will finish it. A truly faithful person first goes through that whole process once in his head.

And then, when he arrives at the site, he is not flustered even when the work comes before his eyes. From the moment he sits down, he works through it one thing at a time, following what he thought out in advance. He is a person who does his work with preparation.

The way of working differs greatly from that of the person who just does it haphazardly without preparation. Even though it may seem that the same work is done in the same place, the result becomes completely different depending on the attitude with which it is done. Is that not so? You, too, will know that when you think much about accomplishing some work and then set about that work, the result is different.

But if one sits down with the heart that all one has to do is work and does it haphazardly, one fails much and forgets much as well. The person who thinks with all his heart for the Lord in order to accomplish one piece of work, pours even more devotion into it, and accomplishes the work of God—such a person is indeed a truly faithful worker. The Bible is speaking to us of precisely that faithfulness.

We must understand the Bible like this. We must not just pass over the meaning of the text with, 'Ah, so this is what it means.' The people of the world all live only for themselves and then go. But we, after being saved, live for the Lord and then go.

God is also for the one who is for God

It is different from just living haphazardly and then going. A little while ago I gave one example with the work of purchasing goods, but when one considers how to buy more cheaply and how to choose what costs less to maintain, the result differs greatly. Even with the same goods, there are those that cause loss the longer they are used and those that save the more they are used.

When we consider each thing like this and choose what is really beneficial to the Church, and when, entrusted with some work, we regard that work as truly the work of God and do it putting in all our heart, all our devotion, and all the strength we have, our Lord delegates all that is His to that person. He entrusts it. He entrusts it to such a person and has him work, and He delights in accomplishing His will through such a person. Such a person is called a faithful one.

But what happens when one works having met a person who is not like that? If it works out, fine; if not, so be it. The person who seeks his own benefit and the benefit of his own flesh while doing the work of God is greatly mistaken.

When we respect and love God, serve Him with all our strength, and work so as to benefit the work of God, God repays us in another way. It is not that the people of the world slip money into our back pockets, but that God is with us in our thoughts, our circumstances, and everything of ours, and gives us blessing. It is just like the way Joseph received blessing.

We must know this fact. God's blessing us is permanent. He loves us unchangingly and blesses us unchangingly. But a person returns benefit only when there is benefit to himself. In one sense he is on someone else's side, and in another sense he is a betrayer.

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In Proverbs it says that the lazy man is like smoke to the eyes to those who send him. Dear fellow believers, how much does it hurt when even one speck gets into your eye? You cannot open your eye, so you rub it and rub it again. It is that a lazy worker is like that to his master.

If we lack the ability and cannot do it well, we can learn and do it. If we think it through step by step, we can do it. And if we have taken on too much, we must divide the work. Rather than holding on to many things and failing to do even one of them wholly, it is actually doing better to divide the work, reduce one's own share, and carry out the entrusted work steadily. Whatever it is, one must think it through well and do it. One must not just work unconditionally.

Could it be right to seek one's own benefit while doing the work of God? You and I are not such people. But we can become such people. Perhaps we are already stained little by little. It is a very slight difference. While there is the person who works with the heart that it is enough if only the work of God goes well, there is also the person who works with the heart that he does it because he cannot help it, since he is told to. The attitude of our hearts must change.

The opportunity to receive blessing is the same for all of us

When we are for God, God also blesses us. I have experienced that blessing more times than I can count. At times, while working, there were several moments when I thought, I am going to go like this, I cannot do any more now, I will just finish this one work and next time I will have to go. Even so, my heart was at peace. It was so even when my body was completely

exhausted and seemed about to collapse.

But when I think that now it is the end, God heals me again. Somehow, whether by sending a person or by sending medicine, He sets my body up again. Even when I can only pray, saying that now I have used everything for the Lord and not a single penny remains, God sends again, through another way, what I had not even imagined. I am still continually experiencing such things now.

If I sum up in one word what I am telling you at this hour today, it is that we should become those who are faithful before God. Whether people recognize us or not, if we are sincere and faithful before God, are united by faith, and do our utmost with devotion and strength, God takes responsibility and blesses us. It is that we should know that fact and believe it. Do you understand?

Whether anyone sees or not, if we consider whether doing this work in this way would benefit the Church, and if it does benefit it, would we not be glad for that one thing?

But there are people who do not consider the benefit of the Church. There is no such person here now, but looking back after many years had passed, I cannot tell how much the many people who left me deceived me. You will know how hard I strove to make the gospel known.

But there are people who, even while doing the work of serving the gospel, do it for their own benefit. Would God delegate the work of God to such a person? Would He entrust it to the person who works faithfully, or would He entrust it to the person who seeks only the benefit of his own flesh? He does not entrust it.

It is not that I am excluded from this just because I preach to you. I am exactly the same. It is whether, as I live this one day today, I put my heart into it for God or did not. If I just did it

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without putting my heart into it, it is nothing. If I did it putting my heart into it for the benefit of God, it is rewarding.

We must have wisdom, and we must have a sense of reward as well. Are we not like that? Knowing the word of the Bible does not make everything all right. What matters is to apply the word of God to our lives and live practicing it by faith.

No matter how much one has been saved, what benefit is there if one knows by faith what is right in the word of God and yet does not practice it oneself? What benefit would there be in reading and believing the word?

Let us know, believe, and practice the word. When we practice it, because we live as God delights, we can pray boldly and come to have the faith that God receives our prayers. Dear fellow believers, faith grows when we live as God wants. It does not grow by itself just because one reads the word much. It grows when one experiences the word.

Let us become those who are faithful before God

Therefore, from whom one learned is truly important. If one is under a person who seeks his own benefit, one comes to resemble that person without even knowing it. But when one tries working together with a person who seeks the benefit of God, one comes to see and learn that person's heart without even knowing it.

Let us become people who seek the benefit of God, starting with me and starting with you. Then God also becomes the God who is for us. Is that right, or is it not? It is very fitting. It is the word that if we are not for God, God is not for us either.

Did the Lord not say so? He said that if you say that you do not know Me even after you have been saved, I also will say

before My angels that I do not know you. This word is a word the Lord Himself spoke.

There are people on this earth who pretend to be shrewd and seek only their own benefit. Can one say that one knows God while not seeking the benefit of God? No. God looks at the center of the heart. God does not show partiality by outward appearance.

Because He looks at the center of the heart, if a person's heart is right before God, that person is indeed the one who should be most respected. So when I look at the saints and the workers, if I see someone treating the workers carelessly or discriminating among them, my heart aches, thinking that if he goes on with that attitude, something terrible will happen. As far as I can, I strive to treat everyone equally. It is because I, too, am the same kind of person before God.

The opportunity to be blessed before God has been given to us equally. It is not something only a certain person has specially. If our hearts are right before God, if our faith is right before God, and if our lives are right before God, we can receive the blessing of God as much as we like, and our faith can grow as much as we like. God has given such an equal opportunity to you and me alike.

Therefore, all we have to do is live rightly before God, even starting from now. Dear fellow believers, there is no reason to worry about the future. Of course there are plenty of personal shortcomings. I am not speaking of that lacking. The person who, when doing the work of God, puts his heart into it for God and does it for the benefit of God is loved. Even if he has human shortcomings, he is loved.

But the person who does not have such a heart is not loved, nor does he himself love God. He keeps drifting further away. The gap grows wider and wider. I hope that you will think for

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yourselves whether, even though you have believed in the gospel, you might be such a person, or whether you might be heading toward becoming such a person.

It is simple. If we respect God, God also respects us. If we despise God, God also despises us. On whom does blessing depend? It depends precisely on ourselves.

On what does the blessing of God depend? Does it depend on our deeds? Before deeds comes the attitude of the heart. If the heart is right, the deeds gradually follow. If one puts forward only deeds while the heart has grown distant from God, no matter how well one does, it is only hypocrisy. The heart must come first. Then the life follows of its own accord. It cannot help but follow. Do you understand? Do you believe?

These days it is hard for the brothers at our workplace even to see one another's faces. On one side the work is piled up, and on the other side there is still some leeway. As the saying goes, even a grasshopper has only one season, so we must earn when we can earn—how fortunate it is! Others have no work, but our work is backed up, so we are putting people off, asking them to wait a little. One team has a month's work backed up, and since estimates keep coming in, there is even work we can do for them only half a year from now.

Then would it be good just to get the work done quickly and earn a lot of money? We must not hurry like that. We must do it steadily, one thing at a time. We must also take care not to damage our bodies too much. We must earn money and also keep attending to the gospel, do things steadily, accomplish the will of God, and live well ourselves as well.

We will work until the day we go before the Lord, and if we push ourselves unreasonably, the body is soon ruined. When urgent work comes up, we can stay up all night. But let us live always keeping a good balance so that our bodies are not

damaged, and go when the Lord calls us, and in that way let us become those who give much glory to God.

I want God to give you blessing. I will close the message here. Let us have a time of prayer, engraving again on our hearts the word we heard today and asking Him to give us a right heart and faith so that we may become people in whom God delights. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The one who has the heart of a true servant

< Luke 16:8-13 >

"So the master commended the unjust steward because he had dealt shrewdly. For the sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light. 'And I say to you, make friends for yourselves by unrighteous mammon, that when you fail, they may receive you into an everlasting home. He who is faithful in what is least is faithful also in much; and he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. Therefore if you have not been faithful in the unrighteous mammon, who will commit to your trust the true riches? And if you have not been faithful in what is another man's, who will give you what is your own? 'No servant can serve two masters; for either he will hate the one and love the other, or else he will be loyal to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve God and mammon.'"

We can know how great a difference there is between seeing with the eyes of the world and the laws of the world, and seeing, speaking, believing, and acting within the word of the truth of God. Until now, Satan the Devil has ruled the world and made people see and act with the eyes of the world. But since Jesus Christ came to this earth and the Church of God came into being, truth and life and salvation and love and peace have ruled this earth. Now we are the people who carry that gospel of the water

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and the Spirit out to the people of the world.

Let us ask, seek, and knock for the preaching of the gospel

For the gospel to be preached throughout the whole world, much material wealth is needed, and God said to ask, to seek, and to knock. How can we gather much material wealth? Our Lord said, look at the birds that fly in the air; they have no storehouse and store nothing up, and yet does God not feed them every day?

I believe that God enables us to make a living and gives us material wealth so that we may serve the gospel. But I do not think that He brings this food to us and tells us to eat it while we sit still. I believe that He blesses that work only when we pray and seek and knock by faith. I believe that our Lord has made us do self-supporting mission work.

We are very fortunate. The thought comes to me that if we had not done self-supporting mission work, could the gospel have been preached this much and been kept until now? When the workers have nothing to eat, could we ask a soul who comes in whether he has sin or not? How could we keep speaking of such things steadily? As we believe and boldly preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took all the sin of the world upon Himself by receiving baptism from John and paid the price of those sins on the Cross—God has saved many souls and has made every saved soul, as wheat, a precious child of God and one of the people of God.

I give thanks. I am thankful that He has enabled us to serve the gospel until now, and I am thankful that He will enable us to serve the gospel even more from now on. Because God will give

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material wealth by some means or other, we will think and pray and seek. This world belongs to the Lord, and I believe that if we truly seek and ask and knock for the Lord, God gives. If we ask for the advancement of our own future, He would not give, but if we truly ask for the gospel, I believe He will give.

The Bible says that you do not have because you do not ask, and that you ask and do not receive because you ask amiss, in order to spend it on your lusts. It also says, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)*. I believe that if we truly ask for material wealth for the preaching of the gospel of God, ask for wisdom, ask for understanding, and ask for blessing, God surely gives.

Since we have eaten and lived well until now, there is nothing more I want. I believe that God will give as is fitting for preaching the gospel. I hope that you, too, will pray before God, asking Him to give. Then I believe that God will give through whomever and by whatever method.

God said that He had hidden seven thousand of His people who had not yet bowed the knee to Baal. I believe that God gives material wealth through whomever it may be. I know that it has only been because we did not seek, did not ask, and did not feel the need. Now we feel the need greatly. We only look to God; we have no heart to look only to you or to place our hopes in the princes of this world.

The meaning of His saying that the sons of this world are more shrewd

Today I would like to share the word about the servant of righteousness. If we look at the text, the part where the steward,

that is, the servant of a certain house, works shrewdly is recorded. God is saying to us, will you live as servants of righteousness, or will you live as servants of men?

He said that the people who are in this world are shrewd. He said that they conduct themselves more shrewdly than the people of God. A certain man was working at a company, and being lacking in various ways, he came to be in a position to be driven out. Thinking about what he should do before being driven out, he called the people who owed this company and wrote false documents for them. He forged the documents. He did the work of lowering their debts. He prepared a way of escape, so that when he was driven out of this company he could go into those people's houses. He conducted himself shrewdly.

So our Lord said of such a person, *"The sons of this world are more shrewd in their generation than the sons of light" (Luke 16:8)*. The people of this world attach themselves here and attach themselves there in order to live well. They are extremely shrewd.

In that way, the people who live in this world know well and conduct themselves accordingly, until they finish their lives, as to whom they should attach themselves in order to live well and for whom they should work in order to live well. That is why He said that in their own generation the people of the world are more shrewd than the people of God.

One cannot serve two masters

Speaking of wealth, God said to serve the gospel with wealth. He said that he who is unjust in what is least is unjust also in much. He said, if you are not faithful in your master's wealth, what would the Lord entrust to you? And He said that no servant

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can serve two masters. He spoke of whether you will live for yourself or live for your Master, and drew the conclusion.

As you and I live on this earth, there cannot be two masters. We cannot make both the world our master and God our master. We must choose one of the two. We must choose whether we will live serving our Lord as our Master, or live in the world serving the world as our master.

But there is something we must think about before we make any choice. It is really how I will live, what way of living is wise, and what way of living is right. We must think about any matter, attaching a question mark to it.

We must first decide whether, having lived until now, it is wise and right to keep living this way from now on, or whether we must change our way of life and everything, or whether it is all right to live as we are. Therefore, even after being born again, we must first think about and decide whether we should live by the method we have lived by until now, or whether we should change the wrong method and live. If we fail to think about this part and fail to make a right judgment, we cannot live rightly. If we just happen to live by the method we have been living by and keep living in that way, it is different from the will of the Lord.

The master of old and the Master of now are different. The Master we have newly met also demands different things. But if we live just as we did in the old days, it is a life that does not fit the will the Lord wants, and we must know that such a life is a loss. It is that we must think about how we should live so that it is not vain, so that we do not suffer loss, and so that we gain profit, and must make a right judgment.

If we try to live for the Lord, that life is a right life and a righteous life. Was the life we have lived until now a right life, or was it a life lived only for ourselves? If we change our way and live looking to the Lord, will it become a life that can leave

much behind, or is it all right to live unchanged as we are? It is that we must think about it.

The Lord said that if one is going to war with ten thousand against twenty thousand soldiers, one should ask for terms of peace. It is that, regarding the goal of our lives, we must think about which life is more beneficial and which life gains more, draw a conclusion, make a right choice, and live rightly. Only then do we come to live a life without regret.

We must live having done our calculations

Those who live for the Lord live a life that seeks first His kingdom and His righteousness. Such people are people who have done their calculations well. It is that they are not muddled, but calculate the future well and do business that can leave a profit. They decide in that direction, do business, and calculate again at the end. A merchant must do business in the direction that leaves more profit. Such a person is a smart merchant.

In your life and mine, what life is right in the end? When we calculate whether we have lived rightly, we can know for whom, for what master, we should live, and what business we should do and how.

In life the process is important, but the result is important, too. How much do people regret their lives when they grow old? There are many such people. If you stop ten thousand people in this world and ask them, almost all say that they lived wrongly. There are many people who regret that they lived in vain. And they express the hope that if they could live again, they would want to live this way or that way.

You and I have not yet lived our whole lives, but the way you and I must live is clear. It is that if we do not calculate in

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advance, we come to live a life that we regret later. We must calculate in advance and live. When doing business, too, one calculates everything and then does it.

The work of serving this gospel of the water and the Spirit is also a business. Did the Lord not entrust talents, go away, and then come back and settle accounts? The one who received five talents said that he had gained five talents, and the Lord said, well done. The one who received two talents gained two talents. The Lord said, well done. The one who received one talent hid what he had been given in the ground. He came to nothing at all.

Giving our whole lives to God and living for the gospel is the right answer

If one lives without calculating, it is an extremely unhappy life. How much snow fell yesterday? It is said that twenty centimeters fell even in the mountain regions, and that about as much fell in a certain province, too. Plastic greenhouses collapsed, so chickens died and strawberry fields were devastated as well. It is that they did not calculate.

It is said that a certain person, having suffered burns and wanting to live apart from people, came into the mountains, raised chickens, and lived earning good money, but this time much snow fell and the chickens were crushed to death, and he was ruined. And he says that it seems it is his fate to work at a job. If he had known that he would be ruined if that much snow fell, he should have prepared. One must not conclude that it seems to be one's fate to live working at a job. It is that he should have calculated and set up countermeasures.

The people of our country easily fall into fatalism. They fall into fatalism, saying, that is just how I am. They say, it seems

this is fate, but does God fix it for us, saying, live this way, live that way? When snow falls, one should have set up countermeasures by any means so that the plastic greenhouse would not collapse. Would one let one's fate be changed by the snow that fell for two days? It is because they did not calculate.

You and I have been born again, but we must live calculating. If we live without calculating, we become like the person who was ruined while raising chickens or the person who was ruined when his plastic greenhouse collapsed.

For you and me to give our whole lives to God and live for the gospel is the right answer. Then how will we live? We must calculate and move under that calculation. If we live for the gospel, will we become utter beggars, or be unable to live? The answer is clear, but have you calculated how you should live?

Do you say, that is just how I am, I cannot help but be this way? Absolutely not. Whether five years or fifty years of our lives remain, the happiness of the person who has calculated and the person who has not calculated differs as heaven from earth. Happiness and unhappiness, too, differ according to whether one calculates or not.

We are people who have already been born again. Would God let His born-again children go wrong? No. He wants to bless them, and He actually blesses them. If we live by faith and live under calculation for the righteousness of God and His kingdom, God piles up blessings and waits to give them.

But because people live without calculating, they produce such results. We must live thinking and calculating. You and I must think about how we will live. Living for the Lord is settled, and when we think about how we should live so that we, too, receive blessing and give much glory before God, God gives wisdom as well. And when we consult with a minister and say that we want to live our lives in this way, we can find various

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methods and it can go well.

Take on the challenge by faith and prepare your vessels

Dear fellow believers, God gives material wealth for the work of preaching the gospel throughout the whole world. When we calculate, He really gives. How does He give? We must think about that part and pray, praying that God would bless this work. In the end we must do it for the Lord, and we must calculate how much we can leave over. The servants of God are doing self-supporting mission work, and we must calculate, pray, and take on the challenge.

When we look at the ministers, there is one who barely gets by, and there is another who eats abundantly and also has something to offer before the Lord. It is because he works calculating. The person who relies on his circumstances barely gets by. One must set a goal of how much one will earn a month and do it. Preaching the gospel in that region is good, too, but if one does overseas mission work with that money, how many souls would receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached throughout the whole world? The person who lives calculating and the person who lives without calculating are on different levels.

Then there is an enormous difference between the person who calculates how he will live and how he can achieve that goal, prays over that part, and takes on the challenge by faith, and the person who just sets one purpose and lives without calculating. We must calculate, make our purpose clear, and see what we must do and by what method. And we must also take on the challenge by faith.

Even in this age of recession, one can earn much money. There are also many businesses that can go well if one really calculates well and prays. There are people who become rich by doing business and people who are ruined, and it is that the difference is whether one thinks, believes, and takes on the challenge or not. Even the person who is not born again is like that, and the person who is born again is all the more so.

We must pray. That is, asking God to give material wealth to the Church of God. If we say that we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet do not take on the challenge by faith and only do things haphazardly, how could God bless us? God is the God of creation. The person who uses his head lives long. It is that when one thinks much for God, one gains many good results.

When we need money, the Lord gives even more. I believe that when we pray, think, and take on the challenge by faith, He gives even more. In this age there are many people who are forced into early retirement, and those who have worked at jobs do not know how to run a business. They go to work in the morning, do the work assigned to them, come home in the evening, wash, and sleep; they spend a month like that, receive their salary, barely eat and live, and then one day, when they are forced into early retirement, they are at a loss as to what to do. It is because they have not thought creatively.

If you have faith, if you are united with the Church of God, learn faith, and receive guidance, you can become number one in the field you work in.

We need much money. We must start something and take on the challenge, and prepare vessels so that God can bless us. Gaining much with little labor is the logic of economics.

Money does not come down from heaven by itself; He is the God who fills them with material wealth when we prepare the

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vessels. In the Bible, after a son of the prophets died, his wife, according to the word of the servant of God, borrowed all the vessels of the people of the village, set them in her house, and poured out the jar of oil, of which one measure was left, into all those empty vessels, and they were all filled. She sold that oil, paid her debt, and also ate and lived on it her whole life.

We must prepare vessels. It is to decide: my purpose is the preaching of the gospel, but in what position will I do what work and in what part will I work, and how will I make the part entrusted to me beneficial to the kingdom of God; and then to pray, prepare the vessels, and seek the blessing of God. God fills them.

God gives blessing even to the Gentiles, so how much more would He give to us? When we settle accounts in the last days with the eyes of faith, we see that people just like you and me have gathered and truly form a countless multitude.

Now is the time for us to sow seed. If we sow much seed, we gain much. And if we widen the range further, we gain even more. When the harvest season comes around, it comes pouring in from here and there. It is that we shine like the sun in the kingdom of heaven, and on this earth we live as people who benefit many people and are indispensable.

Who would be the people who contribute most to mankind and benefit them most? It is you and I. Other people live for themselves, but we pray for those people and live. It may seem like self-praise, but we are the most beneficial people in this world. We are the true number-one people and the righteous, who have the spirit of benefiting people widely.

How great a contribution do we make to this earth? We keep the traffic rules well, pay our taxes well, and clear every blocked place, so we are truly great people. Is that not so? How much do we labor for the people of the world? Who would pray for the

people of the world and live for the people of the world? There is no one but us. He said that those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake will receive a reward, and that the peacemakers are blessed.

You and I are such people. Would God not send down blessing upon all the work you and I do for the Lord? Do you have the faith that He blesses? If you really have faith, when you take on the challenge by faith, you receive the blessing of God.

The person who has made up his mind and the person who has not

It is to fix the purpose and the method of one's life and the position entrusted to oneself, and to be faithful to the death in that field. Then God blesses us so that we benefit countless people. We must decide clearly.

We must decide clearly: I will board the same boat as the Lord, become one body with the Lord, and work together in the work of expanding the kingdom of the Lord; as a servant of the Lord I will work serving Jesus alone as my Master. Without making up this mind, we cannot look to the blessing of God. We must decide clearly: even though I am lacking, from now on I will live not a life for my flesh but a life of the righteousness of God; I will live for His kingdom. When you and I decide clearly, God is with you and me and blesses us.

Making up one's mind is extremely important. There is a tremendous difference between the person who has made up his mind and lives for the Lord and the person who lives as his circumstances allow. The person who lives for the Lord without having made up his mind is a person who will betray Him someday. But the person who has made up his mind and lives

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for the Lord is a person who will live for the Lord at any time, whether it is hard or good. God helps that person. He holds him up.

The heart is important, and faith is important. Make up your mind and say that your Master is none other than the one Lord. If you fix the Lord as your Master, make up your mind that since you are a servant you will live for your Master, and live seeking His help, then although a servant is a servant, because that Master is so excellent, at times He even clothes you in glory.

But if one does not make up one's mind and now this side becomes one's master and now that side becomes one's master, the Lord regards it thus: this person is not a trustworthy person, so I cannot give to him; if things go too well, he may betray Me and live for something else. One must be a trustworthy person in the eyes of the Master. He wants to give more work to the person who, even if entrusted with five cities or ten cities, can do anything if it is for the Lord. The person who makes Him feel that way is a blessed person. Such a person comes to manage more work, comes to be entrusted with more work, and comes to receive more blessing.

But the Lord regards the person who lives without having made up his mind as unsettling. He says, what would be the use if things went well for you? If things go well for you, you will betray Me and leave more severely than now; you had better live in that place where you are now; even while struggling every day, just do not leave the Church, and live. But when one makes up one's mind, He says, rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; even though you are lacking, because you are on My side, I cannot help but help you and cannot help but support you. The Lord has clearly made up His mind. He has decided that He will be on the side of the person who has set his heart on His side.

What is the heart of a servant?

We are serving the Lord. I am a servant of the Lord. The people of our country regard being a servant of the Lord as if one had risen to a government post, but a servant is a person who works diligently as the Lord tells him. When the master is in a good mood and holds a feast, the servant also attends the feast and eats much delicious food, and when the master is having a hard time, the servant has a hard time together with him. A servant is a person who weeps and laughs together with his master.

When one has the heart of a servant, one comes to make up one's mind: the Lord is my Master; I will live for my Master. Once one has become a servant like that, all the master's work becomes the servant's work. The servant must manage all the Lord's property. And he must work and manage it for the benefit of the master.

A servant who has made up his mind is not weary. Because it is the work he naturally has to do, even if he is tired, his heart is glad. His heart is at ease, thinking, since I have been entrusted with it, I must do this work. All the master's work is his own work. It is the relationship of master and servant, but they are one.

In an old film there is a scene in which the hero comes back after long suffering and finds that the house he lived in has become a ruin. Then the daughter of his old servant appears and leads him along, and he sees that the male servant of that house has been living having lost his legs while serving his master. Because the servant lost his legs while serving him, the hero carries that servant on his back and moves him.

Even though that servant had suffered the pain of losing his legs, did he look at his returned master and resent him, saying,

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my life was ruined because of you? He did not. A servant has the kind of heart in which, when he has suffered for his master, that itself becomes glory, and when his master has returned, he does not put forward what is his, but grieves in his heart that in the old days he served his master but now cannot serve him.

When one becomes a deacon, one is the one who looks after the house. A servant is one who, if he lives, lives for his master, and if he dies, dies for his master; if he is clothed in glory, is clothed for his master, and if he is brought low, is brought low for his master. A servant is one who exists for his master.

Therefore, the mind must be made up. I am a person who lives for the Lord. The Lord's work is my work, the Lord's own glory is my glory, You are my Master, if You are pleased I am pleased, too, and I am a person who lives for You. With such a heart, any work of the Church is good. Because both unpleasant work and good work all come from the Lord, one can rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in everything. That heart, which knows that any work comes from the Lord, is the heart of a servant.

If one is one's own master, one says, why do you make me do this kind of work? Why do you entrust this kind of thing to me and go off somewhere else yourself? When people gather, they have to discuss and have to decide. Discussion is harder than labor.

The person who has made up his mind is the person who works with a willing heart at any work, if it is said to be work for his Master. Such a person is glad whatever work he does. If it is said to be for himself, he would dislike it and be irritated, but if it is said to be for the Lord, he likes it and does it well. It is that if one is one's own king, one distinguishes whether it is good or bad for oneself. But if it is for the Lord, as long as it only benefits the Lord, hard work and easy work are the same. It is

because the purpose is the same.

When we look at the hearts of the person who has become his own king and the person who serves the Lord as his Master, the person who has received the Lord in his heart as his Master is far more peaceful and blessed. He said, *"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* It is to live fitting everything to the will of the Master. One examines whether the Lord would like it and whether it would benefit the Lord, and if it benefits the Master, one does it whatever others may say, and if it harms the Master, one sternly refuses to do it. The position that considers only the Master's benefit is that of a servant.

Let us live as servants who serve only one Master

Have you and I not served this gospel with such a heart until now? We have done it persistently. Was preaching the gospel to 110 countries done for ourselves? If you and I had worked according to our personal desires, we would have been satisfied with the gospel being conveyed to one church abroad.

If one had been the chief of some tribe and merely became a king by founding one nation, how satisfied one would be, and how one would hold a feast! One can be pleased even after doing a small thing. But if it is for the Master, doing a small thing does not satisfy the heart, and since one must do it all, it is that the heart of a servant is unchanging.

The person who has the heart of a servant and the person who is his own master are completely different. The person who is for people and the person who is for God are different. It is the same with pastoral ministry. The person who ministers for God and the person who ministers fitting the circumstances of his

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own church are different. Because the goal is different, the method is also different and the conclusion also comes out different. At first they are similar, but when they meet some problem, they differ.

If one has made God one's Master, when one runs into some situation, even if one has done wrong, one turns back and stands on the Lord's side. Even when things are good, one stands on the Lord's side. When the time comes to make some decision, one stands on the Lord's side. But the person who has not clearly fixed his goal, when he arrives squarely at some problem, stands on his own side.

That is why being a servant is extremely important, and the center of the heart is extremely important. The person who has made up his mind, saying, I will give up my own life and live for the Lord; the Lord is so precious and the gospel is so precious, and it is a work that benefits all people, so it is a work worth doing; therefore I will live for this Lord and do the Lord's work—such a person is regarded with favor before God. God cannot help but love such a person.

You and I must become true servants. All of us must become true servants. The servants of God are not so many. True servants are needed. If you and I are servants of Jesus Christ, if we make up our minds that we will live for Him, God does enormous things through us. If we have not made up our minds, like a disorderly mob, then even if a hundred thousand or a million gather and do it, it is all useless.

From now on, too, we cannot serve two masters, and we must live serving one Master. We must make up our minds and live. Even though life is wearisome, hard, and difficult, and even though we cannot live wholly before the Lord, we must at least make up our minds. I believe that when we make up our minds, the Lord makes us live in that way.

Let us live by faith. Let us live as servants of faith. A servant is a servant, but a servant of the kingdom of God. A servant of the Lord is a happy person. It is because he is a servant of Christ that he is happy. How many people are serving as servants in the world? Depending on who one's master is, even people who receive the same salary are different. Are you serving a master worth giving your life for? Serving a master worth giving even one's own life for is a happy thing.

The servant who says that it is not a waste to sacrifice for his master is blessed. It is a work worth doing. Those who live serving a worthless master have nothing much going for them.

Our Master is the Lord. He who took all our sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, rose again, and bought us is our Master. When we make up our minds to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the world and live, God helps us and works for us. He surely accomplishes that work.

We ask, seek, and knock by faith, and prepare the vessels by faith. And we keep on doing. We ask the Lord to help us. The Lord has power, so He can help us without limit and accomplish that work. I believe. I know that you believe, too.

Let us live by faith. Let us cast all our anxieties and worries on the Lord, pray, and live as servants. Let us live as servants who serve one Master, that is, the Lord alone. I believe that when we serve that Master, that Master will bring life, peace, and blessing to His servants. We give thanks before the Lord. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Know and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Luke 16:19-31 >

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets;

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let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

The rich man and the beggar Lazarus

Today we have read the word of God. Long ago a certain rich man lived, and in front of the gate of that rich man's house there was a beggar named Lazarus. Lazarus was literally a beggar, his circumstances were hard, and there were sores on his body. He lived to the point where the dogs came and licked those sores, and then he died.

The rich man also lived and died. But when the rich man died and looked, the place he was in was too hot. When he looked far across to the other side, he saw Lazarus resting comfortably in a very cool place, held in Abraham's bosom. So he asked Abraham to send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool his tongue.

Then Abraham said, you received your good things in your lifetime, and likewise Lazarus evil things, so *"remember that"*; *"but now he is comforted and you are tormented."* It is the word that you enjoyed all the good things while alive, but because of that you have now fallen into torment, and Lazarus has come to go to a good place.

Then this rich man, saying, then what will happen if my brothers become like me, asked that Lazarus be sent to his father's house to tell his five brothers. It was that, since he had come to hell and was suffering torment, he wanted them to be made to believe the word of God well.

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But Abraham said, *"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them."* It is that even if Lazarus were brought back to life and sent to tell them, people would not believe. It was the word that if one does not believe in this world what Moses and the prophets said, one can never come to this good place.

Everyone must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

This word gives us many lessons. As a result, it is telling us that while we are alive we must listen to the words of the servants and people of God who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that we must hear and believe the gospel they convey.

To go to the kingdom of God, one must hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the people of God who are alive at present; only then can one receive the remission of sins and go to the good place. It is that one must hear this gospel: that Jesus bore all the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and rose again. One cannot realize this truth because a person who died and came back to life tells it. Nor is there anyone who believes such words.

How many people are there in this age who say they died and came back to life? Dear fellow believers, do you think you would believe the words of such people? You would not. Where is there anything as uncertain as that?

A person who says he died and came back to life says that he saw such and such in the kingdom of God, that he saw God as well, and that he even saw a certain person from our neighborhood being in heaven. Dear fellow believers, can you

believe those words? Even if I died, I could not believe such words. What if that person is lying? I can never believe them.

But I believe the word of God. And I also believe the words of the people and servants of God who believe the word of God. Why is that? It is that they can be believed because they look at the word of God and speak. It is that there is a basis. The person who believes the words of a person who says he died and came back to life is a truly superstitious person. It may seem that many people would believe if someone said he died and came back to life, but in reality it cannot be believed. Where is there anything as absurd as that? What if he made it up?

A while ago in our country, too, there was a group that prophesied the end of the world. The representative pastor of that group had not seen it himself; he believed the story that when two children of the neighborhood looked up at the sky, a banner came down from the sky on which it was written that on a certain date the end of the world would come. In the place that child saw, it is said, the river of the water of life flowed, gold was laid on a floor like glass, and that date was written in the water of that river as well. Because the child saw it, he said he believed it, too. It was that on that day Jesus would come again to this earth and take them away.

How many Christians fell into that? So I went there and asked. I said, who is your leader? What would that person know? On that day your bodies will not rise even an inch; they will never rise; no one will go. Then they asked how I could be so sure, so I said, since I am not going, you cannot go either. At that, their faces completely turned. What I said was not a joke. Their claim was something that could never be believed.

So on the morning of that day I went there. When I went and looked, no one had gone up, and they were discouraged with their heads bowed. So I asked where his home was and what his

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mother did, and he said she ran an orphanage, so I told him to quickly pack his bundle, go to the orphanage, help his mother, and wipe the children's noses at least. I said that if he stayed here any longer, the people who had suffered harm would eat breakfast and come flocking.

A reporter came and tried to interview that evangelist, but since that person did not want to do it, I said I would do it. I said, the people who are here now are the people who are said to believe best in our country; it is not only this group that has gone wrong, but Christianity in our country that has gone wrong; that is how this kind of thing has happened today, so rather than arguing back and forth about this, the churches of our country must reflect on themselves. When he asked whether all the churches of our country were like that, I said that the people who are said to believe well in the churches of our country had all come in here, and that this is the problem of the churches of our country today. That reporter had come to cover only that group, and when I said such things, his eyes went round. Is that not the fact?

And I told that leader to quickly pack his bundle and go. I said, so many people have brought and offered up their property; would their parents leave you alone? Having said that, I left that place. The next morning I went again and asked in order to find out whether it had gone as I had said. When I asked whether their leader had gone or not, they said he was still there, so I asked, what did I tell you? And they could say nothing and stayed silent. I asked, you heard the gospel I conveyed to you, do you remember? They said they remembered. I told them that that gospel is the true gospel and all the rest are false gospels, so go to your mother, serve the children, and do not do useless things.

Dear fellow believers, you will know that one must not believe the words of such a person. It is too absurd. A dream is

something in which what one has been worrying about in one's heart appears. It appears as if it were reality. One is intimidated because of that dream, but it is all useless. If it seems an ominous dream, one must drive it away, saying, Satan the Devil, be gone in the name of Jesus Christ; and if it is a good dream, one may hope that it will come about as it was, but it is only a vain dream, so if there is something one hopes for, one must pray by faith.

In fact, whether one is rich or poor, if one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus took all one's sins upon Himself by receiving baptism from John—one receives the remission of sins and goes to the kingdom of the Lord. But if one does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, no matter how smart one is in this world, how much one gives in offerings, how much one has learned, how much charity work one does, and how many good deeds one does, one cannot go. Is that not why the Bible says, let them hear Moses and the prophets?

Dear fellow believers, why must we listen to Moses? It is because only when we know the word of God and the law of God do we know the remission of sins. And only when we meet the people of God, that is, the righteous who know and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, can we hear this gospel, and only then can we really meet Jesus Christ. We can know that Jesus Christ bore our sins by receiving baptism from John and paid the price of those sins in full on the Cross and removed our sins, and can meet Him and believe in Him. There is no other way.

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"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment"

Recently a certain person who was famous in the world passed away. That person left the words that life and death are one. It seems he believed in the doctrine of reincarnation. It is the saying that even if one dies, it is the same as this nature.

The doctrine of reincarnation spoken of in Buddhism is of the sort that if one dies after doing dirty things, one is born as a snake when one is reborn. But the doctrine of reincarnation is something human beings made. Dear fellow believers, if one were to die and be reborn as a human being, then even if one has failed in this present life, one could live looking to the next world.

But being born as a human being, being born in a rich family, is said to be a great blessing, yet the probability of being born again in such a position is nil for all eternity. Why is that? It is that because every living person commits sin, there is no probability of being born in a better environment in the next world. Is that so, or is it not? One may wish, having been born and lived as a human being, to be born in a better environment in the next world, but the question is whether one can indeed be born so. The question is whether one has such ability. It is that it cannot be, because one commits countless sins while alive.

Dear fellow believers, are life and death one? In what way are life and death one? Buddhism, too, says this: even rolling on cow dung, this present life is better. It means that being alive at present is better. It is because after death one will go into the fire of hell. People hold vain knowledge. They believe what makes no sense at all. In what way are life and death the same? It is said, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment."*

Dear fellow believers, having been born once, we must meet the righteousness of the Lord, believe in that righteousness, and

receive the remission of sins. If one dies without doing so, there is only eternal judgment. There is only the matter of being judged. There is only the matter of suffering eternally.

We must look into what we know within the word of God

Having wrong knowledge is dangerous. One must not hold on to things merely picked up by hearsay or to wrong doctrines. Dear fellow believers, when a person's knowledge goes wrong, everything goes wrong. If what one knows is not clear and accurate, everything goes wrong.

Dear fellow believers, how smart a person was he? But it is that he did not know the very thing he should have known. It is that he did not know the truth. It is that he did not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is that he had not met a person who knew the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So he held absurd knowledge. A person said to be that smart just died, saying that life and death are one. Not knowing what one should know is what is called ignorance.

The Bible says, *"A man who is in honor, yet does not understand, Is like the beasts that perish."* Dear fellow believers, it is that he is like a beast. It is that he is like a beast that eats and lives every day, and then one day, when its owner comes and drags it away, becomes a bowl of meat. How ignorant a thing it is to live without knowing one's own honor!

Dear fellow believers, there are so many people in this world who are said to be smart, and there is no telling how ignorant they are. When you watch television, Buddhist monks appear and give dharma talks, and it is truly the height of ignorance. What did a certain monk who is said to have the highest

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attainment of the Way in Buddhism say? He said that mountains are mountains and water is water. It is that the person who saw reality as it is was the most enlightened person there.

Dear fellow believers, what is hard about saying that a mountain is a mountain and water is water? But it is that those people do not know that easy thing. Though there are mountains and there is water, they say that it is all nothing. It is that it is nothingness. It is the ideology that everything visible to the eye is nothing. Is it not ridiculous? What is nothing? It is reality that there are mountains and there is water and there are people, yet they say it is nothing. Then it amounts to saying that they see what actually exists as not existing. They use every kind of forced argument in order to make up words.

A certain monk published a book with the title 'Only If There Is Something Can One Attain Enlightenment.' How is one to attain enlightenment about something that is nothing at all? In the end, for those who fall into such a religion and say that they cultivate the Way, there is nothing left except having shaved their heads.

They are alive and are said to be the intellectual class, but should they not have something they know? When, as a pastor and from the standpoint of one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I listen once in a while to what those people say, I wonder how they can know so little. All they have done is memorize some civil law, criminal law, or national law. While knowing so little, they throw away their own lives like a straw and try to look like people who have attained liberation.

What I am trying to say is not to insult that person. It is that the people who do not know God are that ignorant. It is that they know nothing. It is that because they neither know facts as facts nor know the truth as the truth, they end up making absurd decisions, throwing away their lives over absurd things, and

holding on to absurd things.

Dear fellow believers, is what the teacher teaches at school everything? What one learns at school is learning that subject in order to take exams; how much of it is worth using once one goes out into society? One just learns the basics. A person must read books. One must not look only at one's own field but must range over every field. One must not say that one knows after reading one or two books.

What is the point I am making? It is that the person who does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not know the very thing he should know. It is that he does not know what he really should know. He may regard knowing the law, memorizing the law, and obtaining certificates as great, but since he does not know God, who made him, and does not know that God and the word of God, which tell him all about his beginning and his end, it can be said that he is one who knows nothing.

Therefore, we, too, must not think, I am one who knows a thing or two. We must look into what we know within the word of God. It says that the person who looks at the word of God and knows that word, even if he is dull in the world, becomes wise, becomes one who has knowledge, and becomes one who has understanding.

In the midst of suffering, think of the suffering of the Lord

When we have difficulties, we must think of the Lord. We Christians must think of the Lord not only when we are in too much pain but also in ordinary times. Once we have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, we come not to think much of the suffering of the Cross

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of Jesus. But the suffering of the Cross is truly tremendous. It is said that what is extremely hard for a human being to endure is being nailed to a cross. It is said that the pain is that severe.

Then, thinking of that Jesus, who bore our sins with the baptism He received from John and suffered on the Cross for us, we must think about how much your suffering and mine amounts to compared with that. Then it becomes a comfort and we come to gain strength.

He may have chosen such a way because it was too painful, but the one who has no knowledge of the fear of the LORD is ignorant. The one who does not know God, who saved us, and does not love, respect, fear, and follow Him is ignorant. He is truly ignorant. In the world it is said that the person who has read many books is the smartest, but it is not so. Even if one does not know anything else, one must know the word of God. One must believe the word of God.

Meeting the Lord is the greatest blessing

Dear fellow believers, can one become smarter than the word of God? The word of God speaks of everything. Why is that? It is because He made us. Because He knows everything about us, He can speak of everything and can lead us in the right way. He alone can do so. Jesus Christ alone can do so.

In this world, those who have a professional occupation in some field think that they are smart. But because they do not know what they should know, they are foolish and ignorant. I regard such a person as an ignorant one.

That we have met this Lord, that we know the Lord, that we believe the word of the Lord, and that we carry on our life of faith on the basis of this word is a tremendous blessing. Dear

fellow believers, is that so, or is it not? That we can hear the word of God during the sermon is a tremendous thing. Where does one go to hear the word of God? Try listening to a sermon somewhere else once. That sermon is so pathetic that one cannot tell whether on earth it is the word of God or the preacher's own story.

But the Lord has revealed Himself to us and revealed His righteousness, and has made us believe. We are truly happy to have met the Lord. I know that God is blessing us in this difficult time.

I know that the fact that I was born and met the Lord is a great fortune and a great blessing. Dear fellow believers, if we were asked to count the blessings we have received since we were born, we could count having known and believed in the righteousness of the Lord and received the remission of sins, and so having met the Lord, having met Him by faith, having become the people of the Lord, and doing the work of the Lord. Besides these there would be many if we were to put them into words, but there would be nothing better than these. God is blessing us.

When we see the people who are said to have learned so much and to be so smart behaving like that, they truly have not learned what they should learn, do not know what they should know, and are holding on to absurd things. They obtain certificates by knowing a few articles of the law, and without ever once having bowed their heads, they say that they are righteous, but what is righteous about them? They say that they are morally clean, but what is clean about them? All people are like that. It is not only that person. It is because they do not know themselves that they can say they are righteous.

I, too, was like that in the old days. I really was. I wanted to live without a single point of shame before heaven. So I even tried not to marry. I liked living like that for others.

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I came to know, after marrying, why people treat a married person as an adult even if he is young. After I married, I could see all my faults being revealed, because I was no longer living alone but with another person, and not only with one other person but with several people together. When I was alone, other people said that I was fine, and I myself thought that I was fine. But as I formed a family and lived, I was full of faults. So I came to know why the people of old said such a thing. I give thanks for having met the Lord. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Let us live a life that testifies to the gospel

< Luke 16:19-31 >

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he

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said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

God has the heart that wants every life not to come to the place of suffering, that is, hell. He wants no one, when he dies, to come to this terrible hell and suffer, and He wants everyone to prepare faith in this present life and be held in the bosom of God in heaven. God is truly merciful, and He does not want even one soul to perish, but wants to bless.

God does not want even one soul to perish

The word we have read today is precisely such a word. Everything a person goes through while living on this earth is like a dream of a single night, like a spring dream of a single night. It is that one truly passes through this world as in a dream. It is said, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).*

A person is born through his parents, is cared for and cherished when he is small, and grows up. And passing through boyhood and youth, he marries, becomes an adult, becomes the head of a family, reaches middle age, and reaches old age. It is that he goes through the whole process of birth, aging, sickness, and death and returns to a handful of dust.

The Bible says, "*Remember now your Creator" (Ecclesiastes 12:1).* A person must remember his Creator before he dies. It is the word that one, having been born into this world through one's parents and having lived in a world like a spring dream of a single night, should prepare, before returning before

God, the faith by which one can receive the remission of sins and go to heaven.

A rich man and the beggar Lazarus

Looking at today's text, there was a rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. He held feasts and gave great banquets and enjoyed himself every day. But outside that rich man's house a beggar named Lazarus had settled himself.

Lazarus made the front of the rich man's gate his own territory for getting food to eat and settled himself firmly there; he ate the scraps of food that came out of that house, slept there, and relieved himself there as well. If for the rich man the house like a great palace was his home, for Lazarus the outside of the rich man's gate was his home.

There was an enormous difference in how the two men lived. One man lived as a rich man while he lived in this world. He lacked nothing, and when he was sick, a physician came and treated him and gave him medicine so that he would not suffer. If his eyes said they were bored, he was supplied with everything needed for the lust of the eyes. He lived without the slightest lack.

The other man lived so wretchedly that the dogs came and licked his sores. He settled himself in front of the gate and ate the scraps of food that came out from there, and it seems he did not even have the strength to go around begging for food. Since he had no strength, he settled himself right in front of the gate. He ate the scraps that came out and slept there. He was a person who had sores on his body and did not even have the strength to walk around. The dogs came and licked his sores.

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In that way the beggar lived and the rich man also lived, and the beggar died first. He died and entered Abraham's bosom. What is Abraham's bosom? Abraham is a person who believed with his heart, just as it was, what God had said. It means that Abraham is the father of faith. To be held in Abraham's bosom is the word that he went to heaven by faith.

The rich man also grew old and died. He died and was buried. But a strange thing happened. That rich man, as soon as he died, went to Hades, that is, hell. It is that this rich man entered the place where fire is blazing.

When the rich man died, people said that since he had lived to a ripe old age, it was a blessed death, a very good death, not a sad death, and they brought condolence money and drank and made merry. A large funeral company came, hundreds of wreaths sent by people in high positions were set out, and perhaps people even came from abroad. While the funeral was held so lavishly, the soul of that rich man had already entered hell and was suffering torment.

While we are alive, we must believe in Jesus as our Savior

To the rich man, who had entered hell and was suffering torment, God showed Lazarus being in Abraham's bosom in heaven. The text is the scene of the conversation between the rich man who went to hell and Abraham. Through this conversation God has taught us. It is that all living people should believe in Jesus as their own Savior and go to heaven in the world to come. It is that while alive on this earth they should hear the word from those who received the remission of sins first. And He taught us to believe with our hearts that Jesus removed

all our sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and His rising from the dead, and to be saved and enter heaven.

The rich man said, Father Abraham, have that Lazarus dip just one drop of cool water and put it on my blazing tongue. He said that not a mouthful but one drop of water would do. It was that on this earth he had lived tasting cool things and tasting good things, but in this hot place he wished that just one drop might be put on his burning tongue. He pleaded, I am tormented so much in the flame and cannot bear the heat.

Then Abraham said, *"Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented" (Luke 16:25)*. And besides all this, he said, *"Between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us" (Luke 16:26)*.

I cannot grant your request. When Lazarus was in this world he was worse off than your servants, but now he is in heaven, so even if he wanted to come again, he cannot come. A great gulf is fixed, so no one can cross over from here, and you cannot cross over either. So it is that he said he could not grant the rich man's wish.

When you lived on this earth, how loudly you boasted and how luxuriously you lived, even without believing in Me. What you enjoyed so much when you lived on this earth is as good as having tasted all of heaven. So now, He says, there is nothing left for you to taste but hell. How much suffering did Lazarus suffer while alive? But did Lazarus not believe in Me? Did he not believe that I had removed all those sins? Through that faith, He says, he was held in My bosom. But you did not believe in Me but believed in your riches and wealth and power, and in conclusion you did not believe in Me, the Creator. That is why, He said, it was fitting for you to go to that place.

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Let them hear Moses and the prophets

Secondly, the rich man made a request. He said, *"I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment" (Luke 16:27–28)*. Then Abraham said, *"They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them" (Luke 16:29)*.

The rich man said again, 'No.' He said, we were six brothers, and since I have died, there are five younger brothers. He said, I have countless nephews as well, but leave the nephews aside and first keep at least my brothers from coming here. He said, having come to hell, I find it too painful. It is enough that I alone have come here. He made the request, saying, if only I could go, I would go to my brothers and tell them, "Believe in God and believe in Jesus. Never come to this place where I am." It was because this rich man was in such agony and torment. Having experienced it himself, it was so painful.

But He said, "No, in this world there are Moses and the prophets." What He called Moses refers to the written word of God. And what is called the prophets refers to those who came first. It refers to those who have received the remission of sins.

Of course, the prophets of the Old Testament, that is, those who came before us, are called prophets, and they are called prophets because they speak of things that will happen in the future. They taught that Jesus Christ would come and would save us by taking our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John and by dying hung on the Cross. They taught it all: that He is precisely Jesus, and that a virgin would bear a Son and He would be called Immanuel. Such people are prophets, too, but spiritually speaking, it refers to you and me, who have received the remission of sins first. He tells them to listen to

those people. He says that you are already finished, but your family is different. He says that if they want to receive the remission of sins, they should hear the gospel from those who have received the remission of sins first, and receive the remission of sins. God said, do you not have many family members and relatives and descendants? Have them all go to those people, learn, hear, and believe, so that they will never come to the place where you are.

Still, the rich man said, *"No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent" (Luke 16:30)*. Then Abraham said, *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead" (Luke 16:31)*. He said that nothing can be done for the person who is already finished, but those who have received the remission of sins first must convey this gospel to the living and to their descendants.

If one has decided not to believe, one does not believe

How could a dead person come back to life and speak to the living? That cannot be. It is said, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*.

Is there perhaps anyone among you who, out of worry that our ancestors may have gone wrong, thinks that he, too, will go where our ancestors went? It may seem a touching thought, but it is an extremely contradictory and wrong thought. Since God is the Judge, the judgment depends on God. Let us entrust all of that to God.

I do not want to say of those who have gone before that this one went to hell or that one went to heaven. As for those

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ancestors, God, the Judge, will handle it as He sees fit. Let us entrust that matter to God, and we who are alive must believe in Jesus Christ as our own Savior and believe that He has removed all our sins. By believing that gospel, we, too, must go where Lazarus went.

Dear fellow believers, God said that even if a dead person came back to life and told people, they would not believe. If a person has decided not to believe, he does not believe even when a dead person comes back to life and tells him, and he does not believe even when a person who has seen it with his own eyes tells him.

In our country there is something that comes up whenever people talk about whether one believes or does not believe. It is whether the great gate of the old capital has a threshold or not. Dear fellow believers, would it have one or not? Those who say it has one, raise your hands. Those who say it does not, raise your hands, too. You are watching one another and cannot readily raise your hands. If it is a gate, it would have a threshold, one would suppose. But it is that since that gate is not a front door that we go in and out of, but the south gate of a capital city, a gate through which even oxcarts and anything at all can enter, it has no threshold.

I, too, circled in front of it in a car, and no matter how carefully I tried to look, wondering whether that was the gate and whether it had a threshold, the threshold was not visible and only the gate was visible. But no matter how much the person who has seen it directly says that there is no threshold, people do not believe him. The person who thinks that everything called a gate has a threshold cannot abandon that fixed idea. He says, how can something called a gate have no threshold? Does not every gate have a threshold?

Dear fellow believers, what is it that goes around the outside

of a door? It is the door frame. Since every door has a door frame, that gate, too, has a frame. Where is there a door without a frame? It is something all those who do interior work know. Still, no matter how much the person who went and saw it directly tells him, the person who already thinks there is a threshold does not believe even when someone who has seen it directly comes back and tells him. That is how human beings are. They never believe.

Suppose a dead person pushed aside his grave, got up, trudged home as if going out for a moment, and knocked on the door. When he says, "Children, give me some food, I am starving to death," the family opens the door. He comes in saying, "Children, have you been well?" asks for bath water, washes, and eats food. But his face is haggard and scorched. Suppose he says, "Children, I am in a place that is not good; God cannot be deceived; I could deceive people, but I could not deceive God, so I have fallen into the fire and am suffering torment." And suppose he says, "As for why I have come, I have come so that you will not come to the place where I am; if you listen to me and do not want to come to the place where I am, you must believe in Jesus."

Suppose he tells them that Jesus received baptism from John, received all our sins passed on to Him, and bore them away, and that He received all the sin of the world, including the sins we will commit in the future, passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John. He says, going to heaven and going to hell depend on whether one believes or not. When I went and looked, Lazarus, though he had done hardly any good deeds, believed in Jesus and was in heaven. I did much charity and did many good deeds, and yet I came to hell. So you must believe in Jesus without fail, he says. Jesus is God, He is the One who made the universe, and He is your Savior. Believe, and never come to the place where I am, he says, and suppose he then goes back to the

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grave. It is that even when told that much, people do not believe.

Through whom has God had this gospel conveyed? He has had it conveyed through the law and the prophets, that is, through those who believe the word of God. He has had it conveyed through us saints and the servants of God, who believed first and received the remission of sins. Through this word they convey, one meets, knows, and believes in God. When one believes that Jesus has become one's own Savior and has become the Savior who removed all one's sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross, God gives salvation. And He makes such a person enter the bosom of God, where Lazarus is.

When a person dies, he immediately comes to stand before God

What God said in the text is a warning to all the people in this world. People say that even rolling on cow dung, this present life is better. It is that since a person is born once and, once he dies, there is the judgment, and if he dies without believing in Jesus, he comes to go to that place, rolling on cow dung in this world is better than going to hell.

Do you know how good a place this world is to live in? When you are hungry there is food, when you are thirsty you can drink cool water, when you are in pain you can get some fresh air, there are painkillers, and there is everything. This world is a place where one can do everything to some extent as one wishes.

But what happens when one dies? When one dies, one immediately comes to stand before God. When He asks whether you have sin or not, one comes to say, I have. Then when He says, tell Me your sins, it is that the sins one committed and hid

in this world rise straight up into one's throat, and one's tongue wags and tells them all. After one has told them one by one like that, He asks again. When He asks whether there is sin in your heart or not, one comes to say, "There is." He says, "Then is it fitting for you to go to hell? Is it fitting for you to go to heaven?" One comes to say, "It is fitting for me to go to hell." It is that God judges that fairly.

After death one can do nothing. Therefore, what must we do while we are alive? Is it that God spoke of hell here in order to frighten us? Absolutely not. It is a word He spoke for you and me, who are alive. It is a word He spoke not only for me but for my children and relatives and all my brothers and sisters and family. He spoke this word because He wants all the people of this world, black or white or yellow, every one without exception, to be saved.

While alive, one must hear that gospel from those who have the gospel of the water and the Spirit, hear who Jesus is, and hear how Jesus removed sin. We have committed many sins in this world, have committed sins unintentionally, and will commit sins as we live in the future as well. But that Jesus came to this earth in order to send us to heaven. It is that He came in order to make us sinless.

We must accept that heart of God, who wants to send us to heaven, and we must believe that God has removed our sins with the baptism received from John and the Cross. By faith we must enter heaven. We must really live by faith and enter heaven by faith. We must do so.

A human being is truly a spring dream of a single night. It is just like a dream of a single morning. When small, one fusses, plays cute, and lives by instinct. After passing through childhood and entering boyhood, one receives education. After receiving education, one marries and lives on. And from the moment one

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has children, one's own life becomes a life for one's children. One raises one's children and hopes that they will do well. When the children do well, one rejoices, and when they do not do well, one grieves. In that way one's whole life goes entirely into one's children. By the time the children have grown up and are back from the army, the time for those parents to pass away is already drawing near. That is why it is said to be like a dream of a single night.

Dear fellow believers, it is said that life is like a jar by the well. No one knows when the jar by the well will break. It may break when someone makes a mistake and a stone comes flying. It may break while one draws water, or while one carries it on one's head and sets it down wrongly. Once the jar cracks and the water pours out, it is all over.

How great the love of God is

We must know the heart of God. We must know that heart, that love, with which God saved you and me, removed all our sins with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and His rising from the dead, and sent us to heaven. How great is the heart of God, and how great is the love of God?

It is said, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*. Dear fellow believers, how much does God love you and me? He gave us His only Son, His only begotten Son, and passed all our sins on to that only begotten Son with the baptism He received from John. And He had His only begotten Son nailed to the Cross and killed in our place, and so ended all the judgment for our sins. And He made Him rise from the dead and has now seated Him at the right hand

of the throne of God.

What is the reason the Son of God came to this earth and suffered? It is precisely to rescue you and me from sin and keep us from going to hell. He did so in order to make us sinless and make us the children of God.

It is said, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*. We must know the hearts of our parents, but as children we must know the heart of God. We must know how much God loves you and me, and how many of your sins and mine He has removed.

Dear fellow believers, do you know how much God loves you and me? Do you know how many of your sins and mine He has removed? We must know that great love with our hearts and accept it with our hearts. We must believe that God sent His only Son to this earth and removed all our sins with the water and the blood, that He has made us sinless. It is that one believes with the heart and reaches righteousness, and believes with the heart and becomes righteous. It is that one believes with the heart and becomes a child of God.

It is that one believes with the heart and obtains salvation. It is not done by works. One believes with the heart and is saved, and confesses with the mouth and confirms salvation. And we must believe in the love of God and the salvation of God and go to heaven, where Lazarus is.

God wants all people to be saved and enter heaven. Do you know what the heart of God is like? I hope you will know that He loves us thousands of times more than you love your children, and that He wants to take us to a good place.

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He accomplished it all with the baptism He received from John and the Cross

We, who resembled the image of God and resembled the heart of God and were fundamentally the people of God, fell into sin through Satan the Devil and lost God. God loves such people as us and wants to take us to heaven, so would He not have removed all your sins and mine? He removed them all. Though we have not seen it with our eyes, we can know the heart of God and can believe.

Jesus Christ received baptism from John and received all our sins passed on to Him. He received the sins of every human life passed on to Him, without leaving out a single person among mankind, and bore those sins away, and He was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for sin. Nails were driven through both His hands and His ankles. It is said, *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22)*.

It is that Jesus Christ took all your sins and mine upon Himself with the baptism He received from John, took upon Himself all the sins we commit until we die as well, and was nailed to the Cross and received the punishment for sin.

It is said, *"He was wounded for our transgressions."* It is because we commit sin every day. It is also said, *"He was bruised for our iniquities."* It is because of the sin inherited from our ancestors in our mother's womb and all the iniquities we commit our whole lives. He was stripped of His clothes and His flesh was torn by the whip. He suffered all such contempt and shame.

And that Jesus was nailed to the Cross, poured out all the blood in His heart, and died saying, It is finished, was because He took all your sins and mine upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and received the punishment for your

sins and mine. What we should have been struck with, He was struck with in our place. What contempt we should have suffered, He suffered for us. In place of our having to receive the punishment of hell and die, our Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, received all our sins passed on to Him, and died in our place.

So God passed our sins on to His only Son through baptism, that is, through John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. And when that only Son had been judged on the Cross and died, He raised Him again and seated Him at the right hand of the throne of God.

Therefore, He has established Jesus, the Son of God, as the Savior, the Deliverer, for all mankind. Though it is said, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)*, God has ordained that all be saved through His Son Jesus Christ.

It is said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. God sent His only Son to this earth. He says, I am the way to heaven, so whoever you are, only believe with your heart. I received baptism from John for you, and I received the punishment on the Cross for you and paid the price of sin in full; if only you believe that, He has made you go to heaven.

God made us, and in order to save us, who had fallen into sin, He came to this earth clothed in the form of a human being. He was born into this earth borrowing the body of the virgin Mary, who had not known a man. And in the year He turned thirty, He took all the sins of mankind upon Himself by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River.

Dear fellow believers, what is called the sin of the world is the sins of all the people of mankind. We do not know since when this earth has existed, but from that time, and we do not know when this world will end, but until the day it ends, the sins

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of all the people of mankind are called the sin of the world. It is that Jesus took this sin upon Himself with the baptism He received from John. He took it upon Himself and went to the Cross and received the punishment.

He received our sins passed on to Him and bore them all away. He received the punishment in His own body on the Cross. He washed your sins and mine away cleanly with the baptism He received from John, and He saved us from the punishment of all those sins with the punishment of the Cross. So He made us sinless, and He has enabled us to obtain salvation through faith in that Jesus Christ.

If one believes in Jesus Christ as one's own Savior, one becomes a child of God. All one has to do is believe the fact that my Savior took my sins upon Himself with the baptism received from John, that my sins were passed on to Jesus, and that Jesus was judged in my place. It is said, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).*

God loved us and sent His Son. Through that only Son He removed all our sins with the water and the blood. And He has taken those who believe that fact into His bosom again as the children of God.

All things return to their original place. Having come from dust, they return to dust. Where did we human beings come from? Where is our origin? God made our lives. We were sent by God and born on this earth, and we also return to God. The sun rises, sets again, rises again, and returns to its place.

All the religions of this world speak of reincarnation. But, dear fellow believers, He said that it is the fixed principle that a person is born once, dies, and is judged. To say that there is a judgment is to say that there is a world to come, and it is the word that there are heaven and hell. It is not that a person dies

and, if he has done many good deeds, is born again as a human being or an animal.

Therefore, you and I must believe. We must believe that Jesus is truly the life and the way and the truth, that all things in the universe were made through that Jesus, and that that Jesus came to this earth to save you and me from sin and has saved us. We must believe with our hearts that He has saved us like this. Though we are lacking in works, we must believe with our hearts. And we must confess with our mouths.

We must confess that Jesus is really my Savior and that my sins were all passed on when Jesus received baptism from John. Whether one believes in Jesus or not, there is a conscience in our hearts, so we know that there are many things we cannot say before people and many things we have done wrong. We must know the fact that those wrongs are sin. And we must believe that Jesus has become my Savior.

We must play the role of the law and the prophets

Still, on this earth there are many people who do not know this truth and do not know the way to go to heaven. It is not done by works. It is that one is made sinless through believing the fact that the Son of God has removed all one's sins with the water and the blood. There are many people who have not been awakened to this way of going to heaven like that.

We must play the role of the law and the prophets for these people. We must convey the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. Let us convey it to them all. There is still a great deal of work for us to do. There are so many souls left on this earth who must hear the gospel.

Dear fellow believers, we must live as servants of God. It is

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not living only for ourselves. We, too, live our own lives, but we must live not only for ourselves but for people like this rich man, who are dying. There are many people on this earth who will become like this rich man.

That is why, though we are lacking, we must pray for those people. We must labor. We must also earn material wealth and give to such people. We must live not only for ourselves but for other people. We must convey the word of God. We must convey the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must pray before God to save those souls. You and I, as workers of the righteousness of this gospel, let us live the life of servants.

Dear fellow believers, let us not put forward our own righteousness but put forward the righteousness of God. What is admirable about us human beings is like a piece of rag, but the righteousness of God shines like the sun. It is clean and perfect. Dear fellow believers, what should we live for? We must truly live the life of servants.

That I want to do this and want to do that and yet do not do them is not because I cannot, being behind the times. It is not because I cannot, not knowing how. It is that I do not do them in order to save the souls of other people, teach them, and lead them. The old man has more zest and sings better as well. Nevertheless, I do not do them. Why is that? It is because there are still so many people who must hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit through us.

We must really play our role as the servants of God well. Dear fellow believers, do you perhaps say, as you live, that this gospel is a burden in my life, that if it were not for this gospel of the water and the Spirit I could live as I please, and that now that I have been saved, that is enough? Would it be enough if only we went to heaven? Would it be enough if only we went to the place where Lazarus is? Is it all right for your family not to go?

Can you guarantee that your family will not go to the place where the rich man is even if they do not believe in Jesus?

That is why we love our brothers and sisters and love souls, and though we are lacking, we exercise self-control, endure, and persevere. It is not that we live only suppressing entirely the heart that wants to go out and play and wants to do this and do that, but we exercise self-control as far as we can and do the work of saving souls.

As we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can go sightseeing and travel as well. When we hold evangelistic meetings, we travel, and the road we travel to work also becomes a journey. Let us, too, go out to a good place in autumn when the leaves turn. While you are working, if you really want to go at a time other than the hour of worship, go.

But what I am trying to say, more than that, is what kind of heart we should really live with. We must have a heart toward those who still must hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I will close the message here. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Let us believe in God

< Luke 16:19-31 >

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

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The whole lives of two men unfold like a single story

We have examined the lives of the rich man and Lazarus like a single story. The whole lives of the two men have unfolded before us just as they were.

We cannot know what the family background of this rich man was, but while he lived in this world he lived as a rich man. He lived luxuriously and lived well without the slightest discomfort until the day he died. On the other hand, the poor man named Lazarus, though we cannot know how his family had collapsed so completely, lived unhappily his whole life. He lived sitting in front of the rich man's gate begging, trying to fill his stomach with the food that fell from the rich man's table. While they were in this world, the two men lived in circumstances as different as this.

But the beggar Lazarus died and was held in Abraham's bosom, and there he lived enjoying riches and glory and receiving the love of God. The other person, the rich man, died and entered the unquenchable fire and spent his time in torment. The whole lives of the two men have unfolded before us like a single story through the word of Luke chapter 16.

Life is like a spring dream of a single night and like a dream of a single night. Life is also like a fisherman passing through the wide sea. Life is like a mist, and like a flower that blooms for a while on a spring day and then disappears. People speak of life comparing it to mist and flowers.

What life needs most is faith in God

Then what is most important in our lives? What must we

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obtain? What kind of life can be called a successful life? The word we have read today is telling us precisely that answer. It is that every life must have faith.

The word that Lazarus died and entered Abraham's bosom is a word about faith in God. While Lazarus lived on this earth, he filled his stomach with what fell from the rich man's table, but he entered Abraham's bosom. Abraham is the father of faith, and he is symbolized as the person with the best faith among those who believe in God.

Why did He not say that Lazarus died and entered heaven, but say that he entered Abraham's bosom? He is saying that he entered heaven by that faith that believes in God.

While Lazarus lived on this earth, he had the faith that was absolutely necessary for him. His circumstances were hard, and his life was wearisome and painful. Seen in the flesh, it was a life about which one might think it would have been better not to have been born. But Lazarus had what a person must have without fail once he is born, that is, faith in God.

That faith Lazarus had, that faith that believes in God like Abraham, is the faith that all people must have. What is most necessary for our lives? It is faith in God. And that faith one must have without fail.

A person, born on this earth, must have faith in God in his heart. He must believe in God, and that faith must be in his heart. If that faith is not in his heart, life comes empty-handed and goes empty-handed. Though life came empty-handed, when it goes before God, it must go with faith without fail.

If one does not go before God with faith, that life becomes a failed life. However one has lived on this earth, when one goes before God, one must have in one's heart faith that believes in God like Abraham.

It is not only Lazarus who is like that. We who are born again

must also have faith in God. But in this world there are also those who are not like that. It is precisely a person like that rich man.

The reason He did not reveal the name of the rich man is that He is speaking of the many people who are like this man. This man could not enter Abraham's bosom. Because he could not enter, he entered the hot fire.

There are also those who say, who has seen that hell exists? But that place where it is so hot that one's tongue burns and one wishes that just one drop of water might be dipped on a fingertip and put on one's tongue—that very place is hell. It is not something else that is hell; the substance of torment is precisely hell. We call what is tormenting hell. The rich man went to hell because he could not have faith in God, that is, because he could not enter Abraham's bosom.

It is not whether one has committed many sins or few

Here there is not a single word that the rich man committed more sins or that Lazarus committed more sins. People sometimes think that one person must go to hell because he committed many sins and another must go to heaven because he committed few sins. But it is not according to whether one has committed many sins or few that one goes to heaven or goes to hell. Such thoughts are all one's own standards, one's own thoughts, and vain thoughts.

The point is whether one enters the kingdom of God or fails to enter. That matter depends on whether one believes in God or does not believe. It depends on whether one has had faith that believes in God and all His word, or has not. Precisely here is the reason why every life must have faith.

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If one believes in God, faith arises, and if one does not believe in God, faith does not arise. If one believes in God with the heart, God is in that heart, and if one does not believe, God is not in that heart. If one believes in heaven with the heart, heaven is in that heart, and if one does not believe, heaven is not in that heart.

If one believes in one's heart that God has remitted all our sins with the water and the blood, one becomes a believer. If one does not believe in one's heart, one becomes one who has no faith and one who has sin in one's heart. Since it is said that it leads from faith to faith, all one has to do is believe.

We who believe must have faith in God even after being saved. When the Lord calls us, we must enter the bosom of the Lord with that faith. It is said that without faith it is impossible to please God. If one does not believe, there is no telling how much unbelief arises. But if one believes, one can overcome all unbelief.

What is most important in the affairs of life? The word of God says that it is faith. It is faith in God, a believing heart. He said that the one who has faith in God in his heart has succeeded.

For all people, including you and me, whom one believes in is important. Whom must one believe in? The right answer is to believe in God. But people believe in various things. The person who believes in Buddhism believes in Buddhism, and the person who believes in superstition believes in superstition. Believing in superstition is also believing. Then is faith that believes in superstition necessary for life? It is not necessary.

One must really have faith in God. Though He is invisible to the eye, one must believe in God. And when one believes in God, one must believe that He has removed all one's sins. One must believe everything one has heard through the word.

There is a saying, rewarding good and punishing evil. It is a

saying that encourages good, saying that if one does good one prospers and if one does evil one perishes. Such a thought is widespread in the world. But, dear fellow believers, will you believe in your own goodness? Will you believe in your own deeds? Will you believe in your own position? Will you believe in people? Will you believe in superstition? Will you believe in money? What is there to believe in? A person must believe in God without fail.

Only when one believes in God and lives does one's life become a successful life. It is entering Abraham's bosom and going to heaven. On this earth, too, one lives receiving the help of God and receiving the love of God. If one says that one believes in God and yet does not believe that God has removed all one's sins, that life believes in God in vain.

The great gulf fixed between the two men

After death, Lazarus and the rich man spent their time in different places. One man was in a place so hot that his tongue was parched. The other man lived in the best place, where the air was mild, flowers were in full bloom, and food was abundant. There was no lack in that place.

But what was there between those two men? It was said that a great gulf was fixed. There was a deep, hollowed-out valley, a valley whose depth had no end. So even if one wanted to cross over from hell to heaven, or even if one felt pity in heaven and wanted to cross over to hell, they could not go back and forth to each other.

What does this great gulf tell us? It tells us that a person who has sin can never go to heaven, and a person who has no sin can never go to hell. Also, that a great gulf was fixed so that they

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could not go back and forth speaks of the sin of human beings.

There is a river that cannot be crossed, and what is that river? It is the river of sin. If one has sin, one can never go to heaven. No matter how strong one is, one cannot swim across it and cannot enter.

Who filled that gulf?

Then who filled that gulf? It is not a gulf that a person can fill by himself. No matter how hard one strives and does good, the river of sin remains as it is. Only when our Lord Himself fills it can we cross over.

Though the Lord is the Son of God, He came to this earth in the body of a man. And He went to the Jordan River and received baptism from John the Baptist. John the Baptist was the representative of mankind and one born in the line of the High Priest. In the Old Testament age, when the High Priest laid his two hands on the head of the sin offering, the sins of the people of Israel were transferred to that offering just as they were. In exactly the same way, when John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and baptized Him, the sins of the whole world passed on to the body of Jesus just as they were.

At that time Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The words that He fulfilled all righteousness mean that by taking over all the sins of the world onto His own body without leaving any behind, He fully met the conditions of salvation. And so the next day John the Baptist pointed to Jesus and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*.

Bearing those sins, the Lord was hung on the Cross. His

hands and feet were nailed, His side was pierced with a spear, He shed all His blood, and He died in our place. The wages of sin is death, and He who received all the sin of the world passed on to Him received all that judgment of death in our place. And after three days He rose again from the dead and became our eternal Savior.

By precisely this work that gulf was filled. Sin was transferred by the baptism He received from John, the price was paid by the blood of the Cross, and that work was confirmed by the resurrection. Since the river of sin has disappeared, the way to cross over has now been opened. It is not that we built a bridge, but that the Lord Himself became the bridge for us. This bridge that the Lord laid with His body is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Therefore, when we believe in God, what kind of faith should we have? We must believe in that salvation by which Jesus came to this earth, received baptism at the Jordan River and received all our sins passed on to Him, and remitted all sins by dying on the Cross in our place. We must have that faith. True faith is precisely this faith.

What kind of faith was the faith Lazarus had?

There are truly many people in this world who say that they believe in God. Even in our country alone it is so. Then what kind of faith do the people who say they believe in God have? Do they believe all that God has done, like Lazarus, who entered Abraham's bosom?

One must have faith that believes that He has remitted all one's sins and removed them all, faith that believes that He has made one enter heaven, faith that believes that He has made one

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a child of God, and faith that believes that He has made one righteous. One must have faith that believes that God is the One who makes me His child, gives me blessing, and takes responsibility for me. Such faith is precisely faith like that of Lazarus.

As we live our whole lives, we must someday have faith like that of Lazarus. And once we have believed the word of the truth and come to have that faith, we must hold fast to it and believe every day.

We cannot know until when this beggar Lazarus lived as a beggar, but it seems that he did not escape those circumstances until he died. The Bible records that while getting food to eat in front of the rich man's gate, he died just as he was and entered Abraham's bosom.

It seems that God is not so interested in such things as the riches, glory, and honor of this world and the health of the flesh. It seems that because He can reward us with better things in that world and make us live better, He also permitted living in such circumstances in this world.

But Lazarus went to Abraham's bosom. It is that he believed in God well. It is that he believed well the word God had spoken. Though he was in the position of begging for food in front of someone else's gate, wherever and whatever word he heard, he believed the word of God.

That is, he believed that with the baptism Jesus received and the blood He shed, that is, with the water and the Spirit, He had removed all the sins of all the people of this world and had removed his own sins as well. And he also believed the word of promise that He makes those who believe like that the children of God. And so he received the remission of sins by faith. He received the remission of sins, lived believing in God, and went when God told him to come.

How happy Lazarus must have been! In the affairs of life, who has a life as victorious as that of Lazarus? Of these two men, Lazarus succeeded and the rich man failed.

Though Lazarus was lacking, because he had faith in God, it was fitting for him to live in heaven. It is because he believed and received the remission of sins and obtained eternal life. He says that since faith in Me was in his heart even up to the time he came before Me, it is fitting for him to come here, and it is fitting for him to live with Me.

But what would He say to the rich man? He says, did you have faith in Me, did you have such a heart? He says, did you not live enjoying good things in this world? So you have no qualification to come to Me. He says, is it not fitting for you to be in that place as the price of not believing in Me? He says, what is there to resent?

God loves us human beings. Even before He made us, He made us as His people, as the objects of His love. Because He made us for such a purpose, He lets those who believe with their hearts the heart of God, the love of God, and the word of the promise of God live together with Him.

Therefore, you and I must have faith in God as we live in this world. We must believe with our hearts. Then our lives become successful lives. What else is success? If one has faith in God, one succeeds. If one does not have faith in God, one's life becomes a failed life.

By faith we must also go to heaven. By faith we must also receive the remission of sins. By faith we must also receive blessing. By faith we must also solve every problem. The solution to every problem lies within faith.

Will you say, He is neither visible to the eye nor speaking, so what is there to believe? No. We must believe in God Himself. If one believes in God, one believes everything. One believes

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what He has planned, believes what He has done, and believes everything He will do in the future.

People do not believe even if a dead person rises and tells them

Dear fellow believers, we must become successful lives. To succeed, one must believe in God without fail, and to fail, all one has to do is not believe in God. It is a matter without error.

It is said, *"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."* Whoever one was born to in this world, however one lives, and in whatever circumstances and doing whatever work one lives, each person must believe in God. When living in the future, too, one must believe and live.

Let us return to the text. The rich man asks like this. He said, *"Send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment."* It is that he wants them told, your elder brother is in hell, so believe and go to heaven. It is the word that if Lazarus were sent to tell them, my younger brothers would all believe.

But what did Abraham say? He said, *"If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead."* It is that even if the dead Lazarus were brought back to life and sent to the brothers, they still would not believe.

Will you say, how could that be? If a person who has risen from the grave comes and tells them, they will surely believe? God said that He absolutely does not do such a thing.

Think about it. If He brought the dead back to life and sent them, then a person who lived on this earth, died, and went to heaven would have to put on the flesh again, come back to this

world, and run errands. Then there would be no one who did not believe. If so, there would be no need for evangelists on this earth. There would be no need for the Church, no need for the servants of God to convey the word of God, and no reason for us to live the life of faith.

It would be enough for a senior who believed first to die, go to the kingdom of God, and then, receiving an order, come back to life and say, believe. Then the person who heard that and believed could in turn die, come back to life, and say, believe. If it were so, what reason would there be for the Church to exist on this earth?

God said that He is the head of the Church and that the believers living on this earth are its members. He said they are its hands and feet and limbs. Then what would be our work? If people died as soon as they believed in Jesus on this earth, there would be nothing but funerals every day. God does not bring the dead back to life and send them.

I hope no one comes to the spring and dies of thirst

We who have been saved must believe. The person who has not been saved is not saved because he has no faith in God. Rather than having no faith, it is that he does not believe.

Would you believe that America exists only after seeing America with your eyes? God is invisible to the eyes of the flesh, but He is visible to spiritual eyes. He comes to be believed. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? I hope you will believe.

God has saved you and me. He removed all the sin of the world, all your sins, and saved you so that you would not fall into the great gulf. If we believe in God and live, if we believe the word of God and live, we receive salvation, obtain eternal

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life, and obtain grace as well. What would go well because one does not believe in God? If things would go well because one does not believe, no one would believe.

It is said, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen."* Faith is believing what is real, and it is by faith that one comes to reach faith.

Dear fellow believers, I hope no one comes to the spring and dies of thirst. If one draws the water and drinks, it is refreshing, but there are cases where one does not draw and drink and dies of thirst. I hope there will be no one who comes to the Church of God and hears the word of God and yet does not believe in his heart and goes to hell, and no one who does not believe and lives under a curse in his life.

This Church is the Church of God. The word of God is preached to you. Countless people pass through this place. Some believe and some do not believe. The one who does not believe goes, just as he did not believe, to the place where that rich man went. There, neither a genealogy nor anything else is needed.

Dear fellow believers, let us believe and live. I will close the message here. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

What is the purpose of life?

< Luke 16:19-31 >

"There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table. Moreover the dogs came and licked his sores. So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. Then he cried and said, 'Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.' But Abraham said, 'Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented. And besides all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.' Then he said, 'I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father's house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them, lest they also come to this place of torment.' Abraham said to him, 'They have Moses and the prophets; let them hear them.' And he said, 'No, father Abraham; but if one goes to them from the dead, they will repent.' But he said to him, 'If they do not hear Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rise from the dead.'"

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Today an elderly person has come from far away. I am truly glad and thankful. There were family members who had cared and prayed for the salvation of Grandfather and Grandmother, and I am glad to see them seated here like this. I hope that they will receive the remission of sins, live the rest of their lives well, and then be held in the bosom of God.

What is the purpose for which a person lives?

The purpose for which a person lives is to enter the kingdom of God and live happily forever. I know that it is good to live healthily and to live in plenty while alive in this world. But where a person goes when he dies is more important than that. The person who goes to a good place when he dies can be said to be the person who has truly succeeded.

In the text we have read today, our Lord tells us the story of a rich man and the beggar Lazarus. Long ago, a certain rich man was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day, and a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, was laid at the rich man's gate, desiring to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. It says that even the dogs came and licked his sores.

A rich man and the beggar Lazarus

The Lord places this rich man and the beggar Lazarus side by side and speaks to us. While the rich man lived in this world, he wore purple clothing. Purple clothing is clothing that shows nobility, and it is the clothing a king wears. On top of that he wore even fine linen and fared sumptuously every day.

On the other hand, while Lazarus was alive, he was laid at the rich man's gate, desiring to be fed with what fell from the rich man's table. He was in a state where the dogs came and licked his sores. One man enjoyed great wealth and lived comfortably and at ease, and the other lived as a beggar and lived a wretched life in which animals came and licked his wounds.

But after death it was reversed. One man died and entered Abraham's bosom and reached heaven, and the other man died and entered the hot fire and suffered torment. There, the rich man cried out asking that Lazarus be sent to dip just one drop of water on the tip of his finger. He entered a hell as terrible as that.

Whether one is a person who has truly succeeded is not decided by one's life on this earth alone. The one whose soul has received salvation before God and received the remission of sins, and who clearly goes to a good place not only in this life but also when he goes to the next life, is the one who has truly succeeded.

Success and failure are decided in that world

Living in this life is not everything for a person. It is said that it is appointed for a person to be born once and to die once, and that after this there is the judgment. We know and believe that the one who receives the salvation of his soul before God and goes to God is the one who has succeeded in life, and that the life that does not receive salvation, lives in grand style in this world, and then goes to hell is a failed life.

There are two kinds of people in this world. There is the life that, like that rich man, is clothed in purple and fine linen, sets out food every day, enjoys itself eating and drinking, and then departs. On the other side there is the weary life in which nothing one does goes well and which is so painful that, like Job, one

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laments, why was I born into a life like this?

In this world it seems that the rich man succeeded and Lazarus was ruined. But where were success and failure decided? The success and failure of the man who entered Abraham's bosom and the man who could not enter Abraham's bosom and entered the hot fire were decided in that world. Then for what must you and I live? We must live for the spirit.

The animal that has a split hoof and chews the cud

Yesterday evening, in the young adults' meeting, we shared the word together about the clean animals and the unclean animals, the clean birds and the unclean birds, and the clean fish and the unclean fish in Leviticus. What kind of animal did God call a clean animal and tell them to catch and eat?

It is the animal that has a split hoof and chews the cud. Chewing the cud is bringing out again what one has once eaten, chewing it over and swallowing it, and then bringing it out again and chewing it again, so as to supply nourishment to the whole body. He said that the animal that has a split hoof and chews the cud, such an animal, is the clean animal that God has determined, so catch and eat it.

Then what does this word mean? It is that after we have been saved, our hearts must be clearly divided. It is the word that we must make it clear whether we will live for the spirit or live for the flesh, whether we will follow the spirit for the work of saving souls or follow the flesh.

We must rightly follow the spirit. He said that after we have been saved, it is right to live for the work of saving souls. For that, our hearts must be clearly divided. Both the spirit and the flesh are within us, but the heart must be clearly determined.

God has said that we should live the rest of our lives for the spirit and live for the work of saving souls, and that living that way is right. Then we must determine it in our hearts. We must clearly determine it, saying, 'God, that word is right. I also believe so.'

The rich man who asked for one drop of water in Hades

It says that Lazarus entered Abraham's bosom. The rich man died later than Lazarus. Is there anyone who does not die because he is rich? The rich man died too. He died and went before God, but he went to hell. Let us all read together with one voice from verse 22 to verse 25.

"So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham's bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom. 'Then he cried and said, "Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame." But Abraham said, "Son, remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented" (Luke 16:22–25).

Lazarus died, and the rich man died too. But Lazarus went to heaven as soon as he died. He was held in Abraham's bosom. Abraham is the father of faith. He is a person who was saved by faith, believing the word God spoke. He had nothing at all to put forward as his own deeds. Even so, he went to heaven by faith.

Though Lazarus was a beggar, he was a person who believed the word of God. He was a person who had received the

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remission of sins. That is why, as soon as he died, Abraham held him in his bosom.

Following him, the rich man died. The rich man died and cried out in torment in Hades. Seeing Lazarus held in Abraham's bosom on the other side of that great gulf, he cried out as follows. He pleaded, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue just once.

You too will know that when one has a high fever, the inside of one's mouth is sore. How severe must the torment in the hot fire have been for him to ask that at least his tongue be cooled with a single drop of water? This cry tells us what that torment was like.

There is one more thing the Lord pointed out as He spoke in this parable. It is that while this rich man was alive, he looked at Lazarus and regarded him as, that man is my servant even after death. When a person lives as a rich man in this world, he looks at a poor person and harbors the heart that says, you are my servant even after death.

But after death, people are clearly divided into those who have been saved and those who have not been saved. It is not that even after death the poor must always serve the rich and follow the rich.

Emperor Qin Shi Huang of China, when he was about to die, made figures of the subordinates he commanded and set them up inside his tomb, and even buried living people with him, trying to make them his subordinates even after death. But God has told us that being alive is one thing, and after death, according to whether one has received salvation or has not received it, one person goes to heaven and one person enters the hot fire.

When the rich man asked for even a single drop of water in torment in hell, what did Abraham answer? He said, *"Son,*

remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented" (Luke 16:25).

Do not worry about what you will eat or what you will put on

Dear fellow believers, who is rich and who is poor in this life is not everything. For what must a person live, and with what purpose must he live? It is to be born into this world and receive the remission of sins.

Jesus Christ, who is God, became a man and came to this earth. And He received the baptism that John gave in the Jordan River. What was the ministry of John the Baptist? It was the work of passing all the sins of this earth onto Jesus. Thus the sins of you and me and of all the people of the whole world passed onto His body, and the Lord washed us as white as snow.

And He died on the Cross in our place, and having died, He rose again after three days and became our Savior. Those who believe in their hearts the fact that He has become our Savior, that is, those who have obtained salvation by faith, go to heaven.

To believe that Jesus Christ has saved us with the water and the Spirit and so go to heaven—that very thing is the purpose for which God made our lives, the purpose for which we believe in God, and the purpose for which we were born into this world.

Where does our true purpose lie? Would living in this life be the whole of life? It is not so. God Himself came clothed in the form of us human beings, took upon Himself all the sins of mankind by receiving baptism in the Jordan River, bore even all the sins of our whole lives and fulfilled all righteousness, received the judgment on the Cross in our place, rose again on

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the third day after His death, and became our true Savior. To receive the remission of sins by believing in that Son of God and go to the kingdom of heaven is the purpose for which we were born into this world and the purpose for which God made us.

God is seeking us even now. In Luke chapter 15 are recorded the parable of seeking the lost sheep, the parable of seeking the lost drachma, and the story of the second son returning to his father. It is the heart of God to seek every life that, because sin entered through Adam and Eve, through that sin which Satan the Devil breathed in, has left God and is living prodigally and suffering. God came to this earth to save such people.

God said not to worry, while living in this world, about what we will eat, what we will put on, or what we will drink. He asks, God clothes even the grass of the field and God feeds even the birds that fly in the air, so why do you, having no faith, regard yourselves as less than the grass of the field? And then He said, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness,"* and *"Sufficient for the day is its own trouble."*

While living in this world, people pour all their hearts into what they will eat, what they will put on, how they can live more richly, and how they can wear finer linen. The flesh is something that feels even very slight differences, so that using something coarse and using something soft are so different. I too came to know in my body only after I grew older what the words in the Bible, fine linen, mean.

The flesh feels very keenly that the difference between wearing coarse linen and wearing fine linen is this great. But that feeling cannot be the purpose of our lives.

Our Lord said, *"Therefore I say to you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; nor about your body, what you will put on. Is not life more than food and the body more than clothing? Look at the birds of the air, for*

they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not of more value than they? Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature? 'So why do you worry about clothing? Consider the lilies of the field, how they grow: they neither toil nor spin."

The Lord speaks to us who have received the remission of sins by believing that Jesus Christ has saved us with the water and the Spirit. He says, why do you worry about such things? A person is born and worries and toils so much over food, clothing, and shelter and lives only for food, clothing, and shelter, but He says, seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness; sufficient for the day is its own trouble.

The trouble while living in this world is sufficient as the trouble while living in this world. But that world is different. If one believes the salvation by which Jesus came to this earth and took upon Himself all my sins in the Jordan River, took upon Himself even the sins committed in this world and removed the sins, and shouldered the sins in my place and died, then in that world one's circumstances on this earth have nothing to do with it.

Whether one lived as a rich person or lived poorly on this earth has nothing to do with it. Sufficient for the day is its own trouble. Even if one's body falls ill and there are many agonies and anguishes in the affairs of life, all of those are only sufferings in this world and cannot follow one into that world.

To whom do the worries, torments, and curses that continue on into that world come? They come to the one who does not believe the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins in the Jordan River, that He took upon Himself all the sin of the world that we commit until we die, and that He shouldered those sins in our place on the Cross and died. It is that the worries and anxieties of this world continue on into the torment of the fiery

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pit of hell in that world.

Therefore, we must believe in Jesus Christ, who has caused us to be born again of water and the Spirit. God Himself has saved us human beings from sin. One must believe in Jesus as one's own Savior and have one's soul saved from sin.

We must not set our hearts only on what we eat and drink. We must pour our hearts into whether my heart has been saved from sin and whether my heart believes in Jesus Christ or does not believe. We must devote ourselves wholeheartedly to seeking God and to having my soul saved.

It is said, *"With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10),* and it is said, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. We hear the word of God and believe that word, and so receive salvation. Where does true faith lie? It lies in hearing and believing the word of God.

It is not that faith grows out of our living kindly and living well and so we go to heaven. God made this world, came to this earth Himself, took upon His own body all our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, died in our place on the Cross, and rose again. Only when we believe with our hearts in that Jesus Christ, that is, in that God who loved us, and believe this gospel recorded in the word, do we enter heaven. Amen.

What is the true Way of our lives?

You and I must clearly determine our will and live toward the goal. A person is born into this world once; for what purpose will he live? We must live so that our souls may be saved, that is, to receive the remission of the sins of our hearts.

Confucius said that if one realizes the Way in the morning,

one may die in the evening without regret. What is the true Way? Is not the character for the Way a character that means a road? It is the saying that if one has found the road to the kingdom of heaven, if one has realized that Way, one may realize it in the morning and die in the evening without regret.

Where does the true Way lie for us? Jesus Christ is the true Way. Jesus Christ said, *"I am the way" (John 14:6)*. If one believes in Jesus, one goes to heaven.

Jesus came to this earth, received baptism in the Jordan River, and took over all our sins. And He received the judgment on the Cross on our behalf. If we believe in that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, our Savior, our God who is our Creator, we receive salvation.

What is the true Way? What is the true Way that our lives must realize? To believe the fact that Jesus Christ took upon Himself our sins and saved us, and that this Savior saved us with the water and the blood, is to realize the Way.

The Bible says that there is a day of our Lord's second coming. And it also tells us when the time of the Lord's coming is. He said that He will come at the time when people are living eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, and buying and selling. At that time, what kind of person can receive the Lord? He said that when the Lord comes, one will be taken and the other will be left.

What kind of person is taken before God? He said, *"Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it."* The one who lives only for the life of his own flesh suffers destruction. More precious than the flesh is one's own soul. The Bible says that the one who believes the word of Jesus Christ for the salvation of his soul, and who, whatever anyone may say, believes that Jesus Christ has saved him with the water and the Spirit—such a person is taken before God.

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He said, *"He who finds his life will lose it, and he who loses his life for My sake will find it."* The one who has set the goal of living only for his own flesh does not receive salvation. Whether one lives in a royal palace or rolls about on cow dung in this world, the things of this world are not everything. My soul is before God, and that soul must receive salvation. He said, *"Though your sins are like scarlet, They shall be as white as snow."*

How can I receive the remission of the sins of my soul? How did Jesus remove my sins? The person who has prepared the remission of the sins of his soul by believing in that Jesus Christ, the person who believes in the remission of the sins of his soul—God takes such a person to heaven.

Here there are those who are advanced in years, and there are also many who are still young. Then for what shall we live? While doing the work of the flesh entrusted to us in this world, what would be the true purpose of our lives?

It is to receive the remission of the sins of our hearts so that our souls come to a state in which there is not a single sin. It is to believe that all our sins have passed onto Jesus Christ. Should we not live making it our purpose to have our souls cleansed, live in a state without sin, and go to that kingdom? We must live having set going to the kingdom of heaven as our goal. On this earth we are sojourners. We are sojourners who play house for a little while and then pass on.

The child who cried under the eaves because he had nowhere to go

Long ago, when winter came, children would gather on the playground and play, spinning tops, flipping paper tiles, jumping

over rubber-band ropes, and riding sleds on the ice. From the morning the children would gather in a huddle and play all day long. Then the sun would slowly sink and evening would come.

When evening comes, the parents go out to look for their children. They call, so-and-so, come and eat; so-and-so, come and eat. The children, called by their mother, called by their elder brother, called by their parents, answered, 'Yes,' and went home one by one.

But though all the children had gone home, one child alone could not go home. After everyone had gone, that child sat under the eaves sniffling and crying. Why was he crying? Because he had nowhere to go.

Our lives must have a place to go. Hell is not the place for us to go. The place we are truly to go is Abraham's bosom. That heaven which the father of faith entered, the place full of the fragrance of orchids, where the sound of music rings out, where there is every beauty and goodness and preciousness and the beauty of God—we must enter that heaven.

When you and I have lived busily and hurriedly on this earth and our souls leave our bodies, where do we go? Do we have a place to go? If we have received the remission of sins, we have a place to go. But has your heart received the remission of sins, as white as snow? Are you without sin? We must prepare the remission of sins in your hearts and mine.

Only then can we go to that place to which God calls us after we have finished living in this world. We must have a place to go. Even if we have a place to go, a reservation must have been made for a good place. Just as one buys a bus ticket or a plane ticket well in advance, we must buy the ticket to heaven well in advance. Then what is that ticket to heaven?

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The ticket to heaven is stamped with two kinds of dye

That ticket is not our merit. It is not the good doing of you and me. It is not that we kept the Law well, nor that we lived kindly, nor that we lived as rich people, nor that we gave many offerings. That ticket is precisely the ticket of the water and the Spirit.

It is the work God has done. It is to believe the work that God came to this earth, took upon Himself all my sins with the water, and, shouldering those sins on the Cross, received all the judgment in my place. It is to receive the remission of sins by believing the fact that Jesus is one's own Savior, and so prepare that ticket to heaven.

The person who has prepared and waits goes at any time when the Lord calls. If only one has that ticket, if only one has that faith that believes that He has saved one with the water and the blood, one goes to the kingdom of heaven. Now, on this ticket to the kingdom of heaven two kinds of dye are stamped. The ticket is stamped in blue and scarlet, and the border of that ticket is purple.

Blue is the baptism Jesus received, and scarlet is the blood Jesus shed. When those who believe in the blue and the scarlet try to enter heaven with this ticket of faith, our Lord, standing before the gate of heaven, receives the one who has that ticket. We must know the fact that He receives only the person who has that ticket stamped with the dyes of blue, scarlet, and purple.

How did our Lord take Lazarus to heaven? God became a man and came as the baby Jesus, and when He was 30 years old, He received baptism in the Jordan River, saying, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Just as in the Old Testament a lamb received the laying on of hands and

took over sins, Jesus took over all our sins by receiving baptism.

Thus He took over all our sins and received all that judgment on the Cross in our place. That is how Jesus became the Savior of you and me. On the ticket for entering heaven two kinds of pigment representing the water and the blood are stamped, and on the border purple is stamped. Only by going in with that ticket can one enter that place.

Let us prepare the faith of you and me. Let us prepare true faith. How did our Lord save us? How did He take over our sins? The Lord was born in Bethlehem to save us. He came to a stable.

He came to save lowly you and me. He did not come to save the rich of the world or those who live in grand style only for their own flesh. He came to save those who are oppressed and suffering on this earth, the sick, the poor, the orphans and widows, those who truly suffer much on this earth, and the lost.

Our Lord came and, when He was 30 years old, received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* In this way, by the method of receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He took over all the sins of all people and fulfilled all the righteousness of God.

Just as rice seedlings are transplanted into a paddy field, when Jesus Christ received baptism from John, all the sins of mankind passed onto the body of Jesus Christ and were planted on His head. Jesus, who took over all those sins, received all the judgment for those sins on the Cross on our behalf, and so has saved us from sin.

This very ticket is the ticket to heaven by which our Lord has saved us. Only when we believe in the water and the blood in our hearts, only when we have the faith that believes in those two, do we enter heaven. We must not believe only in the blood of Jesus or only in the baptism of Jesus. It is two. Why did God

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set these two? These two speak of witnesses. They speak of the evidence that He has clearly saved us.

Even in the courts of this world, when witnesses are set up, not one person but two are set up. Our Lord has saved us with the water and the blood. He not only took upon Himself our sins in person but also died in place of our sins. He received the judgment. Thus He has saved us with the water and the blood. This very ticket is the ticket of heaven by which God has saved you and me. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Amen.

The Lord who dried up the fountain of blood

Our Lord has told us in many places in the Bible and in many forms how Lazarus was saved. Long ago, when Jesus was on this earth, there was a woman who suffered from a flow of blood. A flow of blood is a disease in which blood always flows and does not stop. As a woman, since her blood did not stop, how great must her shame and suffering have been?

But when this woman heard the rumor that Jesus was passing through her town, she sprang up. Jesus came into the town surrounded by many people. With the faith that if she only touched the hem of that Jesus' garment she would be healed, this woman pushed her way in among the people and took hold of the hem of Jesus' garment. The Bible records that immediately power came upon her and the fountain of her blood was dried up.

A flow of blood is a disease in which, even if one wipes away the blood, blood comes out again, and even if one wipes it away, it comes out again. But the Bible records that the fountain of the blood was dried up. The fountain was dried up.

We too commit sins from the time we are born into this world until we go before God. We are exactly the same as the one who

had the flow of blood. If Jesus had only wiped away that woman's blood with a handkerchief with a single stroke, the blood would not have come out for a short while. But soon the blood would have come out again.

Did Jesus heal in the manner of wiping only the outside? No. Jesus dried up the fountain. Our Lord took upon Himself, by receiving baptism in the Jordan River, all these sins we commit from the time we are born into this world until we die, and made us clean without sin. He has saved you and me like this.

Sin is not only what one commits by trying to commit it on purpose. The Old Testament says that a person commits sin even unintentionally. One commits sin because one is weak, because one's temper is bad, because one is quick-tempered, because one is too generous, because one's heart is good, and because one's heart is not good. One does not commit sin by making a plan, but commits sin unintentionally.

But our Lord took upon Himself all the sins of you and me and of all the people of this world by coming to the Jordan River 1,900 years ago from now, saying to John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, and receiving baptism.

Until the day this earth ends, though we do not know when that day is, our Lord already removed 1,900 years ago even the sins of the children who will be born until that day it ends. That is why Jesus has truly become our Savior.

That Jesus Christ who dried up the fountain of blood, by receiving baptism in the Jordan River, cleanly removed the sins of you and me from their very source and made us people without a single sin. We should believe this fact.

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It is right to live for the spirit

In the parable of the rich man and Lazarus, both men died, but one went to heaven and one went to hell. He said, *"Remember that in your lifetime you received your good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things; but now he is comforted and you are tormented" (Luke 16:25).*

Then the rich man asked that Lazarus be sent to him, but he was told that a great gulf was fixed so that no one could cross over. Then the rich man asked that, since he had brothers, they might not come to that place, and that Lazarus might be sent to tell them.

What did our Lord say? He said that even if the dead Lazarus rose and told them, they would not believe. He said that on this earth there are prophets and there are the servants of God, and the one who does not believe their words would not believe even if the dead Lazarus rose and spoke.

We must believe the fact that when a person dies, he goes to heaven or to hell. He has told us that My servants are on this earth and preach the gospel of the water and the blood, that they preach being born again of water and the Spirit exactly as Jesus spoke it, and that the one who hears the words of My servants and believes enters heaven like Lazarus, and the one who does not believe enters hell like that rich man.

Dear fellow believers, since the time is up, I will close now. Do you believe in that ticket to heaven by which Jesus has saved us with the water and the Spirit? Amen. Do you believe that the baptism of Jesus and the blood of Jesus on the Cross have saved us from all sins? Amen.

Believe. Only when one believes in this water and blood does one enter heaven and go to the kingdom of heaven. The person who does not believe cannot help but fear God. God has given

that ticket free of charge, and He says that two kinds of dye are stamped on this ticket so that if one only takes it and goes, one enters heaven; will you not believe in this ticket, and so suffer on this earth and go to hell in that world as well?

You must believe. It is said, *"With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation."* By believing with the heart one becomes righteous and becomes a child of God, and by confessing with the mouth one obtains salvation. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Amen. Do you believe that Jesus has saved you with the water and the blood? Amen.

You must believe. I believe too. Our Lord came 1,900 years ago and took upon Himself all my sins in the Jordan River. Through that work, Jesus Christ took away all the sins in my heart. Because I believe the fact that they all passed over when He received baptism, there is no sin in my heart. Though I am still lacking, I have no sin.

Though I am lacking, because Jesus received the judgment in my place on the Cross, there is nothing for me to be judged for. There is no one to accuse me, and there is no one to judge me.

Then how must the person who has been saved live now? God has said that it is right for the person who has been saved to live for the spirit. It is right for you and me, who have been saved, to live for the work of saving souls. I believe so too. Do you also believe so?

Let us believe so and live preaching the gospel. Do you want your family to go to hell, or do you want them to be saved? We must live for the spirit. Our hearts must be clearly divided. The pig has a split hoof but cannot chew the cud. We have always heard this word, but we must bring it out again and chew the cud.

We live for one of the two. We serve the flesh and also serve

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the spirit, but what is our fundamental goal and our final goal? What is the purpose of the life we live? We must live for the work of saving souls. Therefore, we must live for the spirit. It is right to live for the Spirit of God.

The rich man went to hell, and Lazarus went to heaven. In the rest of our lives, let us preach the gospel to those like Lazarus and preach the gospel to the rich as well. Whoever believes receives salvation. Our Lord says that it is harder for a rich man to enter heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle.

Do not become rich in heart. There are people who say, I have plenty of everything; I lack nothing. How could one lack nothing? If there is sin in a person's heart, there is always much that is lacking. One must receive the remission of sins. Blessed are the poor in spirit.

Living on this earth is for a short while. But that world is waiting for us. Heaven and hell are waiting for us. For the person who does not believe in the remission of sins, that is, in the water and the blood, hell is prepared, and for the person who believes in this water and blood, heaven is prepared and waiting.

Let us all believe and all enter heaven, and let us all enter that refreshing place, that beautiful place, that kingdom of God that is good to live in, which Lazarus entered. Let us live praying for the gospel so that all the people on this globe may enter. I will close the message. Let us all pray together. ✉

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CHAPTER

17

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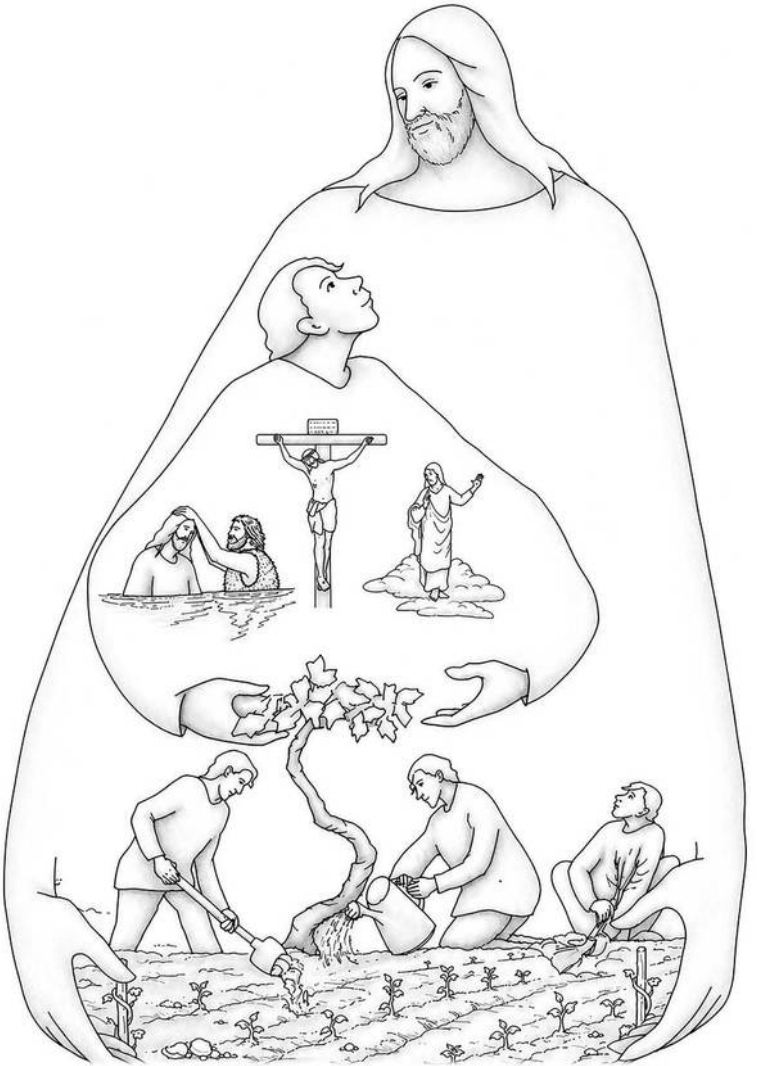

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Luke Chapter 17

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

Luke chapter 17 deals in turn with stumbling and forgiveness, true faith and the attitude of a servant, the cleansing of the ten lepers, the kingdom of God, and the judgment of the last days and the preparation of faith. The whole chapter shows what faith the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must have and how he must live.

1. Rebuke sin and forgive repeatedly (17:1–4)

"Then He said to the disciples, 'It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, "I repent," you shall forgive him.'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus warns that things that cause others to fall into sin

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cannot but happen, but that the person who causes such things bears a grave responsibility.

The *"little ones"* can include not only children but also disciples who are weak in faith or regarded as low in society. He uses the strong expression that destroying the faith of a weak person is more serious than being thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around one's neck.

When a brother sins, one must not unconditionally pretend not to know, but must exhort him so that he realizes his wrong. But if he repents, one must forgive him, and even if he does wrong seven times in a day and returns seven times, one must forgive him.

This does not mean taking sin lightly or continuing to allow abuse. It is a teaching not to harbor personal revenge and hatred toward the person who repents, while setting up the necessary responsibility and safe boundaries.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must forgive our brother with the grace we have received

Jesus warned that things that cause stumbling cannot but exist in the world, but that there is woe to the person who causes another to stumble. In particular, causing a little one who is weak in faith to fall is a very grave sin before God.

Causing a person to stumble does not mean merely hurting his feelings. It is making a soul unable to believe in God and the gospel through one's own words and actions, greed and hypocrisy, and wrong teaching. If one, while claiming to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, seeks one's own selfish desires and honor, or condemns and oppresses others at will, one

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can cause even the gospel to be misunderstood. Therefore, the saints must first examine themselves.

But this is not the word that we should unconditionally cover over a brother's wrong for the reason that we love him. Jesus said to rebuke a brother when he sins, and to forgive him when he repents and returns. The purpose of rebuking lies not in condemning the other person and exalting oneself, but in making him turn from his wrong and return to the way of faith.

If he returns and repents even seven times in a day, we must forgive him. We too were people who had committed sins we could not repay before God, but Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who knows this grace of the remission of sins remembers the mercy he has received and accepts the brother who turns back. Forgiveness is not a merit for obtaining salvation but a fruit that comes from the grace of the remission of sins already received.

2. Faith and the attitude of a servant (17:5–10)

"And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you. And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come at once and sit down to eat"? But will he not rather say to him, "Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink"? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not.

So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do."'"

General interpretation of the text

Having heard the teaching to forgive repeatedly, the apostles ask Jesus to increase their faith. Jesus says that if they have even faith the size of a single mustard seed, they can command the mulberry tree to be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea.

This word does not mean that faith is a magical power that fulfills any wish. It means that relying on God, who is the object of faith, is more important than the size of faith, and that even obedience that seems humanly impossible becomes possible when one trusts God.

The parable of the servant that follows teaches not to boast of one's obedience as one's own merit. After carrying out the work entrusted to him, the servant says that he has done what he had to do.

The expression "*unprofitable servants*" does not mean that a person is of no worth at all. It means that having obeyed God does not give one the right to demand a reward from God or to receive grace. The obedience of a disciple is not a means of accumulating merit but a natural response to grace.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must serve with thanksgiving with living faith

The apostles asked Jesus to increase their faith. To this, Jesus said that even if they had faith the size of a single mustard seed, the mulberry tree would be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea.

What is important here is not how big faith looks on the outside. Even a small mustard seed sprouts and grows if there is life in it. On the other hand, however big a seed may look, it cannot bear fruit if it has no life. It is the same with faith. Even if one has much Bible knowledge and one's religious zeal seems great, if one does not believe in one's heart the salvation God has accomplished, it is not living faith.

Living faith believes that Jesus is God and our Savior. It also truly believes the word that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took upon Himself the sins of our whole lives, that He bore those sins and was hung on the Cross and received the judgment, and that He rose from the dead and saved us. Such faith, though it may look as small as a mustard seed, is the true faith that saves a person from sin.

The reason Jesus went on to speak the parable of the servant was also to teach the attitude of the person who serves the Lord by faith. Even after doing all the work his master commanded, the servant says that he has only done what he ought to do. The saints, too, must not demand a reward from God for the reason that they have done much work for the gospel.

We do the Lord's work not in order to obtain salvation by that work. We serve with thanksgiving because the Lord first saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made us the people and workers of God. Laboring for the preaching of

the gospel and for the Church and souls is not a matter of settling wages with God, but a fruit of thanksgiving for the grace of having been saved.

3. The ten lepers (17:11–19)

"Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' So when He saw them, He said to them, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?' And He said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.'"

General interpretation of the text

On the way as Jesus goes to Jerusalem, ten lepers stand afar off and cry out for Him to have pity on them. The various skin diseases called leprosy at that time not only caused the patients physical suffering but also caused them to be isolated from the community.

Jesus tells them to go and show themselves to the priests. According to the Law, one could return to the community only

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after a priest confirmed whether one had been healed. Believing the word of Jesus, they are cleansed on the way as they go.

Among them, only one person, a Samaritan, returns, gives glory to God, and gives thanks to Jesus. Jews and Samaritans were in a hostile relationship with each other at that time, but it is he, who was treated socially as an outsider, who rather recognizes the grace of Jesus.

All ten received physical healing, but the one who returned expressed thanksgiving and faith in a relationship with Jesus. The word *"Your faith has made you well"* shows that his healing is connected to complete salvation beyond mere bodily recovery.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The one who has received the remission of sins returns to the Lord

On the way as He went to Jerusalem, Jesus met ten lepers. Because lepers at that time had to live apart from people, they too stood afar off and asked Jesus for mercy. Jesus told them to go and show themselves to the priests, and as they went, they were all cleansed.

But among the ten who were cleansed, the only one who returned to Jesus and gave glory to God was a Samaritan. The nine also were cleansed of the disease of the flesh, but they did not return to Jesus, who had bestowed that grace. On the other hand, the Samaritan fell down at the feet of Jesus and gave thanks, and Jesus said that his faith had saved him.

This event shows the fact that help for the flesh and the faith of salvation are not the same. A person can receive health, material things, and the solving of difficulties from God. But the fact that one has received such help alone does not mean that one

has received the remission of sins. One may enjoy only the results of grace and not return to the Savior who bestowed the grace.

The leprosy of sin cannot be cleansed by a person's good deeds and religious efforts. Jesus took upon Himself our sins with His baptism and received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and so solved the root of sin. A sinner must hear this word of salvation and believe in his heart that Jesus is his Savior.

True faith does not stop at the benefit received but returns to Jesus. The person who has received the remission of sins exalts the Lord who cleansed him, gives thanks, and serves the Lord and the gospel. Thanksgiving and service are not the price that buys the remission of sins, but in the person who truly knows the grace of the remission of sins, the fruit of thanksgiving appears.

4. The kingdom of God and the day of the Son of Man (17:20–25)

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.' Then He said to the disciples, 'The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, "Look here!" or "Look there!" Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation."

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General interpretation of the text

When the Pharisees ask when the kingdom of God is coming, Jesus says that it does not come only in a way that people can observe and calculate the date and place.

The word *"the kingdom of God is within you"* can also be translated as 'is among you.' In context, the common interpretation is that it means not that the kingdom of God is in the hearts of the Pharisees, but that the reign of God has already begun because Jesus the King is among them.

But the kingdom of God has not yet been completed. When the Son of Man appears in the future, it will be revealed clearly as lightning lights up the sky, so there is no need to follow rumors that He has appeared in a particular place.

Before that, Jesus must suffer many things and be rejected by the generation of that time. The glory and completion of the kingdom of God are accomplished by passing through the Cross and the resurrection of Jesus.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The kingdom of God comes to the heart that has received the remission of sins

The Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God would come. They thought of the kingdom of God as a visible political kingdom or an earthly nation. But Jesus said that the kingdom of God does not come only in a visible way such that one could say it is here or there, and that the kingdom of God is within a person.

This word does not mean that the kingdom of God is automatically in the heart of every person who has sin. On this earth, the kingdom of God is first established in the heart and

faith of the righteous person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. In the heart of the person who believes the word that Jesus has removed all our sins, the condemnation of sin disappears and the peace of God comes. The Holy Spirit dwells in that heart and rules that person with the word of God.

But the kingdom of God must not be limited to peace of heart alone, either. Jesus will come again in the future so that all people can know, as lightning lights up the whole sky. We must not follow rumors and mysterious phenomena that Christ has appeared here or appeared there. The second coming of Jesus is not an event that only some people know secretly, but an event that will be revealed clearly to the whole world.

Before that glorious day comes, Jesus first had to suffer many things and be rejected by the generation of that time. The suffering of the Lord was not the failure of the plan of salvation. Because Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world with His baptism, He had to receive the judgment for those sins on the Cross. And after rising from the dead, He will come again in the future as the Judge and King.

5. The days of Noah and Lot (17:26–30)

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of

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Man is revealed."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus compares the day when the Son of Man appears to the days of Noah and Lot. The people of Noah's time ate, drank, and married and then met the flood, and the people of Lot's time also bought and sold, farmed, and built houses and then met the judgment.

This does not mean that eating and drinking or marrying and working are sins in themselves. The problem was that people were absorbed only in daily life, ignored the warning of God, and were not at all prepared for the judgment.

The day of the Son of Man, too, will come suddenly at a time people do not expect. Therefore, rather than calculating dates or being seized with fear, a disciple must remember God in daily life and live faithfully so that he can receive the Lord at any time.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must prepare the faith of salvation before the judgment

Jesus said that the time of His second coming would be like the days of Noah and the days of Lot. The people of Noah's time ate and drank, married and were given in marriage until the day of entering the ark. The people of Lot's time also ate and drank, bought and sold, planted, and built houses.

This does not mean that eating and drinking, marrying, working, and building houses are sins in themselves. The problem lay in the fact that people were absorbed only in their

immediate daily lives and did not believe the word of God and the warning of judgment. Because the world was going on as usual, they lived as if the judgment would not come. But when Noah entered the ark, the flood came, and when Lot went out of Sodom, the judgment of fire and brimstone came.

The last day is like this as well. People will be living as usual and then meet the second coming and judgment of the Lord at a time they did not think of. Faith cannot be prepared after that time has come. Therefore, while we are alive now, we must admit that we are sinners who must be judged, and believe the salvation Jesus accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The saints must not calculate the date of the second coming or spread fear by forcibly fitting every event in the world to signs. They must believe the fact that the Lord will come again just as the word of God says, and preach the gospel in the place now entrusted to them and prepare their faith.

6. Do not look back, but prepare (17:31–37)

"In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.' And they answered and said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' So He said to them, 'Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together."

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General interpretation of the text

On the day of the Son of Man, the person on the housetop or in the field must not turn back to gather his possessions. Jesus says to remember Lot's wife, who looked back as she was leaving Sodom.

This is a word warning against attachment to the possessions of the world and one's former life rather than against the act of gathering things itself. The one who makes only the preservation of his own life his highest purpose loses true life, but the one who entrusts himself to God comes to obtain life.

He says that even when two people are together, one will be taken and the other will be left. Interpretations are divided as to whether being taken is salvation or judgment. Considering the context of Noah and Lot, many interpret it as being taken away in judgment, but the core of the text lies in the fact that each person is revealed individually before the judgment of God.

The word *"Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together"* can be understood to mean that just as it is certain that birds gather where there is a corpse, the judgment of God cannot be avoided or hidden either. Rather than trying to find out the exact place, one must realize the fact that the judgment of God is certain and unavoidable.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must not look back but prepare individual faith

Jesus said that on the day when the Son of Man appears, one should not come down to take the goods in the house, and the person in the field should not turn back either. And He said to

remember Lot's wife.

Lot's wife came out of Sodom in body, but her heart remained in the world she had left behind. She valued what she had left in Sodom more than the word not to look back, and in the end she received the judgment just as the word said. The saints, too, can be inside the Church outwardly while in their hearts holding on only to the material things and pleasures of the world and their own safety.

The word that the one who seeks to preserve his life loses it and the one who loses it lives does not mean to treat life carelessly. It means that one must not try to hold on to the safety of the flesh and the possessions of the world to the point of abandoning the Lord and the gospel. Jesus gave up His own life to save us. The saints who have received this grace must value the Lord and the gospel more than the benefits of the world.

Even when two people are lying together and two people are working together, one is taken and the other is left. This shows the fact that salvation is not accomplished collectively, but that each person must believe the word of God in his heart. The fact that one's family believes or the fact that one is together in the Church cannot take the place of one's individual faith.

Each person must believe in his heart the word that Jesus took upon Himself our sins with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and rose from the dead. And after receiving the remission of sins, he must be united with the Church, keep his faith, and serve the gospel. The final judgment comes unavoidably, just as the eagles gather where the body is. Therefore, we must prepare our faith in the present, when we can hear and believe the word.

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Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 17 conveys

Luke chapter 17 shows together the faith that receives the remission of sins and the life after being saved.

First, a person must have living faith, even if it is only the size of a mustard seed. He must believe in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

The saints who have received the remission of sins must examine themselves so as not to cause others to stumble, and must forgive the brother who turns back. They must not put forward what they have done as merit, but must serve the gospel in thanksgiving for the grace of having been saved. They must also give thanks to the Lord who saved them and give glory to God, like the Samaritan, the one among the ten lepers who returned.

The kingdom of God is first established in the heart and faith of such a righteous person. But the Lord will come again in glory in the future. As in the days of Noah and Lot, that day will come suddenly at a time people do not think of. Therefore, we must not have our hearts taken captive by the world or look back like Lot's wife, but each of us must now believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and prepare the faith with which to meet the Lord. ✉

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

The life of the saved saints and the second coming of the Lord

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 above, we examined each passage of Luke chapter 17 through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit side by side. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will examine in detail the life that does not cause a brother to stumble but forgives him, the attitude of a servant who believes the word and is faithful, and the faith that gives thanks for the grace of having been saved and prepares for the day of the Son of Man.

The warning not to cause a brother to stumble, the faith like a single mustard seed, the parable of the unprofitable servant, the ten lepers, and the words about the kingdom of God and the day of the Son of Man are not lessons separate from one another. All these words show the fact that the saved person must not boast of his own faith and labor, but must forgive and serve his brothers with the grace he has received, and must wait in faith for the Lord who will come again while giving thanks to Jesus.

The passage-by-passage expository sermon that follows examines, following the flow of the text, how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and

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completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

Do not cause a little one to stumble, but forgive the brother who repents

"Then He said to the disciples, 'It is impossible that no offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones. Take heed to yourselves. If your brother sins against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him. And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, "I repent," you shall forgive him.'" (Luke 17:1–4).

Jesus spoke this word to His own disciples. Before this, He had rebuked the Pharisees, who loved money and regarded themselves as righteous before men, and through the word about the rich man and Lazarus He had warned of the end of a life that rejected the word of God. Now He tells the disciples not to cause other souls to fall, to rebuke sin truthfully, and to forgive the brother who repents.

Do not cause one little one to stumble

Jesus said that in a world with sin, things that cause stumbling cannot but happen, but that there is woe to the person who causes another soul to stumble. Responsibility and judgment surely follow the act of causing a soul to fall with false teaching and greedy conduct.

The stumbling spoken of in the text is a serious matter of dragging a weak person into sin, or of destroying his faith with false teaching and a bad example and so making him grow distant from God and the gospel of salvation.

In particular, mixing a person's deeds or repeated prayers of repentance into the gospel of the water and the Spirit as conditions for the remission of sins, or removing the fact that Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John and preaching another gospel, is something that greatly causes souls to fall. A person who cannot yet discern the gospel accurately can easily believe the words of an authoritative preacher or teacher. Therefore, the person who preaches the gospel must not mix his own thoughts and doctrines into the word, but must accurately preach the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Not only false teaching but also greed, abuse of authority, and hypocritical conduct can cause people to stumble. If one speaks of the gospel with one's mouth while taking advantage of the weak and hiding the truth to protect one's own position, the person who sees that can come to distrust even the gospel. Pastors and teachers, parents and leaders must not take lightly the influence their words and conduct have on other souls.

In the parallel passage in Matthew chapter 18, Jesus called these little ones *"these little ones who believe in Me."* The little ones refer to souls, including children, who are weak in faith and lacking in discernment and so need protection and care. God regards even one soul that people consider insignificant as more precious than the whole world.

The word that it would be better to be thrown into the sea with a millstone hung around one's neck shows how heavy the sin of causing one soul to stumble is. God severely judges the one who blocks the way of salvation and leads weak souls with a false gospel.

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"Take heed to yourselves"

Jesus went on to say, *"Take heed to yourselves."* Before finding only the faults of others and condemning them, a disciple must examine himself. He must reflect on whether the teaching he conveys is blurring the gospel, whether his words and actions are confusing weak people, and whether his greed and stubbornness are making others grow distant from God.

Even the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins can commit wrongs and hurt others because of the weakness of the flesh. If one has realized a wrong, one must acknowledge it and turn from it, and strive to set right the harm one has caused. This is not an act for obtaining the remission of sins again, but a fruit of faith that appears in the saved person.

Jesus said to rebuke a brother when he sins. To rebuke is a loving exhortation that truthfully makes the wrong known and turns him to the right way so that the sin does not keep harming his soul and the community. True love does not leave a brother to remain in sin but awakens him with the word of God.

When a brother repents, one must forgive him. Repentance is not saying sorry with the mouth only in order to avoid responsibility, but the attitude of acknowledging one's wrong and trying to turn from that sin. Jesus said to forgive even if he sins seven times in a day and returns seven times and repents.

The word seven times means to keep forgiving the brother who repents and returns. The person who remembers the remission of sins he has received from God does not keep digging up past wrongs to condemn or retaliate against his brother, but accepts him so that he may live rightly again.

"If he repents, forgive him"

A person is not saved by the merit of having forgiven others much. Because everyone has the sins of having caused others to stumble, told lies, hated, and tried to retaliate, one must first receive the remission of sins from God. Those sins cannot be removed by a person's resolution and good deeds alone.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, in the Jordan River, Jesus took upon His own body all the sins of the world, including the sins of causing others to stumble, false teaching, hatred, and retaliation. And bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so received the judgment of sin, and He rose again on the third day and completed our salvation. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The remission of sins God has bestowed in Christ becomes the basis on which one can forgive one's brother. Because the believer knows that he too has had the debt of sin that he could not repay canceled by grace alone, he has compassion on the brother who repents and returns, and forgives him. Forgiveness is not a condition or merit for obtaining salvation, but a fruit in which the grace already received appears in one's life.

The Church must be strictly on guard against causing the little ones to stumble through a false gospel, greed, and abuse of authority. At the same time, it must not keep condemning, for his past sins, the brother who acknowledges his wrong and turns back, but must help him to live rightly again within the gospel.

The person who has received the remission of all his sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit regards one soul as precious and preaches the true gospel. He is careful in his

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words and conduct, rebukes his brother's sin with the word, and lives forgiving, with the grace he himself has received, the brother who repents and returns.

Give thanks for grace and serve with living faith

"And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you. And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come at once and sit down to eat"? But will he not rather say to him, "Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink"? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do."'" (Luke 17:5–10).

Before this, Jesus had told the disciples to take heed to themselves so as not to cause others to stumble, and to forgive again and again the brother who sins if he repents. Knowing the fact that their own faith in following the Lord was lacking, the apostles pleaded, *"Increase our faith."*

True faith the size of a mustard seed is enough

To the apostles who asked Him to increase their faith, Jesus said that even if they had faith the size of a single mustard seed, the mulberry tree would be pulled up by the roots and be planted

in the sea. In faith, the vitality of truly believing the word of God is more important than the size that appears on the outside.

A mustard seed is very small, but there is life in it. Likewise, even if faith looks small and weak to the eyes of people, if it is faith that has received the true word of God in the heart, it bears the fruit of life. On the other hand, even if one's conviction seems strong and one's emotions seem fervent, if one believes something different from the word of God, it is not saving faith. What matters is not how strongly a person is convinced, but whom he believes in and what he believes.

The word that the mulberry tree would be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea means that even what seems impossible by human strength is accomplished when one believes the word of God. The power of faith lies not in a person's emotions or ability but in the living God and His word. When the saved person preaches the gospel and is united with the Church and faithfully carries out the work entrusted to him, God accomplishes His will through that faith.

The faith that receives salvation is like this as well. It is impossible for a person to remove his own sins and become righteous by himself. Religious zeal and good deeds, repeated prayers of repentance and service cannot wash away all the sins of the heart. But God has Himself accomplished, through Jesus Christ, the salvation that a person cannot accomplish.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, in the Jordan River, Jesus took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so received the judgment of sin, and He rose again on the third day, overcame sin and death, and completed our salvation.

The person who truly believes the gospel of the water and

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the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. One is saved not by boasting of the size of one's faith or putting forward special experiences, but by accepting as fact the word of salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. Though it may look as small as a mustard seed, there is eternal life in the faith that truly believes this gospel.

The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins lives according to the word of the Lord with that same faith. He can forgive even the person who is hard to forgive by his own emotions, remembering the remission of sins he has received from God, and he can begin even the preaching of the gospel and the service that are hard to carry out by his own ability, believing that God will accomplish them. There is no need to be discouraged because one's faith looks small. It is because God, the object of faith, is great.

"We are unprofitable servants"

Jesus went on to speak the word about the servant plowing or tending sheep. Even after finishing the work entrusted to him in the field and coming back, the servant prepares his master's meal and serves him, and only then eats himself. Jesus spoke of the fact that a servant cannot think that, because he has done the work he was commanded, he has put his master under an obligation to reward him on the basis of his obedience.

The person who has carried out the Lord's work by faith, too, cannot attribute the result to his own ability and merit. It is because God gave the word and made him believe, and gave him the strength and wisdom he needed and made him bear fruit.

After doing the Lord's work, one must not boast that one has accomplished something, but must give glory to God, who accomplished everything.

The confession *"We are unprofitable servants"* is the confession of humility of a servant who has done his master's command and does not put forward his labor as merit. Even after faithfully carrying out the work entrusted to him, the saved person does not think that he has put God in his debt, but confesses, *"We have done what was our duty to do."*

Both salvation and the qualification to serve were first received by the grace of God. A person easily thinks that if he does much evangelism and service, giving of offerings and church work, God must give him material things, health, and success in return. But such an attitude turns grace into a transaction. Salvation is not the wages for a person's work, but a gift received free of charge by believing in the righteousness Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Doing the Lord's work is not a condition for buying or keeping salvation, but a fruit of faith that the person who has already been saved bears with thanksgiving.

Serve on the basis of the grace of God

The believer is not a person who serves on the condition that the Lord will give him what he wants in the future. He serves in thanksgiving for the grace by which Jesus has already saved him from sin and judgment and made him one of the people and workers of God. When one thinks of the grace of salvation received from the Lord, one comes to preach the gospel, be united with the Church, and faithfully carry out the work entrusted to one.

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The saved person must actually do the work entrusted to him. He faithfully carries out the responsibilities entrusted to him in the gospel and the Church, in the home and the workplace, but after finishing that work he does not exalt his own name and merit. Knowing that salvation, faith, and the opportunity to serve were all received by grace, he gives thanks and glory to God, who used him.

Luke chapter 17 verses 5–10 teach true faith that has life and the attitude of a servant who serves by grace. The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart and received the remission of sins believes the word of God and does the work entrusted to him. And after the will of the Lord has been accomplished, he does not put forward his own merit, but confesses, *"We have done what was our duty to do,"* and gives all the glory to God.

The one who believes in grace returns to Jesus and gives glory to God

"Now it happened as He went to Jerusalem that He passed through the midst of Samaria and Galilee. Then as He entered a certain village, there met Him ten men who were lepers, who stood afar off. And they lifted up their voices and said, 'Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!' So when He saw them, He said to them, 'Go, show yourselves to the priests.' And so it was that as they went, they were cleansed. And one of them, when he saw that he was healed, returned, and with a loud voice glorified God, and fell down on his face at His feet, giving Him thanks. And he was a Samaritan. So Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?' And

He said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.'" (Luke 17:11–19).

On the way as He went toward Jerusalem, Jesus passed between Samaria and Galilee. In the Gospel of Luke, this journey is not a mere geographical movement. Jesus had already taken upon Himself all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River, and now, bearing those sins, He was going on the way to accomplish salvation in Jerusalem through the death of the Cross and the resurrection.

"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"

On that way, Jesus met ten lepers. They not only suffered from the disease but also could not be close to people and had to live an isolated life outside the village. That they stood afar off and lifted up their voices even after meeting Jesus shows their desperate situation.

The ten men cried out, *"Jesus, Master, have mercy on us!"* They did not put forward their own qualifications and good deeds. In a situation where they could neither heal the disease themselves nor solve it by the strength of others, they sought the mercy of Jesus. What they needed was not a reward for deeds but the mercy that Jesus bestows.

Jesus saw them. People kept them at a distance for fear of contagion and uncleanness, but Jesus did not turn away from them. The Lord knew the circumstances of these people who were living in isolation and shame, and He spoke with the authority to cleanse them.

Jesus commanded, *"Go, show yourselves to the priests."* Showing oneself to a priest was the procedure by which a person who had become clean received a verdict and returned to the

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community again. The ten men had not yet seen any change appear in their bodies, but they set out on the way according to the word of Jesus, and on the way as they went, they were all cleansed. What cleansed them was the mercy of Jesus and the authority of His word.

"Where are the nine?"

All ten men were cleansed of the disease of the flesh. But only one person realized the grace he had received, returned to Jesus, and gave glory to God. True faith does not stop at receiving benefits through the power of Jesus, but makes one believe in Jesus, who bestowed the grace, and return to Him.

One of them, when he saw that he was healed, turned back from the way he was going. He did not merely confirm the fact that his body had changed, but realized that what had happened to him was grace given by the mercy and power of Jesus. He did not leave for his own life with only the benefit he had received, but returned to the One who had bestowed the grace.

He glorified God with a loud voice. Before, he had asked for mercy with a loud voice in order to be healed, but now he exalted God with a loud voice because of the grace he had received. The lips that had sought help in suffering were changed, after he realized the grace, into lips of thanksgiving and praise.

While giving glory to God, he fell down at the feet of Jesus and gave thanks. Giving glory to God and returning to Jesus were not separated. This shows that Jesus is not a teacher who merely tells people the method of healing, but the One who bestows grace with the saving authority of God.

Luke reveals that the man who returned was a Samaritan. Samaritans were regarded as distant religiously and ethnically in

Jewish society at that time. But among the ten men, the one who returned to Jesus and gave glory to God was not a person who was considered to be in a religiously closer position, but the Samaritan. The salvation of God is received not by nation, lineage, or religious position, but by faith in Jesus.

Jesus asked, *"Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine?"* The nine also had received the cleansing of the flesh by the grace of Jesus, but they did not return to the One who had bestowed the grace. This question reveals the human heart that wants the help and gifts of God yet forgets the very Lord who bestowed the grace.

Even today, people seek the healing of diseases, material help, the solving of family problems, and rescue from difficulties. One can pray to God for such needs, and if one has received help, one must give thanks. But if one obtains only the solving of temporary problems and does not believe who Jesus is and what He accomplished for sinners, one misses the most important grace of salvation.

"Your faith has made you well"

Jesus said to the Samaritan who returned, *"Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."* All ten men were cleansed of the disease, but the word of salvation was proclaimed to the Samaritan who returned to Jesus and fell down at His feet. His faith was not a faith that sought only the power to heal a disease, but true faith that believed in Jesus Himself, who bestowed the grace.

The thanksgiving of the Samaritan was a fruit that came from a heart that believed in the grace he had received. He was first cleansed by the mercy of Jesus, and because he realized that

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grace, he returned and gave thanks. In the heart of the person who truly believes in the grace of salvation, thanksgiving and praise toward Jesus arise.

Just as a leper could not make his body clean by his own strength, a sinner cannot wash away the sins of his heart by his own deeds and religious efforts. The One who can completely save a person from the disease of sin is Jesus Christ alone. A person receives the remission of sins by believing in his heart the word of salvation that Jesus accomplished.

Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world, including the Samaritan, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, in the Jordan River. And bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so received the judgment of sin, and He rose again on the third day, overcame sin and death, and completed salvation. Today, the person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins once and for all and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not demand only the solving of the problems of the flesh and leave Jesus. He realizes the grace that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins and was judged, and returns to the Lord and gives glory to God. He not only shows the grace he has received in thanksgiving and worship but also preaches this gospel of salvation to other souls.

Luke chapter 17 verses 11–19 teach that one must not stop at experiencing the grace of Jesus but must truly believe in the Lord who bestowed that grace. The person who has received the remission of all his sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit returns to Jesus, who saved him, offers thanksgiving and praise, and lives giving glory to God.

The kingdom of God established in the heart and faith of the righteous

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.'" (Luke 17:20–21).

"The kingdom of God is within you"

The Pharisees asked Jesus when the kingdom of God would come. Their interest was concentrated on the time when the kingdom of God would come and on signs that could be confirmed with the eyes. But Jesus said that the kingdom of God does not come in a way that people can point out, *"See here!"* or *"See there!"* by calculating the time and place.

That Jesus said, *"The kingdom of God does not come with observation,"* means that on this earth the kingdom of God is not a kingdom that appears only in a particular place or as outward power. The Pharisees waited for signs before their eyes and an outward kingdom, but Jesus said that the kingdom of God is established in the heart and faith of a person.

The word *"the kingdom of God is within you"* means that the kingdom of God is established in the heart of the person who believes in Jesus the King and the salvation He accomplished. The Pharisees, who did not believe in Jesus, could not enjoy this kingdom because they did not receive the Lord even while standing before Him, the King. The kingdom of God is established in the heart and faith of the righteous person who has believed in Jesus Christ and received the remission of sins.

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The heart of the righteous who has received the remission of sins is the kingdom of God

Jesus, who stood before them, was the Savior who had taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Bearing those sins, Jesus went to the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so received the judgment of sin, and by rising from the dead He overcame sin and death. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins and becomes one of the people who belong to the kingdom of God.

The person who believes this gospel in his heart receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. Because the Holy Spirit dwells in that heart and the word of God becomes the standard of faith, the reign of the Lord, the King, is established in that person. That the heart and faith of the righteous are the kingdom of God on this earth means that Jesus dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and that this person accepts the word and reign of the Lord by faith and lives by them.

In the heart of the righteous person who has received the remission of sins there is the peace enjoyed in fellowship with the Lord. The person who has been set free from sin and judgment calls God Father and enjoys the peace of the Lord. Even when the circumstances of the flesh and the environment of the world are difficult, when he returns to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the righteousness the Lord accomplished holds his heart. This peace is not the temporary comfort the world gives, but the blessing of the kingdom of God enjoyed in Jesus Christ, who washed away all sins.

We live following the reign of Jesus the King

Today the kingdom of God appears where the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached, where people believe that gospel and receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and where they live according to the word of Jesus the King. The person who has received the remission of sins does not serve his own thoughts and desires as his master, but believes in Jesus as the Master of his life and follows His word.

The believer who belongs to the kingdom of God is not a person who only keeps the peace of his heart and turns away from the world. Believing that he is one of the people who belong to the King who saved him, he preaches the gospel following the guidance of the Holy Spirit and loves and serves his brothers and neighbors. Such a life is not the price for entering the kingdom of God, but a fruit of faith that appears in the person who has already become one of the people of that kingdom by grace.

Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment for those sins with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit and from now on lives under the reign of the Lord, the King. The kingdom of God has already been established in his heart and faith, and he lives looking toward the eternal kingdom of God that will appear perfectly in the future.

Prepare the faith with which to meet the day of the Son of Man

"*Then He said to the disciples, 'The days will come when*

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you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, "Look here!" or "Look there!" Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. 'In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.' And they answered and said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' So He said to them, 'Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.'" (Luke 17:22–37).

As the lightning shines, so also the Son of Man will be in His day

After saying that the kingdom of God is established in the heart and faith of the righteous, Jesus taught the disciples about

the day of the Son of Man that would come in the future. After Jesus suffered and departed, a time would come when the disciples would earnestly long to see the Lord again and to see that kingdom appear perfectly. But that day could not be brought forward or seen at will just because a person wanted it.

While waiting for the Lord, claims may arise that "Christ has appeared over there" or "He has come secretly over here." Jesus commanded not to go after such words or follow them. The true second coming is not an event made known secretly only to a particular group or place. As lightning shines from one part of heaven to the other, the day of the Son of Man will be revealed suddenly and openly so that all people can know.

But there was something that had to be accomplished before the glorious day of the Son of Man. Jesus had to suffer many things and be rejected by that generation. He had already taken upon His own body all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. Now, bearing the sins He had taken upon Himself, He would go to the Cross and shed His blood and die, and so receive the judgment of sin, and rise from the dead and complete salvation. The glory of the Son of Man is not separated from the righteous work of Jesus, who gave Himself up to save sinners.

The judgment that comes suddenly, as in the days of Noah and Lot

Jesus said that the day of the Son of Man would come as in the days of Noah and Lot. The people of Noah's time had their hearts taken captive by eating and drinking, marrying and being given in marriage, and by the pleasures of the world, and did not believe the word of God and the warning of judgment. The

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people of Lot's time also lived absorbed in the affairs of the world, buying and selling, planting, and building houses. The world went on as if nothing would happen, but when Noah entered the ark and Lot went out of Sodom, the judgment came suddenly.

The judgment began on the day Noah entered the ark and Lot came out of Sodom. At that time there was no time to go back again to hold on to property and plans. The word that the person on the housetop should not go down to take the things in the house and the person in the field should not turn back either means that on the day of the Son of Man, the property and possessions of the world cannot save a person's soul.

Jesus said in particular, *"Remember Lot's wife."* Lot's wife came out of Sodom, but by looking back she revealed her attachment to that place and her disobedience to the word of God, and in the end she received the judgment. Believing and following the word of God in the heart was more important than the fact that her body had come out of the place of judgment. Even if one places one's body in the Church and lives a religious life, if one does not believe the gospel in one's heart and loves only the world, that outward appearance cannot save one's soul.

The word *"Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it"* means that the person who tries to preserve his life by holding on to his own strength and the things of the world loses true life in the end, but the person who abandons his own righteousness and entrusts his life to Jesus obtains eternal life. Salvation is received by believing in the righteousness Jesus accomplished. The person who has received this salvation lays down his own will and his attachment to the world and lives following the righteousness of the Lord.

One will be taken and the other will be left

Jesus said that among people sleeping in the same place and working together, one would be taken and the other would be left. The clearest core of this word is that on the day of the Son of Man, a final separation takes place even among people who have lived close together. The faith of a close family member or colleague cannot take the place of one's own faith. Even if one has attended the Church together and offered the same worship, each person must believe in his own heart the gospel Jesus accomplished.

In the flow of this sermon, the person who is taken is the person who is gathered to the Lord, and the person who is left is the person who remains under judgment. What matters here is not an outward religious life but the faith of the heart. One cannot prepare for that day merely by saying with the lips that one believes or by the fact that one has been near the gospel community. The person who has believed in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, belongs to the kingdom of the Lord.

The word about Lot's wife is a solemn warning even to the person who has received the remission of sins not to love the world and abandon his faith. Even a saved person, if he sets his heart on the world, does not believe the word of God to the end, and betrays the Lord, receives the judgment together with the world. Therefore, the righteous must not be discouraged because of their own shortcomings, but must keep the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serve the gospel until the Lord comes.

When the disciples asked, *"Where, Lord?"* Jesus answered,

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"Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together." Just as the eagles gather where the body is, in the last days Satan works in those who are dead in sin and unbelief and leads them to judgment. Therefore, the believer must not have his heart taken captive by the world, but must keep the word of God in his heart and serve the gospel until the Lord comes.

Today the believer must not follow the words of anyone who claims that Jesus has appeared in a particular place, or calculate the date of the second coming. Neither must he hastily fix the date of the second coming whenever events such as natural disasters or wars occur. Jesus did not tell us to guess the date, but to believe the true gospel and live so that we can meet the Lord whenever He comes.

Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins with the blood and death of the Cross, and rose from the dead. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes one of the people of God. He does not try to make salvation with his own deeds out of fear of judgment, but believes in the righteousness of the Lord that has already been completed and hopes for the Lord who will come in the future.

The person who prepares for the day of the Son of Man faithfully does the work entrusted to him in the home and the workplace, but does not put those things before God. He preaches the gospel, serves his brothers and neighbors, and places his hope not in the possessions of the world but in the salvation Jesus accomplished. Because the day of the Son of Man will be revealed suddenly like lightning, a sinner must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now, and the saved person must keep this faith, serve the gospel, and walk with the Lord. ✉

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 17

[Question] 1. What events and teachings does Luke chapter 17 contain?

Luke chapter 17 contains the word about the sin of causing others to stumble and forgiveness, faith the size of a single mustard seed and the attitude of a servant, the event of healing the ten lepers, the kingdom of God, and the day of the Son of Man.

Jesus solemnly warned against causing a little one to stumble, and said to rebuke a brother when he sins but to forgive him when he repents. Then He taught the apostles that if they have true faith the size of a single mustard seed, they can obey according to the word of God. He also spoke of the attitude of a servant who, even after doing all the work entrusted to him, does not put forward his own merit but does what he ought to do in thanksgiving for the grace of having been saved.

In faith, what matters is not its size but whether one truly believes the word of God in one's heart. The person who believes the word relies on the Lord and obeys even when faced with things that seem impossible by his own ability. Also, after doing the Lord's work, he does not demand a reward, but remembers first the grace of having been saved and serves with thanksgiving.

Jesus cleansed ten lepers. Among them, only one, a Samaritan, returned, gave glory to God, and fell down at the feet of Jesus and gave thanks, and Jesus declared to him that he had

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been saved by faith.

When the Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God would come, Jesus said that the kingdom does not come as a visible place but is within them. The kingdom of God is established in the heart and faith of the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, and in that heart there are peace with God and the joy of salvation.

Finally, Jesus warned that the days of the Son of Man come suddenly, as in the days of Noah and Lot. People did not prepare for the judgment, their hearts being taken captive by the affairs of the world, but those who believed the word of God obtained salvation. Therefore, we must not have our hearts taken captive by the world, but must believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished and prepare for the Lord who will come again.

The teachings of Luke chapter 17 all lead to the faith of the heart. To forgive a brother with the grace one has received, to use even small faith according to the word, to give thanks to Jesus who saved us, and to establish the kingdom of God in the heart and wait for the Lord who will come in the future—this is the central lesson of this chapter.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 17 verse 1, what do the *"offenses"* that Jesus spoke of mean?

The *"offenses"* mean words, actions, and teachings that place a spiritual stumbling block before a person, cause him to fall into sin and unbelief, and make him deviate from the way of believing the word of God and the gospel of salvation.

"Then He said to the disciples, 'It is impossible that no

offenses should come, but woe to him through whom they do come! It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones'" (Luke 17:1–2).

In a world with sin, temptations and false teachings that cause people to fall never cease. But Jesus said that woe is to the person who causes them. It is because the responsibility of destroying another person's faith cannot be taken lightly.

The parallel passages in Matthew and Mark reveal the little ones as those who believe in Jesus. Jesus regards as precious even one soul that is weak in faith or regarded as low by people. Therefore, destroying that person's faith becomes a very grave sin before God.

In particular, distorting the gospel of salvation to put forward a person's deeds and merit, or destroying trust in the gospel with the hypocrisy in which one's words and life differ, becomes a spiritual stumbling block. The life of parents influences their children, and the attitude of those who believed first and of those who teach the word greatly influences those who are weak in faith.

Urging others to sin or pressuring them to go against their faith and conscience is also an act that causes them to stumble. The saints must not think only of their own words and freedom, but must examine whether these lead others into sin or make them grow distant from the gospel.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and saved sinners by rising from the dead. A person receives the remission of sins not by his own merit but by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we must preach the gospel rightly and examine our words and actions, and help others not to grow distant from Jesus but to stand firm on the word.

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Just as Jesus said after this word, *"Take heed to yourselves,"* we must examine ourselves before finding the faults of others. If we have realized a wrong teaching or action, we must turn from it and set it right, and become people who build up the faith of the little ones.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 17 verse 2, what warning did Jesus give to the one who causes others to stumble?

Jesus warned that it would be better for the one who causes even one of the little ones to stumble to have a millstone hung around his neck and be thrown into the sea.

"It would be better for him if a millstone were hung around his neck, and he were thrown into the sea, than that he should offend one of these little ones" (Luke 17:2).

The image of having a millstone hung around one's neck and being thrown into the sea is a fearful punishment with no way to survive. With this strong word, Jesus showed how heavy the sin of destroying the faith of one soul and making him deviate from the way of salvation is.

The comparison *"It would be better for him"* emphasizes the fearfulness of the judgment that the person who has caused a little one to stumble will receive. Even if a person seems to have little influence in the world, God does not take his faith and his soul lightly.

The parallel passages in Matthew and Mark reveal these little ones as the little ones who believe in Jesus. Even a person who is regarded as low in the world or seems weak in faith is a precious soul before God. Therefore, those who teach the word and those who lead the community must be all the more careful

about what influence their words and actions have on the faith of these little ones.

This warning does not apply only to leaders. Parents must examine their lives before their children, and the saints who believed first must examine their lives before those who have newly come to believe. If one speaks of the gospel with one's mouth while following greed and falsehood or putting forward one's own authority, one can deeply wound the faith of others.

We must not cause people to fall through false teaching and hypocrisy, greed, and the wrong use of authority. We must rightly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, and serve with truth and love so that even one little one may believe the word and stand firm on the way of salvation.

When we realize a wrong, we must not make excuses or hide it, but must truthfully turn from it. The person who takes the sin of causing others to stumble seriously does not boast of his own influence, but regards one soul as precious and strives in the work of building up faith.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 17 verse 19, what blessing did Jesus declare to the Samaritan who returned?

Jesus declared to the Samaritan who returned, *"Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well."*

"So Jesus answered and said, 'Were there not ten cleansed? But where are the nine? Were there not any found who returned to give glory to God except this foreigner?' And He said to him, 'Arise, go your way. Your faith has made you well.'" (Luke 17:17–19).

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The ten lepers asked Jesus for mercy, and when Jesus told them to show themselves to the priests, they followed the word and were all cleansed as they went. But the only one who saw that he was healed, returned to Jesus, and gave glory to God was a Samaritan.

After confirming that all ten had been cleansed, Jesus looked for the nine who had not returned. They had received the healing of their disease, but they did not return to Jesus, who had bestowed the grace they received, and give glory to God. This contrast shows how receiving grace differs from believing in the Lord of that grace and giving thanks.

He believed that the source of the grace he had received was in Jesus, and fell down at His feet and gave thanks. His return and thanksgiving were a fruit of faith that appeared in a person who had first received grace and believed in Jesus. The basis of salvation lies in Jesus, who bestowed mercy, and Jesus saw his faith and declared salvation.

The word *"Your faith has made you well"* shows that Jesus is not One who only heals the diseases of the flesh, but One who saves people. The Samaritan did not regard Jesus only as One who had given him help for a moment, but returned believing in Him as the Savior who had bestowed mercy on him.

Even his background as a Samaritan could not block his salvation. Salvation is received not by lineage and religious position, but by believing in Jesus, the Savior. We too must not be people who seek only help in present circumstances and leave, but must believe in our hearts the salvation Jesus accomplished, give thanks for the grace we have received, and give glory to God.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and saved sinners by rising from the dead. The person who has

believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins does not take salvation for granted, but returns to Jesus and gives glory to God with thanksgiving and obedience.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 17 verse 20, how did Jesus answer the Pharisees as to how the kingdom of God comes?

Jesus answered that the kingdom of God does not come in a way that people can confirm by observing the time and place with their eyes. The kingdom of God is not a territory of the world that one can point out, *"See here!"* or *"See there!"* but the reign of God established in the heart and faith of a person.

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.'" (Luke 17:20–21).

The Pharisees asked when the kingdom of God would come, but Jesus spoke of where that kingdom is established rather than of dates and outward signs. The kingdom of God is not a kingdom built with buildings, political power, and the scale of the world.

A person easily regards great visible works and the power of the world as evidence of the kingdom of God. But Jesus taught not to look for the kingdom of God in an outward place, but to believe the word of God in the heart and accept His reign.

The kingdom of God is established in the heart and faith of the righteous person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. When a sinner believes the word that Jesus received baptism from John and

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took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and then rose from the dead, he receives the remission of sins, enjoys peace with God, and enters into His reign.

The kingdom of God established in the heart is not a vague feeling but faith that believes the word of God. The person who has received the remission of sins has fellowship with the Lord, enjoys the peace and joy of salvation, and lives according to the will of God by that faith.

If sin remains in the heart and one cannot enjoy peace with God, one cannot enjoy the peace of the kingdom of God. But the person who has believed the word that Jesus took upon Himself and removed all sins has been reconciled to God, and the peace of the Lord settles in his heart.

When Jesus comes again in the future, His kingship and judgment will be clearly revealed before the whole world. Therefore, rather than chasing after dates and places, we must now believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit and establish the kingdom of God, and wait in faith for Jesus, who will come again.

The person in whose heart the kingdom of God has been established holds on to the word of God rather than placing his hope in the world. While doing the work entrusted to him, he sets his heart on the gospel and the will of the Lord, and lives keeping his faith until the day the Lord comes again.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 17 verse 21, where did Jesus reveal the kingdom of God to be?

Jesus revealed that the kingdom of God is *"within you."*

'Nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed,

the kingdom of God is within you.' (Luke 17:21).

The kingdom of God is not a kingdom confirmed only by a particular visible place or the institutions of the world. On this earth, the heart of the righteous person who has received the remission of sins and the faith he has are the kingdom of God. The reign of God is established in the person who has received the word of God into his heart.

The person in whose heart the kingdom of God has been established enjoys peace with God because he believes that his sins have been washed away in Jesus. He has fellowship with the Lord, lives in the word, and accepts the will of God in his heart.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, was judged on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The person who believes this word in his heart receives the remission of sins, enjoys peace with God, and lives as one of the people of the kingdom of God.

Therefore, that the kingdom of God is in the heart does not mean simply harboring religious thoughts or feeling momentary peace. It means believing in the heart the word of salvation Jesus accomplished, having fellowship with the Lord in that faith, and living according to the will of God.

Knowing the word of God only as knowledge and believing it in the heart are different. When one accepts the word as the promise of salvation given to oneself, the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit come, and that faith turns the direction of one's life toward God.

We must not judge the kingdom of God by outward size and circumstances alone, but must first examine whether the word of salvation Jesus accomplished has settled in our own hearts by faith. We must keep that faith and wait for the kingdom of God

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that will appear in glory in the future.

The saint who has established the kingdom of God in his heart does not remain in his own thoughts alone, but hears the word together with the Church and serves the gospel. Not having one's heart taken captive by the world, but receiving the Lord who will come again while doing what pleases God—this is the preparation of faith.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 17 verse 23, what does it record that the people of the world will say about the second coming of Jesus?

People will say about the second coming of Jesus, *"Look there!"* or *"Look here!"* But Jesus said not to go after such words or follow them.

"And they will say to you, 'Look here!' or 'Look there!' Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day" (Luke 17:23–24).

In the last days, rumors that Christ has appeared in a particular place and various mysterious phenomena may arise. People may have their hearts taken captive by special signs and rumors, but Jesus gave the disciples a clear standard of judgment.

That a person is famous, that many people follow him, or that amazing phenomena appear does not mean that his claim can be believed. The saints must discern by the standard of the word Jesus recorded in advance, rather than by the words of people.

The true second coming is not a secret event that only a certain group knows. Just as lightning shines from one part of heaven to the other, on the day Jesus comes again the whole world will come to know His appearing. Therefore, the saints

must not be shaken by the words *"Look here!"* or *"Look there!"* but must believe the written word.

The day Jesus comes will come suddenly at a time people did not think of, but His appearing itself will not be hidden. The preparation of faith is not going around looking for a place, but holding in one's heart the promise of the Lord, who said He would come.

The One who will come again is Jesus, who suffered many things and was rejected by this generation. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and saved us by rising from the dead.

The faith that prepares for the second coming does not lie in chasing rumors. It lies in believing in one's heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, not having one's heart taken captive by the world, and waiting in the word of God for the Lord who will come again.

The saints must not be dragged about by fear and curiosity about the second coming, but must carry out the work entrusted to them today by faith and preach the gospel. The person who lives with the word of God in his heart can receive the Lord with joy whenever He comes.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 17 verse 25, what did Jesus first have to go through before the day of the Son of Man comes?

Before the day of the Son of Man comes, Jesus first had to suffer many things and be rejected by this generation.

"But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation" (Luke 17:25).

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Jesus is the Son of Man who will come again in glory in the future, but before that He walked the way of suffering to save sinners. His being rejected and mocked by people and dying on the Cross was the event that accomplished the will of God to save sinners.

The word *"first"* shows the order of salvation. Jesus first suffered and died and then rose from the dead, and after that the gospel is preached to all nations and He comes again in glory in the future.

Jesus had foretold this matter even more clearly before, 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).*

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Jesus, who suffered and was rejected, overcame sin and death and rose again, and it is He who comes again in glory.

The disciples expected the glorious kingdom of God, but they could not easily accept the suffering and death of Jesus. But salvation for sinners had to be accomplished first. The King who will come again is that very Jesus who walked the way of baptism and the Cross for sinners and rose again.

Therefore, while waiting for the glory of the second coming, we must believe in our hearts the salvation Jesus accomplished before it. The person who believes the word of suffering and resurrection already fulfilled can also firmly believe the promise that He will come again and wait in hope.

Jesus fully bore the judgment of sin and completed salvation. The saints believe that grace, and even in difficulties they do not deny the gospel but follow the Lord.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 17 verses 26–27, which past age did Jesus say the days of the Son of Man would be like?

Jesus said that the days of the Son of Man would be like the days of Noah.

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all" (Luke 17:26–27).

The people of Noah's time did not believe the warning of God even in the midst of abounding wickedness. They ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, and lived as if the world would continue as it was, their hearts taken captive by the life and pleasures before their eyes.

But Noah believed the word of God about a judgment that was not yet visible and prepared the ark. Even while people did not believe, the word of God was fulfilled just as it was, and after Noah entered the ark, the flood came suddenly and destroyed the people outside the ark.

The faith of Noah was not vague optimism but faith that accepted as fact the word God had spoken. He believed the warning of God more surely than the circumstances of the world, and that faith appeared as the obedience of preparing the ark.

The second coming of Jesus is like this as well. The Lord comes suddenly while many people are absorbed in the affairs of the world, and at that time there is no room to newly prepare faith. Therefore, we must now receive the word of God into our hearts and individually prepare our faith.

The account of the days of Lot, which follows the account of the days of Noah, gives the same lesson. People set their hearts

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on the world, buying and selling, planting, and building houses, but the judgment came on a day they did not think of. Jesus warned to remember Lot's wife, who looked back with attachment to the world.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself our sins, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and saved us by rising from the dead. We must believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins, and wait for Jesus, who will come again, without having our hearts taken captive by the world.

The saint who waits for the Lord faithfully carries out the responsibilities of daily life, but does not keep his heart bound to the world. He must regard the word of God as most precious, serve the gospel, and prepare the faith with which to receive the Lord at any time.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 17 verses 34–35, how does it show the difference between the person who is taken and the person who is left on the last day?

The difference between the person who is taken and the person who is left on the last day lies in whether one has believed the word of God in one's heart and individually prepared for salvation. Even if people live together in the same place and are in the same Church, the faith of another person cannot take the place of one's own faith.

"I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left" (Luke 17:34–35).

The two men lying in one bed are a scene of those who have died. When the Lord comes, the person who died having received the remission of sins is raised in the resurrection of eternal life, but the person who was not saved is left and later comes out in the resurrection of judgment. The two women grinding together show those who are alive when the Lord comes. Even among the living, the person who has been born again is taken, and the person who has not been saved is left.

The two scenes show that final salvation is not decided all at once by the unit of a family or a community. Even when parents and children, husband and wife, and close colleagues are together, each person must receive the word of God into his own heart.

The fact that one is gathered together in the Church cannot take the place of one's individual faith either. One must not stop at saying that one knows Jesus, but must accept the word of salvation recorded in the Bible as a fact accomplished for oneself. Believing the word of God in the heart is the faith that prepares for the last day.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The person who believes this word in his heart receives the remission of sins and becomes a person who belongs to the Lord.

The person who has received the remission of sins does not make his own deeds or religious career the basis of salvation. He believes in the righteousness Jesus accomplished, and by that faith he is united with the Lord and lives according to the word. This is the fundamental difference that makes the final result different even for those who are together outwardly.

Therefore, we must not rely only on an outward religious life,

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but must believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit and prepare our individual faith. We must hold on to the word of God, not have our hearts taken captive by the world, and live with the faith that waits for Jesus, who will come again.

After the last day has come, faith cannot be prepared. We must now hear the word of God and believe it in our hearts, abandon our attachment to the world, and set our hearts on the work of serving the gospel. The person who has prepared faith can receive the Lord with joy when He comes. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

We must work on the basis of the grace of God

< Luke 17:5-10 >

"And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you. And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come at once and sit down to eat"? But will he not rather say to him, "Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink"? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do."'"

On the basis of the word we have read together today, I want to share the things we ought to know about serving the Lord. The apostles came to the Lord and asked, *"Increase our faith" (Luke 17:5)*. Then the Lord said, *"If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, 'Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea,' and it would obey you" (Luke 17:6)*. It is the word that if one has even faith the size of a single mustard seed and commands by faith, it comes to pass just so.

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But following this word, the Lord spoke a parable about a servant. He said, *"Which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, 'Come at once and sit down to eat'?" (Luke 17:7)*. The preceding word is about faith the size of a mustard seed, and the word that follows is about a servant, so the two words may even seem unrelated to each other. But since it is a word the Lord spoke, we must think about it deeply.

Would a master tell a servant who has come back from working in the field to sit down and eat right away? Rather, it is fitting that the servant waits on his master while he eats and drinks, and only after that eats and drinks himself. Moreover, even if he has waited on him like that, what boast would that be before his master? He has only done what he ought to do. The Lord said, *"So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, 'We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do.'" (Luke 17:10).*

Serving God is not a debtor-creditor relationship in which one receives wages

Since this word is a word of the Lord that differs from human thinking, we must think about it deeply. We say that we serve God, and we do the work of God. There are times when we work with all our strength. But can we demand a reward from the Lord because we have labored like that? We cannot. Rather, we can only say that we have merely done what we ought to do. Is that not so?

The relationship between the Lord and us is clear. We who do the Lord's work are servants of God, and the Master is literally our Master. We who are servants cannot demand a

reward because we have done well the work our Master had us do. Even seen by reason, it is clearly so. Yet some people harbor an expectation of reward, saying, I have done this much, so why do You not reward me? This is greatly mistaken. Our serving the Lord and taking on the Lord's work is never a debtor-creditor relationship in which, because one person ordered the work and the other did it, wages must be given and received.

The one who has been saved before God does the Lord's work in thanksgiving for the grace of God

Then why do we do the Lord's work? It is because the Lord has saved us from sin. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John. And He was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for those sins, shed His blood and died, and rose from the dead and became our Savior. We who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the remission of sins and have been saved. The Lord delivered us from sin and made us the people of God and made us workers. There are still many people on this earth who must be saved. So just as the Lord saved us, we too do the work of conveying that salvation to them.

Those who do the Lord's work do it because they have been saved, not in order to do some work and receive a reward. This is certain. The one who has been saved before God does the work that pleases the Lord in thanksgiving for the grace of God, with the heart that asks, with what shall I repay the gift of salvation and the love You have bestowed on us? If the work that pleases the Lord is preaching the gospel to the whole world, one does that work, and one works with the heart that says, if You tell me to do the work of supporting the preaching of the gospel from a

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lowly place in order to serve that gospel, I will do it.

We must not confuse these two things. It is not a relationship in which we demand, as if we were in a debtor-creditor relationship with God, that He reward us because He had us do the work. If we do some work and then expect a recompense before God, God rejects us, saying, I am not a debtor to you. This is precisely what we must be most careful about.

The people of Israel came out of Egypt and walked through the wilderness. From Egypt, crossing the Red Sea, it was a distance that would have taken little more than ten days if one walked straight to enter the land of Canaan. But while passing through the wilderness, when they were about to die of thirst because there was no water, the people complained against God, saying, is it because there are no graves in Egypt to be buried in that You have dragged us out into this wilderness to kill us? And they turned on Moses as if to grab him by the collar, saying, did you drag us out into this wilderness to kill us?

When Moses prayed to God, God told him to take the rod and speak to the rock, saying that if he did so, water would come out of the rock. But when the complaining people kept following Moses and turning on him, Moses could not bear it any longer and his anger rose up. He did not do as God had commanded, but struck the rock twice with his rod as if he himself were bringing out the water. The rock split and water gushed out, but as a result Moses could not enter the land of Canaan because of that matter.

Not a single one of the people of Israel who complained at that time entered the land of Canaan; they all died in the wilderness. Only Joshua and Caleb, and the little children born in the wilderness, entered Canaan, and all the adults who came out of Egypt, beginning with Moses, died in the wilderness, and that place became their grave. We must not be like that. We must

not harbor such a heart of complaint, demanding something from God for the reason that we have done much of God's work.

The true worker of God

Because a person has a body, after working hard he gets hungry and loses strength. At such times he wants to eat something delicious, and in fact he must eat well in order to live. This is something natural that our bodies desire, so it cannot be called bad. In winter one must keep one's body warm, and when one is sick one must take medicine and look after one's body. The flesh is truly weak and sensitive, and as those entrusted with that body, we must protect it well.

But we must not confuse looking after the flesh with seeking wages from the Lord. Because the flesh is weak, comforting one another and sharing good things to eat is something to do among ourselves, but we must not go before the Lord and complain, why do You not do this for me, or demand a recompense like a person who has gone to collect a debt. We must rightly look after the flesh, but we must not seek wages from the Lord. If we confuse these two things, we cannot become true workers of God.

However, we must not act indiscreetly for the reason that the flesh is weary. Some ministers, for the reason that it is hard, take their subordinates to unwholesome places and mingle with them there, but that must not be done. If we do that, what would be the difference between us who believe and those who do not believe? If we conduct ourselves exactly like the people of the world before the people to whom we want to preach the gospel, they think, how can a person who believes in Jesus be like this? Is this not a quack? Therefore, public and private matters must be clearly distinguished. Even if personal weakness cannot be

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helped, one must not carry it out openly in public. The believer must live a life distinguished from the people of the world.

Preaching the gospel is the true joy of this age

Since the work God has entrusted to us is preaching the gospel, we are preaching the gospel in our country and also preaching it overseas. Just as the Epistle of James was a letter sent to the twelve tribes scattered abroad—the Jewish diaspora— our fellow countrymen, too, live scattered all over the world. Though they live far away, they love their homeland and pray for it, and they cherish our language and strive to teach it to their descendants. I want to make a combined volume containing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and send it to them as well. If they could read that book in the language of their own country and in our language together, it would truly be a happy thing. So I want to carry out this work diligently and well.

What joy is there in this present age? There can be no joy other than the joy of preaching the gospel. The world is declining, the climate and people's hearts alike are collapsing, and there are many people who oppose Christianity. There are truly many people who have been disappointed over the long years by the Christianity of our country, which is nothing but formality. It is not uncommon for people who attended church, gave offerings, and were faithful to be disappointed and leave the church, and even to criticize the church instead. We must know the fact that there are many such people.

Therefore, we must be wise also when we make and convey the combined volume containing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Do not try to force it on a person who does not want to receive it. As the word says not to cast pearls before swine, if

one casts pearls, they rather trample them and turn and attack the one who cast them. If, while we are conveying it to foreigners, a person of our country also asks for it, we can give it. In any case, the one who will believe believes, and the one who will know knows. He said that the Lord meets the one who seeks. If we ask, we will find, and if we knock, it will be opened. Even with a single book, the basics of the gospel can be fully conveyed. However, if one tries to convey everything in an hour or two to a person who has no foundation in the word, in the end he easily goes back to his old ways.

We must ask God for wisdom and be united with the Church

The greatest joy of this age is preaching the gospel. It is so for me, and it is so for you. While doing so, we must also manage our health well, and above all we must have wisdom. A person must not be merely clever. Anyone can become clever, but wisdom is not something just anyone has. The reason the Bible has the word to honor the elderly is that the elderly have wisdom. Knowledge refers to knowing, but wisdom is applying what one knows to oneself and making it beneficial. If one reads even a single book, knowledge increases quickly, but applying it to oneself is precisely wisdom. We must become wise people.

Even if one knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one is wise only when one applies it to oneself and believes. The person who accepts as his own and believes this gospel—that Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself all my sins, paid the price of those sins on the Cross and died, and rose again—thinking, so this is what God is saying to me, and I am precisely this kind of sinner, is the wise person. The person who

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stops at merely knowing and does not reflect on his own soul, however much he preaches the gospel to others, in the end loses that gospel himself. Such is the person who leads others to this Church and yet goes out of the Church himself. That is precisely having no wisdom.

He said that if we lack wisdom, we should ask God for wisdom. He said that if we lack wisdom and ask God, the Lord, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, will fill us to overflowing. We are those who lack wisdom before the Lord, so we must ask the Lord and obtain it.

The weather is becoming harsher and changing much, so we must adapt well. Above all, we must have wisdom. The wise person is together with the Church. Wise people are united with one another and live forming a community. Alone, one easily collapses when difficulties come, but gathering together, sharing thoughts, and living together is what is wise. By all means, let us know well and believe what the Lord has said to us, and live discerning well what we ought to do and what we ought not to do. I have finished the message. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The one who has faith the size of a mustard seed

< Luke 17:5-10 >

"And the apostles said to the Lord, 'Increase our faith.' So the Lord said, 'If you have faith as a mustard seed, you can say to this mulberry tree, "Be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea," and it would obey you. And which of you, having a servant plowing or tending sheep, will say to him when he has come in from the field, "Come at once and sit down to eat"? But will he not rather say to him, "Prepare something for my supper, and gird yourself and serve me till I have eaten and drunk, and afterward you will eat and drink"? Does he thank that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. So likewise you, when you have done all those things which you are commanded, say, "We are unprofitable servants. We have done what was our duty to do."""

The economy is very difficult, and it seems it will become more difficult in the future. But whatever our circumstances may be, we must do the work of God, and we must go forward praying that God will bestow His grace.

The apostles, while following the Lord around, knew that their faith was lacking, and asked the Lord to increase their faith. At that time, the Lord said that if they had faith the size of a single mustard seed, even if they said to this mulberry tree, be

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pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, it would have been so. This word means that the disciples who followed Jesus around at that time did not have even that much faith. A mustard seed is a seed so minute that even if one puts it on one's palm and tries to pick it up, it is hard to grasp. The Lord spoke of faith the size of a single mustard seed to mean that if one has only that small faith, the mulberry tree being planted in the sea comes to pass.

When we take on the work of God even with faith the size of a mustard seed, the Lord accomplishes that work

A mulberry tree is usually planted in a plain, on a mountain, or in a field. But He said that even if one said to that mulberry tree, be planted in the sea, it would have been so. Then what must the sea change into? It means it must change into dry land. This is a miracle. It is that if only one has faith the size of a speck, the things you want to do come to pass. It cannot be done by our ability, but it comes to pass because the Lord helps.

We too are carrying out the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world. Seen with human eyes, it is a practically impossible work. There are too many factors that would make it impossible. Think of the work of translating books written in Korean into English, and then translating that English again into the languages of the whole world. The cost of translation is enormous, and making and running a website is also difficult work unless one is a specialist. Among the countless people of the world, no one had ever attempted this work. But we took it on with faith the size of a mustard seed, and the Lord accomplished that work.

This word means that when we do the work of God, we should do it with the faith that believes the word of the Lord. If there is faith the size of a mustard seed in our hearts, whether we do well or poorly, when we pray before the Lord with that faith and carry out that work, it comes to pass. In the world there are negative people who only say it cannot be done whatever work they are given, and there are people who, though they have never done it before, take it on by faith, learn, and creatively get it done. Even work that seems impossible, if one takes it on by faith, God gives wisdom and opens the way and accomplishes that work.

Even with faith the size of a mustard seed, if one truly believes, one receives the remission of sins

What kind of faith is faith the size of a mustard seed? The faith that receives salvation is also faith the size of a mustard seed. Faith that truly believes even though its measure is small—if only one has such faith, one receives salvation. Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John and took over all the sins of the world onto Himself. And bearing those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from the dead and became our Savior. Even if I do not know all the words of the Bible, if I truly believe in my heart that the Lord has thus taken upon Himself my sins and received the judgment for my sins in my place and saved me, even with faith the size of a mustard seed, I receive the remission of sins and receive salvation. If only one has that much faith, one has already been saved.

The faith that receives salvation and the faith that, after being saved, follows the Lord and is united with the Church are a little different. But to receive salvation, faith the size of a mustard seed is enough.

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What did the Lord mean by faith the size of a mustard seed?

What the Lord meant by faith the size of a mustard seed concerns, more than the measure of faith, whether one truly believes, whether one believes sincerely with the heart. If one truly believes that Jesus, who is invisible to the eye and is the God of the word, put on flesh and came to this earth, took over my sins by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again and saved me, one receives salvation. Why is that? It is because even in a seed as small as a mustard seed there is life.

More important than whether a seed is large or small is whether there is life in that seed or not. Whether it is a flower seed, a rice seed, or the seed of a fruit tree, a seed in which life is alive sends up a sprout if one only plants it in the ground, waters it, and adjusts the temperature. But however large a seed may be, if it is a seed with no life and only a dead shape, even if one plants it in good soil, waters it, adjusts the temperature, and devotes oneself to it, no sprout comes up. There must be life for a sprout to come up. Faith is like life. If one has true faith, one receives salvation and can follow the Lord.

Secondly, for the faith that follows the Lord, too, faith the size of a mustard seed is enough. If one has true faith, even the size of a mustard seed, that what the Church does is right and that my living like this is right, one can be united with the Lord and follow Him, take part in the Lord's work and receive the blessings that come from that work, and become a true worker who accomplishes the will of the Lord. It is not only the person with great faith who does the Lord's work well. Even with little faith, if it is true, one receives salvation and is also used as a worker.

When I do the work God has entrusted to me within the Church and have no strength, I pray to God and ask for strength, and I receive the answer to that prayer. God answers what we ask in various ways. Sometimes He opens up the surrounding environment so that we can do that work, and sometimes He opens various ways. If you have no wisdom, ask God for wisdom. Then God gives wisdom. Wisdom is the ability to get some work done when one has been entrusted with it. When we pray and think quietly, God gives wisdom, and we can also get it done by watching and learning from what others do. In that way we can follow the Lord.

If one has the faith that receives salvation, one has living faith. When, with the faith that says I will carry out the work God has entrusted to me within the Church and follow the Lord, one is united with the Church and faithful in the place entrusted to one even though one's own strength is not great, the Lord accomplishes the will of the Lord. It comes to pass according to that faith. If one truly believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus, who became our Savior, received baptism from John and took upon Himself our sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead, the rest of faith also comes to pass. It does not happen overnight, but as one dwells within the Church, one becomes a person of true faith.

If one racks one's own brains and tries to guide one's own life by oneself, it does not work. If one follows with true faith, it goes smoothly. Within the Church of God, the more one exercises one's own means and methods, the harder it becomes to follow the Lord. Even if in my thinking I want to do it this way, the Lord's thinking is different. When the Lord entrusts work to me and I am faithful in that work and united, the Lord raises me to a position one step higher and entrusts me with work of a higher level. When one is faithful like that, God fills what

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is needed for that work and blesses. But if one tries to follow the Lord not by God's method but by one's own method, all the things the Church does look only displeasing. And so one cannot follow the Lord. It is that there is no true faith. Beginning with the faith by which one was saved, it must become normal faith that believes sincerely.

A leader, too, finds it hard to lead a person who insists only on his own means and methods, so in the end he gives up leading him and rather leads the person who follows well by faith. In following the Lord there are two kinds of people. What kind of person are you? Are you a person who tries to pioneer his own life by himself and set his own goals and go? Or are you a person who considers it right to be faithful in the work the Lord told us to do, preaching the gospel to the whole world, after being saved, and who believes that when he carries out the work the Lord has entrusted, the Lord fills what is needed so that he can follow? If one does it with one's own thoughts, it never comes to pass. If one no longer develops within the Church and comes to a standstill, it is evidence that one is not now following the will of the Lord.

Deny yourself and follow the Lord

After I met the gospel, because the Bible says that preaching the gospel to the whole world is the work that pleases the Lord, I first made up my mind to obey the will of the Lord. When I tried to obey the will of the Lord, the very first thing I had to do was separate from those who did not believe. It seemed it would be easier to preach the gospel while staying with the people I knew, but the Lord did not say so in the Bible. He said to deny yourself, take up your cross, and follow Me. Then even if my

thinking does not agree, I must deny my thinking and do as the word of the Lord says. And so I said farewell to those who were not saved and went out into the world where the Lord told us to preach the gospel.

When I came out into the world, I had nowhere to go and no money. If I had only set my mind to it, I could have gone to some well-known place and been treated well and rested comfortably, but since I had come out after saying farewell to those who did not believe, even when my feet tried to turn that way, my heart did not go. So I went to a construction site and worked, ate, and slept together with the people there. Even when the people I worked with held drinking parties every evening, I went out separately to a quiet place and opened and read a small Bible, and when it became quiet I went in and slept, ate breakfast, and worked again. Having walked step by step like that, I have come to meet you today. We must follow as the Lord leads.

Why is Abraham called the father of faith? God said to Abraham, leave your country, your family, and your father's house, and go to the land I will show you. Abraham did not know where he was going, but because he heard the word of God, he left his homeland. Leaving one's homeland is never an easy thing. Unless one denies one's own thinking, it is truly difficult. Because if one leaves one's friends, family, and acquaintances, one loses the whole fence of one's life, one cannot leave. But because Abraham believed and followed the word of God, God established him as the father of faith.

If only one has faith the size of a mustard seed, one can follow the Lord

Was it only Abraham? If we look at the Bible, all the people

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of faith were like that. The seniors in faith who went before you—the cell leaders, evangelists, and deacons, the seniors in faith—have all come this far because they denied their own thinking and followed the guidance of the Church. If they had insisted on their own thinking, they would have left long ago.

Therefore, even if those who went before you seem lacking and seem not to do the work well, you must never look down on them. In skill, you may be better or the one who went before may be better, and that difference can change at any time. But those who went before are people who by faith denied their own thinking and have served this gospel in unity of heart with the Church until now, and have come this far. They are seniors in faith compared with you, and in faith they are far ahead of you. Whether skill is good or bad is nothing at all. One must look up to the fact that they have believed in the Lord and followed Him until today. There is an inexhaustible amount to learn from them. Those who went before are people who have received rebuke and received fellowship and guidance, and accepted even scolding that they had done wrong, acknowledged their own faults, and come this far.

A person with many thoughts of his own, when someone who went before rebukes as wrong what he had considered right, has his insides turn over, and quits and leaves. Such a person cannot follow the Lord. It is that he has no true faith. Faith the size of a mustard seed is faith that truly believes even though it is the size of a speck, but he does not have that faith. Having heard and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and being within the Church of God, where would I go if I left this Church? If one goes out into the world, they are all people who have not been saved. Being saved is a moment, but living by faith is an eternal matter.

You have seniors in faith, friends, those who went before,

servants of God, and juniors. That is precisely your own family. Where would you go if you left that place? Because what the one who went before says is right, and his rebuke is not meant to make me go wrong but to lead me rightly, even though it is hard, one wipes away one's tears and follows by faith. One can follow when one has that true faith the size of a mustard seed which considers that, though it is hard for me, what the one who went before says is right.

If one merely looks at those who went before and only judges them, seeing them with the eyes that ask how they compare with me, no one can follow. As for the person who has not gained true faith, since his faith that sincerely believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not sound, how could he follow the guidance of the Church? Such a person only hopes to be led in accordance with his own benefit, and in the end leaves of his own accord.

Dear fellow believers, this is the word the Lord speaks to us today. If only one has faith the size of a mustard seed, the work of life is manifested and one can follow the Lord. And the work of preaching the gospel to the whole world as we desire in our hearts will surely be accomplished, and the Lord protects and blesses us. I hope you will believe that. I hope God will give you such faith. I have finished the message. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

On this earth, the hearts and faith of the righteous are the kingdom of God

< Luke 17:20-37 >

"Now when He was asked by the Pharisees when the kingdom of God would come, He answered them and said, 'The kingdom of God does not come with observation; nor will they say, "See here!" or "See there!" For indeed, the kingdom of God is within you.' Then He said to the disciples, 'The days will come when you will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it. And they will say to you, "Look here!" or "Look there!" Do not go after them or follow them. For as the lightning that flashes out of one part under heaven shines to the other part under heaven, so also the Son of Man will be in His day. But first He must suffer many things and be rejected by this generation. And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day

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when the Son of Man is revealed. 'In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left. Two men will be in the field: the one will be taken and the other left.' And they answered and said to Him, 'Where, Lord?' So He said to them, 'Wherever the body is, there the eagles will be gathered together.'"

The kingdom of God is within the hearts and faith of the righteous

The Lord said that the kingdom of God is within you. The kingdom of God is within our hearts. In this world, no visible place can be called the kingdom of God. It is not that some place is the kingdom of God; in this world, the hearts of the righteous are the kingdom of God, and also the faith of the righteous is the kingdom of God.

Therefore, the person in whose heart the kingdom of God has been established is a person who has received the remission of sins, a person who has peace in his heart, who has fellowship with the Lord, and in whose heart the peace of the Lord is. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself all our sins, and He received the judgment for those sins on the Cross and died and rose again, and so removed all our sins. That is why there is peace in that heart, and that heart is precisely the kingdom of God. If a person has no peace in his heart, something

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is wrong with that person. Something is wrong with him spiritually and wrong with him in the flesh as well. He said that the kingdom of God is within you, and that kingdom is now within me and within your hearts. Is the kingdom of God within your hearts?

The false christs who will appear in the last days and the Lord who will come like lightning

The Lord said to the disciples, *"You will desire to see one of the days of the Son of Man, and you will not see it."* Why did He say such a word? It is because when the end comes upon this world on the last day, many things will happen in which people say that Christ has appeared here or appeared there. Just as it is said that the Virgin Mary appeared in some country, in the last days of this world rumors will spread that Jesus has appeared here or appeared there. Many strange miracles will appear as well. But if the Lord has spoken like this, it surely comes to pass just so. The world grows darker and darker, the end of the world draws near, and such mysterious phenomena arise.

At such a time, how does the Lord come? As the lightning flashes out of one part under heaven and shines to the other part under heaven, when the Lord suddenly comes one day, He will appear so that all the people of the whole world can know. He will not appear in such a way that the person here knows and the person there does not know. Therefore, we must know these things well in advance.

That day which comes suddenly, as in the days of Noah

What kind of time is the time when the Lord comes? He said it is like the days of Noah. He said, *"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26)*.

What kind of time were the days of Noah? It was a time when people ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, were preoccupied with the life of the present, preoccupied with enjoying pleasures, and preoccupied with pursuing wickedness. And yet the world seemed perfectly fine. The sun still set and rose again in the morning, and people lived extravagantly. Precisely at such a time, He said, *"So also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:39)*. While people are eating and drinking and living, at a time no one thought of, our Lord comes suddenly.

Even now the world is changing like this. New epidemics spread throughout the whole world and people die. Who knows what changes will happen in the future? We only look at the word of the Lord and think. The Lord comes at a time we do not think of, at a time when wickedness abounds. At that time some people suddenly suffer destruction and there is no way of escape. There is not even time to believe. But some people have their faith prepared, and they enter the Lord's kingdom together with the Lord.

The one who is taken and the one who is left

The Lord said that when the time comes for Him to come, of two people, one will be taken and one will be left. Let us apply

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this word to you and me and prepare our faith now.

Two people are sleeping, and one is taken and one remains. Two people are working together, and one is taken and one is left. He said, *"Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left" (Luke 17:35)*. What does this mean? It is that the person who is left seemed to believe but in fact did not believe.

Believing is believing with the heart. It is not believing because one did this or that in action. It is decided according to whether one believed with the heart or did not, and whether after believing one was united with the Lord or was not. He sees whether one has become a person fitting in the Lord's sight, whether one is a person fit for the Lord to take and live with, and takes him.

There are also cases where parents and children were living together, and the parents are taken and the children remain as they are. That is a tragedy. If one of a married couple is taken and the other remains, how sad would that be? To be left is to suffer punishment from that time on and to suffer torment forever.

Prepare now by faith for the things of the end

In the last days we must not turn back. The Lord tells us to remember Lot's wife, who looked back toward the world and became a pillar of salt. That is a warning He gives us. However born again a person may be, if he turns back, with attachment to this world remaining, and follows the world, he suffers the same thing as Lot's wife.

Therefore, we must keep looking ahead and, believing in the work that pleases the Lord, run forward with a forward-looking

spirit. Otherwise, if one follows the world even though one has been born again, one is ruined. One is left. This is what will happen at the end.

Then one may ask, the things of the end have not yet come and there is no sense of reality about them, so what great matter is that? But faith is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. We can bring the things of the end forward to the present now and think about them and prepare. When that time comes, one cannot prepare.

Must one see a business fail before knowing that it will fail? Is preparing before it fails a foolish thing? Whatever it may be, even what will happen a hundred years later can be brought forward to the present and solved, and even what will happen a thousand years later can be brought forward to the present and solved. Because the world of faith is believing the word of God, if the word of God says it is so, then it is so.

Therefore, you and I must examine whether we might perhaps be left, and we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit at this very moment. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took upon Himself all the sins of the world, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood and received the judgment for those sins and died, and rose from the dead and became the Savior of us who believe. If we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins and receive salvation. So we must not keep looking back at the world and following it. Even if the Lord were to come tomorrow, the world still does all its own business today.

What we believe must appear in our lives. Going forward in our lives in pursuit of what we believe is true faith. If one says one believes and does not go forward in that direction, one is not a believer but believes only in words. I hope you will become those who truly believe.

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A life that looks ahead by faith and takes on challenges

We must live with this faith, preparing by faith what needs to be prepared. Only then can we live by faith. If a believer does not use his faith, it is like being dead. Once one has solved some matter by faith, after that one becomes reluctant to use faith. But the next matter, too, must be solved using faith. If another problem arises, that too must be dealt with by faith. It is said that the righteous live by faith alone. Without faith, nothing is solved. No matter is solved by itself.

Faith is the substance of what is not seen. It is the substance of things hoped for and the evidence of things not seen. If one looks ahead by faith, hopes by faith, and takes on the challenge by faith, it appears as reality. That is precisely faith. Therefore, we must take hold by faith of what is not visible to the eye and bring it about so that it becomes visible to the eye. If there are people of faith, that nation lives, and if there are no people of faith, that nation is ruined. It is not enough merely to work diligently. We must pioneer and take on challenges using faith.

Heaven, too, is entered by faith

Heaven, too, is entered by faith. For us to go to heaven, there must be the fact that Jesus has removed all our sins. Jesus received baptism from John and Himself bore all our sins, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the full price of those sins, and rose from the dead on the third day. When we discover and believe how Jesus has removed our sins with this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins and enter heaven. This is the world of faith. It is what was hoped for

coming true as reality.

Therefore, with this faith, we must prepare from now on for the things of the end. We must look ahead and firmly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and must not look back, setting our attachment on the world. I hope you will become people of faith who are taken on that day when the Lord comes. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Now, in the last age, we must be preparing our faith individually

< Luke 17:26-35 >

"And as it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man: They ate, they drank, they married wives, they were given in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and the flood came and destroyed them all. Likewise as it was also in the days of Lot: They ate, they drank, they bought, they sold, they planted, they built; but on the day that Lot went out of Sodom it rained fire and brimstone from heaven and destroyed them all. Even so will it be in the day when the Son of Man is revealed. 'In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back. Remember Lot's wife. Whoever seeks to save his life will lose it, and whoever loses his life will preserve it. I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left."

The Lord said, *"As it was in the days of Noah, so it will be also in the days of the Son of Man" (Luke 17:26)*. That time when Jesus, who came as the Son of Man and as our Savior,

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comes again is also like the days of Noah. Until Noah entered the ark, people were living extravagantly and committing sins. When Jesus comes again, it is exactly the same as this.

It is also like the days of Lot. People ate and drank, bought and sold, planted and built houses, and on the day Lot went out of Sodom, fire and brimstone poured down like rain from heaven and destroyed them all. On the day the Son of Man is revealed, it will be exactly the same as this.

In this time when the coming of Jesus is at hand, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The world is ruined by natural disasters, by diseases, by famine, and by political instability. This is already predicted, and economists say so as well. Look at how mankind has changed. Since Adam and Eve sinned against God and were driven out of the Garden of Eden, in the Old Stone Age people carved stones to make weapons, and when the Iron Age came, farming tools developed and agricultural production greatly increased, and mankind came to live well. On reaching modern society, science has developed, and in these last days the Internet has developed and people are living well.

But while the culture of mankind developed and the standard of living repeatedly rose and fell, whenever wickedness abounded, the world collapsed. It caved in completely. Whenever people struggle and barely become able to live, sin abounds again. Then it collapses again. History has flowed in this way.

Historians consider that this present age, too, has now reached the time to be ruined because wickedness abounds so

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greatly. Moreover, with the coming of the age of non-face-to-face contact because of disease this time, the world has in fact completely collapsed. When the economy of one nation collapses, the economies of the surrounding nations collapse together. When the economy of a great nation caves in, the economy of the whole world caves in together.

Look at this in the light of the word of God and of reality. When wickedness abounded in the days of Noah, God told Noah to build an ark. Even until Noah had finished building the ark and entered the boat, people were still committing sins. When Noah entered the ark, rain came down from heaven and water gushed up from the earth, and rain poured down for forty days. And so only the family of Noah lived, and all mankind perished.

Even now, though the time for Jesus to come is at hand, there are truly many people who do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the nations of the whole world. We must make this gospel known even to the peoples who use languages we do not know. Making it known is our work, and believing is their work. Those who will be saved are saved, and those who will not be saved are not saved. In this age, too, those who will be saved receive salvation.

This world is going to be ruined anyway. Then one may ask, why do we live striving so hard? It is in order to live until that day. It is that we strive in order to live on this earth without discomfort until the new heaven and the new earth come.

We must abandon our attachment to the world, keep our own faith, and wait for the Lord

It was so at the time of the flood of Noah, and it was so in

the days of Lot. The Lord said this in verse 31. He said, *"In that day, he who is on the housetop, and his goods are in the house, let him not come down to take them away. And likewise the one who is in the field, let him not turn back."*

It is the word that on that day when the Lord comes again and this world is destroyed, if you have gone up on the housetop, do not come down to take the household goods below. It is that you should not try to gather the refrigerator, the dishes, or the household goods, but flee straight away.

But what does this mean? However one tries to flee, there is nowhere to flee. It is the word to believe only in the Lord. It is the word that there is no longer any place to flee other than calling on the Lord. Do not come down to take the goods, and the one in the field, do not turn back either, but call on the Lord straight away. It is the word that since the time has come for Him to come again in the very form in which He ascended, just believe.

It is hard to believe when that time has come. One must already be believing before that. We must abandon our attachment to the world, keep our own faith, and wait for the Lord.

Remember Lot's wife. God visited Lot as well and told him to flee. Lot had the faith that believed in God, having lived together with Abraham. He called his sons-in-law together and said, God has said that He will destroy this land of Sodom with fire, so let us flee together. But his sons-in-law took those words as a joke. They did not believe, saying, how could brimstone and fire come down from a perfectly clear sky?

As Lot fled together with **his wife and two daughters**, the angel said not to look back, saying that if they looked back they would die. But Lot's wife found the things she had left behind too precious to give up. She was following as her husband

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hurried her along, when fire really fell from heaven and the land of Sodom burst into flames. As the sound of burning and the screams of people crying to be saved came to her ears, she could not bear her curiosity. When she turned and looked back all at once, she became a pillar of salt.

In the Bible, salt signifies a promise. Though the angel had told Lot's family that they would die if they looked back, Lot's wife looked back, and just as it was said, she really became a pillar of salt. The word of God is fulfilled just as it is spoken.

The Antichrist and the tribulation that will arise in the last days

Such things happened in the old days, and such things will happen in the future as well. I believe there is no guarantee that this world economy will get better. The economy will not get better anymore. Every nation will come to experience difficulties.

Some nations cannot solve by themselves the problems that arise in their own nations. So when the last days come, the leaders of the great nations of the world gather in one place and form a single consultative body that runs the world. What is decided there is conveyed to each nation, and each nation must abide by that decision.

Because the world economy is difficult, diseases spread, and wars break out, the powerful nations band together and try to handle these problems. If, saying that wars break out because of religion, that consultative body makes a decision that each may believe in his own religion but may not spread it to others, no one will be able to spread it. In this way, a time comes when the whole world gradually declines and collapses.

Then an evil spirit enters into the head of that consultative body, and he becomes the Antichrist. Satan the Devil gives that person special wisdom and has him solve all the piled-up problems. If people do as he says, everything is solved.

Then that person's heart becomes proud, and he says that he is God, and says, praise me, worship me, and I will kill all who do not worship me. That is precisely the age of the tribulation. Before it comes to that, each nation falls into difficulty, the economy collapses, wars break out, and diseases spread, and at the end of such difficulties, such a result unfolds.

This is precisely the prophecy spoken of in the Bible, in the Book of Revelation. We must know this and must be prepared.

Be preparing your faith individually

The Lord spoke like this from verse 34. *"I tell you, in that night there will be two men in one bed: the one will be taken and the other will be left. Two women will be grinding together: the one will be taken and the other left" (Luke 17:34–35)*. This word is the word to be preparing our faith individually.

We must prepare our faith individually. Even if we are gathered together within the Church, salvation is not accomplished collectively. Each person must individually receive the Lord and receive the word of God into his heart. Otherwise, it will not do.

We are sinners from the time we are born

We must receive it individually. We did not become sinners because we committed sins. Adam and Eve, the ancestors of

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mankind, sinned against God by picking and eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, and they passed that sin down to their descendants. And so we bear the fate of going to hell from the time we are born. Do you know this fact?

Whether we commit sins or do not commit them makes no difference. Even if we live like a saint and receive the praise and admiration of people, if we were born as descendants of Adam, we all go to hell. We must admit that we are those who are to go to hell.

If one says one does not know even that, God has given the Law. He gave the law of God and points out all the wrongs of our conscience. He says it all: you are one who murders, you are one who steals, you are one who commits adultery. We must accept all of it. The wages of sin is death, so if anyone has sin, whoever he may be, God sends him to hell.

Why is that? It is because God has had, from the time He made us, the plan to save us through His Son and make us His people. From the time He made man, God made him with that purpose. Let us say that we make something. For example, if we make a microphone, we put components inside it and make and put in a diaphragm, a sound tube, and wires. What is the purpose of making all these things? It is to make sound come out well. It was made for that purpose. However much the thing that was made may struggle, if the maker made it for that purpose, it turns out that way.

However, though God created man for that purpose, He does not force it; rather, He speaks like this, personally and in the natural order of things. I made you for this purpose. I made you lacking for a while, but I made you in order to save you from sin, make you My people, and have you live together with Me forever. I have come to this earth clothed in human flesh in order to save you, so believe that fact, He says.

The One who is God and came to this earth clothed in human flesh is precisely Jesus Christ. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon His own body all the sins of the world. And bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, and so received all the judgment of sin. On the third day He rose from the dead and became our Savior. He tells us to believe this fact, that God came clothed in human flesh and saved you.

If you do not believe, you cannot receive salvation. One must receive salvation by faith, and if one does not believe, one goes to hell. God says that He cannot but judge the one who does not believe.

Among those who do not believe there is one class, namely the Devil. The Devil is a fallen angel. The angels, too, were made to worship and praise God, and there was no one higher than he except God. But he gathered the angels together, formed a band, and opposed God. He proposed to bring God down. At this, God was angry and said, will you be exalted to the ends of heaven? You will be brought down to the ends of the earth, and cast him out of heaven. And so the fallen angel came down to this earth, and that is precisely the Devil and the demons.

Accepting the word is faith

We must be preparing individually. Even though such an age has arrived, there are still many people who half believe and half doubt. The world makes all kinds of sweet promises. It boasts loudly, saying, just trust me and follow me, and I will do everything for you. But the promises of the people of the world are all vain bluster. The promises of the world are vain, but the promise of the Lord is a true promise.

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Even if we do not believe the fact that this world will be ruined, the world is ruined. If one does not believe, it is only oneself who suffers. Therefore, we must believe. If God wants to bring down this age of non-face-to-face contact, He brings it down in an instant. If He wants to take you, He takes you even by making you unable to breathe overnight.

Therefore, we must believe individually. And those who believe must be united with one another to form the Church, praise God, and do the work of God. Because it is hard to keep faith alone, we must live the life of faith together, receive the blessings God gives, and do the work God entrusts, and then meet the Lord when He comes.

Will things get better in the future because you and I live like this? Will life get better? It will not get better. This world has already entered a downhill road. It went up as far as it could go up, and now it has turned downward like this. On this downhill road, the person who does not believe goes all the way down to hell.

How good would it be if it were all over when one dies? If so, it would be enough for everyone to just die in advance. But God neither made us that way nor leaves us that way. He sends the person who takes the side of the Devil to hell together with the Devil, and He has the person who believes live in heaven together with Jesus. Therefore, we must be preparing individually. We must prepare our faith.

Accepting the word of God is faith. Accepting the word is believing; saying within your own notions, "Jesus, I believe in You," is not faith. That is religion, something one has made up oneself. Since the word said Jesus Christ, accepting that word, thinking, ah, this One is the King of kings, is faith.

The Bible speaks like this: *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. Faith comes by

hearing the word of God. Therefore, we must believe. We must prepare. Then, even living in these last days, we will not live in confusion but can finish the end well. The Lord is speaking that to us.

What does this word mean? Why did the Lord speak so much about the things of old? Some people call the Bible a history book. It is because it records many things of old. But through those things of old, God wants to teach us, admonish our hearts, and awaken us to what is right and what is wrong and lead us to the right way. The word of God is the word that admonishes us and leads us to the right and proper way.

If one takes hold of the word, the remission of sins comes

The Bible speaks of two people being together in that night. Two men are working together in the world, and one is taken and one is left. Two women are grinding at the mill together, and one is taken and one is left. Being left is the saddest thing. A deep meaning is contained in this word.

This speaks of the Church. There are people who live together within the Church and yet have not received salvation. It is because they did not believe and did not accept the word of God. Discovering Jesus through the word of God and accepting the word Jesus has spoken to us is faith.

One must have faith, and if one takes hold of the word of God, it becomes faith. But people do not take hold of that word. If one does not take hold of the word, the remission of sins does not come either. If one takes hold of the word, the remission of sins comes of itself.

By the faith that believes this gospel, that Jesus received

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baptism from John and took over all our sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again on the third day, the remission of sins comes to us. It is because the Bible says so. Therefore, we must take hold of the word. Then salvation comes, we become the people of God, the Holy Spirit comes, we naturally come to do the work of God, and everything comes to be believed.

And living on this earth becomes better. We can live receiving the special protection and love of the Lord until the world perishes. When the people of the world are ruined, they are ruined overnight, but the righteous are not like that. Even if I fall, the person beside me holds me up so that I do not fall down. Even if the world is ruined overnight, we are not ruined like that.

We must never become people who are left. Believe the word of God. Let us believe together. Dear fellow believers, do you believe the word of God? I will close the sermon with this word. ✉

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CHAPTER

18

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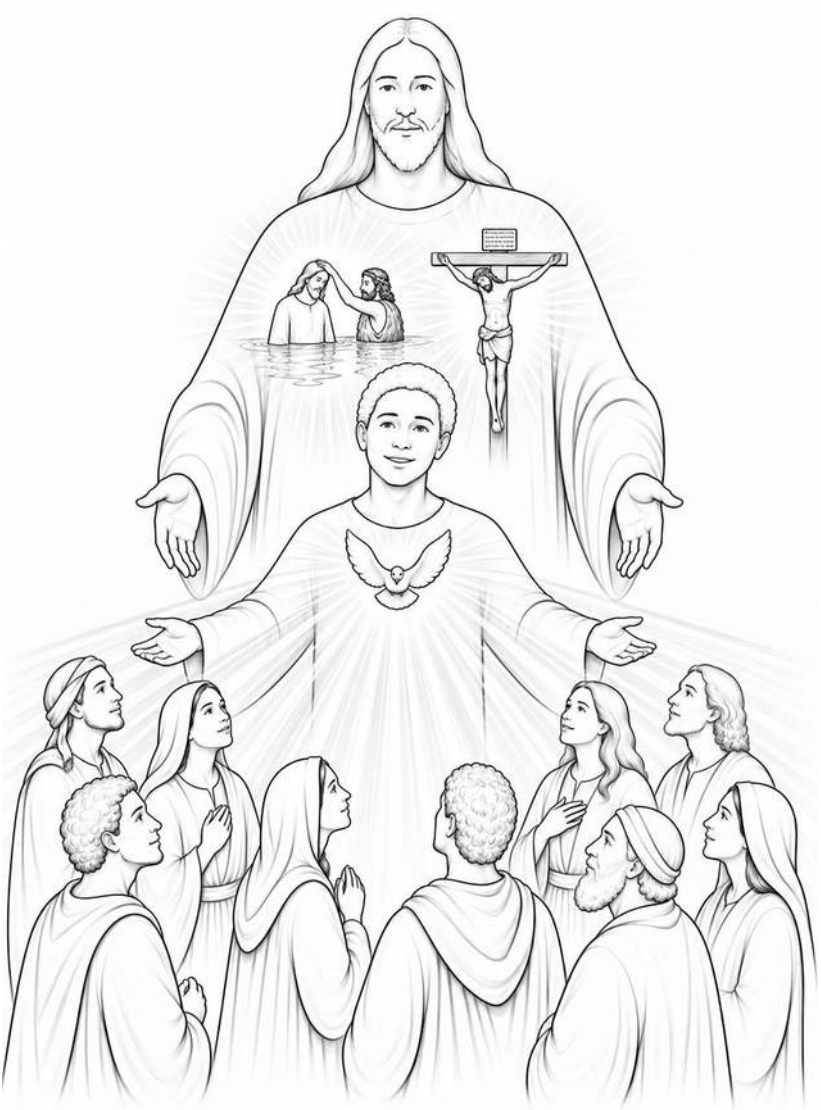

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Luke Chapter 18

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

Luke chapter 18 shows prayer that does not lose heart, the humility that admits one's own sins, the kingdom of God received like a little child, the faith that lays down riches and one's own righteousness, the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, and the mercy shown to the blind man of Jericho. We will examine each text in turn through the general interpretation of its context and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The unjust judge and the persistent widow (18:1–8)

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: 'There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, "Get justice for me from my adversary." And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, "Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."' Then the Lord said, 'Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?'"

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General interpretation of the text

Jesus tells His disciples the story of a widow, meaning that they always ought to pray and not lose heart. The widow keeps going to a judge who does not fear God nor respect man, asking him to resolve the wrong done to her.

The judge avenges the widow not out of a sense of justice but because her continual requests are troublesome. This parable does not mean that God answers reluctantly like the unjust judge. It is a contrast: if even an unjust man responds to a persistent request, the righteous God will all the more not turn away from the cries of those who rely on Him.

Even when the answer seems to be delayed, one must trust in the justice of God and not give up prayer. The question *"when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"* asks whether one will keep faith and prayer even in the midst of waiting.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must not lose heart but pray in faith

The unjust judge did not fear God and disregarded man, but when the widow kept coming, he avenged her in order to avoid the trouble. Jesus did not say that God is like the unjust judge. It is a contrast asking whether the righteous God would turn away from the prayers of His people who cry out day and night, if even the unjust judge granted the request of the widow who kept coming.

The saint who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins can pray, believing in God as his Father. Prayer is not a means of moving God in order

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to fulfill one's own greed. It is asking, within the will of God, for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel, for the souls of one's family and neighbors, for the Church and the saints, and for the help needed in life.

We must not lose heart because the answer is not seen right away. We must pray to God, believe His word, and wait for the time He has appointed. That Jesus asked at the end, *"When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"* means that He seeks the faith that believes in God and does not give up prayer until the time of His second coming.

2. The prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector (18:9–14)

"Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'"

General interpretation of the text

To people who believe that they are righteous and despise

others, Jesus speaks the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector.

The Pharisee speaks of his own religious deeds, such as fasting and tithing, and boasts that he is better than others. His prayer has the form of thanksgiving to God, but there is no admitting of his own sins or seeking of the mercy of God.

On the other hand, the tax collector stands afar off, unable even to raise his eyes, and beats his breast, praying that God would have mercy on him. The tax collector was acknowledged as righteous not because of honest tax administration, but because he admitted his sins and relied on the mercy of God.

Jesus says that the tax collector went back acknowledged as righteous by God. Before God, the person who exalts himself is humbled, and the person who admits his sins and needs and comes humbly is exalted.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must believe not in our own righteousness but in the righteousness of God

While praying, the Pharisee boasted of the fact that he was different from other people and of his fasting and tithing. In his words there was no heart that sought the mercy of God. He regarded himself as righteous on the basis of his deeds and despised the tax collector.

But the tax collector stood afar off, unable even to look up to heaven, and beat his breast, asking God to have mercy on him. He knew the fact that he could not solve his sins with his own deeds. Jesus said that it was not the Pharisee but the tax collector who went back justified.

This word does not mean that the act itself of saying that one

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is a sinner saves a person. It means that one must admit before God that one is a being who cannot but sin until one dies, and must rely on the mercy God has bestowed.

The mercy of God is not pretending not to know sin. Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. God declares righteous not the person who puts forward his own deeds, but the person who knows and believes in his heart the righteousness Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

3. Little children and the kingdom of God (18:15–17)

"Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it."

General interpretation of the text

When people bring little children to Jesus, the disciples rebuke them. In those days little children were beings with almost no social status or rights, but Jesus calls them near and tells the disciples not to forbid them.

The word that the kingdom of God belongs to those who are like little children does not mean that one must become naive or immature. It means that, like a little child, one must not put

forward one's own strength and status, but must receive the kingdom of God in dependence.

The kingdom of God is not a possession obtained by human merit or qualification, but a gift that God gives. Therefore, rather than claiming that one is qualified, one must receive it humbly.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must receive the kingdom of God like a little child

When people brought little children to Jesus, the disciples rebuked them. But Jesus told them not to forbid the little children from coming, and said that the kingdom of God belongs to such people.

Faith like a little child is not believing without any thought or abandoning discernment. It is the heart that does not put forward one's own religious knowledge and merit and quarrel with the word of God, but acknowledges the fact of salvation that God has said He has accomplished just as it is.

A little child does not calculate the gift his parents give as a reward for his own merit. Likewise, the kingdom of God is not a reward that a person obtains by keeping the Law perfectly or piling up many good deeds. It is the kingdom that God gives by grace to the person who knows and believes in his heart the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

4. The rich ruler and eternal life (18:18–27)

"Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, 'Good Teacher,

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what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Honor your father and your mother."' And he said, 'All these things I have kept from my youth.' So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, 'You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' And those who heard it said, 'Who then can be saved?' But He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.'"

General interpretation of the text

An official calls Jesus *"Good Teacher"* and asks what he must do to obtain eternal life. Jesus says that only God is good, and makes him think seriously about the meaning of the word 'good' that he uses and about the identity of Jesus.

The official says that he has kept from his youth the commandments that forbid murder, adultery, and stealing and command honoring one's parents. But Jesus says that he lacks one thing, and tells him to distribute his property to the poor and follow Him.

The command of Jesus does not simply mean to purchase eternal life by the act of getting rid of property. It reveals that the official is actually relying on riches more than on God.

Because he was very rich, he goes away sorrowful. He thought that he had kept the commandments, but because of his attachment to riches he failed to obey the heart of the commandments, which is to love God and one's neighbor with all one's heart.

Jesus says that it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. This is a hyperbolic figure of speech expressing that it is practically impossible.

It does not mean that riches themselves are evil or that no rich person can be saved. But riches give the illusion that one is safe and lacks nothing, and can make one rely on possessions more than on God.

When people ask who then can be saved, Jesus answers that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. Salvation is not obtained by human merit or by the act of giving up property itself, but is accomplished by the grace and power of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—God accomplishes the salvation that is impossible for man

The rich ruler asked Jesus what he must do to obtain eternal life. He thought of eternal life as a reward he had to obtain by his own deeds rather than as a gift God gives. When Jesus spoke of the commandments, he answered that he had kept them all from his youth.

He was not only materially rich but also rich in heart because of his own deeds and righteousness. Because he thought that he had kept the commandments well and lived a good life, he did

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not know the fact that he was a sinner utterly lacking before God.

That Jesus told him to sell his property, distribute it to the poor, and follow Him does not mean that everyone must dispose of his property in order to be saved. Jesus revealed the fact that the ruler was relying on riches and his own righteousness more than on God. He thought that he believed in God, but in reality riches had become the master of his heart.

In the text, the rich man does not refer only to a person with much property. It refers to the person who thinks that his own ability and possessions are enough without seeking God, and who, being high and proud in heart, does not feel the need of a Savior. Riches themselves are not sin, but when one relies on them as on God, they become an idol.

For this reason Jesus said that it is impossible for a person to be saved by his own strength, but that God can do it. God accomplished the salvation that man could not. It is because Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment on the Cross in our place, and then rose from the dead.

5. Those who left everything and followed (18:28–30)

"Then Peter said, 'See, we have left all and followed You.' So He said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.'"

General interpretation of the text

Peter says that the disciples have left what was theirs and followed Jesus. Jesus says that the person who has left his house and family for the sake of the kingdom of God will receive many times more in this world and obtain eternal life in the world to come.

This is not a promise of material prosperity that one will gain more property by following Jesus. A disciple may experience loss, but he gains new family, relationships, and care within the community of the kingdom of God.

Sacrifice for Jesus is not forgotten by God. But one does not sacrifice in order to obtain a reward; one follows Jesus willingly because one knows the value of the kingdom of God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Devotion is the fruit of the grace of having been saved

Peter said that the disciples had left what was theirs and followed Jesus. Jesus said that the person who has left precious things behind for the sake of the kingdom of God receives many times more in this world and obtains eternal life in the age to come.

It is not that the disciples bought eternal life because they had left everything. Salvation is not a recompense obtained by a person's sacrifice and devotion. Jesus accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit the salvation that man cannot, and a sinner receives the remission of sins by knowing that salvation and believing it in his heart.

The person who has received the remission of sins gives

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thanks for the grace that saved him and thinks first of the kingdom of God. He uses his material things, time, and talents for the gospel and for souls, and at times leaves behind the benefits and comforts of the world and follows the Lord. God does not forget such labor of faith.

The blessing of many times more received in this present time must not be understood simply as material success. The saint who has left behind the relationships and possessions of the flesh for the sake of the gospel gains new brothers and sisters and a family of faith within the Church of God. Also, though persecution accompanies the way for the gospel, eternal life awaits in the age to come.

6. He foretells His suffering and resurrection (18:31–34)

"Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.' But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus tells the twelve disciples that when He goes up to Jerusalem, the words the prophets wrote will be accomplished.

Jesus will be delivered to the Gentiles, be mocked and

insulted, be spit upon and scourged, and then be put to death, but He will rise again on the third day. The Cross is not an unexpected failure but the way that accomplishes the plan of salvation of God.

The disciples did not understand this word. Because they expected a glorious Messiah, it was hard for them to accept the way of a Messiah who suffers and dies. Only after the resurrection of Jesus do they gradually come to realize its meaning.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The suffering and resurrection of Jesus are the way of salvation

Jesus said in advance that He would be delivered to the Gentiles, be mocked, insulted, and spit upon, be scourged, and then be put to death, and that He would rise again on the third day. All these things were not an accident that happened suddenly, but the plan of salvation of God, written down through the prophets.

The baptism of Jesus and the Cross are not separate events. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He took upon Himself all the sins of the world. Therefore, He had to go to the Cross bearing those sins and receive in our place the judgment we ought to have received. And by rising from the dead, He overcame sin and death and became our perfect Savior.

The disciples heard the word of Jesus but did not realize its meaning. They expected a glorious kingdom, but they did not understand the way of Christ, who would take upon Himself sin and receive the judgment. Even today, if one knows Jesus only

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as the One who heals diseases and solves the difficulties of life, one can miss the center of salvation. One must know why Jesus received baptism and why He had to die on the Cross.

7. He heals a blind man (18:35–43)

"Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, that I may receive my sight.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God."

General interpretation of the text

When Jesus is coming near Jericho, a blind man is sitting by the road begging. When he hears that Jesus is passing by, he cries out, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

"Son of David" is an expression that acknowledges Jesus as the Messiah whom God promised. People rebuke him, telling him to be quiet, but he cries out all the more.

Jesus stops walking, calls him, and asks what he wants.

When he answers that he wants to see again, Jesus says that his faith has saved him and restores his sight.

After being healed, he follows Jesus and gives glory to God. He does not stop at opening his physical eyes but enters the way of a disciple who follows Jesus. The people who see this also praise God.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The person who believes in the mercy of Jesus is saved

A blind man near Jericho could not see Jesus with the eyes of his body. But when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he called Him *"Son of David"* and asked for mercy. This was believing that Jesus is the Messiah whom God promised, and asking for help.

People rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he cried out all the more loudly. He knew that he could not solve his situation by himself and that he absolutely needed the grace of Jesus. Jesus stopped walking, called him, and asked what he wanted.

When he answered that he wanted to see, Jesus said that his faith had saved him. He immediately received his sight, and followed Jesus, giving glory to God. This event must not be interpreted to mean that every physical disability comes from an individual's sin. Nor is it a promise that every believer will surely be healed of physical illness.

But in its spiritual application, a person can fail to see the salvation Jesus accomplished because of his own righteousness and wrong faith. One must admit the fact that one's own eyes are dark and that one needs the mercy of God. One must know and believe in one's heart the fact that all our sins passed on to

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Jesus through His baptism, and that Jesus received the judgment for those sins on the Cross and then rose from the dead.

After being saved, one must, like that man, follow Jesus and give glory to God. The life of following the Lord and preaching the gospel is not a condition for obtaining salvation but the fruit of faith that comes from the grace of having been saved.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 18 conveys

Luke chapter 18 contrasts the person who comes to God by his own strength with the person who relies on the mercy of God. The Pharisee boasted of his own righteousness, and the rich ruler relied on his deeds and riches. On the other hand, the widow did not lose heart but asked for help, the tax collector humbled himself, the little children received the kingdom of God as a gift, and the blind man of Jericho asked for the mercy of Jesus.

A person can neither make himself righteous by his own deeds nor buy eternal life with riches and religious merit. But God has accomplished the salvation that man cannot. Jesus took upon Himself all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

Therefore, we must not hold on to our own ability and righteousness like the person who is rich in heart. We must admit our lack before God and know and believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. After receiving the remission of sins, we must pray without losing heart, seek first the kingdom of God, serve the gospel and souls, and wait for the Lord who will come again. ✉

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

The faith that abandons one's own righteousness and believes the gospel like a little child

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 above, we examined each passage of Luke chapter 18 through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit side by side. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will examine in detail the faith that prays without losing heart, the heart that abandons its own righteousness and seeks the mercy of God, and the life that receives salvation like a little child and follows Jesus.

The parable of the unjust judge and the widow, the prayers of the Pharisee and the tax collector, the event of receiving the little children, and the words about the rich ruler and the blind man of Jericho are not stories separate from one another. All these words show the fact that a person cannot be saved by his own goodness, riches, and religious deeds, but must admit his own lack and accept in faith the salvation God has accomplished.

The passage-by-passage expository sermon that follows examines, following the flow of the text, how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and

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completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

God who answers the prayer of faith

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: 'There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, "Get justice for me from my adversary." And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, "Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."' Then the Lord said, 'Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?'" (Luke 18:1–8).

We must always pray and not lose heart

This parable follows the content in which Jesus spoke earlier about the day of the Son of Man and the final separation. While waiting for the appearing of the Lord, the disciples could lose heart because injustice continued and the answer of God seemed to be delayed. Jesus taught them that they must always pray and not lose heart.

The judge in the parable was an unjust man who did not fear God and disregarded man. On the other hand, the widow had no power to resolve the wrong done to her or to exert influence on

the judge. All she could do was to keep going to the judge and ask for a fair judgment. The judge avenged her not because he loved justice but because it was troublesome that the widow kept coming.

Jesus did not say that God is like this unjust judge. It is a contrast: if even the unjust judge finally granted the plea of the widow, how then could the righteous and good God turn away from the prayers of His people who cry out day and night? God is not One who answers reluctantly only after a believer has troubled Him enough, but the Father who loves His people and already knows their circumstances and needs.

Pray for the will of God and the work of the gospel

To pray always is not to give up after asking God once because one's circumstances do not change. If it is a right thing that pleases God, one must keep praying with a purpose, and wait, believing that God will accomplish it. In particular, we must gather our hearts and pray for the preaching of the gospel to the whole world and the salvation of souls, for the Church and the workers of the gospel, and for the needs of the saints.

The widow entrusted to the judge the wrong she could not resolve by her own strength, and kept going to him until she was avenged. Likewise, a believer must not try to accomplish the work of God by his own strength, but must ask God for help. It is asking in faith that God would set injustice right, open the way of the gospel, and help His people.

A sinner cannot come before God by his own merit or by his zeal in prayer. But Jesus had already taken upon Himself all our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and at the time of the text He was going toward the Cross

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bearing those sins. He received the judgment for sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead. The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and can call God Father and pray boldly.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has been saved from the power of sin, death, and Satan. But injustice still remains in this world, and things that hinder the preaching of the gospel also happen. A believer does not try to solve every problem by his own strength but asks God for help. It is because he believes that Jesus overcame sin and death with the gospel, and that on the last day He will judge all injustice and fully reveal the salvation of His people.

God surely hears the prayer of faith that accords with His will. Therefore, a believer must pray, believe that it will be accomplished, and wait until the answer appears. The more one experiences the things one has prayed to God for being accomplished one by one, the firmer the faith that relies on the word and promises of God becomes.

Prayer is not doing nothing and only waiting for an answer. If one has prayed for the preaching of the gospel, one must look for a way to preach the gospel, knock on doors, and do the work entrusted to one with the strength God has given. A believer asks God for help while praying, takes up the challenge again with that faith, and continues to serve the work of the gospel until the day the Lord comes.

"When the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?"

At the end, Jesus asked, *"When the Son of Man comes, will*

He really find faith on the earth?" This question does not stop at meaning only that the religious form of prayer will completely disappear. It is a word warning that it will be hard to find the faith that relies steadfastly on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed and cries out to God without losing heart, even when the answer of God seems slow and the injustice of the world continues.

True faith believes the fact that Jesus removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and relies on the promise that God surely hears the prayers of His people. Therefore, the person who has been saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lose heart even when his circumstances are hard and the answer seems slow. He prays in faith until the will of God and the work of the gospel are accomplished, and continues the work entrusted to him until the day the Lord comes.

The Lord who makes sinners righteous

"Also He spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others: 'Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, "God, I thank You that I am not like other men—extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess." And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, "God, be merciful to me a sinner!" I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.'" (Luke 18:9–14).

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The Pharisee who boasted of his own righteousness

Jesus spoke this parable to *"some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and despised others."* The problem does not lie simply in the fact that the two men prayed with different attitudes. The center of the parable is what each made the basis of his righteousness before God, and who admitted the fact that he needed the mercy of God.

The Pharisee thought that he was different from the people who practiced extortion, injustice, and adultery. He fasted twice a week and gave tithes of his income. Fasting, tithing, and moral self-restraint are not wrong in themselves. The problem lies in the fact that he believed himself to be righteous on the basis of these deeds, reported his own good deeds rather than asking God for grace, and despised the tax collector.

In the prayer of the Pharisee there was no examining of his own sins or seeking of the mercy of God. He compared himself with others and judged that he was better. But the righteousness God judges is not a state of being relatively better than other sinners. A perfect righteousness that can stand before God is needed, and a sinner has no ability to make such righteousness with his own deeds.

The tax collector who admitted what he was and asked for mercy

The tax collector stood afar off in the temple, unable even to raise his eyes to heaven, and beat his breast. He confessed, *"God, be merciful to me a sinner!"* This was not an admission to the extent that he had made a few mistakes, but a confession that he deserved to be judged before God and could not be saved

without the mercy of God.

The tax collector admitted that he had no righteousness to put forward before God, and that he was a being who could not but sin from birth until death. He did not boast of his good deeds but asked for the mercy of God. Jesus said clearly that this tax collector went down to his house justified rather than the Pharisee.

He made sinners righteous with the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The mercy with which God had pity on sinners did not end with words only. Jesus took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Bearing those sins, He was hung on the Cross and received all the judgment by shedding His blood and dying, and by rising from the dead He completed the salvation that makes sinners righteous.

Before being born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a person is a sinner before God and a being with no righteousness at all in himself by which to be saved. The person who admits his sinful nature and his condition of perishing believes in his heart the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and receives the remission of all his sins. God counts this faith as righteousness and makes the sinner righteous.

The person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a person who still remains in the status of a sinner even when he commits wrongs because his flesh is weak. It is because Jesus already took upon Himself and received the judgment for all the sins that person

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would commit from birth until death. Therefore, the saved person, while admitting the lack of his flesh, believes the verdict of the gospel that God has made him a righteous person without sin.

The person who exalts himself is the person who exalts his own deeds and religious merit above the righteousness of God. The person who humbles himself is the person who admits that he has no righteousness by which to be saved, and accepts the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished. God exalts the person who lays down his own righteousness and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and makes him His righteous child.

Even today, one can make a long career of attending church, church offices, many offerings and much service, fasting and prayer, and a moral life the basis of salvation. These deeds are fruits of faith that the person who has believed the gospel and been saved can do in thanksgiving, but they cannot wash away a person's sins or make him righteous. If one boasts of them and despises others, one has fallen into the same self-righteousness as the prayer of the Pharisee.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit removes the boasting of every person. A sinner is not saved by his own righteousness, but receives the remission of sins only by believing in the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Therefore, the righteous person does not despise others but gives thanks for the grace that saved him, and preaches the gospel with the heart that the person who does not yet know the gospel also needs the same mercy.

Both men went up to the temple and prayed, but only the tax collector went down justified rather than the Pharisee. God looks not at one's religious appearance or one's reputation among

people, but at what the heart believes. The person who abandons his own righteousness and believes in his heart the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins and is justified before God.

Have faith like a little child

"Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.'" (Luke 18:15–17).

Let the little children come to Me

People brought infants, hoping that Jesus would touch them. The disciples rebuked them and stopped them, but Jesus called the little children near and said to let them come to Him and not forbid them. Jesus gladly received the little children the disciples had stopped, and said that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these.

This word also connects with the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector that comes right before it. The Pharisee put forward his own deeds and righteousness, but the tax collector asked for the mercy of God without being able to claim any merit. A little child, too, has no religious career or merit to put forward before God. Jesus taught that the kingdom of God is not a reward

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obtained by piling up one's own righteousness, but belongs to the person who accepts in faith the salvation given by the grace of God.

The faith that accepts the word of God as it is

To receive it *"as a little child"* is to acknowledge the word as it is when God speaks, and to believe it in one's heart and accept it. Just as a little child comes without hesitation to the person who loves him, a sinner must want the remission of sins, eternal life, and the kingdom of God that God bestows, and accept them in faith.

A person cannot produce the salvation of God with his own thoughts and knowledge. When God says that He has removed all our sins through Jesus Christ, we must accept it, saying, "I see. This is how the Lord has saved me." Not placing one's own thoughts and experiences above the word of God, but believing in one's heart what God has accomplished—this is faith like a little child.

Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the kingdom of God

Jesus came to this earth to save us from all our sins. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He took upon His own body all the sins of the world, and bearing those sins He received the punishment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. And He was buried and rose again on the third day, and thus overcame sin and death and completed our salvation.

The faith that abandons one's own righteousness
and believes the gospel like a little child

Today we believe in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. The person who believes and accepts this gospel receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, becomes a child of God, and enters the eternal kingdom of God. To believe and accept the salvation God has accomplished just as it is, without judging it by one's own thoughts or putting it off, is true faith.

Therefore, parents and the Church must not stop little children from coming to Jesus, but must teach them the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that they can understand it. Adults, too, must not put forward their long career of faith, knowledge, and deeds, but must believe the word of God with the heart of a little child.

Jesus said that whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it. We must believe the salvation the Lord accomplished just as it is and obtain eternal life, and preach this gospel while we live united with the Church of God. The person who believes and accepts the word of God in his heart like a little child enjoys the salvation and the blessing of heaven that God gives.

God accomplished the salvation that is impossible for man

"Now a certain ruler asked Him, saying, 'Good Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?' So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God. You know the commandments: "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Honor your father and your mother."' And he said, 'All these

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things I have kept from my youth.' So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, 'You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.' But when he heard this, he became very sorrowful, for he was very rich. And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' And those who heard it said, 'Who then can be saved?' But He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.' Then Peter said, 'See, we have left all and followed You.' So He said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.'" (Luke 18:18–30).

The ruler who was rich in heart with his own deeds and riches

Earlier, Jesus said that unless one receives the kingdom of God as a little child, one cannot enter it. A little child does not buy a gift with his own merit but accepts what is given. Yet the ruler who appears next asked, *"What shall I do to inherit eternal life?"* The faith that receives the salvation given by grace and the thought of obtaining eternal life by one's own deeds are being contrasted.

The ruler called Jesus *"Good Teacher,"* but he did not know Jesus as God and as his own Savior. By saying, *"No one is good but One, that is, God,"* Jesus revealed the fact that only God is

truly good and that man cannot obtain eternal life by his own goodness and deeds.

When Jesus spoke of the commandments not to commit adultery, not to murder, not to steal, not to bear false witness, and to honor one's father and mother, the ruler answered that he had kept them all from his youth. He was convinced that he had kept the commandments faithfully by the standard of deeds visible to the eyes of people. But the Law of God judges not only outward deeds but also the heart, and reveals the sin and self-righteousness hidden inside a person.

Jesus commanded the ruler to sell all that he had, distribute it to the poor, and follow Him. The ruler was actually a rich man with much wealth, and at the same time a person rich in heart with his own deeds and righteousness. The word of Jesus revealed the fact that he relied on riches more than on God and was trying to solve even the matter of eternal life with his own deeds.

That ruler was in fact very rich, and when he heard this word he became very sorrowful. He wanted eternal life, but he could not accept with joy the word to lay down his riches and follow Jesus.

The command of Jesus revealed that the keeping of the commandments he boasted of was not complete. He thought that he loved his neighbor, but before the word to distribute his riches to the poor he became sorrowful. He thought that he believed in God, but he treasured riches more than following Jesus, who is God. Riches had settled in as the master that guaranteed his safety and satisfaction.

Riches themselves are not evil. Gold and silver and all possessions belong to God, and a person is a steward who manages what God has entrusted to him. But when a person relies on riches as on God and makes them the basis of his life

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and safety, riches become the idol of his heart. Because the ruler was following riches rather than following the word of God, he became sorrowful before the word of the Lord.

The things which are impossible with men are possible with God

Jesus said that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God. This means that the person who regards himself as lacking nothing with his own strength and possessions and does not need a Savior cannot enter the kingdom of God. In the person whose heart is full of the riches of the flesh and his own righteousness, there is no place for the word of the remission of sins that God gives to enter.

When people asked, *"Who then can be saved?"* Jesus answered, *"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God."* A person cannot be saved by not sinning or by keeping the Law of God perfectly. Nor can he buy eternal life with his own good deeds, property, and religious merit. But God Himself accomplished the salvation that man cannot.

Jesus came to this earth to save all people from sin. By receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, He took upon His own body all the sins a person commits throughout his life, and bearing those sins He received the punishment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. And by rising from the dead He overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

A sinner receives the remission of all his sins and obtains eternal life by believing in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the blood

of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. The person who admits his lack and his state as a sinner believes the word *"The things which are impossible with men are possible with God"* and accepts with thanksgiving the salvation God has accomplished. The kingdom of God is not a kingdom one enters by money or human goodness, but a kingdom one enters by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

The promise received by those who have followed the Lord

Peter said that they had left what they had and followed the Lord. Because the disciples believed in Jesus as the Christ and the Lord, they left behind their boats, nets, and possessions and followed the Lord. Jesus does not forget the faith and labor of the person who has left behind his house, family, and possessions for the sake of the kingdom of God and followed the Lord.

That the person who has left things for the sake of the kingdom of God receives many times more in this present time means that he gains many brothers and sisters and a family of faith within the Church of God, and enjoys the care and spiritual abundance the Lord bestows. Also, in the age to come, he obtains eternal life that never dies again and lives with God forever.

Today, too, a person must not make his property and education, church office and good deeds, or long religious life the basis of eternal life. Rather than asking only what more he must do, he must hear and believe what Jesus has accomplished for him. The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been saved knows that his possessions and life

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are what God has entrusted to him, and uses them wisely to care for his family, help his neighbors in need, and preach the gospel.

Man has no goodness or ability to achieve eternal life. But God completed with the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection the salvation that is impossible for man. The person who believes in this salvation receives the remission of all his sins and obtains eternal life, and does not make his own righteousness and riches his master, but believes in and follows Jesus as his true Lord.

Jesus who went up to Jerusalem to accomplish salvation

"Then He took the twelve aside and said to them, 'Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem, and all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished. For He will be delivered to the Gentiles and will be mocked and insulted and spit upon. They will scourge Him and kill Him. And the third day He will rise again.' But they understood none of these things; this saying was hidden from them, and they did not know the things which were spoken" (Luke 18:31–34).

While going up to Jerusalem with the twelve disciples, Jesus spoke again of what would happen to Him. Earlier, Jesus had declared that man cannot save, but God can. Now the text shows how God would accomplish the salvation that is impossible for man. Jesus would accomplish the salvation for sinners by suffering and dying and rising again on the third day.

"All things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished"

Jesus said, *"Behold, we are going up to Jerusalem."* Jesus did not go to Jerusalem without knowing what would happen to Him. He knew everything: that He would be delivered to the Gentiles, be mocked and insulted, spit upon and scourged, and then be put to death, and that He would rise again on the third day. Therefore, the death of Jesus was not an unforeseen failure. Knowing the will of the Father to save sinners, the Lord went up to Jerusalem of His own will.

The word *"all things that are written by the prophets concerning the Son of Man will be accomplished"* means that the suffering, death, and resurrection of Jesus were not a plan prepared suddenly. The words the prophets wrote testify to the plan of salvation of God, by which Christ would suffer, die, and rise again, and all those words were actually accomplished in Jesus.

The word that Jesus would be delivered to the Gentiles refers to His being tried and executed under the ruling power of Rome. The mocking and insults, the spitting and scourging, and the death that Jesus foretold were actually fulfilled in the record of the Passion that follows. Jesus did not suffer only symbolically; He took upon Himself insult, pain, and death in His actual body.

The prediction of Jesus did not end with death. The Lord said clearly that *"the third day He will rise again."* The Cross could look like the end of all hope, but God raised Jesus from the dead. The resurrection shows that Jesus was not defeated by sin and death, but perfectly accomplished the salvation for sinners.

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He went to the Cross bearing the sins He had taken upon Himself with His baptism

Jesus had already taken upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Therefore, the way He went up to Jerusalem was the way of going to receive the judgment for that sin on the Cross, bearing the sin of the world He had taken upon Himself with His baptism. Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again on the third day, and thus overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to accept in one's heart the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all my sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross in my place, and rose from the dead and saved me. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The disciples did not yet realize that word

The disciples heard the word of Jesus directly, but they realized none of it. The text records that this saying was hidden from them and they did not know what Jesus had said. They were following Jesus, but they did not yet understand the way in which Christ would accomplish salvation by suffering, dying, and rising again.

The fact that one has heard the words of the message with one's ears is not the same as realizing and believing in one's heart the meaning of its salvation. Even after the death and resurrection of Jesus had actually taken place, the disciples were

at first confused. When the risen Jesus opened the Scriptures to them and opened their hearts, they came to realize that the words of the prophets and the events that happened to Jesus were one work of salvation.

Today, we too must not stop at knowing the words baptism, Cross, and resurrection, but must clearly know and believe what salvation Jesus accomplished with them. Jesus, knowing all about His suffering, death, and resurrection, went up to Jerusalem to receive the judgment for the sin of the world that He had taken upon Himself with His baptism, and to give life to sinners. Therefore, a person must not try to achieve salvation with his own good deeds and religious efforts, but must believe in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, and receive the remission of all his sins.

Jesus who opened the eyes of the blind man who asked for mercy

"Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!' Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!' So Jesus stood still and commanded him to be brought to Him. And when he had come near, He asked him, saying, 'What do you want Me to do for you?' He said, 'Lord, that I may receive my sight.' Then Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.' And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people,

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when they saw it, gave praise to God" (Luke 18:35–43).

Right before this, Jesus had foretold that He would suffer and be insulted and put to death in Jerusalem, and then rise again on the third day. Now, on the way up to Jerusalem to accomplish that work of salvation, Jesus came near Jericho. By that road sat a man who could not see and lived by begging.

"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!"

Hearing the sound of a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. People told him that *"Jesus of Nazareth was passing by,"* but he cried out toward Jesus, *"Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!" "Son of David"* is a title referring to the King whom God promised to send, the Christ.

He did not call Jesus merely a famous healer or a passing teacher. He asked for mercy, believing that Jesus had the authority to have pity on his situation and save him.

Those who went before rebuked him and told him to be quiet. But he did not give up, and cried out all the more loudly, *"Son of David, have mercy on me!"* It was because he knew the fact that he absolutely needed the mercy of Jesus.

People tried to silence him, but Jesus stopped on His way and commanded him to be brought. Even while going to receive the judgment for the sin of the world in Jerusalem, He did not turn away from the cry of one man sitting by the road. Even a person who could be regarded as small and worthless in the world was, to Jesus, a precious soul to whom mercy had to be shown.

When he came near, Jesus asked him, *"What do you want Me to do for you?"* He called Jesus *"Lord"* and answered, *"That I may receive my sight."* He did not hide his need, and believed that Jesus could accomplish that thing.

"Receive your sight; your faith has made you well"

When Jesus said, *"Receive your sight; your faith has made you well,"* he immediately received his sight. That his eyes were opened by a single word of Jesus shows that Jesus has the authority of God that rules over the human body and disease.

Jesus said, *"Your faith has made you well."* He called Jesus the Son of David and Lord and relied on His mercy and power, and after receiving his sight he followed Jesus, giving glory to God. His faith was directed toward Jesus the Savior.

The One who made him see and saved him is Jesus. His faith was not relying on his own conviction or zeal, but a faith that admitted the situation he could not resolve by his own strength and relied wholly on the mercy and power of Jesus. True faith is accepting in one's heart what Jesus Christ has said and accomplished.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that opens the spiritual eyes

At the time of the text, Jesus had already taken upon Himself the sins of all the people of the world, including this man, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. And He would go to Jerusalem bearing those sins, receive the judgment for sin with the blood and death of the Cross, and overcome sin and death by rising again on the third day. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection receives the remission of all his sins not by his own deeds but by the righteousness of God that the Lord accomplished.

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Even a person whose physical eyes are healthy cannot see the truth of spiritual salvation if he does not know the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished. Without knowing why the baptism of Jesus was necessary, whose sins He received the judgment for on the Cross, and what the resurrection completed, one can rely on one's own good deeds and religious zeal. Only when one hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes it in one's heart does one clearly see one's own sins and the salvation Jesus accomplished.

After receiving his sight, that man followed Jesus, giving glory to God. His following Jesus was not a price paid to obtain salvation, but the thanksgiving and the fruit of faith shown by a person who had already received grace. The people, too, saw this and praised God. True grace does not make one boast of one's own faith and zeal, but makes one give glory to God, who bestowed the grace.

Today the Church, too, must not block people from coming to Jesus like the multitude that went before. It must not regard people lightly because of age or disability, poverty or education, social status or past conduct. While caring for people's physical and practical difficulties, it must also clearly preach the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Instead of putting forward his own righteousness and religious career, a sinner must admit that he needs the mercy of God. And he must believe in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed by taking upon Himself all sins with the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment on the Cross, and rising again. The person who believes this gospel receives the remission of all his sins, has his spiritual eyes opened to see Jesus as his Savior, and gives glory to God and lives according to His word. ✉

The faith that abandons one's own righteousness
and believes the gospel like a little child

Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 18

[Question] 1. Give an overview of the main events and teachings recorded in Luke chapter 18.

Luke chapter 18 records the prayer that does not lose heart, the humility that abandons one's own righteousness, the faith that receives like a little child, the conversation with the rich ruler, the foretelling of the suffering and resurrection of Jesus, and the event of healing the blind man near Jericho. All of this shows that a person cannot reach salvation by his own strength and merit, but must receive by faith the salvation God has accomplished.

In verses 1–8, Jesus taught through the parable of the unjust judge and the widow that men always ought to pray and not lose heart. If even the unjust judge avenged the widow who kept pleading, the righteous God hears the prayers of His people who cry out day and night. Therefore, the saints must pray in faith for the will of God and the preaching of the gospel and wait for the answer.

In verses 9–14, the Pharisee, who believed himself to be righteous and despised others, is contrasted with the tax collector, who stood afar off, beat his breast, and asked for the mercy of God. The Pharisee boasted of his fasting and tithes, but the tax collector admitted that he was a sinner and asked for grace. Jesus said that the tax collector went back justified.

In verses 15–17, people brought little children, hoping that Jesus would touch them. The disciples rebuked them, but Jesus

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let the children come near and said that one must receive the kingdom of God as a little child. This is the teaching to accept the word and salvation of God with pure faith, without putting forward one's own knowledge and qualifications.

In verses 18–30, a ruler asked what he must do to obtain eternal life. He had kept the commandments in outward deeds, but he became sorrowful before the word to distribute his riches and follow Jesus. Because his heart was full of riches and his own righteousness, there was no place to accept the salvation Jesus bestows. A person cannot obtain eternal life by his own deeds, but God can save sinners.

"But He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.'" (Luke 18:27).

In verses 31–34, Jesus foretold that in Jerusalem He would be mocked, insulted, and scourged, and be put to death, and then rise again on the third day. The disciples did not realize this word at that time, but the suffering and resurrection of Jesus were the work of salvation that fulfilled what the prophets had written. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead.

In verses 35–43, a blind man who was begging by the road called Jesus the Son of David and asked for mercy. People rebuked him and told him to be quiet, but he cried out all the more, and Jesus saw his faith and opened his eyes. He immediately followed Jesus and gave glory to God, and the people who saw this also praised God.

Therefore, Luke chapter 18 teaches us to pray in faith, to abandon our own righteousness, to accept the word and salvation of God, and to follow Jesus. Salvation is not accomplished by a person's deeds and riches, but is the grace of God received by

believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 18 verse 1, what did Jesus teach His disciples by speaking the parable of the unjust judge?

Jesus spoke the parable of the unjust judge in order to teach His disciples that they must always pray and not lose heart. It means to believe in God and keep praying even when the answer seems slow.

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart" (Luke 18:1).

In the parable there appear a judge who did not fear God and disregarded man, and a widow who often went to him asking him to avenge her. At first the judge did not listen to her request, but when the widow kept coming, he finally said that he would avenge her.

Jesus contrasted this unjust judge with the righteous God. If even an unjust man listened to the plea of the widow, God, who loves His people, will all the more not turn away from the prayers of those who cry out day and night.

"And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:7–8).

Prayer needs the faith that God hears and answers. Even after praying, one must believe and expect that God will accomplish it, and must not lose heart until the answer comes. Seeking, knocking, and doing the work entrusted to one along with prayer

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is also a form of faith.

The parable of Jesus asks about the faith of the person who prays rather than about a method of counting the number of prayers. As in the word asking whether He will find faith when the Son of Man comes, it is important to rely on God and continue praying even when one's circumstances do not change. While waiting for the answer, one must hold on to the word and believe that God will accomplish it rightly.

Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Because the saints who have received the remission of sins have believed this gospel and become the children of God, they can call God Father and pray. They must not only ask for their individual needs and wisdom, but must also pray with one accord for the Church and the preaching of the gospel, for the salvation of souls and the safety of the workers. Jesus taught us to be people who have such faith even when the Son of Man comes.

When one experiences the answer to prayer, one's faith also grows. As one confirms the fact that God has heard, one comes to ask boldly again for the kingdom of God and the work of the gospel. Therefore, we must not pray once or twice and stop, but must keep praying in faith with the things that please God in our hearts.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 18 verses 4–5, how did the judge respond when the widow pleaded persistently?

The judge did not listen to the plea of the widow for a while,

but when she kept coming, he changed his mind. He neither feared God nor respected man, but considering that the widow would keep troubling him, he said that he would avenge her.

'And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, "Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me"' (Luke 18:4–5).

The judge responded not because he loved justice but because he did not want to endure the repeated pleas of the widow any longer. Nevertheless, the powerless widow did not give up but kept asking him to avenge her, and finally received a response.

Through this scene, Jesus taught that the person who prays must not lose heart. If even the unjust judge listened to the request of the widow, how could God, who is righteous and loves His people, turn away from the prayer that cries out in faith? We must believe the fact that God hears prayer and keep praying.

Because the widow had no way to get justice by her own strength, she often went to the judge. Likewise, the saints must also admit the limits of their own strength and wisdom and ask God for help. Rather than losing heart because one offers the same prayer again, one must ask in faith until God answers.

Prayer does not end with merely repeating words. We must pray for the things that accord with the will of God, and find and do what we must do in order to accomplish them. To keep praying for the preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls, for the Church and the workers, and to serve in faith is the life that follows the teaching of this parable.

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[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 18 verse 13, with what attitude and what content did the tax collector pray before God?

The tax collector stood afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to look up to heaven, and beat his breast, praying that God would have pity on him. He did not put forward his own good deeds or religious merit, but admitted that he was a sinner before God.

"And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, 'God, be merciful to me a sinner!'" (Luke 18:13).

The Pharisee spoke of his fasting and tithes and despised other people and the tax collector. Outwardly he lived a pious life, but he made those deeds his own righteousness and exalted himself before God. On the other hand, the tax collector knew that there was nothing in him to boast of, and asked only for the mercy of God.

"I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other; for everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Luke 18:14).

A person must admit before the word of God the way he is, committing sins from birth until death. The Law makes a person realize that he is a sinner, and Jesus had pity on such sinners and saved them by receiving baptism from John and taking upon Himself their sins, receiving the judgment on the Cross, and rising from the dead.

The tax collector beat his breast because he knew that he could not obtain justification by his own deeds. He did not defend himself by comparing himself with others, but asked God to have pity on him. In his prayer, in which he humbled himself before God, is contained the confession that he cannot live

without grace.

Therefore, the person who comes before God must not boast of his own deeds or despise others, but must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. The person who admits his sins and asks for the grace of God is justified by faith.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, the saints must know the lack of their flesh and live humbly. Because the basis of their having become righteous lies not in their own pious life but in the salvation Jesus accomplished, they must give thanks for the grace they have received and must not condemn or despise others.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 18 verse 15, how did the disciples respond when people brought little children to Jesus?

When people brought little children, hoping that Jesus would touch them, the disciples saw them and rebuked them. The disciples tried to stop the little children from approaching Jesus.

"Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them" (Luke 18:15).

But Jesus called the little children and let them come near, and said to let them come and not forbid them. He said that the kingdom of God belongs to such as these, and taught that whoever does not receive it as a little child will by no means enter it.

"But Jesus called them to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means

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enter it.'" (Luke 18:16–17).

To receive it as a little child refers to the faith that does not put forward one's own knowledge and merit, but purely accepts the word and salvation God gives. The person who believes and receives the word as it is—that God has completed salvation through Jesus enters the kingdom of God.

A little child relies on and receives what someone gives. Likewise, the remission of sins and eternal life are not things a person produces, but gifts God gives. One must accept in one's heart the gospel that Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself our sins, received the judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

The fact that one has much knowledge or has lived a life of faith for a long time does not become the basis of salvation. Rather than exalting one's own thoughts before the word of God, one needs the heart that believes and obeys what God has said. Faith like a little child is faith that trusts God and receives His word.

We too must admit before God that we are people who need His help and grace, rather than regarding ourselves as sufficient. Also, we must embrace little children so that they come near to Jesus and hear and believe the word, and teach them so that they grow in the gospel.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 18 verse 19, what did Jesus answer the ruler who called Him *"Good Teacher"*?

To the ruler who called Him *"Good Teacher,"* Jesus asked why he called Him good, and answered that no one is good but God alone.

"So Jesus said to him, 'Why do you call Me good? No one is good but One, that is, God" (Luke 18:19).

The ruler saw Jesus as a respectable good teacher rather than knowing Him as God and the Savior. With the word that only God is absolutely good, Jesus first revealed that a person cannot obtain eternal life by relying on his own good deeds.

A person has no perfect goodness to put forward before God. Even if he does good things outwardly, greed, pride, and self-righteousness can dwell in his heart, and a person cannot change his sinful nature or produce eternal life by his own strength.

The ruler was convinced that he had kept the commandments well. But before the good God, a person's deeds are not perfect enough to obtain eternal life. Jesus made the ruler lay down the goodness of his own that he had relied on, and look to God, who is truly good.

The word of Jesus that no one is good but God alone does not mean that Jesus is not good. Rather, it is a word that made the ruler, who had known Jesus only as a good teacher, think about who He is. Jesus is God and the Savior who saves sinners.

Jesus is not a mere moral teacher but God, who saves sinners. What the ruler needed was not to add one more good deed, but to admit his own lack and believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished. We too must believe in Jesus not merely as a good teacher but as God and the Savior.

When a person holds on to his own righteousness, it is hard for him to accept the grace Jesus gives. Rather than boasting of one's own goodness before God, one must admit one's sins and lack, and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed. By that faith one obtains eternal life.

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[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 18 verse 20, what commandments did Jesus speak to the ruler who asked about eternal life?

To the ruler who asked about eternal life, Jesus spoke the commandments *"Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Honor your father and your mother."*

'You know the commandments: "Do not commit adultery," "Do not murder," "Do not steal," "Do not bear false witness," "Honor your father and your mother"' (Luke 18:20).

The ruler answered that he had kept all these commandments from his youth. In outward deeds he had in fact not committed adultery, murdered, or stolen, and he had lived a moral life, refraining from bearing false witness and honoring his parents. So he thought that his deeds were worthy of obtaining eternal life.

But the commandments of God shine not only on outwardly visible actions but also on a person's heart. Even if one has not murdered in action, there may be hatred; even if one has not stolen, there may be covetousness; and even while honoring one's parents outwardly, there may be no love and obedience in the heart. The ruler was confident of his outward keeping of the commandments, but he did not see the love of riches and the self-righteousness in his heart.

When Jesus told him to distribute what he had and follow Him, he became very sorrowful. This response revealed that he was relying on riches more than on the word of God. The commandments did not confirm to him the fact that he was perfect, but made him realize the lack of his heart, which could not be covered by outward deeds.

The Law makes a person realize his sins. The person who has

discovered his own lack before the commandments must not try to establish his righteousness by his own efforts, but must come to Jesus, who accomplished the salvation that man cannot. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world once and for all, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Eternal life is not bought by the merit of keeping the commandments, but is the gift of God received by believing this gospel.

"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20).

The Law and the commandments show the will of God and make a person know what he has done wrong. Just as the ruler regarded himself as righteous on the basis of his outward deeds, we too can establish our own righteousness by comparing ourselves with others. But the word of God shines on the covetousness, hatred, and falsehood of the heart along with actions.

The saved saints do not disregard the commandments. Not in order to pay the price of salvation, but in thanksgiving for the grace they have received, they respect the life, property, and honor of their neighbors and honor their parents. Such obedience is not merit that establishes one's own righteousness, but the fruit of life that comes from faith.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 18 verse 22, what did Jesus demand of the ruler who said that he had kept the commandments from his youth?

Jesus demanded of the ruler who said that he had kept the

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commandments from his youth that he sell all that he had, distribute it to the poor, and follow Him. He said that then he would have treasure in heaven.

"So when Jesus heard these things, He said to him, 'You still lack one thing. Sell all that you have and distribute to the poor, and you will have treasure in heaven; and come, follow Me.'" (Luke 18:22).

The ruler was confident that he had kept all the commandments, but when he heard this word he became very sorrowful. It was because he was very rich and had made riches the thing he relied on in life. The word of Jesus revealed the riches that occupied a bigger place than God in his heart.

The core of what Jesus demanded does not lie in paying the price of eternal life by the act of disposing of property. It was the word to lay down his own righteousness and the idol of riches that the ruler was holding on to, and to believe in and follow Jesus as the Savior. Because he had great riches and also much boasting about his own deeds, he could not accept the salvation Jesus gives.

The ruler thought that he believed in God, but at the actual moment of choice he could not let go of riches. Riches occupied the same place as God in his heart. Jesus revealed what he relied on and loved most, and told him to abandon it and follow Him.

A person cannot buy eternal life with good deeds or almsgiving. Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself all sins, received the judgment on the Cross, and saved sinners by rising from the dead. Eternal life is given by grace to the person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

To follow Jesus is to believe in what Jesus has done, without making one's own righteousness and the things of the world the basis of salvation. Unlike the ruler, who placed the basis of eternal life in his own deeds, salvation is based on the baptism

of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who believes in this salvation regards the Lord as more precious than riches.

The person who has been saved does not serve riches as his master, but manages them as what God has entrusted to him. He must help his neighbors in need, serve the gospel, and follow Jesus, putting Him before riches. The word given to the ruler makes us examine what our hearts rely on most.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 18 verses 24–25, to what did Jesus compare the difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom of God?

Jesus compared the difficulty of a rich man entering the kingdom of God by saying that it is harder than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle. This is a word strongly expressing that one cannot enter the kingdom of God by a person's strength and deeds.

"And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, 'How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.' And those who heard it said, 'Who then can be saved?' But He said, 'The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.'" (Luke 18:24–27).

Here the rich man does not refer only to a person with much property. It refers also to 'the person who is rich in heart,' whose heart is so full of his own deeds and rightness, knowledge and riches that he thinks he does not need God. The ruler was not only rich physically but also rich with his own deeds of having kept the commandments.

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When the heart is full of one's own righteousness and the things of the world, it is hard to accept the word of salvation Jesus gives. A person cannot remove his sins or produce eternal life with his own good deeds, nor can he buy the kingdom of God with riches. So those who heard asked, *"Who then can be saved?"*

Riches themselves are not evil. The problem lies in relying on the safety and satisfaction riches give more than on God, and so not feeling the fact that one needs a Savior. Whether one has much or little, the person who regards himself as lacking nothing and trusts only in his own strength is a person who is rich in heart.

The ruler had stored up even his deeds of having kept the commandments like his own property. So rather than admitting his sins and lack, he asked what more he could do to obtain eternal life. By revealing his riches and his own righteousness, Jesus made him know the fact that a person cannot save himself.

Jesus answered that the things which are impossible with men are possible with God. God sent Jesus, and Jesus received baptism from John and took upon Himself the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead. God accomplished the salvation that is impossible by a person's deeds.

Therefore, one enters the kingdom of God not by how much or how little riches one has, but by faith. The person who lays down his own righteousness and ability and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed receives the remission of sins and eternal life. Believing in the salvation God has accomplished is the faith of the person who is poor in heart.

After being saved, one must know riches as what God has entrusted to one and use them well. To share them willingly for the gospel and one's neighbors and to seek first the kingdom of

God, without relying on or boasting of riches, is the fruit of faith.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 18 verses 28–30, when Peter said that the disciples had left what was theirs and followed Jesus, what did Jesus answer?

When Peter said that the disciples had left all that was theirs and followed Jesus, Jesus answered that the person who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children for the sake of the kingdom of God receives many times more in this present time and receives eternal life in the age to come.

"Then Peter said, 'See, we have left all and followed You.' So He said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.'" (Luke 18:28–30).

The disciples left behind their livelihood and their familiar life and followed Jesus. Jesus promised that God remembers what one has lost or laid down for the sake of the kingdom of God, and that even on this earth He causes one to gain many brothers and sisters in the Church and the care one needs.

In the words of Peter appears a choice different from that of the rich ruler. The ruler went away sorrowful because he could not let go of riches, but the disciples left behind what was theirs and followed Jesus. Jesus said that He knows their sacrifice and does not leave in vain what they have left for the sake of the kingdom of God.

Eternal life in the age to come is not bought as wages for what the disciples left, but is the grace of God given to the person

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who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished. The leaving and following of the disciples was not the price of salvation, but the fruit of the faith that regarded Jesus and the kingdom of God as more precious.

The word that one receives many times more in this present time includes the relationships and care newly formed within the kingdom of God. Even the person who has left his hometown and family for the sake of the gospel meets many brothers and sisters in the Church, and they serve one another. God does not leave His people alone but fills their needs within the community.

In the age to come, one receives the life that lives forever. The person who believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished for sinners does not end with death but enjoys eternal life in the kingdom of God. This promise gives the strength to follow the Lord even in the midst of present sacrifice and difficulty.

We too must not put riches, relationships, and our own plans before God. Even if we suffer loss and sacrifice for the sake of the gospel, we must follow the Lord, believing what God will bestow in this present time and in the age to come. When we remember the brothers and sisters God has given us and the promise of eternal life, we can know that leaving is not the end but leads to greater grace.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 18 verses 35–38, who was the person who cried out to Jesus to have mercy on him?

The person who cried out to Jesus to have mercy on him was a blind man who was sitting by the road near Jericho, begging. Luke does not record his name, but the parallel text, Mark chapter 10 verse 46, reveals that he was Bartimaeus, the son of

Timaeus.

"Then it happened, as He was coming near Jericho, that a certain blind man sat by the road begging. And hearing a multitude passing by, he asked what it meant. So they told him that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by. And he cried out, saying, 'Jesus, Son of David, have mercy on me!'" (Luke 18:35–38).

He could not see Jesus with the eyes of his body, but when he heard that Jesus of Nazareth was passing by, he called Him the *"Son of David."* This title shows that he called Jesus believing that He is the Messiah whom God promised.

The fact that he was begging by the road shows that he was in a situation where it was hard to live without the help of others. When he heard the news that Jesus had come near, he clearly knew his own need and asked for mercy. Though the eyes of his body could not see, by faith he recognized Jesus as the One who would help him.

The blind man did not hide his situation or think that he could solve it by himself, but asked for the mercy of Jesus. When a person realizes his sins and his inability, he comes to know that he needs a Savior. We too must believe that Jesus is the One who saves sinners and come to Him.

What is important in the faith of Bartimaeus is not only the loudness of his voice but whom he called. He believed in Jesus as the Son of David, that is, the Messiah. We too must know and believe that Jesus is the Savior who saved sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 18 verse 39, how did those who went before respond when the blind man cried out to Jesus, asking for mercy?

Those who went before rebuked the blind man and told him to be quiet. But he did not back down at their restraint, and cried out all the more loudly, *"Son of David, have mercy on me!"*

"Then those who went before warned him that he should be quiet; but he cried out all the more, 'Son of David, have mercy on me!'" (Luke 18:39).

The multitude hindered the blind man who was trying to come to Jesus, but Jesus did not turn away from his cry. He stood still and had him brought, and asked him directly what he wanted. The mercy of Jesus was greater than the judgment and hindrance of people.

Even though the blind man was rebuked, he did not stop calling Jesus. It was because he had the faith that Jesus was the One who would open his eyes. He regarded the grace Jesus would bestow as greater than the words of those who went before.

Jesus heard the cry of the blind man and stopped walking. He commanded the multitude to bring him, and asked the blind man who came near what he wanted. Jesus heard the plea of one person whom people had regarded lightly, and responded to his need.

We too must not lose heart by looking only at the responses of people when there are difficulties and hindrances. We must pray with the faith that Jesus knows and hears our needs, and become people who lead others to the Lord rather than people who block the way of others coming to Jesus.

[Question] 13. In Luke chapter 18 verse 42, with what word did Jesus make the blind man see?

Jesus said to the blind man, *"Receive your sight; your faith has made you well."* Then he immediately received his sight.

"Then Jesus said to him, 'Receive your sight; your faith has made you well.'" (Luke 18:42).

In the word of Jesus there was the authority to open the eyes of the blind man. The blind man believed in Jesus as the Son of David, that is, the promised Messiah, and asked for mercy, and Jesus responded to that faith and healed him.

Jesus first asked, *"What do you want Me to do for you?"* and the blind man answered clearly, *"Lord, that I may receive my sight."* He did not hide his need but told it to Jesus, and Jesus opened his eyes with a single word.

The word *"your faith has made you well"* shows the fact that the blind man believed in Jesus, who is able to save, rather than meaning that faith itself became merit. Faith is not boasting of one's own earnestness, but knowing and accepting who Jesus is and what He has accomplished.

The blind man did not call Jesus merely a passerby or a capable teacher. He called Him the Son of David and believed in Him as the Messiah sent by God. Jesus acknowledged that faith and made the eyes of his body see.

Our souls, too, are in darkness if we do not know the word of God. When we hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John and taking upon Himself our sins, receiving the judgment on the Cross, and rising from the dead, we obtain the remission of sins and eternal life. Just as the blind man believed the word of Jesus and came to see, we too must believe the word of salvation.

Faith is accepting the word Jesus has spoken as it is. We too

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must not try to wash away our sins by ourselves, but must believe the word that the salvation Jesus accomplished is perfect and receive the remission of sins. And we must follow Jesus according to the grace we have received.

[Question] 14. In Luke chapter 18 verse 43, how did the blind man and the people who watched this each respond after his eyes were opened?

When his eyes were opened, the blind man gave glory to God and followed Jesus. The people who watched this all praised God too.

"And immediately he received his sight, and followed Him, glorifying God. And all the people, when they saw it, gave praise to God" (Luke 18:43).

After being healed, he did not go back his own way but followed Jesus. He gave to God the glory for the grace Jesus had bestowed, and showed that faith with his life. The fitting response of the person who has received grace is to give thanks and follow the Lord.

Having his eyes opened did not merely bring him convenience in life. He came to know who Jesus, who had pity on him and saved him, is, and became a person who follows Him. His praise and following show that the grace he received changed the direction of his life.

The people praised God when they saw that the blind man had come to see. The mercy and power of Jesus bestowed on one person caused the people around him to see the glory of God as well.

What Jesus did was not something that remained only within the person who was healed. It became a testimony to the people

who saw it as well, and made them praise God together. The faith and change of one person became a channel that made the grace of God known to others.

We too, after believing in and receiving the salvation Jesus bestowed, must give thanks for that grace and follow Jesus. When we give glory to God with our words and lives and preach the gospel, others also come to know that God has saved sinners and praise Him together. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

God who answers the prayer of faith

< Luke 18:1-8 >

“Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: ‘There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, “Get justice for me from my adversary.” And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, “Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me.”’ Then the Lord said, ‘Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?’”

This word of Luke chapter 18 is the word in which the Lord, giving a parable, taught us that when we always pray with a purpose and do not lose heart, God hears and answers. The Lord spoke this parable to teach that men always ought to pray and not lose heart.

In a certain city there was a judge who neither feared God nor regarded man. But in that city there was a widow to whom a wrong had been done, and she often went to that judge and

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pleaded with him to avenge her. Again and again she pleaded with him to please resolve this matter and set right the wrong done to her.

Because this judge was by nature a man who thought nothing of people, at first he would not listen to the widow. But when this widow did not stop after just one visit but came back again and again, repeating the same words, the judge, watching quietly, realized that this matter was hardly going to end.

That widow was not a person who would stop at ten or twelve times; she might come fifty times, a hundred times, perhaps even a thousand times. If three hundred and sixty-five days of a year were not enough, she might keep doing it for ten years. The judge thought that he had better settle this matter quickly, if only because he was sick of it, and at last he avenged that widow.

When we pray and believe, God surely answers

Even a judge who did not fear God granted a person's request like this, if only because he was sick of it. *"And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him"*? If the righteous people of God gather together and pray earnestly, with a purpose, for the work of God, God surely grants it speedily.

It is the same with individual prayer. If it is a prayer God wants, when we keep asking Him to bless that work and bring it to pass, God grants that prayer. If we who have been chosen in Jesus Christ and are in the Church of God ask God in faith for the preaching of the gospel, believe, and keep praying, God blesses us.

We gather together and pray for the preaching of this gospel, that our overseas coworkers may increase, that those who serve the gospel may prosper, that He may give the material things we

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need, and that He may keep the safety and health of God's servants, both men and women. When we pray and believe like this, God grants it. Therefore, faith is needed in praying. When we pray and believe, God surely answers.

But some people, thinking themselves great, say that it is enough just to believe and there is no need to pray aloud, and they do not pray at all. Some groups do not pray together even when many gather; only the leader stands and prays, and they end with that. Even at funerals they do not pray together; one minister prays and it is over.

In a way, such an attitude is a truly convenient excuse for people who do not want to pray. Since Jesus said, *"Do not use vain repetitions,"* they say, God, who knows the desires of our hearts, grants them even if we do not pray. But such faith that has abandoned prayer, however good it may look, is all in vain.

We must believe and expect that He will grant our prayers

We must ask for what we should ask for. God already knows what we need and answers, but nevertheless He said that we must ask. When we ask and believe, God answers, and only then do we ourselves come to know that God has given it. If God supplied it when we had not even asked, we would not know whether it was God who gave it or not.

What will happen if we keep our mouths shut and do not pray, thinking that since God knows my heart, He will take care of it and grant it? Some say that there is no need to come to church or to serve the gospel, and only say that God knows that I love Him and that He knows my will is earnest. But to say so while not putting a single thing into action is conceit and pride. There

are many such people even among the evangelicals of this land. But the Lord taught us that we always ought to pray and not lose heart. When we pray, believe, and wait, God answers.

So whenever we gather, I pray for the preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world, for our coworkers, for the work of serving the gospel, for the health of our brothers and sisters, for the security of this country, and that God may give us blessing. It is because when we pray and believe, God answers, and seeing that answer, we can pray for yet another thing.

Faith is built up like this, little by little. Faith is something we experience step by step. Faith is not a doctrine, nor is it a letter. When we have prayed and believed and God answers, with that experience we come to pray even more boldly for yet another thing, for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel. Prayer turns into the experience of faith, and into blessing. This is precisely what prayer is.

After being born again, everyone prays. We pray because we are in need, and the Church prays earnestly with one accord. But there are some who, after saying, I pray in the name of Jesus, and Amen, do not actually believe. Not believing means not expecting. To pray and then expect nothing, thinking that since one has prayed, God will take care of it, is unbelief. We must expect. If we have said something, the other party must have heard it, and if that request is right, we must believe and expect that He will grant it.

We must ask God for wisdom so that it may be of benefit to the gospel

Then what shall we pray for? In the big picture, in the Church we pray for the kingdom of God and the preaching of the gospel.

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Individually, if the body is weak, we ask for health, and if we lack wisdom and understanding in the work entrusted to us, we ask God for wisdom and understanding. When we ask like this, God grants it and helps us. There are many things to pray for, not only for ourselves but also for our weak colleagues.

We need wisdom. Knowledge and wisdom are different. Knowledge is knowing, and wisdom is bringing to pass what one knows. When one is about to accomplish something, finding the way to accomplish it and actually bringing it to pass is wisdom. Therefore, a person must have knowledge, and must also have wisdom.

For example, let us say that one is building a house but has only half the money. A person who has wisdom sells the units of that building while building the house. Even before the house is finished, people already come and ask which unit costs how much and sign contracts, so that the money that was lacking is made up with some to spare. Bringing things to pass like this is wisdom.

If a person merely works hard and goes at it blindly, he fails. One must work hard but with a purpose and a goal, and ask God for wisdom so that the work may be of benefit to the gospel. Knowing and wisdom are different. There are people who actually bring to pass what they know, and people who do not. Therefore, when we pray, God, I have no wisdom; please give me wisdom, and believe, God gives us wisdom, so that the work is accomplished without any great problem and becomes of benefit both to the gospel and to the individual.

We must also have wisdom in living our lives. How can we live our lives well and successfully? When we ask for wisdom, we can bring that to pass. Is not the person whose own soul prospers, who is of benefit to people, and who does not go around borrowing but rather lends, a successful person? The

person who thinks himself clever and tries to live only by what he knows is foolish. The person who knows what he needs and prays for it, believes, and waits is a wise person.

If we preached the gospel only with our mouths, we could not preach it even to all the citizens of a single city. But when we translate the core of the sermons into the language of each nation, make them into books and eBooks, and send them out, the gospel is preached throughout the whole world. This is precisely wisdom. The work that one person cannot do however hard he tries, and that a hundred people cannot do however hard they try, is accomplished when there are wisdom and faith.

We who have received the remission of sins are the children of God who can come before God and pray

We have God. We are not people without a father. God has become our Father and our Shepherd. So we must believe in that God and live asking Him for help.

That we have become people who can call God Father and pray like this is because we have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for those sins by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and rose again from the dead and became our Savior. We who have believed this gospel and received the remission of sins have become the children of God and priests who can come before God and pray.

In particular, the security of this country is in danger right now. The leaders of the world can in fact do nothing for the security of this country. But we can. It is because we are priests

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who can pray, people who are qualified to pray to God. In order to preach the gospel in this country where we live, this country must be at peace and its security must be kept, so we must also pray for the peace of this country. We who have received the remission of sins and can pray to God can do, through prayer and faith, what the people of the world cannot do however much they clamor and strive.

Therefore, we must pray for what we need individually, pray for what the Church needs, and also pray for the security and peace of this country. That when we pray and believe, God answers—this is the core. I will close the message here with prayer. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The one who prays to God must pray without losing heart

< Luke 18:1-8 >

"Then He spoke a parable to them, that men always ought to pray and not lose heart, saying: 'There was in a certain city a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. Now there was a widow in that city; and she came to him, saying, "Get justice for me from my adversary." And he would not for a while; but afterward he said within himself, "Though I do not fear God nor regard man, yet because this widow troubles me I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me."' Then the Lord said, 'Hear what the unjust judge said. And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them? I tell you that He will avenge them speedily. Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?'"

The Lord said that we always ought to pray and not lose heart

The Lord spoke about prayer. The one who prays to God must pray without losing heart, and if he does so, the Lord surely brings it to pass. The Lord told us in a parable that we always

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ought to pray and not lose heart. In a certain city there was a judge who did not fear God nor regard man. But in that city there was a widow who, having suffered a very unjust wrong, kept going to that judge and pleading with him. Since she herself had no power, she ceaselessly asked him to avenge her against her adversary.

But because this judge was by nature a man who disregarded people and asserted only his own authority, he did not even look at the plea of this widow. Not only was he a harsh man in human terms, but because he did not fear God, he was a man who would never move unless it suited him. He was a man who did not respond unless it was of benefit to himself.

But even this man began to be troubled in his heart as the widow came every day and pleaded with him. The widow kept asking him: she had suffered such an unjust wrong that she could not possibly bear it, but since she had no power, would the judge take up the matter and resolve it and take vengeance on her adversary on her behalf.

At first the judge thought that she would come a few times and then give up. But after one month passed, and two months, and three months, the widow did not stop. When five months and six months passed, the judge's trouble deepened in his heart. He thought, if I do not grant that plea, how long will she keep this up? Seeing what she has done so far, it looks as if she will do it until she dies, and there is nothing I can do about it. At last he resolved that he had to grant this plea, and he avenged that widow. He said, *"I will avenge her, lest by her continual coming she weary me" (Luke 18:5)*. Because the judge of old had power, he granted the plea of that widow and avenged her. Prayer is precisely like this.

When we pray before God, what is the content of that prayer? Because we meet many problems as we live our lives, the

content of our prayers keeps changing with the passing of time, month by month and season by season. Did not even the unjust judge finally avenge the widow at her ceaseless pleading? How much more, then, will God surely avenge His own elect who cry out to Him day and night? He said, *"And shall God not avenge His own elect who cry out day and night to Him, though He bears long with them?" (Luke 18:7)*. Therefore, holding the desire of our hearts, we must pray without losing heart, and if we do so, we surely receive an answer to that prayer.

We who have received the remission of sins can pray boldly to God

But we who have received the remission of sins are constant in our prayers. How did we receive the remission of sins? Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, received the judgment for those sins by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and rose again from the dead and became our Savior. In the hearts of us who have believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit dwells. Therefore, we can pray boldly to God.

The prayer topics of us who have received the remission of sins are always constant. The prayer that the gospel may be preached throughout the whole world, the prayer that the souls of our families and our fellow countrymen may be saved, the prayer that He may keep our health and safety, and the prayer that He may bless everything we do—those prayer topics do not change. Today, too, we prayed for the preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world, for the souls at home, and for our fellow countrymen at home and abroad. This prayer is one that

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we continue until that work is accomplished.

Then does He grant it right away when we pray once or twice? The Lord does not grant things so readily. Because we fall when we rest from prayer, the Lord delays the answer little by little so that we cannot but continue praying. He does not grant everything all at once, but helps us little by little when we pray with an earnest heart and believe and cling to Him, that is, when we have the faith that believes what we have prayed for.

There is a reason why the Lord does not give us everything we need all at once. It is because if we received it all, we would rather be ruined.

God accomplishes our prayers step by step as our faith grows

In the Old Testament there appears a king named Solomon. He is the son of David. Because David lived according to the will of God, God promised to establish his descendants as kings, and He promised to establish Solomon as king too. Before he died, David earnestly charged Solomon. He told him, just as I served the LORD God, you too must serve God, and just as I kept the Law of God, you too must keep the Law. He told him to offer sacrifices to God alone, to offer the sacrifices according to that law and receive the remission of sins and live with a clean heart, and to lead his people that way as well.

After David went before God, Solomon at first followed his father's will well. He offered a thousand sacrifices as burnt offerings. That sacrifice—bringing the sacrificial animal, confessing one's sins, laying one's hands on that animal and passing one's sins onto it, cutting its throat and taking its blood and giving it to the priest, and burning its flesh and offering it to

God—he offered a thousand times. If one offered one a day, it would take a thousand days, nearly three years; that many sacrifices he offered at one sitting. At first, Solomon loved God so fervently and prayed like that.

Solomon offered a thousand burnt offerings to God at the high place at Gibeon, and that night God appeared to him in a dream. At that time Solomon asked for wisdom, saying that he was a little child and did not know how to lead this people, so that he might lead this people well. God regarded that request as so admirable that He gave him wisdom, gave him riches, and also held back his enemies.

But from then on, problems arose. He who had offered a thousand sacrifices brought foreign women and made them his wives, and not just one or two. In the city of Jerusalem, the burning of incense and bowing down to foreign gods took place; the people of Israel did so, and King Solomon did that work too. At last the nation of Israel was completely ruined. His son Rehoboam succeeded him, but most of the people set up Jeroboam, who had worked under him, as king, and the nation was split in two. After receiving riches and blessings all at once, he fell like that and was ruined.

In this way, God does not solve all our problems for us at once, but accomplishes them step by step as our faith grows. We pray before the Lord that He would let us preach the gospel to the whole world, but until when must we offer this prayer? This prayer must be offered ceaselessly. The Lord could grant it even if we prayed only once, but because it will not do for us not to pray, the Lord leaves those problems as they are so that we ask for help each time.

Therefore, prayer must be offered without change. Because we offer the same prayer every time we gather, at times it is hard and even tedious. We have prayed countless times, let us preach

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the gospel to the whole world, let us preach the gospel to the souls at home, let us preach the gospel to our own people as well. But until when must we do it? We must do it until that work is accomplished.

To accomplish His will, the Lord puts His will in the hearts of the servants of God. The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD like the water of a weir, and He leads it as He wishes. What is called a weir is like a reservoir that holds back the water of a river, so that when one wants to let the water out, one lets it out. God first gives such a heart to the hearts of His servants and makes them act according to His will.

The Lord wanted of us that work of preaching the gospel to the whole world. So He made us do that work, and we are still doing that work now. At times it is tedious, but we pray without change for that work and for those entrusted with that work. If we first pray for the will of God and live by faith accordingly, God grants all the rest. The blessings we need are what we ask for in addition, after that.

Prayer is the channel through which we receive blessing from God

Prayer is truly important. It is because prayer is the channel and the way through which we receive blessing from God. Faith gives us assurance, but prayer is like submitting a petition to God. In order to pray to God, asking Him to do things this way, one must have faith and a clean heart. One must confirm the remission of sins by faith, and shake off by faith what must be shaken off. In any case, one's heart must be before God in order to pray.

Then what would be the desire of our hearts? The Lord said

not to stop little children from coming to Him. The Lord likes little children because the hearts of children are pure. When children are taught like this, they accept it as it is. The Lord wants our hearts to become like that too. He wants us to accept in our hearts as it is what God says, and to believe and follow it. Whoever wants to enter heaven must have a heart as pure as a little child's, and must believe the word of God.

In this world there are many people who are not like that. Even among those who follow the Lord within the Church, there are many who merely follow as a formality, without such faith. But our faith must grow into a maturity that knows how to take responsibility. We must believe purely like little children, but grow into people who know how to take responsibility for the work entrusted to them. The Lord, too, takes responsibility for His people. He helps His people in their work of preaching the gospel according to the times, and He has held us up and supplied us until now.

When we keep praying without losing heart, God grants it

Once we have believed in the Lord and been born again, the content of the prayers we offer must accord with the purpose of the Lord, and we must ask for the things that please the Lord. Our hearts must be the same as the heart of the Lord. Because the Lord wants the gospel to be preached to the whole world, we pray that we too want it to be so. To pray that He would open the door for the preaching of the gospel, raise up workers abroad, let His will be accomplished through the website, eBooks, paper books, and audiobooks, and help and bless us—this is the prayer that accords with the heart of the Lord. After that, we ask Him

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to help us with what we need.

It is said that prayer is like breathing. Just as one dies if one does not breathe, we must live asking the Lord for help, believing, seeking, and knocking. It is always praying, believing, and taking up the challenge again. Until when must we do it? We must do so until the day the Lord comes, until we go before the Lord. Prayer does not go well alone. Therefore, when we have gathered together, we pray in union.

By all means, we must become pure people. We must become people who believe like little children. Looking at the word here, He said that if we pray without losing heart, God grants it. What we pray for will differ from person to person, but the big things are the prayers for the preaching of the gospel, for the Church of God, for the workers of God, and asking Him to keep us safe in spirit and body. Next, we can pray for our families, for many souls, and for the people of the whole world. But prayer must not be offered once and then stopped. We must keep praying, yet there are many times when we rest from prayer. There are things for which we receive an answer when the measure of prayer is filled, and there are things for which we receive an answer even though we pray only once. We do not know all of how God does things. But what is certain is the fact that there surely is an answer.

We must know this word well. Reading the word is not the only thing that matters. Faith grows when we know what the word says, accept it in our hearts, believe it, and put it into practice. Learning only from the experiences of life is not solid, because it changes according to circumstances. We must first know from the word what it says, and make this word our compass.

The Holy Spirit is the same. When one has received the remission of sins in one’s heart, the Holy Spirit dwells in that

heart, and the Holy Spirit from time to time brings the word of God to mind in the heart. Then that word gives us wisdom. This is how the Holy Spirit teaches us. Memorizing the word and having it come to mind are different. Memorizing is knowing, while His bringing the word to mind is that, when we ask the Lord before some problem what would be good to do, the Lord makes us think of that word in our hearts and teaches us its meaning.

This evening we have received the lesson that if we pray without losing heart, we receive an answer. I hope that you will become people who keep praying with faith, without losing heart. I will close the message here. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Have faith like a little child

< Luke 18:15-17 >

"Then they also brought infants to Him that He might touch them; but when the disciples saw it, they rebuked them. But Jesus called them to Him and said, 'Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God. Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it.'"

The age of the Antichrist is arriving

The world is truly noisy and changing fast. Scholars who research artificial intelligence, and big corporations, are producing astonishing results in many fields. They are even researching storing and passing on the memories contained in the human brain, analyzing genetic information to prevent diseases in advance, and keeping human life going for a long time. And it has not stayed at the level of mere research; it has already developed enormously.

Scientists say that in only twenty or thirty more years, a new humanity entirely different from the humanity of today could be born. Artificial intelligence has already surpassed the human mind. Even in the fields people regarded as the hardest, machines have overtaken people, and now it has reached the point where people learn from machines instead. Even in driving, it is said that there are fewer accidents when a machine drives

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than when a person does.

Then why do I speak of such things? It is because we must recognize and accept that we are living in precisely such an age. All mankind will come under the rule of these machines, and the one who operates those machines is trying to become like a god himself. Since they are trying to extend human life and even control the genes at will, the age in which man tries to become God, the age of the Antichrist, has now arrived in earnest.

In such an age, there are humans, but it is not the age of humans. It is the age of dictators, the age of ruling people with machines. Dear fellow believers, do you want to live ruled by machines? Therefore, although we are not people obsessed with eschatology, we must clearly recognize these last days and live with a purpose. If we live aimlessly, without any purpose, we can fall into great difficulty. Keeping the faith and spreading the faith, and, when the time comes, the Lord coming and we also going before the Lord—we must live holding on to precisely that purpose.

The kingdom of God belongs to those who are like little children

Today we have read the word of Luke. In this word, little children appear. Parents brought their children to Jesus, trying to have them receive blessing, and the children rushed up before Him with the heart of wanting Jesus to touch them.

Little children instinctively come up and nestle even against a stranger if it seems that he is fond of them. It is because they are truly pure. Once, when I visited a certain home, a child who had just begun to crawl on the floor saw me, smiled brightly, and crawled up onto my lap and sat there. So I held that child, laid my hand on its head, and prayed in the name of Jesus that He

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would bless this little child and that family. Little children are so pure that they nestle up without hesitation to anyone who seems to love them.

But from the disciples' point of view, the children kept rushing up while Jesus was preaching the word, so the disciples stopped them. They sent the children away, and even reproached the parents, telling them to take care of their children.

Then Jesus rather rebuked the disciples. And He called the little children to come near and said this: He said, *"Let the little children come to Me, and do not forbid them; for of such is the kingdom of God" (Luke 18:16)*. It is the word that the kingdom of God belongs precisely to those who are like these little children. Then the Lord said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, whoever does not receive the kingdom of God as a little child will by no means enter it" (Luke 18:17)*. It is that the person who receives the word of God as a little child enters that kingdom, but the one who does not will by no means enter it.

The meaning of this word is clear. It is that God gives the kingdom of God, the remission of sins, salvation, and blessing to those who want them. Whoever wants them, God gives them. He gives them to the person who wants the blessing God bestows, who wants to receive the remission of sins by believing the word that God removes my sins, and who, since God has prepared heaven, wants to go there too—precisely to such a person. If one truly wants it, God is the One who gives salvation, gives eternal life, and grants everything.

Whoever wants it and believes obtains the kingdom of God

But there is something truly strange. Even though salvation

becomes one's own if only one wants it, there are many people on this earth who do not want it. Some people rather have a contest of wills with God. Saying, "If You can save me, just try and save me," they try to compete over whose will is stronger.

God loved us and came to this earth, and He wants to give the remission of sins, heaven, and eternal life to those who want them, and to give blessing even while we live on this earth. And He has already given them to those who want them, and He will give them in the future as well. "God, since You say You have saved me, I want that. I want You to remove my sins. I want to believe and go to heaven. I want to receive the remission of sins and become a child of God." If only one has such a wanting heart, one can receive all that is God's.

In fact, there are many people who have wanted and believed like this and received true blessing. But on the other hand, there are people who do not want it. Making a fuss for no reason and having a contest of wills with God, they say, "Just try and make me believe; just try and persuade me." What need is there for that? If God says so in His word, then so it is; it is not a matter for a person to hold out against God. This is what God is like. He is the One who gives the blessing of God to the one who wants it.

We must believe that God is the One who grants to the one who wants it all that He wants to give us. The Lord said, *"The kingdom of heaven suffers violence, and the violent take it by force" (Matthew 11:12)*. Whoever wants it and believes obtains that kingdom.

God came to this earth clothed in human flesh in order to remove all our sins. And He took upon Himself our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, was nailed to the Cross bearing those sins, said, *"It is finished!"* and died, and rose again on the third day after His death and saved us. So that whoever

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wants it can receive the remission of sins by believing in Jesus, Jesus Himself came and completed the work of saving you and me. We only have to want it. We only have to believe. We only have to accept it. He said, *"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).*

Salvation cannot be made with human thoughts

But some, even though all they have to do is accept it, argue, saying, "What you say is different from what I have heard; a certain theologian says this and another says that." It is truly frustrating. How can we make our own salvation with our own thoughts? Can you make your own blessing with your own thoughts? Can you obtain the qualification to enter the kingdom of God with your own thoughts? There is nothing at all that we can do by our own strength.

What we have to do is only to come before God and want and believe like this: "God, we believe in You. Since You say that for us You received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed onto You, and received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, I believe this word and want to be saved. I want to go to the kingdom of God, I want to receive the remission of sins, I want to obtain eternal life, and I want to receive the blessing of God even while I live on this earth." We only have to believe the words Jesus spoke and the work He accomplished when He came to this earth. Then we become those who have received that blessing.

Jesus told His disciples that if they had faith even as small as a single mustard seed, and told the mulberry tree to be pulled up by the roots and be planted in the sea, it would be so. Would a

mulberry tree grow even if planted in the sea? It is the word that there is nothing impossible for faith. Then why can one not believe the word of God? Jesus is God. Some say that they cannot believe that God created the heavens and the earth in the beginning because they did not see it themselves. If it is written so in the word of God, one has only to believe it as it is; what is there to add one's own thoughts to it?

When God made this universe in six days and made man on the sixth day, were you and I there? Would God have made it better if we had interfered? What God did has nothing to do with us. Is that not so? If God did it that way, then He did it that way. That is not our concern.

But some people think that their own thoughts are right and that they are clever. When I see such people, they are foolish beyond words. Is it our concern that God made the universe, the heavens and the earth, made heaven, and made the beasts, the fish in the sea, the trees and the grass? Did God make them that way because we wanted it? It has nothing to do with us. God made everything and then made man to rule and live within it. So there is nothing for us to do but believe. We merely think many useless thoughts for no reason.

Only those who receive the word like little children are saved and go to heaven

The person who does not receive the word of God like a little child is not saved and does not go to heaven either. But the person who receives it like a little child, when told that God has spoken thus, confesses like this: "I see. You have saved us. You have saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You even suffered in my place. You rose again to give me life. You

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have given eternal life. You have made heaven. You said You will take us who believe." We are creatures who cannot but agree with all of this. Is that not so?

What would be different? When scientists talk about quantum theory or whatever, when someone who rightly knows that field tells us, we can only say, "I see, I see." What objection could we raise to that? Rather, it is the person who has half-read a single book who pretends to know and raises objections. But when the one who rightly knows tells it rightly, there is nothing else to do but accept it, saying, "I see."

So Jesus said that we obtain salvation by faith. He said that the one who takes it by force obtains salvation. Whoever wants it and takes hold of it obtains salvation. If one believes in and takes hold of the work Jesus accomplished, saying, "I want it. I want to receive the remission of sins and go to heaven," one obtains salvation by that faith. Is salvation not truly easy? If one empties one's heart, it is easy.

If you do not know because you have not yet learned, buy books and study them. Try buying a box of books on theology every week and reading them carefully, and writing a report after reading them all, for about ten years. If you try that, the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit written in the Bible and preaches it humbly will rather come to look admirable to you. It is the person who knows nothing who acts up rashly.

Little children ask many questions, cling to you, and often accept things as they are. If you say they are pretty, they take it that they are pretty and accept it at face value. We too must become like little children in this way in order to be saved, go to heaven, and be united with the Lord. It is not achieved by doing a lot of useless study. Did not the apostle Paul also say that he counted as dung all that he had learned long ago under Gamaliel?

Therefore, in this world of which not much is left, God gives

salvation and eternal life to those who want them. We must truly become people who are pure in heart. You and I must examine ourselves as to whether we are indeed such childlike people, and pray with the heart of wanting to become such people. Dear fellow believers, do you want to become like little children?

There is truly much to learn from little children. What one has learned in childhood hardly ever leaves. I myself still have in my head a chant of a pagan religion that I learned briefly for a while in my childhood. Everything else has been forgotten, but that alone still remains. It is because a little child accepts as it is whatever he is told, without rejecting it. When one receives, serves, and believes the word of God like a little child in that way, one enters heaven and receives the remission of sins.

If by any chance salvation is not going well for you and your heart keeps getting confused, examine yourselves as to whether your hearts are like a little child's. And tell God that you want to become such people, and pray that He would give you a pure heart. Not much of this world is left. It is truly right around the corner. Now we must live with the resolve that we are living in the last age.

We are not a generation that simply lives out a lifetime and ends. We are those who live in the age in which, just as God has written in the Bible, we will see with our own eyes the Antichrist rise from among the leaders of this earth and abuse and kill believers. We must know and recognize this ourselves, think of the end, and live with a clear purpose in life in the midst of it. If we just live aimlessly, we can fall into great temptation, and if things go wrong, we can be completely ruined.

The purpose must be clear. Even in doing business, if there is no purpose, nothing is accomplished. A person who sells goods, whenever he opens his mouth, makes his product known and tells what benefit there is in using this product and what loss

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there is in not using it. Now, there is something people discovered after trying marketing in every way. It is that rather than positive advertising that says, “This product is good,” telling people, “If you do not use this product, you suffer such and such a loss,” stays in the heart far more. It is because people are more sensitive to loss than to gain.

It is the same with the gospel. Along with the words, “If you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you go to heaven and receive the remission of sins,” if we also tell people, “If you do not believe in this gospel, you go to hell and do not receive the blessing of God,” those words remain for a lifetime in the person who hears them. If your hearts and mine are not like a little child’s, we cannot go to heaven and cannot receive the blessing of God either. But if we become like little children, we obtain eternal life and obtain blessing, and we are united with God and receive His protection.

Believe the word of God with a pure heart like a little child’s

By all means, I want us to become people like little children. I am by nature a person with many and complicated thoughts. But after thinking much and reading the Bible, I reached one conclusion. It is that the word of God is not something one may believe or not believe, but something one must believe unconditionally. Some people keep making excuses and do not believe, but those are all mere excuses. If one does not believe, one alone suffers loss, and if one believes, one receives many blessings. One can accept it only by becoming like a little child.

Even in relationships between people, if one behaves too shrewdly, one rather suffers loss oneself. If one unconditionally

doubts and rejects what the other person says, one gains nothing. At times one must let oneself be fooled even knowingly, and put up with a little loss, and give and take with each other; then there is a taste to living. How much more, what loss is there in believing the word of God? When the One who made us says that He loved us so much that He saved us, believing that word is never a loss.

Even if those growing up among us have some shortcomings, we embrace them all, but we exhort them to keep their wits sharp for the gospel. In fact, all our children are living well by faith. Just as their height has grown, I cannot tell you how much their faith has grown. There is even a brother who once left home and then came back and has completely come to his senses. Having gone out and lived in the world, he found that the word of God was entirely right. What is there in the word of God that is wrong? They have now become fine young men who can no longer be called children, brothers who know how to take responsibility each for the work entrusted to him. Truly, Hallelujah.

It is truly good to be like a little child. I too used to struggle and fret so as not to suffer loss, but now at times I let myself be fooled even though I know everything, and when someone says he is in difficulty, I tell him, ‘Go ahead,’ and give it to him. It is right for me to suffer a little loss with the other person, to share gains, and to give and take with each other. If one accepts with a pure heart, someday it bears fruit. Just as a person someday returns to what pleased him, the word accepted purely surely remains in that person.

By all means, let us believe in God and believe His word with a pure heart like a little child’s, receive the blessing God gives, enjoy eternal life, and live well. I will close the message here. Now let us pray together and sing praise, and close. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The person who lacks nothing cannot believe in God

< Luke 18:24-30 >

“And when Jesus saw that he became very sorrowful, He said, ‘How hard it is for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God! For it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God.’ And those who heard it said, ‘Who then can be saved?’ But He said, ‘The things which are impossible with men are possible with God.’ Then Peter said, ‘See, we have left all and followed You.’ So He said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or parents or brothers or wife or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who shall not receive many times more in this present time, and in the age to come eternal life.’”

“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

A certain man came before the Lord and asked, *“What shall I do to inherit eternal life?”* He said that he had kept all the commandments from his youth. He asked as if to say in return, since I have done this much, what could I lack, and so is it not fitting that I obtain eternal life?

Then Jesus said that he still lacked one thing. What was it? It was that he should sell all the riches he had, distribute them to the poor, and follow Him. But this man, saying how could he do

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such a thing, went away from the Lord sorrowful.

So Jesus spoke to His disciples the word we have read today. He said that it is hard for those who have riches to enter the kingdom of God, and that it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to go through that tiny eye of a needle. He explained with a figure of speech that it is impossible in the flesh.

He said that it is hard for a person with great riches to enter the kingdom of God; then are riches a bad thing? Riches are not a bad thing. These things were all made by God. So is the land, and so are the minerals, and in themselves they are never bad.

Then what are riches? Riches refer to what we are now using or what we need in order to live. The smartphone we are now using is also riches, and our houses, the food we eat, and the workplaces where we work all belong to riches. Everything we need in order to live is riches.

If one lacks nothing, one does not feel the need to believe in God

If the word that it is hard for a person with great riches to enter the kingdom of God is paraphrased, it is like this. The person who lacks nothing in living his life, that is, the person with great riches, has a hard time entering the kingdom of God. Why is that so? It is because, having nothing that he lacks, he does not feel the need to believe.

But our Lord spoke clearly. Even if one now has everything one needs and serves the Lord well with it, if one relies on it and lives, one cannot enter the kingdom of God in the end. The kingdom of God is the kingdom that God rules. The Church of God, too, is the Church that God rules.

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The rich rely on riches and live enjoying satisfaction from their power and the benefits that come from them. For that reason, as a result, they do not feel any reason to believe. They do not feel the need to believe in Jesus the Savior. Because they do not feel the need, they do not believe, and because they do not believe, salvation is impossible for such people.

But what about the person who has few riches and lacks something in living his life? He comes to rely on God and pray. He comes to cry out, please help me. Such a person feels the need to believe, and in the end believes that God has saved us and obtains salvation.

Therefore, we who have parents who could not supply us with everything we needed in order to live must rather give thanks. We sometimes resented our parents. In the old days there was a proverb that even an ox needs a hill to rub against. When its back itches, there has to be at least a hill or a tree for it to rub against; on flat ground it cannot rub. It means that a person, too, in living his life, needs something to rely on in order to lean on it and live. We sometimes resented our parents for not having such a thing.

But thinking about it now, although such parents were a little resented at first, I have come to know that that lack rather contributed to my coming to believe in God and pray and become the person I am. Of course, there will be people who still resent it even now. But resenting does not bring money or bring what one needs. Almost all the people of the world want to become rich and want their riches to increase. There is no one who wants to live a life of feeling inconvenience for lack of riches.

Then why did God place poor people on this earth? It is to make them rely on God. There are also many people who have fallen into mental suffering or into suffering caused by sin. Why

did He divide people like that? It is all to make them seek God.

After God drove Adam out of the Garden of Eden, He cursed the ground. He said that from now on the ground would bring forth thorns and thistles. Until then, it seems there was not a single thornbush. But after he was driven out, as he went here and there, his legs were scratched in the thickets and bled and became a mess. He could not but suffer. So God gave him the heart of wanting to go back to that Garden of Eden where he used to live—that happy place where there were no thornbushes, where there was plenty to eat and everything needed was there, that kingdom of God which God ruled—that is, the heart of repenting and returning. Therefore, we rather need to give thanks.

Man cannot, but God does

If it is so hard for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God, who can be saved? Man cannot, but God can. God has already accomplished that work.

God sent His own Son to remove your sins and mine. Jesus, who is God the Son, came to this earth clothed in human flesh. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John. And He was hung on the Cross, received the judgment for those sins, shed His blood and died, and rose again from the dead on the third day. If one believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, one receives the remission of sins, obtains new life, and is saved. In this way God made you and me without sin and gave us salvation.

What does the word salvation mean? It means that one has escaped from danger and become safe, and it means that one preserves one's own life. Since we have obtained salvation, we have obtained new life and have kept our own lives.

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At this point Peter stepped forward. Lord, look at us. Have we not left everything in order to follow You? I was a fisherman, and did I not leave my boat and nets, my parents, brothers, and sisters, put all of that behind me, and follow You? Then what will You give us?

The Lord answered like this. He said that since they had done so, there is no one who will not receive many times more while living on this earth, that is, in this present time, and enjoy eternal life in the age to come as well. It is that one receives compensation many times over for what one has left.

Then what are the many times more that one receives in this present time? The person who has lost his parents or brothers or sisters or everything for the Lord's sake gains many brothers and sisters and family members while he lives at present. What happens when one comes into the Church? We call one another brother and sister. This is precisely having received compensation many times over. One has gained many brothers and gained many sisters. Also, in the age to come, there is no one who will not obtain eternal life, that is, the blessing of living forever. It means living while feeling and enjoying for all eternity that one keeps on living. This is the word the Lord spoke.

We are saved by faith and go to heaven by faith

When a person stands in the face of death, he clings, begging to be allowed to live just once more. There was a certain famous great rich man of our country. He was a man who started after the Korean War, built up a big business, and gathered riches beyond counting. He had so much money that people used to call him a great rich man.

But this man came down with a severe cancer and was about

to die. This man believed in Catholicism, and before he died he read the Bible once. And he got caught precisely on this text of today. This word, that it is harder for a person with great riches to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, got stuck right in his heart. He got angry, saying, does this not mean that since I am rich, I cannot enter?

He called the most learned and well-read priest he knew of. Showing him this text, he said, it says that it is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God than for a camel to go through the eye of a needle; does this not mean that since I am rich, I cannot enter? Interpret for me what this means. But that priest could not say a word. It was because he did not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He said that he would look into it and come back and tell him, and then went back and never came again. That rich man died just as he was, and even his funeral was all done.

To speak precisely, a rich man cannot enter the kingdom of God by riches. But if a rich man cannot go, then no one else can go either. Then who can go? Man cannot, but God can. God has saved you and me and made us go to heaven. Therefore, we go by faith. Even with much money one cannot go to the kingdom of God, and even by using one's talents one cannot go. The kingdom of God is a kingdom one goes to only by faith. In Sunday school days we sang a lot that it is a kingdom one goes to by faith, but without knowing that it had such a deep meaning, we just believed and went along. It is truly a pity.

The Lord has given us eternal life

What is eternal life? It is living forever, and it is the opposite of death. Living forever is a truly good thing. But we do not think

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about this much. Thinking that since we were born of our parents we just eat and live, we have little thankfulness for being alive. Dear fellow believers, do you have a thankful heart for being alive?

But once a person faces death, he comes to realize, ah, I really almost died; from now on my life is a bonus. When that happens, all things look new. There are people who came down with a disease and almost died and then lived, people who fell from a cliff and climbed back up and survived by a hair's breadth, and people who survived in the midst of a disaster in which a big building collapsed. The thankfulness of such people for being alive is different from before.

Such people feel differently even when they look at a single flower. They feel all things praising God. The wind, too, praises God, and the trees and flowers, too, praise God. those who have come close to death and survived can know such things. All things praise God.

Our bodies are alive like this right now, but suppose we were to die two months from now. If one came down with liver cancer and could live only two months, living each day would be very new. Everything one goes through each day and one's surroundings would be new. One feels that way because in a little while one will die and it will all be over.

When told that one will die, what does one feel most? It is that one is leaving what one has and the people one loves. Because one must leave them, it is truly sad. It is because death separates loved ones. The living feel sorrow for the one who is leaving, and the one who is leaving also grieves that he will not see his loved ones again. So death is a sad thing, and when a person dies, everyone weeps. It is because it is a parting.

But the Lord said that in the age to come there is no one who will not obtain eternal life. We live forever. How good it is to

live forever! With no more parting, no sorrow, no death, and no pain, we will live enjoying and delighting with God for all eternity.

When death comes, a person, wanting to live, tries to give up everything he has. However great his riches, even if afterward he should have to live like a beggar, he can give it all up if only he can live. It is said that a certain great rich man of America said that he would give half his fortune if he were allowed to live just thirty minutes more. But when God takes away one's life, that is the end. Therefore, we must know how good it is to live.

It is because you and I are alive now that we do the work of God. When we die, it is over. Since the Lord has given us eternal life and life, we are truly blessed people. Since we are living our life of faith within the kingdom God rules, the Church of God, doing the work in which God works and in which He delights, I know that this is truly a glory to us.

We do the work of God while living at present, and even after we die, we will live again and never die, and live with God as His children, enjoying that glory together. We must think once again of the fact that we have been chosen as such blessed people, been saved, and live as workers of righteousness, and give thanks as we live. I give thanks before God, who has given us the life in which we never die, but even if we die once on this earth, we live again and live forever. I will close the message here. ✉

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◇ About the Next Series

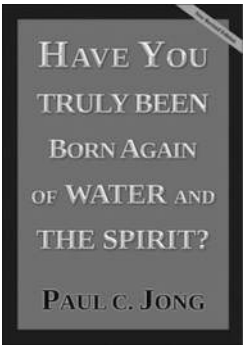
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

News about newly released books, as well as various ways to access them—including eBooks (PDF, EPUB), audiobooks (M4A, MP3), and online reading—can be found at **www.bjnewlife.org.**

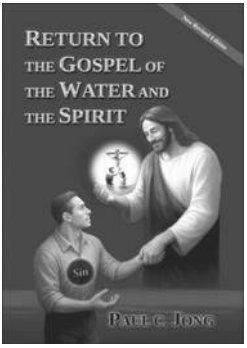
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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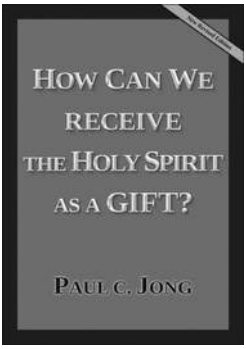
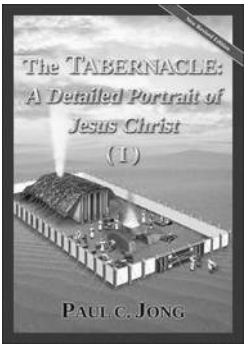
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]

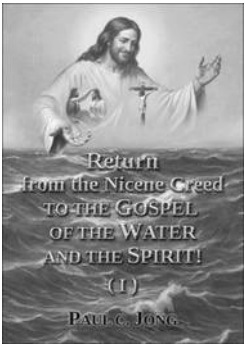


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

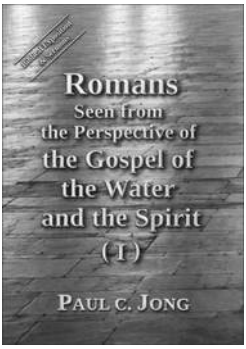
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

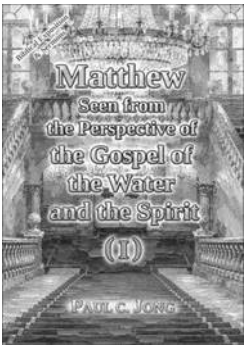
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

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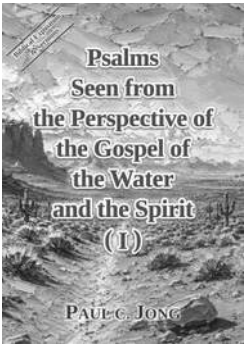
Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

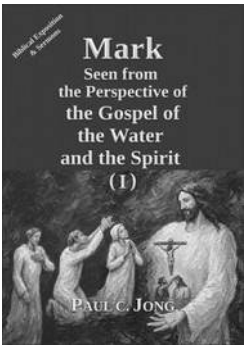


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who 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.

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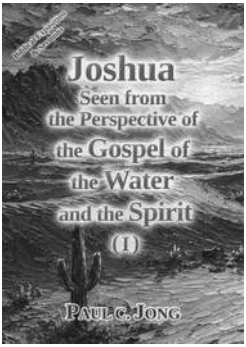
Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)

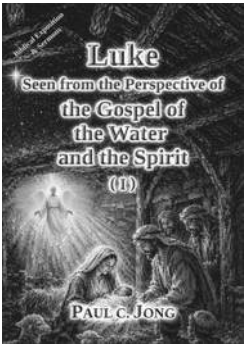


The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy 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.

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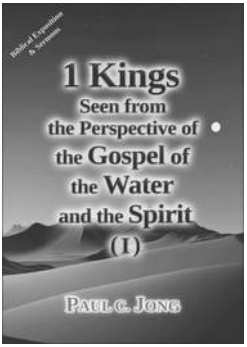
1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

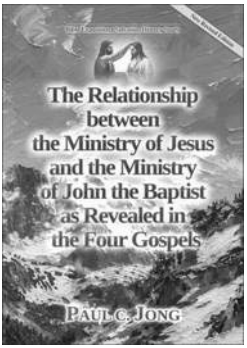


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures 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.

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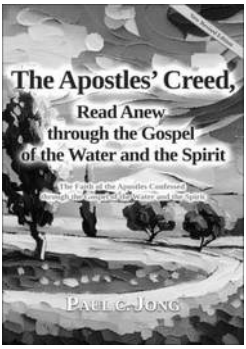
Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

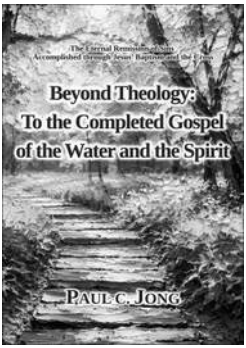


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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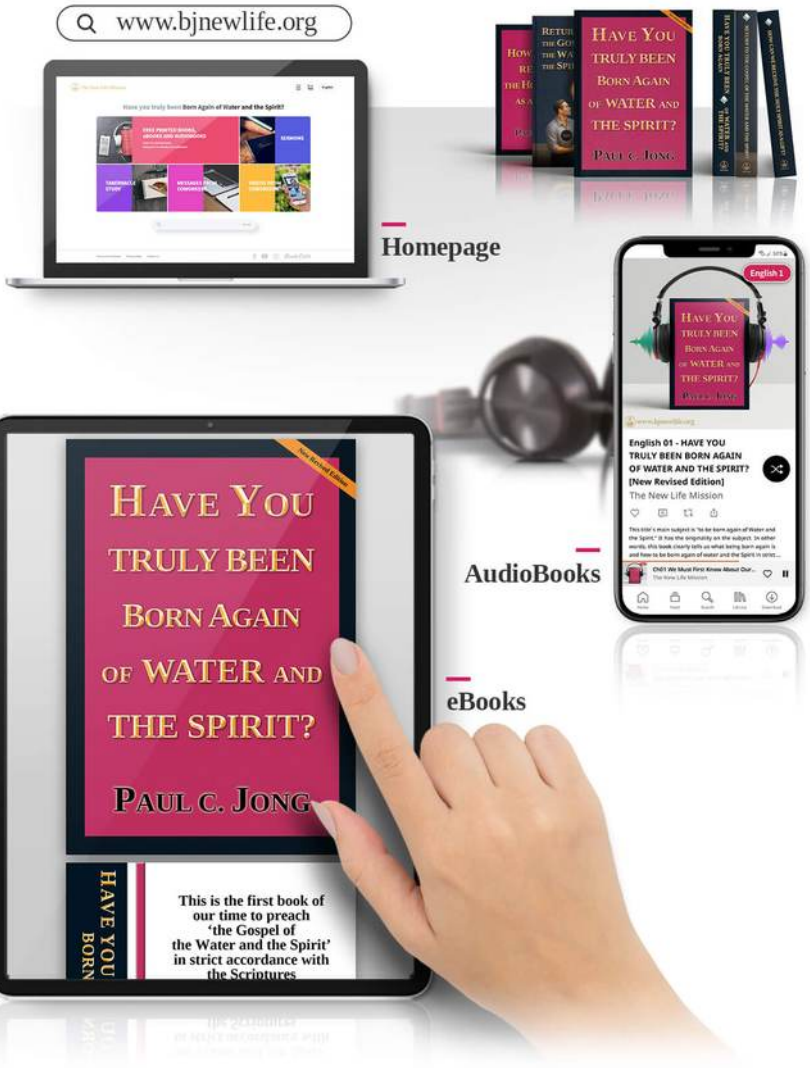

Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

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Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION
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E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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Sincerely,
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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

"Nevertheless, when the Son of Man comes, will He really find faith on the earth?" (Luke 18:8)

What should the person who has received the remission of sin now live for? The Gospel of Luke shows us the righteous life that the saved person lives in thankfulness for the grace of God.

The saved person does not claim merit for what he has done. He first gives thanks for the grace of God, who removed his sins, forgives his brother, uses what God has entrusted to him for the preaching of the gospel, and prays without losing heart. Such a person does not set his heart on the riches of the world or on his own righteousness, but looks toward the eternal kingdom of God and waits for the Lord who will come again.

We must not rely on our own religious deeds like the Pharisee, but seek the mercy of God like the tax collector and accept the word of God just as it is like a little child. For the problem of sin cannot be solved by human righteousness and effort.

The world is rushing toward its end. We must believe now. Later will be too late.

For the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—completed through the baptism of Jesus, by which He took upon Himself the sin of the world, the Cross, which was the judgment for that sin, and the resurrection—a new and righteous life begins. That righteous life is not a life that keeps the salvation one has received to oneself, but a life that preaches the word of salvation to the souls who do not yet know the gospel.

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