Sermons by Paul C. Jong

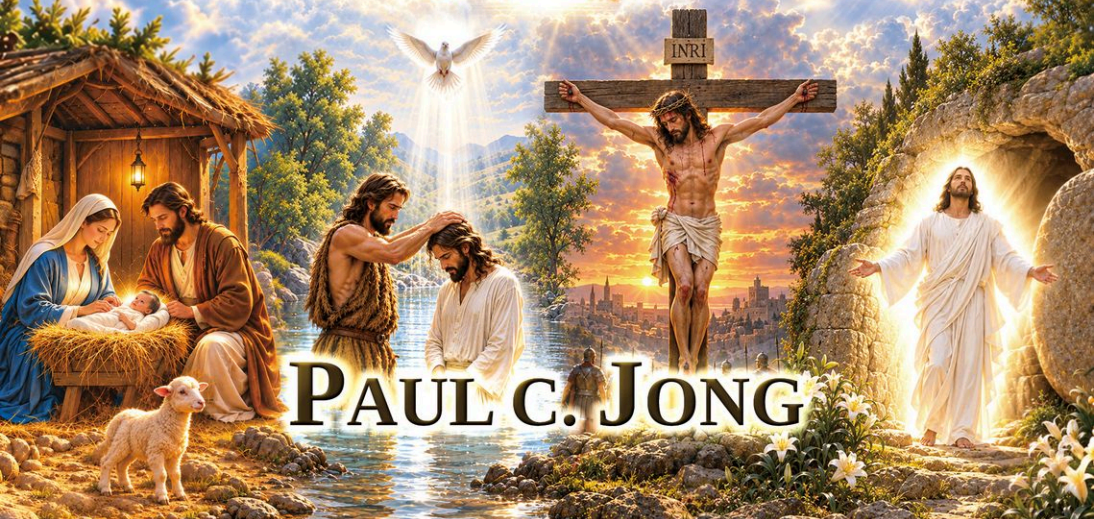
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Gospel of Matthew

Volume 4

Chapters 21–28





PAUL C. JONG



“He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay” (Matthew 28:6)

The women who had gone to the tomb looking for Jesus held the risen Lord by the feet and worshiped Him. He rose again in the very body in which He had died on the Cross. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and receiving the judgment for those sins in our place, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and then rose again. For us who have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, death is not the end. When the Lord comes again, our bodies, too, will rise again, and we will live with the Lord forever. The risen Jesus guarantees our resurrection and eternal life.

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>

FREE BOOK / DONATION

From THE NEW LIFE MISSION

https://www.bjnewlife.org

E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org

The New Life Mission is looking for coworkers to collaborate in postal ministry or book distribution ministry to effectively spread the gospel. Those who are interested in this ministry are asked to first read Paul C. Jong's Christian book series, then visit **www.bjnewlife.org** and apply to become a coworker to become a qualified partner.

Dear Readers of This Book:

First of all, we are delighted that this book has reached you well, and we give great thanks to God.

Our 'The New Life Mission,' established in 1991, is carrying out a literature mission ministry that translates and distributes Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual sermon collections into multiple languages worldwide.

Pastor Paul C. Jong has been easily and clearly conveying Jesus' salvation work according to the Word of the Bible to this day, so that many people can receive true remission of sins and return to God through just this one book. And together with his fellow workers, he continues to make tireless efforts even now to spread the gospel of water and the Spirit throughout the world.

[Ministry Introduction]

- **Pastor Paul C. Jong's thematic books:** Over 110 volumes written (continuously being published)
- **Translation languages:** Approximately 110+ languages
- **Single-language books:** Approximately 1,700+
- **Bilingual books:** Approximately 370+
- **Daily website visitors:** Average over 20,000 (supporting 27 languages)
- **Daily e-book downloads:** Over 3,000 copies
- **Daily audiobook downloads:** Over 5,000 copies

[Ministry Channels]

- **Download Services**

Free: E-books and audiobook files provided on 'The New Life Mission' homepage / Official Wix blog

Paid: Amazon, Apple Books, Google Books, Kobo, Spotify, Apple Music, etc. (printed books, e-books, audiobooks)

- **Other Content:** YouTube & Blog (Sermons, Bible studies, testimonies, etc.) / SNS (Facebook, Instagram, etc.)
- **Offline:** Worldwide network of partner churches and co-workers

We ask that you recommend this book and 'The New Life Mission's website to many people around you so that lost souls can return to God. (For those who have purchased printed books from Amazon or purchased ePub e-books, audiobooks, etc. through paid sites, leaving warm reviews on the respective purchase platforms would greatly help our mission.)

- Recommend Pastor Paul C. Jong's books and website (www.bjnewlife.org) to acquaintances around you
- Participate in the ministry by writing book reviews on purchase platforms

Please join us in this beautiful literature ministry so that the gospel of truth may reach lost souls in these last days. We pray that God's blessings will be with you.

Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Gospel of Matthew

Volume 4

Chapters 21–28

PAUL C. JONG



Hephzibah Publishing House

A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
SEOUL, KOREA

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

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Matthew Volume 4
Copyright 2026 Hephzibah Publishing House
First Edition: 2026
Published: October 2026

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means — electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, or otherwise — without the prior written permission of the publisher and copyright owners.

Scripture quotations used in this book are from the '*New King James Version (NKJV)', 'American Standard Version (ASV)'*.

ISBN 978-89-282-6353-0
Illustration: Young-ae Kim
Reviewed: Elizabeth
Translator: Elizabeth
Printed in South Korea
Cover art generated with AI and retouched

Hephzibah Publishing House
A Ministry of THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Seoul, Korea

♠ Website: https://www.bjnewlife.org
https://www.nlmission.com
https://www.nlmbookcafe.com
♠ E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org

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

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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.

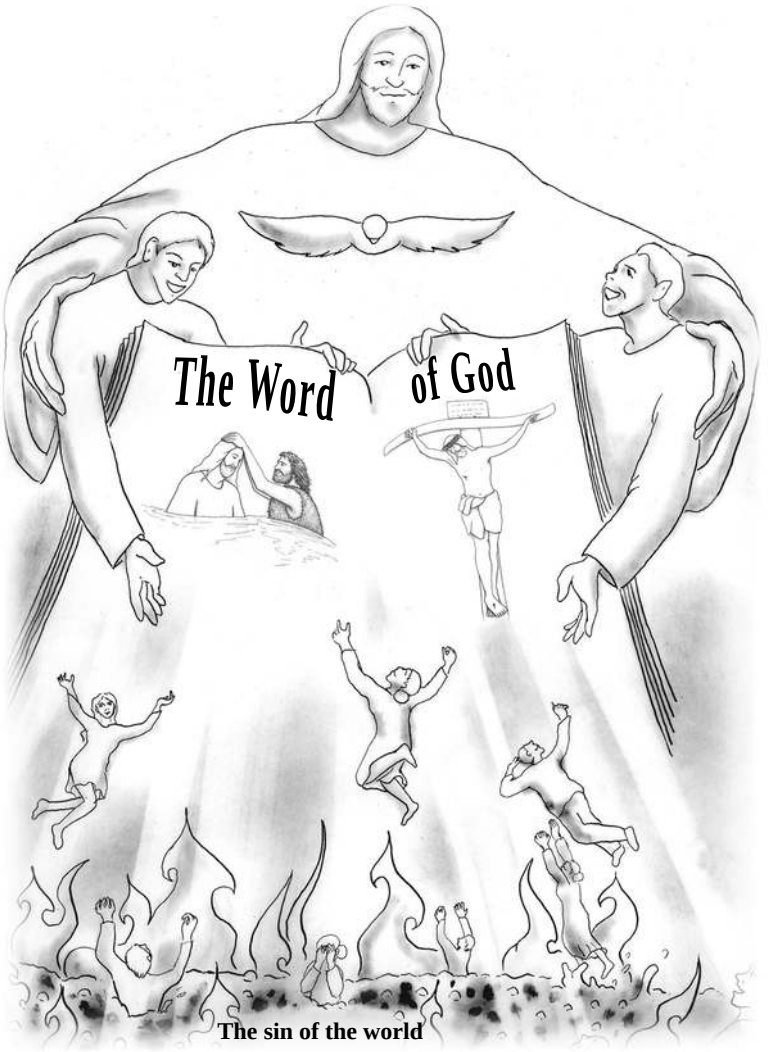
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

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

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



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

Preface

Jesus, who has accomplished the remission of sins and is with us

When Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. Jesus, who met His death amid the mockery of people, received the judgment for our sins through that death. He opened the way of salvation for us, who could not come to God because of sin. Once we know this, we cannot put forward our own merits before the Cross. We come to believe in Jesus, who gave Himself for us, and to give thanks.

As we read the final passages of the Gospel of Matthew, what we must clearly know is who Jesus is—the One who accomplished this salvation—and what kind of people He has made us to be in our lives. Jesus entered Jerusalem riding on a donkey and cleansed the temple, called sinners to the kingdom of heaven, and exposed the hypocrisy of those who considered themselves righteous. He also told His disciples beforehand about the tribulation to come and about His own death. Jesus, who suffered and rose again from death just as He had said, is still the basis of our faith even now. We believe in what He has accomplished, and we wait for Jesus, who will come again.

He gave His body and blood for the remission of sins

Before He was seized, as Jesus ate the Passover meal with His disciples, He gave them the bread and the cup. Before the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

disciples, who would soon be scattered and forsake Him, Jesus spoke of His own body and blood, which He would give for them. It was not because He was unaware of the disciples' weakness that He loved them. What came first was not their confident claims that they would stand firm, but the salvation that Jesus would accomplish for them.

"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28).

To know how the blood that Jesus shed is connected with the remission of our sins, we must first know the baptism Jesus received from John. Through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all. Then, as the price of those sins, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He received the judgment for sin in our place, and He rose again from death. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has saved us from sin. The baptism of Jesus and the blood of the Cross are linked to His taking our sins upon Himself and to His receiving the judgment for those sins in our place.

All the sins of the world also include the sins that you and I will commit throughout our whole lifetime. Even when we had not yet been born, Jesus knew our sins and bore even those sins. Therefore, the basis of the remission of sins does not lie in how good a life we have lived. It lies in this salvation that Jesus has accomplished. Those who believe in their hearts in the gospel of the water and the Spirit accept by faith the fact that their sins were transferred to Jesus and that the judgment for those sins has also already been carried out. That is, we come before God relying on the grace by which He has declared us righteous.

In Gethsemane, facing the cup He had to drink, Jesus obeyed the will of the Father. Even when He was seized, He could have called the angels and escaped, but He gave Himself up in order

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

to fulfill the Scriptures. The reason He remained in that place to the end, even while hearing the mockery that told Him to come down from the Cross, was to save us. Because we know this love, we do not stop at feeling sorrow over the sufferings of Jesus, but believe in the remission of sins that He has accomplished for us.

Jesus has given us the righteousness to enter the kingdom of heaven

Both bad and good were invited together to the wedding feast that Jesus spoke of. However, not everyone was accepted merely because they had come into the place of the feast. The king saw a man who was not wearing a wedding garment, and that man could not give any answer. This is why the matter of entering the kingdom of heaven must not be judged by one's own reputation or by the record of one's religious life.

The wedding garment we must wear is the righteousness of the remission of sins that Jesus has given. Because a sinner cannot remove his own sins by himself and stand before God, we must believe in the salvation that Jesus has prepared. Those who have been made righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit take part in the feast of heaven. Having been praised in the world cannot take the place of this grace, and having a shameful past is no reason to regard the invitation of salvation that Jesus has given as having nothing to do with oneself. It is Jesus who makes us worthy of the kingdom of heaven.

Those who believe in this grace have no need to hide what is inside them and pretend to be righteous. The scribes and the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked wanted to look right to people, but within them there was greed and hypocrisy. While devoting

their hearts to adorning the outside, they did not acknowledge their actual selves before God. We who read that word, too, cannot just call to mind the faults of others. For we, too, have a heart that, even while saying that we have received the remission of sins, seeks to be acknowledged by people, or lays heavy burdens on others while we ourselves will not move.

Jesus said that he who is great must become one who serves his brothers. If we know that the righteousness we have received came from the grace of Jesus, we cannot use it to rule over our brothers. We come to look after those who live by the same grace and to help them live by faith. Even when a heart that wants to exalt itself is revealed, we must acknowledge it before the word and turn back. A life of learning from Jesus, who saved us, thus extends even to our attitude toward the people we live with.

The risen Jesus entrusted the gospel to His disciples

After the death of Jesus there was a tightly closed tomb. The people who sealed the stone and set up guards tried to guard that tomb. But they could not stop the resurrection that Jesus had spoken of. To the women who came to the tomb, the angel gave the news that Jesus had risen just as He had said. The women met the risen Jesus, held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him. Jesus, in whom we believe, is the Savior who is alive even now.

Jesus called again the disciples who had forsaken Him and run away. He kept the promise He had made before He was seized, that after He had risen He would go to Galilee before the disciples. The disciples' confident words collapsed, but the word of Jesus did not collapse. Therefore, as we come to know our shortcomings more and more, the place we must return to is the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

word that Jesus has spoken. Faith cannot stand upright by hiding our failed selves or by clinging again only to our own resolutions. We must rely on the grace of Jesus, who saved us.

Jesus, who met His disciples in Galilee, commanded them to make disciples of all the nations and to teach them to observe all things that He had commanded. In this way He had other people, too, hear the word of salvation through those who had been saved. This is also why we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because we know how precious the remission of sins given to us is, we seek to preach what Jesus has accomplished even to those who do not yet know this gospel.

This work does not end with making known the content of the gospel once. Jesus said to teach them to observe. We must look after those who have come to believe in the gospel so that they may learn the word and live by faith together with the brothers in the church. We, too, live in this way, hearing the word and receiving help. When those who teach someone do not forget that they, too, are disciples learning from Jesus, they can exalt the grace they have received and serve one another.

While waiting for Jesus, who will come again, we do the work entrusted to us

When the disciples asked about the sign of the end of the age, Jesus told them to take heed of deception, and He also said that there would be tribulation and persecution. He let the disciples, who would preach the gospel, know beforehand the difficulties that would come upon them. We, too, must remember this word. When we find ourselves in difficult circumstances, if we remember that it is something Jesus already knew and spoke of,

we can endure while relying on Him, without having our hearts taken captive only by the fear before our eyes.

In the parable of the ten virgins, the wise virgins and the foolish virgins all waited for the bridegroom, and when the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. But when the bridegroom came, those who went in to the feast were those who had prepared. Merely saying that we wait for Jesus cannot take the place of the preparation of faith. Those who have received the remission of sins and have received the Holy Spirit as a gift by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can welcome Jesus. We must not think that this preparation can be exchanged for our own zeal or for a momentary fervent emotion.

We who have received the remission of sins wait for Him while doing the work that Jesus has entrusted to us. Jesus said that the servant who is giving food to the members of the household when the master returns is blessed. Waiting is not separate from today's service. Helping the work of preaching the gospel with what we have, looking after the brothers who live by faith together with us, and being faithful in the place entrusted to us belong to the life of believing in Jesus, who will come again. More important than whether we have been entrusted with a great work or a small one is using it according to the will of Jesus, who entrusted it to us.

When Jesus sent out His disciples, He did not leave them to carry out this work by their own strength alone. The promise He gave them last is a comfort to us, too, who now believe and follow this word.

"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

The One who promised to be with us is Jesus, who knew our sins and accomplished salvation. Because we believe in Him,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

even in our weakness we can hear the word again, give thanks for the grace we have received, and do the work entrusted to us. I hope that you, too, who read this word, will be assured in your hearts of the remission of sins He has given through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I hope that, within that grace, we will live together a life of serving our brothers, preaching the gospel, and waiting by faith for Jesus, who is always with us. ✉

Contents

Preface ---------- 7

Sermons on Matthew Chapter 21

Sermons by Paul C. Jong

1. Break the neck of the colt of a donkey
(Matthew 21:1–5)---------- 23
2. The lowly King, who came to us according to the word
(Matthew 21:1–11) ---------- 40
3. My house is a house of prayer
(Matthew 21:12–17)---------- 47
4. Do not doubt, but believe and ask
(Matthew 21:18–22)---------- 53
5. The purpose of believing in Jesus is the remission of sins
(Matthew 21:23–32)---------- 59
6. Relent and believe before the word
(Matthew 21:23–32)---------- 76
7. The kingdom of God possessed by a people
who bear fruit
(Matthew 21:33–43)---------- 84
8. God, who set up the rejected stone
as the chief cornerstone
(Matthew 21:33–46)---------- 91

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

Sermons on Matthew Chapters 22–23

Sermons by Paul C. Jong

1. The grace of the remission of sins that makes us worthy of the feast of heaven
(Matthew 22:1–14) ---------- 103
2. Put your hope in God, who raises the dead
(Matthew 22:15–33)---------- 110
3. Be chosen and put on the robe of righteousness
(Matthew 22:1–13) ---------- 117
4. To believe according to God's intention is to be chosen
(Matthew 22:14, Ephesians 1:1–12) ---------- 132
5. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!
(Matthew 23:1–13) ---------- 149
6. Love God and your neighbor by the grace you have received
(Matthew 22:34–40)---------- 169
7. Believe in the Christ whom David called Lord
(Matthew 22:41–46)---------- 175
8. The scribes and the Pharisees of today
(Matthew 23:1–22) ---------- 180
9. The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees
(Matthew 23:23–39)---------- 194
10. He who humbles himself will be exalted
(Matthew 23:1–12) ---------- 211
11. Regard God as greater than anything else
(Matthew 23:15–22)---------- 218

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

12. Do these, and do not leave the others undone
(Matthew 23:23–24)---------- 224
13. First cleanse the inside of the cup and dish
(Matthew 23:25–26)---------- 230
14. Nothing can be hidden before God
(Matthew 23:27–28)---------- 235
15. Obey the word He has now sent
(Matthew 23:29–36)---------- 241
16. Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD
(Matthew 23:37–39)---------- 249

Sermons on Matthew Chapter 24

Sermons by Paul C. Jong
1. The word of Jesus, which is more certain
than the stones of the temple
(Matthew 24:1–2)---------- 259
2. What faith should we have in the age
of spiritual disasters?
(Matthew 24:3–8)---------- 264
3. The end comes only when the gospel
of the kingdom of heaven has been fully spread
(Matthew 24:3–14) ---------- 283
4. See, I have told you beforehand
(Matthew 24:15–28)---------- 290
5. Do not hide the grace you have received in the ground
(Matthew 25:14–30)---------- 297

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

6. Know the time of the rapture correctly
and prepare your faith
(Matthew 24:28–31)---------- 305
7. Saints who unite and give out food are the wise ones
(Matthew 24:34–46)---------- 325

Sermons on Matthew Chapter 25

Sermons by Paul C. Jong
1. Why we must stay awake
(Matthew 25:1–13) ---------- 345
2. The righteous, who were created for good works
(Matthew 25:31–46)---------- 359
3. The least ones who have become the Lord's brothers
(Matthew 25:31–46)---------- 376

Sermons on Matthew Chapter 26

Sermons by Paul C. Jong
1. Jesus, who was delivered up
at the very Passover He had spoken of
(Matthew 26:1–5)---------- 387
2. The fragrant oil for burial
that will be remembered together with the gospel
(Matthew 26:6–13) ---------- 392
3. Those who know what they themselves are like
can serve the Lord and give thanks
(Matthew 26:6–13) ---------- 398

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

4. Do not exchange Jesus for thirty pieces of silver
(Matthew 26:14–16)---------- 415
5. Calling to mind again the gospel of the water
and the blood
(Matthew 26:26–28)---------- 420
6. The body He gave for the remission of sins
and the blood of the covenant
(Matthew 26:17–29)---------- 425
7. The shepherd, who goes before the sheep
that will be scattered
(Matthew 26:30–35)---------- 432
8. The cup that cannot pass away unless He drinks it
(Matthew 26:36–46)---------- 438
9. Let us become those who labor for the work of the Lord
(Matthew 26:36–46)---------- 444
10. Jesus was seized to fulfill the Scriptures
(Matthew 26:47–56)---------- 469
11. Jesus, who is the Christ even amid mockery
(Matthew 26:57–68)---------- 475
12. The Lord foretold even Peter’s denial
(Matthew 26:69–75)---------- 481
13. What does Jesus Christ become for us?
(Matthew 26:57–68)---------- 486

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

Sermons on Matthew Chapter 27

Sermons by Paul C. Jong

1. The reason Jesus had to hang on the Cross
(Matthew 27:1–50) ---------- 505
2. If you have realized your sin, go to the Savior
(Matthew 27:1–20) ---------- 530
3. Pilate, who washed his hands,
and Barabbas, who was released
(Matthew 27:21–26)---------- 537
4. Do not attach conditions to faith
(Matthew 27:32–44)---------- 542
5. God, who has given us life
(Matthew 27:1–54) ---------- 548
6. The Lord raised us from death and gave us new life
(Matthew 27:45–54)---------- 568
7. With what you have, serve Jesus with honor
(Matthew 27:57–61)---------- 585
8. The people who guarded the tomb in the face
of the word they remembered
(Matthew 27:62–66)---------- 590

Sermons on Matthew Chapter 28

Sermons by Paul C. Jong

1. Jesus rose again just as He had said
(Matthew 28:1–10) ---------- 597

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

2. Even money cannot change the resurrection
(Matthew 28:11–15)---------- 603
3. Those who live carrying out the Lord's will
(Matthew 28:1–20) ---------- 608
4. Become a disciple of Jesus Christ
(Matthew 28:11–20)---------- 622
5. The command and covenant of Jesus Christ toward us
(Matthew 28:18–20)---------- 642

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

CHAPTER

21

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

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Break the neck of the colt of a donkey

< Matthew 21:1–5 >

“Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, “The Lord has need of them,” and immediately he will send them.’ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.”’”

The Lord fulfilled in this way the word of the Old Testament *“Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey” (Matthew 21:5)*. That is, the Lord rode on a donkey and entered Jerusalem. Through this word, we wish to examine ourselves and receive grace.

Break the neck of the firstborn of a donkey

We are all donkeys. In the Old Testament, concerning the firstborn of a donkey, the first to be born on this earth, the word

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

says: *"Every firstborn of a donkey you shall redeem with a lamb; and if you will not redeem it, then you shall break its neck" (Exodus 13:13)*. So when a donkey gave birth to its firstborn, the people of Israel either redeemed it with a lamb or, if they did not do so, broke its neck. When we look at this word while living the life of faith, it means that the Lord rode on the colt of a donkey and entered Jerusalem, and that we ourselves are that very donkey. Donkeys, which are not sheep, do not obey well. This is not said about any one person but about all people. From birth we are born as donkeys, and we are those who go against the will of God and do not obey. All of us were born from birth as descendants of Adam, like the colt of a donkey, the firstborn of a donkey, and so the word that the colt of a donkey must have its neck broken truly strikes home.

The life of faith is daily living

Believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit takes only a moment. It is only foolish people who do not believe, and it is only those who are stubborn and whose hearts have been captured by other things, or those who are held captive by the devil, who reject this gospel. When God says that He removes their own sins, loves them, sends them to the kingdom of heaven, makes them His children, and gives them every blessing, what reason could there be not to believe? Anyone who knows how to count properly cannot help but accept it in his heart.

The problem is what comes after that. Being born again by faith takes only a moment, but the life of faith is a life we live until we die. Daily living is a life that continues. Life is like culture. It is a way of living—how one lives—that continues on and on. If we want to live in society getting along with people,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

we must adapt to that society, and even after adapting, if we want to live well, we must learn many things. If we live in our own style, we cannot survive among them. The life of faith is the same. The life of faith is also daily living. It is meeting the Lord, then following the Lord, and living while doing the work the Lord gives us to do, and in this life we must not hold on to our own thoughts. We would not be able to follow.

So we must break our own necks. We must break our own stubbornness, and we must completely break off what is called pride, what is called personality, and what is called the self. If we do not break ourselves on our own, others will break us. The Lord said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me" (Matthew 16:24)*. A person who does not break himself cannot follow the Lord. He does meet the Lord, but he cannot follow Him. Breaking oneself is denying oneself, taking up one's own cross, and following the Lord. This word will have nothing to do with those who only say that they have received the remission of sins but do not try to serve the Lord or to follow Him. But if we want to follow the Lord, we must deny ourselves according to the Lord's word, we must take up our own cross, and as a result we must break our own necks. It is truly a hard thing. The Lord tells all Christians who want to follow Him to do so.

This means that we must break our own necks. But if we do not try to break them ourselves, it is hard. If others try to break us, we come to resist. But it is different if we ourselves realize, "In this area I am truly evil before God." We have the things we like, our own style. But there are things God likes, God's style. There is God's purpose. God's purpose may not fit us. It may even be the complete opposite. God's purpose is that He tells us to serve the gospel for others and to preach the gospel for others,

so how could that ever match the self of our flesh? It can never match.

Nevertheless, as I have followed and served the Lord, I have broken my neck and broken my stubbornness, and I have followed by the grace of the Lord, thinking that even if my pride is hurt and I am ignored, it is fine as long as the Lord's work goes well. Even so, there was a thought that kept arising afresh. When things were difficult and hard, the thought had been coming to me continually from long ago that it might be good to just run the church moderately, serve the gospel at this level, and live comfortably. It was the thought of how good it would be if, when people came, I neither asked nor questioned whether they had sin or not, did not preach the gospel either, but asked whether they believed in Jesus, and if they said they did, asked what church they attended, fully recognized whatever office they had held in that church, whether deacon, kwonsa (exhorter), elder, or pastor, and told them I would treat them that way here as well. Many times the thought came to me that then that person could also come here, adapt well, and live the life of faith well, that I would be comfortable too, that I would not have to preach sermons that person dislikes hearing, and that if I just told them to receive blessings, things would be truly peaceful.

Each time, when I thought for a moment about whether to try doing so, I absolutely could not do it. The thought came to me that if I did so, I would be killing that soul, completely taking away the money that soul had, using that soul to make it work for me and to be served, and in the end, sacrificing that soul so that I alone could live well in the flesh. So I shook my head, saying, "Why are you thinking such a thing?" and repented before God that I had thought an evil thought. Dear fellow believers, I am also human, so there were many times like that. But these days I have given up such thoughts altogether. Why is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that? It is because if I do not preach the gospel, countless people will die. Because of me—if I do not join together with you to preach this gospel—the people throughout the whole world who are to be saved will die, and God will require the price of their blood from us. The Lord's word says so. Therefore, I cannot do that, and having met the Lord, I do not want to be cursed again. If anything, it is better to obey the Lord's will and live well, receiving the Lord's love; why would I want to be cursed by the Lord after meeting Him?

People who ended up living according to their own style

Ethiopia is a nation that appears in the Bible. In the book of Acts, we see that *"a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury" (Acts 8:27)* went all the way to Jerusalem, worshiped, and believed in God. On his way back, he met Philip and heard the gospel. He was reading the Old Testament in his chariot, and even as he read about the things the Savior would suffer like a lamb led to the slaughter when He would come to this earth in the future, he could not understand their meaning. He read the words, but he knew nothing. When Philip, following him, asked, *"Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30)* he answered, *"How can I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31)*. And he had Philip get up into the chariot. Philip got up into the chariot and explained to him that this word had prophesied that the Savior would come to this earth, have our sins transferred to Him and bear them through the baptism He received from John, suffer and die hanging on the Cross, and rise again. In this way, he preached the gospel to him, connecting it with the word of the

LORD God. So the eunuch received the remission of sins. And it is written, *"He went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39).*

He had to return to his own country, keep that faith, go to those who had gone before him, ask about the Lord's commands, and live the life of faith. The Bible does not tell how he lived after he returned. After this Ethiopian eunuch heard the gospel from Philip and returned, since he held a high office, he could have kept his faith as much as he wanted and could have preached the gospel to people as much as he wanted. Since it was long ago, he had to travel by chariot, but saying that he had business to attend to, he could have gone again to meet the servant of God and let people hear the gospel, or invited the servant of God, and so nurtured many disciples and led them to be saved. He was in a position from which he could have evangelized his own country. How regrettable it would be if, in such a position, it ended with him alone!

Look also at General Naaman of Syria. General Naaman also met the servant of God, was healed of his disease, and came to know that the LORD is the true God. After that, he asked to be pardoned for bowing down in the temple of Rimmon as he followed his master, and went back. Looking at this, I looked back on myself. If I had shut my mouth after meeting the Lord, not only I but also the people around me would not have been saved. Had that been so, you also would not be saved now and would probably be zealously living a religious life. You would have been zealous following wrong teachings. So would I. But, very fortunately, though I am lacking, I broke my neck. I said that if it pleased God, if God wanted me to preach the gospel, I would do it. I said that if I lost friends, I would lose them; if I lost my possessions, so be it; and if my honor disappeared, so be it. That is only a false honor, not honorable at all. I say this now, but at that time it was hard.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Dear fellow believers, even so, though I am lacking, I gave up such things and preached the gospel, and today I have met you and preach this gospel to you; how fortunate that is! I see that God gives blessings in the place where the gospel is preached. It is truly so.

A person who has broken his own neck is simple

The command to break the neck of the donkey is a word spoken about none other than me and you. Knowing is not everything. There are those who break themselves and follow the Lord, and there are also those who follow the Lord without breaking themselves, and I cannot tell you how often those who do not break themselves end up in trouble because of it. Watching them, there are many times when I feel sorry, thinking, "Oh, if only they would break their own necks; if only they would break off their own stubbornness and pride." Is the Lord having us do this? Is the Lord pleased with this? If so, we just need to do it. We just need to do so.

Dear fellow believers, a person who has broken his own neck is simple. The Lord wants it done that way? Then we will do it that way. It is simple. Even if we dislike it and are upset, if the Lord wants us to serve the gospel in this way, we will do so. Why is that? Because the Lord is so great, so mighty, so merciful, and almighty, and because He has not only saved us but has also given us many things, and He is the Lord of our life and has become our everything, we cannot oppose Him. We must oppose what should be opposed; if we oppose Him, we are finished. He is unconditionally right, and I am unconditionally wrong. It is 100 percent so. Even if in theory we seem to be right and for the

moment we seem to be right, when we go a little deeper into that matter, everything we insist on is wrong.

So the people of the world sometimes look at all of us as strange. There are also times when they ridicule us, saying that we are foolish and that they do not know why we live that way. But what does that matter? We do not weigh reasons in following the Lord. Weighing reasons is what people who pretend to be smart do. Dear fellow believers, what is so great about us that we would talk back before the Lord, insist on our own thoughts, and keep our own pride alive? It is more than we deserve that the Lord has met us, and it is more than we deserve that the Lord has given us work to do. When He has given us work to do, what can we do well? We only do our best. Comparing ourselves with others is wrong; if we do our best, we get a little better, and if we do not do our best, we become hopeless. Is doing as the Lord has told us in vain, or is doing as we please in vain? Looking at the result, everything done as one pleases is in vain. It must all be torn apart and redone. It is all void. The answer is already clearly given.

Then what is self-denial? There are days when I too really, really hate it. Still, it is doing it. It is because the Lord told us to. And it is changing our thinking. It is changing our thinking to think how rewarding, beautiful, and fruitful the work the Lord has told us to do is, and how thankful we are that so many people receive salvation when we have made only this much effort. There are times when it is hard because of the work we do, but that is only a tiny speck, and the Lord brings forth tremendous fruit, so we are thankful. When we change our thinking, strength arises in our hearts, courage arises, and we are filled with joy. That is called the fullness of the Holy Spirit. The strength that comes when we are united with the Lord's thoughts is what is called the fullness of the Holy Spirit. It is not a needless boiling

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

up of emotions that is called that. Even if the work is hard and repeated every day, as long as the Lord's work goes well, it is enough to become a grain of wheat for God.

I want to say this to you. You have done well with me until now, but are you yourselves not that very donkey? You may think that because you do a certain job well, no one but you could do this work. But who is there who could not do that work? Even if it seems great, if the worker is replaced, the new one soon does it. Even the work I do, if someone is put in my place, he will soon do it. It depends on how much we obey the Lord's will and do it faithfully or not; nothing else matters. Anyone, if put in that position, can do it all. Of course, there will clearly be a difference between doing it well and doing it poorly. Still, he can do it. In the Lord's work, even if someone does not do the work well, the one who obeys the Lord's command well is more beautiful in the Lord's sight. Then is that not enough?

Breaking oneself even in small things

Today too, among the tasks entrusted to us, we can think about whether the Lord is pleased with this work, whether He was pleased, what work He will be pleased with in the future, and what pleases the Lord. It all applies even to trivial matters in daily life. Even in small matters, we can yield our hearts as much as we want. If the Lord is pleased with this, if only the Lord's work is done, we can give way and we can bend. If only the work goes well, if only the will of God is fulfilled, is that not enough? What other reason could there be?

When those who have gone before us tell us to do something a certain way, we may dislike it because it is not our style. We dislike it, but because we have to do it that way, we firmly yield

our hearts and follow. It means saying that we will do it that way because the Lord is pleased with this work, and if we do it this way, the Lord's will is fulfilled. When we change our thinking in that way and think that, on the contrary, the Lord's will is fulfilled better through our doing so, that is uniting our hearts with the Lord, and when we break our necks completely, we instead become very strengthened and it is good. Have you not also experienced such things while serving the Lord in your lives? In life, there are many such things at every moment.

Dear fellow believers, to be honest, if I did not break my neck but asserted my pride, saying, "I am the one in the higher position," I could not do anything. How could I be together with the brothers? I must also share now and then the stories the brothers like, but if I assert my dignity, I cannot do that. When the Lord tells me to lower my eye level, I firmly lower it and am together with them. Is your pride hurt by lowering your eye level? We are the same brothers and sisters, the same people who serve the Lord. Then the atmosphere is warm, the work goes well, and how good that is! If we do not break ourselves, problems arise in every matter. When we break ourselves, it seems that we lose right away and suffer loss. Dear fellow believers, what does it matter if you lose right away? The Lord takes and uses all, even those who lose right away.

"The Lord has need of them"

The Lord, being lowly, rode on the colt of a donkey. He rode on the colt of a donkey and entered Jerusalem. The people cut down branches, spread them on the road, and cried out, *"Hosanna to the Son of David! 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!' Hosanna in the highest!" (Matthew 21:9)*.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The King of kings, the Absolute One who made the universe, did not ride a white horse, nor did He ride a noble animal of this earth; He rode on an insignificant little colt of a donkey. Even among donkeys, He did not ride a big one but rode a colt. It means that the Lord is now using us in that way. Is it not enough if only the Lord's work goes well? Is that not so? Sometimes your thoughts and my thoughts may differ, but is it not enough if only the Lord's work goes well? The Lord has saved us, and is not obeying that Lord the life of faith?

What pride could we have? If we have human pride, we cannot go to people, hand them a flyer, and ask, "Do you have sin?" It is because we know full well how that person will respond. Would that person see us as a proper person? Asking a stranger, a person we have met for the first time, "Do you perhaps have sin?" is a departure from courtesy and is regarded as very rude. Still, the Lord told us to do so. He told us to ask whether they have sin. So we ask whether they have sin. When we preach the gospel, I cannot tell you how many courtesies there are that must be observed. If we observe them all, when would we talk about the main point? I think I would rather be called someone with no common sense than observe all of them, and I go straight to the main point and talk. Of course, there are many times when it does not go well that way. But there are also times when it does. Why do I do so? Once we part from a person we met for the first time today, that is the end, so when would there be time to talk while observing all those courtesies?

The Lord told them to go into the village opposite them and bring the colt of a donkey that was tied there. He told them that when they were loosing it and bringing it, if the owner saw them and asked why they were loosing his colt, they were to say, "*The Lord has need of them" (Matthew 21:3)*. The disciples actually did so. Was there no law about theft even back then? Even then,

all such laws existed. Even so, the disciples went and did that work just as the Lord had told them. When the disciples said that the Lord had need of it, that is, that the Lord would use it, the owner, perhaps understanding, yielded because it was God who would use it. It means that the Lord will use us. It means that He will make use of us.

Thousands of years ago, the Lord said that because the donkey is an unclean animal, if the firstborn colt of a donkey was not redeemed with a lamb, its neck was to be broken. Is this not symbolically speaking about us ourselves? Because we have believed the gospel, we have no sin, and we can follow the Lord and live the life of faith, but in order to follow the Lord, as a result we must deny ourselves. Doing it a little will not do. When we do it, we must do it all the way. Then those who denied themselves early on find it easy to follow the Lord. Those who have not done so find it hard to follow the Lord. And if they never do it in the end, they end up living according to their own style. Such a person is finished.

Dear fellow believers, there are many people on this earth who have heard the gospel from me. Even now, very many people are hearing the gospel through books. Dear fellow believers, who are those throughout the world who even now follow the Lord without change, not with a reluctant heart but with a willing heart? Are they not those who have broken their pride as the neck of a donkey is broken and who follow the Lord?

Salt that has lost its flavor

Otherwise, every day you will want to pack your bags and leave in your heart. “Now I cannot do it anymore. I have somehow endured up to this point.” Then you say that you will

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

endure this time. But it is not something that works by enduring. Will enduring work? You must break it. You must deny yourself. You must break your own claim to be right. You must say that you will break your claim to be right if the Lord wants it, and break it off completely. Dear fellow believers, as you work, how often does your own sense of being right come out? "If they just left me alone, I would do well on my own; why do they interfere so much?" Learn now. Learn now to yield your heart and bow your head. Otherwise, even though you have met the Lord, you will end up remaining an enemy who opposes the Lord because you did not yield your heart. You will be forsaken by the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, on this earth there are many people who, after meeting the Lord, believing, and being born again, are forsaken by the Lord. *"If the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men" (Matthew 5:13)*. It means that if salt loses its flavor, it is useless even in the world. It is useless even in the world; would it then be useful for the kingdom of God? It means that those who do not yield their hearts become like salt that has lost its flavor. Dear fellow believers, are we not salt? Are we not the light of the world? You and I are salt. But a person who does not yield his heart is salt, yet useless. He is useless even in the world. Even when he goes out into the world, he lives following only his own greed, so he is useless in the world, and since he does not obey the will of God, he is also useless in the kingdom of God. It is salt, but it cannot be put into food. Then what do we do? It must be thrown away. It must either be thrown outside or thrown into water so that it melts away. That is what happens. Therefore, do not be conceited just because you have been born again.

Is everything done just because we believe, just by believing? What about our forerunners in faith who appear in the Bible?

Both the apostles and the saints all yielded their hearts, broke their own stubbornness, and lived following the Lord's will. In the Church of God, there is no one who did not do so. Those who did not break their own necks do not remain in the Church of God today. Dear fellow believers, there are people who left even after believing the gospel. Why is that? Because they did not break their own thoughts and pride, their own necks, and did not break what they themselves regarded as right, it simply ended. If they go out into the world, will they be useful? Since they seek only their own profit, they are of no use at all. The people of the world do not know whether such a person believes the gospel or not. Even if he says, "I am a person who believes this gospel. I am a person who did such things in the past," those people do not believe it. In effect they say, "Isn't the way you are acting now proving that you are chaff?"

Anyone can believe the gospel, but the life of faith is the problem

Dear fellow believers, anyone can believe the gospel, and anyone can preach it. The problem is the life of faith. Following the Lord's will until the day the Lord comes—this is what is precious. If someone believes the gospel, then gives everything up and stays that way, and when the Lord comes says, "I believed too. I too am qualified to take part in the kingdom of heaven," will the Lord really do so for him? Then would the Lord not be too unfair? The Lord is righteous. He is very righteous. He surely makes people pay the price. If He says, "I intended to save countless people through you, but because of you all those lives died, so I will require the price of their blood

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

from you," that is the end. Dear fellow believers, there are many such words in the Bible.

Today, the message is simply: break the neck of the colt of a donkey. It means to break the neck of the colt of a donkey, that is, your own claim to be right. What the Lord is pleased with, everything of the Lord—all of it is right. Is it right or not right? All of it is right. Is there anyone more right than the Lord? There is not. Dear fellow believers, many people meet the Lord. But many people also leave.

What must both I myself and you do in order to live the life of faith properly? We must unconditionally break our necks. No words are needed. We must break what we ourselves regard as right. In a way, it means to empty ourselves completely. It means to become people who know nothing and insist on nothing. Then does it mean to become fools? It does not; rather, it means to accept this truth that God speaks, lay our foundation on it, lay the foundation on the rock, and grow there. It means to build our house on the rock. It means to lay down entirely all that we knew in the world until now, what we inherited from our parents, and such things. Dear fellow believers, the heart is important. Faith is important. If one born-again person goes wrong, countless people die. It is not only he himself who dies. But if we become a grain of wheat, we will give life to many people and save them. You must not let the sermon simply go in one ear and out the other. I preach this sermon because I hope that no one will just die. Are you asking whether we could not just let it pass? What would we let pass, and how? Do we let it pass even when God's work has gone wrong? Do we let it pass even though there is so much in God's work to look after? If so, there is no need to live this way.

The heart of a debtor

Dear fellow believers, do not be too conceited because you have been saved. The apostle Paul said that he was in debt to all the people of the whole world. When did the apostle Paul ever borrow money from them? Did he ever borrow food? Did he ever borrow, eat, and not repay? Yet the apostle Paul said, *"I am a debtor both to Greeks and to barbarians, both to wise and to unwise" (Romans 1:14)*. Why is that? It is because, as one who had already met the Lord, he had the duty and responsibility to preach the gospel to them. For if he did not preach it, they would not receive salvation. So with the heart of a debtor, he wanted to go to Rome as well. Why is that? It is because if he went to Rome, he could preach the gospel to the whole world. The apostle Paul worked with the heart of a debtor. That is why the apostle Paul is famous in the Bible today, famous in heaven, and recognized by us as well. What would have happened if he had quit while serving the gospel? We are the same. I am the same. I cannot quit the work of serving the gospel.

Even when we obey the Lord's will with little effort, God has us preach the gospel to many people. Dear fellow believers, God knows everything. I also know you. You may be able to deceive people, but would God not know it? He knows everything. Dear fellow believers, if you oppose and obstruct God, you will be in great trouble. You must treat the church and the family members in the church as you would treat God. If you go wrong, you will be in great trouble. You must not act carelessly, thinking, "No one will know that I am doing this." If, even after being born again, someone does not follow the Lord well and does not unite well with those who have gone before, it is because his own style remains, because he has not broken his own thoughts. What kind of life of faith could a person live who has not broken his own

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

thoughts? What glory would God receive through him? Nothing is accomplished through such a person. God works together with His servants. He works together with those who have broken their own sense of being right. I am the one who preaches before you. But I am also included in this. We all learn together and follow the will of God. We are believers, so I hope that we will follow the Lord well. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The lowly King, who came to us according to the word

< Matthew 21:1–11 >

“Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, ‘Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, “The Lord has need of them,” and immediately he will send them.’ All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: ‘Tell the daughter of Zion, “Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey.”’ So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them. And a very great multitude spread their clothes on the road; others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: ‘Hosanna to the Son of David! “Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!” Hosanna in the highest!’ And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, ‘Who is this?’ So the multitudes said, ‘This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee.’”

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The command He gave before the King was welcomed

When Jesus drew near Jerusalem, He told two disciples to go into the village opposite them and bring the donkey and the colt of the donkey. The entry into Jerusalem was prepared in this way by Jesus' command. Then the praise of the multitude rises up, but at the center of all those scenes is Jesus, who comes according to the word.

Let us read verses 1 through 3. *"Now when they drew near Jerusalem, and came to Bethphage, at the Mount of Olives, then Jesus sent two disciples, saying to them, 'Go into the village opposite you, and immediately you will find a donkey tied, and a colt with her. Loose them and bring them to Me. And if anyone says anything to you, you shall say, "The Lord has need of them," and immediately he will send them'" (Matthew 21:1–3).* In sending the two disciples, Jesus tells them specifically where to go and what to do, and even instructs them how to answer if anyone asks. The disciples did not devise on their own and prepare an appearance that would befit a king; rather, Jesus spoke of what He intended to use, and the disciples moved according to that word. So, in the work of serving Jesus, what we must hear first is Jesus' own will.

The words *"The Lord has need of them"* make clear the purpose of this work. The disciples are not going to bring the donkey to meet their own needs, but are going in order to take it to Jesus. And since the Lord, who made all things in heaven and earth, says that He has need of them, even the donkey in that village is originally His. Even when we do the same work, it matters whose will we follow and for whom we do it; so if, while claiming to serve Jesus, we try to make only the appearance we

ourselves want, we may do much work and yet grow distant from Jesus' will.

The King, who fulfills the word of the prophet

Let us read verses 4 and 5. *"All this was done that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet, saying: 'Tell the daughter of Zion, "Behold, your King is coming to you, Lowly, and sitting on a donkey, A colt, the foal of a donkey"'" (Matthew 21:4–5)*. The reason He had them prepare the donkey appears here. It was to fulfill the word spoken by the prophet. So in this scene the Bible first lets us see the King. Even if we examine the actions of the donkey, the disciples, and the multitude, if we miss who the One coming in their midst is, we miss the meaning of the entry, for Jesus comes as the very King of whom God spoke.

That King is lowly and rides on the colt of a donkey. Within one verse, the words that the King is coming and the word that He is lowly are found together. Jesus' lowliness does not mean that He lacks the qualifications to be King; rather, it shows in what form the One who is King comes to His own people. So we recognize Jesus, who comes to us, not by a standard of majesty that people have set up, but according to the word God has spoken.

Just because His appearance riding on a donkey is plain, His authority does not become smaller; rather, in the very way He fulfills the word, we recognize the true King. Even when what God has promised is fulfilled in a form lower and more insignificant than we think, we cannot look down on that work by looking only at its outward appearance. Faith examines how the word is being fulfilled.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

This King is not One who came only to receive glory from His people, but One who gave Himself to save people bound by sin. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins we commit throughout our lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all. Jesus, who shed His blood and died on the Cross in our place to pay the price of those sins, rose again from death. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of sins and take Jesus, the Savior, as their King.

Therefore, exalting Jesus begins first with accepting the salvation He has accomplished. It is acknowledging that we ourselves need the remission of sins, and believing in the grace the King has bestowed. Nor is there any reason to keep away from the King in shame just because we have no strength of our own to boast of. The King who came to us is the One who lowered Himself to save sinners, and He is the lowly One who delights to work through us, who have been saved yet are still lacking.

The preparation of the disciples, who did as He had commanded

Let us read verses 6 and 7. *"So the disciples went and did as Jesus commanded them. They brought the donkey and the colt, laid their clothes on them, and set Him on them" (Matthew 21:6–7)*. What the disciples did is recorded briefly. They did as Jesus had commanded, and so the donkey and the colt came to Jesus, and when the disciples laid their clothes on them, Jesus sat on them. The names or abilities of the two disciples are not revealed in this scene. The text records only the fact that they did as Jesus had commanded.

In following the Lord's will there is clear obedience such as this. Your work does not gain value only when it becomes widely known, so treasure the fact that the Lord's will is fulfilled through the work entrusted to you. The disciples' preparing of the donkey came before the great acclaim of the multitude, and that labor prepared the way by which Jesus entered according to the word.

Even when the work entrusted to you is not easily noticed by other people, look at the purpose of that work. More important than how much you are noticed is whether you are faithful to the will the Lord has entrusted to you. Nor is there any need to lay down all your service because of your own shortcomings. You need only do what you are to do according to the word you heard today, and rejoice that glory goes to Jesus through that work.

The multitude who covered the road and sang praises

Most of the multitude spread their own clothes on the road, and others cut down branches from the trees and spread them on the road. When Jesus sat on the donkey the disciples had prepared, the multitude welcomed Him on the road on which He was going. What each person did was different, but all those actions were directed toward Jesus, who was coming, and the praise, too, bursts out toward Him.

Let us read verse 9. "*Then the multitudes who went before and those who followed cried out, saying: 'Hosanna to the Son of David! "Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!" Hosanna in the highest!'" (Matthew 21:9)*. The multitude calls Jesus the Son of David and praises the One who comes in the name of the Lord. What matters is not so much the sound of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

acclaim itself as whom that sound points to; so our praise, too, becomes right praise when it is praise that confesses who Jesus is and what work He has accomplished. Just because emotions have risen greatly does not mean that the content of praise is filled in by itself. The more we know and believe the word, the clearer the reasons for praise become.

In the scene of spreading clothes and branches, the actions and the confession of welcoming the King are found together. Today we do not receive Jesus by repeating those old actions just as they were; rather, we believe the word given to us, follow its will, and offer praises of thanksgiving. This is why lips that exalt the Lord's name and a life that follows the Lord's word must go together.

The confession that must become clear in the face of the whole city's question

Let us read verses 10 and 11. *"And when He had come into Jerusalem, all the city was moved, saying, 'Who is this?' So the multitudes said, 'This is Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee'" (Matthew 21:10–11).* When Jesus entered Jerusalem, all the city was moved and asked who this One was, and the multitude answered that He was Jesus, the prophet from Nazareth of Galilee. At this question, we come to recall again the word of the prophet that we heard earlier. That word called this One *"your King."* Just because a stir arose in the city does not mean that everyone came to know Jesus rightly; who Jesus is, we come to know through the word God has spoken and the work Jesus has accomplished.

Whom do you know Jesus to be? Going further than the answer that He is a prophet from Nazareth of Galilee, you must

know that He is the King who came to save His own people. To listen when the King speaks, to believe when He has bestowed salvation, and to follow when He entrusts His will—this is the faith that welcomes Him. When there is this faith, praise does not end as a moment's acclaim but becomes the confession of a life.

Jesus came to us according to the promised word. Do not try to change that lowly King to fit our expectations, but believe in the salvation He has accomplished and welcome Him by following His word. I hope that the praise toward the King who came in riding on a colt will continue into the obedience we offer in the work entrusted to us today. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

My house is a house of prayer

< Matthew 21:12–17 >

“Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves. And He said to them, ‘It is written, “My house shall be called a house of prayer,” but you have made it a “den of thieves.”’ Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them. But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, ‘Hosanna to the Son of David!’ they were indignant and said to Him, ‘Do You hear what these are saying?’ And Jesus said to them, ‘Yes. Have you never read, “Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise”?’ Then He left them and went out of the city to Bethany, and He lodged there.”

Jesus, who sets things right in the temple

Jesus, who has entered Jerusalem, goes to the temple, drives out those who buy and sell, and overturns the tables and the seats. Then He heals the blind and the lame and regards the children’s praise as right. These events show what Jesus rejects and what He accepts in the temple. So, just because something bears the name of the temple, it does not mean that everything that takes place within it is fitting before God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Let us read verse 12. *"Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves" (Matthew 21:12)*. Jesus did not lightly point it out with words and pass by. By driving out all those who bought and sold and even overturning the tables and the seats, He revealed that He could not leave that practice in the temple as it was. The reason is made clear in the very next word: what the temple is a house for is not something people decide; rather, the word God has spoken concerning that house is the standard.

We easily think that if there are many visible activities, God is being served well in that place. But what we must ask first, before asking whether the work is busy, is whether God is pleased with that work. Jesus did not see the brisk buying and selling in the temple and praise the temple for doing well; rather, He overturned and set right what had departed from the will God had established. The Master of the temple is the One who does not leave what is not right as it is.

The clear standard that it is a house of prayer

Let us read verse 13. *"And He said to them, 'It is written, "My house shall be called a house of prayer," but you have made it a "den of thieves"'" (Matthew 21:13)*. By saying *"It is written"* Jesus makes clear through the word of the Bible what the temple is a house for. It is a house of prayer. It is a place for relying on God, asking of God, and upholding His will, but people had made that house a den of thieves. The distance between what people had actually made of it and the purpose God had established had grown that great.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Then who is it that can pray in this house of prayer? It is the person who has received the remission of sins. Since prayer is exalting the Lord as King and asking for grace before Him, a person who thinks that he obtains everything he needs by his own strength loses the reason to rely on God. On the contrary, a person who relies on God values hearing and following God's will more than carrying out his own will. Therefore, restoring the house of prayer is not accomplished by adding one more event called prayer, but is accomplished when the heart with which one stands before God and the purpose of serving Him are made right.

Examine your worship and service, too, in the light of this word. If, while saying that you serve God, you seek human gain first, or decide first what you will gain and then put forward the name of God, the purpose becomes different. The profit you will receive becomes more important than the worship God is to receive. Jesus' rebuke leads us to realize that wrong and turn our hearts to God.

The people who came forward to be healed

Let us read verse 14. *"Then the blind and the lame came to Him in the temple, and He healed them" (Matthew 21:14)*. In that very temple where Jesus drove out those who bought and sold, the blind and the lame come to Jesus and are healed. What Jesus rejected was using the temple according to one's own will, and to the people who came seeking help He bestowed grace. The sternness that sets the temple right and the compassion that cares for the weak are present together in one Person, Jesus.

These people did not come to show their own strength, but came to Jesus just as they were, with bodies that needed help,

and Jesus healed them. When a person who, though trying to live according to the Lord's will, cannot do so by his own strength comes to the Lord in this way, the Lord heals him. So there is no reason to draw back, thinking that revealing one's own lack before Him is shameful. The One who helps us is Jesus, who knows our circumstances and bestows grace.

The way for us, who were in sin, to go to God also lies in believing the salvation Jesus has opened. Through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and the sins we commit throughout our lives are also included among them. As the price of that sin, Jesus was hung on the Cross and, pouring out His blood, died in our place, and He rose again from death in three days. Those who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of sins and come to God, and worship is what is offered to God while believing that grace and giving thanks to Him.

A church that knows that grace also inclines its heart toward those who seek help. It does not first calculate what it can gain from that person, but hears the word together with him, speaks to the Lord about it, and bears the labor that is needed. We learn from what Jesus did in the temple that prayer toward God and compassion toward people cannot be separated from each other.

The leaders who heard the praise and were indignant

Let us read verse 15. *"But when the chief priests and scribes saw the wonderful things that He did, and the children crying out in the temple and saying, 'Hosanna to the Son of David!' they were indignant" (Matthew 21:15)*. The chief priests and the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

scribes saw the wonderful things that Jesus did, and they also saw the children crying out *"Hosanna to the Son of David"* in the temple. But their reaction was indignation. Over the same events, there were the people who had been healed and the children who were praising, and there were the leaders who regarded those events with displeasure. The fact of holding a high position in the temple did not guarantee a heart that rejoices in Jesus.

They ask Jesus whether He hears what the children are saying, and Jesus answers *"Yes."* Jesus heard that praise, and He speaks concerning the very praise He heard. The leaders took issue with the children's words, but Jesus turns the question to the word that the leaders should have read. What fitting praise is, is not determined by their displeasure.

God, who perfects the praise of young lips

Let us read verse 16. *"And said to Him, 'Do You hear what these are saying?' And Jesus said to them, 'Yes. Have you never read, "Out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants You have perfected praise"?'" (Matthew 21:16)*. Jesus answers by bringing up the word that the praise coming out of the mouth of babes and nursing infants has been perfected. Therefore, that praise cannot be taken lightly just because those who offer it are children. This is because it is praise that God receives and perfects. The thought that praise has value only if the status of the one who praises is high is set right in the light of this word.

We, too, easily set different values on praise and confession depending on who is praising and confessing. But a heart that believes what Jesus has done and gives thanks is not bound by a person's age or office. If, while priding yourself on knowing

much of the word, you look with displeasure on the pure praise offered to Jesus, examine your heart again before the very word you claim to know.

In verse 17, Jesus leaves them, goes out of the city to Bethany, and lodges there. Jesus' question "*Have you never read*" was the last thing the chief priests and the scribes heard. That question comes to us as well. Before evaluating other people's faith, hearing and following the Lord's word comes first.

Rely on God in the house of prayer, and give thanks and sing praise to Jesus, who bestows grace. Cast away the heart that put your own profit first in the name of serving God, and show compassion to those who need help. Before the Master of the temple, who perfects even the praise of babes and nursing infants, let us, too, offer the praise of thanksgiving. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Do not doubt, but believe and ask

< Matthew 21:18–22 >

“Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, ‘Let no fruit grow on you ever again.’ Immediately the fig tree withered away. And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, ‘How did the fig tree wither away so soon?’ So Jesus answered and said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, “Be removed and be cast into the sea,” it will be done. And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive.’”

The word spoken in front of the tree that had no fruit

When Jesus spoke to the fig tree, the tree withered at once, and the disciples, seeing that, marveled and asked how it had withered so soon. Jesus answers that question with words about faith and prayer. So when we read this scene, we cannot stop at looking only at the withered tree. We must hear together what the disciples saw and asked about, and what Jesus taught them to believe.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Let us read verses 18 and 19. *"Now in the morning, as He returned to the city, He was hungry. And seeing a fig tree by the road, He came to it and found nothing on it but leaves, and said to it, 'Let no fruit grow on you ever again.' Immediately the fig tree withered away" (Matthew 21:18–19)*. When Jesus was coming into the city early in the morning, He was hungry. So He went to the fig tree by the road, but He found nothing but leaves. How can a fig tree be standing there and yet have no fruit? When Jesus spoke to the tree, it happened just as He said.

When Jesus said that no fruit would grow on it ever again, the tree withered at once. The disciples' marveling, too, was because the word and its result followed each other so immediately; so Jesus' word is not a wish that goes unfulfilled. The One who speaks has the authority to fulfill that word. Only when we know this fact do we also rightly hear the promise of prayer that He gives next.

The tree had leaves, but it did not have the fruit that Jesus looked for. But causing fruit to be borne is also not our ability; it is the work that God does. So we cannot assure ourselves that we rely on God even in our hearts merely because we are used to speaking of God and have the form of worship. Examine whether you hear the word of God and actually believe and follow it. The teaching that He gives the disciples in this passage also leads to the question of whether they have faith.

The answer that leads from amazement to faith

Let us read verse 20. *"And when the disciples saw it, they marveled, saying, 'How did the fig tree wither away so soon?'" (Matthew 21:20)*. The disciples' question is a question that seeks to understand what they themselves saw. After Jesus spoke, the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

tree withered at once, and they saw that result and marveled. But a heart that is only amazed does not yet reach the faith that Jesus teaches. So Jesus does not stop at letting them look on at His authority, but speaks so that the disciples may live with faith.

Let us read verse 21. *"So Jesus answered and said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, if you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, "Be removed and be cast into the sea," it will be done'" (Matthew 21:21)*. Jesus says that if they have faith and do not doubt, they will not only do what was done to this fig tree, but also, if they tell this mountain to be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done. The fact that the tree withered is before their eyes. Since they have seen what kind of One Jesus, who spoke, is, the passage now moves on to the teaching to trust Him and ask.

The disciples saw what was done just as He spoke. So this faith is directed not toward our self-confidence but toward Jesus, who spoke. If we keep examining only how strongly we ourselves are convinced, we end up relying on our own hearts, but those who believe the word of Jesus set their hearts on Jesus. It is holding on to whether the One who spoke is faithful, rather than to whether the power within ourselves is sufficient.

A heart that holds on to the promise, not to doubt

When we meet a difficult matter, we first think of our own limits. There are indeed times when our ability falls short and we cannot see the way. But that knowledge of our lack must not go so far as to block us from asking God. Saying that we cannot do it by our own strength and saying that even God cannot do it

are different from each other, so Jesus teaches the disciples to believe and ask.

Jesus said, *"If you have faith and do not doubt."* Even when our hearts are shaken because of difficulties, we can make those difficulties known to the Lord and hold on to the word again. Those who pray by faith are not those who hide their own weakness, but those who rely on the Lord, who will help them.

The salvation that God has accomplished makes us know clearly who the One we rely on is. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, so the sins we commit throughout our lives were also all passed on to Him at that time. To pay the price of that sin, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and perfectly accomplished our salvation. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of sins. Salvation, too, is not a result produced by the power of one's own conviction, but grace received by believing what Jesus has accomplished.

Therefore, those who have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel also rely on the Lord and His word in the matter of living. If we entrust our salvation to the Lord but think that we must handle the problems of life by ourselves, we come to keep prayer at a distance. Jesus told the disciples to believe and ask, so we can go forward believing that the One who saved us hears our supplications even now.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The promise that tells us to ask for anything, believing

Let us read verse 22. *"And whatever things you ask in prayer, believing, you will receive" (Matthew 21:22)*. Jesus tells the disciples that whatever they ask in prayer, believing, they will receive all of it. This is a promise that keeps us from regarding prayer as powerless words. This promise raises up the heart that is discouraged, not asking even though it knows what it needs, and makes it go to the Lord. Holding on to a problem for a long time and thinking about it is not the same as asking the Lord about that problem, believing.

To ask believing means to ask the Lord while believing the Lord's word, so it is different from a heart that merely borrows the Lord's name in order to fulfill a wish one has set for oneself. It is listening to the will that Jesus has spoken and asking for the wisdom, strength, and help needed to follow that will.

So pray specifically. If you need wisdom to fulfill the work entrusted to you, ask for wisdom; if you need strength to look after those who are weak, ask for strength; and on the path of serving the gospel, ask for help. And after you have prayed, do what you are to do today according to the word you have received. When asking by faith and moving by faith are connected, prayer does not remain as words of the lips but becomes a life that relies on the Lord.

Since the One who will give the answer is the Lord, we can entrust to Him what we have asked of Him. It is turning back from the place where we used to give up in advance, looking only at our own ability, and praying, believing in the Lord's power. If we hope for the Lord's touch and yet do not actually make it known to the Lord, that is inconsistent; so, as befits those

who have heard the word telling them to ask for anything, believing, actually ask.

Today's path given to the disciples who saw an amazing work

The disciples saw the tree wither and asked how it had happened, and Jesus showed them the way of faith and prayer. If we accept that answer, our attention, too, moves from the wondrous event itself to the One who spoke; so instead of standing far off, viewing Jesus only as One who has amazing power, we come to believe in Him and ask of Him.

If a difficult matter lies before you, do not just keep measuring your own strength over and over. Make known to the Lord what you need, and trust Jesus, who spoke. Remembering the fig tree that withered at once when He spoke, walk today's path with prayer that believes that word and asks. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The purpose of believing in Jesus is the remission of sins

< Matthew 21:23–32 >

"Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?' But Jesus answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?" But if we say, "From men," we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.' So they answered Jesus and said, 'We do not know.' And He said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, "Son, go, work today in my vineyard." He answered and said, "I will not," but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, "I go, sir," but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said to Him, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.'"

The purpose of people who believe in Jesus is to enter the kingdom of God. If people who believe in Jesus live a life of faith with the purpose of entering the kingdom of God, that is right. But if, while believing in Jesus, they do not believe with the purpose of entering the kingdom of God, that is a wrong life of faith. Right before today's passage, Jesus showed His disciples a miracle. Seeing a fig tree that had only leaves in abundance, He said, *"Let no fruit grow on you ever again" (Matthew 21:19),* and the fig tree withered away. When the disciples saw this and, amazed, asked why the fig tree had withered so, the Lord said, *"If you have faith and do not doubt, you will not only do what was done to the fig tree, but also if you say to this mountain, 'Be removed and be cast into the sea,' it will be done" (Matthew 21:21).*

In fact, all these words mean that if people who believe in Jesus do not believe with the purpose of entering the kingdom of God but believe in the manner of living a religious life, that is wrong. To put it from another angle, it means that a person who believes in Jesus properly receives the remission of sins and surely enters the kingdom of God. That is what was spoken to us. When Jesus entered the temple and taught, the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered, came to Him, and challenged Him, saying, *"By what authority are You doing these things?" (Matthew 21:23)*. Jesus had entered the temple in Jerusalem, overturned the tables of the people who did business there, and driven them all out of the temple. Also, He had said

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

to the fig tree that it would never bear fruit forever, and that fig tree, which had been so flourishing, withered up completely and died.

"The baptism of John—where was it from?"

Jesus did many things. That is why the chief priests and the elders challenged Him, asking by what authority He was doing these things. What this means is that, as the elders and the chief priests of Judaism saw it, someone who had no office and no authority within that religion that believed in the Old Testament was acting as if He were a prophet, as if He were a high priest, as if He were God. So they were indignant and asked as if rebuking Him. Then Jesus said that He, too, would ask them something, and asked, *"The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?" (Matthew 21:25)*. It means that if they answered that, He would teach them by what authority He was doing these things. If they said that the baptism of John had come from heaven, He would ask why then they had not believed him; and if they said that it had come from men—that is, if they said that John had not come from heaven but had acted the part of a prophet on his own—the people would rise up. Because people regarded John the Baptist as a true prophet, they feared the people. So they could not answer. Then Jesus, too, said that He would not answer by what authority He was doing these things, and He spoke as follows: *"'But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, "Son, go, work today in my vineyard." He answered and said, "I will not," but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, "I go, sir," but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?'*

They said to Him, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you'" (Matthew 21:28–31).

And then He spoke as follows about John the Baptist: *"For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him" (Matthew 21:32)*. What Jesus said is that if their purpose in believing in Jesus, the Son of God, had truly been to go to the kingdom of God, they not only would have received the remission of sins but also could surely have gone to the kingdom of God. But it means that because most people, while saying that they believe in God and that they believe in Jesus Christ, do not have a clear purpose and are believing with a purpose different from God's will, they did not enter the kingdom of God even after believing in Jesus. Here Jesus said many things, but the core is this. Just as He said that if one truly believes, even if one says to a mountain to be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done, so if one knows and believes in Jesus rightly, just as a mountain is moved, the remission of sins is surely accomplished, miracles also happen, and one also comes to enter the kingdom of God. That is why Jesus said that the tax collectors and the harlots would enter the kingdom of God before them, and said that John had come in the way of righteousness, and they had not believed him, but the tax collectors and the harlots had believed.

Dear fellow believers, it says that John came in the way of righteousness. The way of righteousness means that John the Baptist came to this earth to do the work of transferring people's sins to Jesus Christ, and that he also came to testify that Jesus is the Son of God. So it means that if they had believed and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

accepted the role of John the Baptist just as it was, they could have entered the kingdom of God. But they did not believe.

Dear fellow believers, truly the purpose of believing in Jesus is to enter the kingdom of God. We must not believe in Jesus in order to become rich on this earth, to gain honor, to become upright people, to become good people, to become people whose conduct is proper, or to become people who are beneficial to the world. But most people believe with such purposes. They seek honor in the world, and they pursue very high honor in the world. It means that there are many who, while believing in Jesus, have the purpose of becoming fine people themselves, becoming people who are useful in the world, and becoming people on whom the eyes of the people of the world are focused.

People who believe in Jesus in order to gain fame

People want to do fine things while living a religious life, and so to be revered by people and gain fame. Long ago, I fell ill and stayed in a hospital. There were many patients there who coughed up blood. The tuberculosis germs eat away at the lungs, so that later the patients cough up blood. Blood pours out from the throat. At that time I had just come to believe in Jesus, so love was burning and boiling up in my heart. When coughing up blood, if one swallows the blood and breathes, it hardens in the throat and one suffocates and dies, so it must be spat out. Since the patients were together, whenever blood came up, whether they were men or women, they poured it out without restraint, and people were frightened and all ran away. But because I had just come to believe in Jesus and love was boiling over, whenever someone poured out blood, I put out my hands and caught it. I caught it and threw it away, took that person to the

washroom, washed the person clean and laid the person down, and called a doctor to have the person treated. It was not because I was good that I did so, but because love was boiling over at that time. Aren't there also stories of people who cared for patients with Hansen's disease with their own bodies? In that hospital there were also nuns and priests, and about 300 patients, but no one did that work. No one made me do it; I did it voluntarily.

While I was there, I also had many conversations with Catholic believers about the word. I did not pray making the sign of the cross, nor did I pray to Mary. Even so, they chose me as someone to send to seminary. But I said that I could not go that way. I told them that Mary, too, was only a person who had received grace, so they had to know the Bible properly. The reason they saw me as a decent person was that they had seen what I did.

I think that such a thing is something any ordinary person can do. But later, a certain pastor heard that story and asked how I had done that work, saying that he himself could not do it even though he wanted to, and he said that it was not something just anyone does, but a great thing. I thought it was something anyone does. That is why I do not regard it as great when people do volunteer service. If one sets out to do it, what is there that one cannot do? If Jesus died on the Cross for me, can I not do such a trifling thing?

People want to do fine things while living such a religious life, and so to be revered by people and gain fame. But is that something great? It is nothing. Yet it means that the purpose of their believing in Jesus lies in pursuing that. Whether they believe in Catholicism or in Protestantism, what they pursue while believing in God turns out to be being recognized before people. But in reality it is nothing. It is something anyone who

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

is a human being can do. In the time of first love, when one has just met Jesus, one can do it as much as one likes, and when one is healthy, one can help others as much as one likes. What I am saying is that the purpose of believing in Jesus is to receive the remission of sins with certainty. Believing in Jesus is for clearly knowing and believing the role of John the Baptist and the role of Jesus, receiving the remission of sins, and going to the kingdom of God. If your purpose in believing in Jesus is to gain fame among the people of the world, to become a good person, or to become a person who is beneficial to the world, why do you believe in Jesus? It would be better not to believe at all.

Dear fellow believers, do you know how many people among the people of the world who do not believe in Jesus do fine things? Do you know how many people help others and do good deeds? If, while saying that you believe in Jesus, your purpose is to become a good person and do good deeds, what are you believing for? It means that the purpose is wrong. That is why Jesus said that the tax collectors and the harlots would enter the kingdom of God before the chief priests, the Pharisees, and the scribes. It is people who have no rightness of their own before God and who know their own sins who enter. John the Baptist is a prophet. He is the last prophet and priest of the Old Testament. That prophet came with the way of righteousness. John the Baptist came to this earth, gave baptism to Jesus, and transferred the sin of the world. And on the next day he said, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*, and testified to people that the One who had said He would come as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament and save us was that very One, that He was the Messiah and the Savior. That is why John, the disciple of Jesus, says in John chapter 1 that John the Baptist was a man who came to testify of the Light, and that he was sent so that all might believe through him.

John the Baptist is a prophet and a high priest

"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe. He was not that Light, but was sent to bear witness of that Light" (John 1:6–8). It says that John the Baptist was the one who came to testify of the Light. It means that he came so that all might believe through him. It means that through the testimony of John the Baptist, people come to know who Jesus is, and come to know that He is the Savior who had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world and was nailed to it, rose again, and removed our sins. Who is John the Baptist? He is a prophet. Who is John the Baptist? He is the greatest among those born of women. Who is John the Baptist? It means that he is the high priest who, when the Old Testament age came to an end, represented mankind and played the role of the high priest of the Old Testament.

Some people object, asking whether there is a verse in the Bible that calls John the Baptist a high priest. If one studies the Bible deeply for a long time, one will come to understand this word.

Dear fellow believers, the reason I call John the Baptist a high priest is that he played the role of the last high priest of the Old Testament age. He is a prophet and at the same time a high priest. Why is that so? He was truly a servant of God, and he was Elijah the prophet, whom God had said He would send. He was the one who testified who Jesus is and who passed on sins to Jesus. Just as the high priest of the Old Testament passed on sins to the sacrificial offering, he played the role of passing on the sin of mankind to Jesus by giving Him baptism, as if laying his hands on Him. It means that because people do not believe in the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

role of John the Baptist, they are believing in Jesus with a faith that cannot enter the kingdom of heaven, even though they could believe in Jesus with certainty and enter it. What I am saying is that the purpose of believing in Jesus is to enter the kingdom of God, and that in order to fulfill that purpose, we must look into what John the Baptist did to Jesus after coming to this earth. John the Baptist came to this earth and rebuked and pointed out people's sins, but the greatest work he did was the work of transferring the sin of mankind to Jesus by giving Him baptism. So, because Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, He was nailed to the Cross and died, and thereby removed your sins and mine and received the judgment for sins for us, and He rose again and saved those who believe. That is why all of us who believe come to enter the kingdom of God.

Dear fellow believers, the fig tree withering when Jesus spoke to it, and all the words He said—that if one believes and prays, even if one says to a mountain to be removed and be cast into the sea, it will be done—mean that you are to believe the words that the servants of God and the prophets speak and the work that Jesus Christ did after coming to this earth, and so receive the remission of sins and enter the kingdom of God. All the events are related to this. They are related to the remission of sins.

Dear fellow believers, the most important thing is to believe in Jesus and receive the remission of sins. You must believe in Jesus with the purpose of receiving the remission of sins. You must ask yourself questions such as these: how Jesus bore your sins, why John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus, and why Jesus had to receive baptism from John, die on the Cross, and rise again. The tax collectors and the harlots believed with their hearts the testimony of John, who gave baptism to Jesus, and the

things that John did. Because they believed both what John did and Jesus, they entered the kingdom of God before the religious leaders. But those who are called religious leaders did not believe, and so they did not enter. If one goes to hell because one still has sin even after believing in Jesus, what could be a more mistaken way of believing in Jesus than that?

The key to the gate of the kingdom of heaven

Not long ago, I went to get my clothes to go to a funeral and was flustered because I did not have my key. As I was wondering whether I had to go back again, the key turned out to be in the pocket of the clothes I had changed into. Then, in a flash, a story I had heard long ago came to mind. A man lived on the 100th floor of a high-rise building, and because there was a very rare treasure in his home, he went up together with a friend to show it to him. They walked all the way up to the 100th floor. They went up and up and, panting, stood in front of the door, but when he looked in his pocket to take out the key, he had not brought the key with him. How hard they had climbed up, and how dumbfounded he must have been to have no key! Someone who told this story said that a person who believed in Jesus intended to go to the kingdom of heaven, but he left the key behind and went to the gate of the kingdom of heaven, and because he had no key, he had to go back again. For a moment, I felt as though I had become such a person.

Dear fellow believers, people who believe in Jesus are exactly like this. The purpose of believing in Jesus is to have all one's sins cleanly remitted and go to the kingdom of heaven, but if one does not receive the remission of sins and, while believing in Jesus with sin still remaining, merely gains fame among

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

people, becomes a religious leader, becomes a high person, and receives praise as a good person, how is that person any different from the man who went up to the 100th floor without the key? Dear fellow believers, suppose someone, while saying that he believes in Jesus without having received the remission of sins, keeps on volunteering and serving, and then dies, goes before Jesus, and tries to enter the kingdom of heaven, saying, "I believe in Jesus. You know me, don't You? I believe in my Savior. I believe that You died for me on the Cross." Then a servant of Jesus says, "Wait, you have sin; how can you enter?" "Even though I have sin, I enter because I believe in Jesus." "You cannot enter." "Why can I not enter?" "Is there not sin in your heart? How can a person who has sin enter?" "Everyone believes that one has sin even when one believes in Jesus, so what are you talking about? I am going in." Saying this, he tried to push his way in, and then he was seized and thrown into the pit of fire beside it. Dear fellow believers, the Bible has the following word: *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven" (Matthew 7:21)*. It means that there are so many people who say, "Lord, Lord."

Dear fellow believers, the purpose of our believing in Jesus is to have all our sins remitted once and for all, forever, and to enter the kingdom of God. That is why we believe in the Savior, and that is why we live a life of faith. Our serving, too, is to preach to others this precious and beautiful gospel by which one can enter the kingdom of heaven. But both in the time when Jesus was on this earth and now, the purpose of the religious leaders and religious people in believing in Jesus lies not in receiving the remission of sins, but in becoming good people, becoming people who are beneficial to the world, gaining fame, receiving praise, and becoming people of high status. How

wrong that is! Are you and I believing in Jesus with the purpose of going to the kingdom of God? Dear fellow believers, have you obtained the qualification to enter the kingdom of God? Are you confident that you will enter?

Dear fellow believers, if, while believing with the purpose of entering the kingdom of God, we have no confidence that we will enter, how can we say that we believe in Jesus? After believing in Jesus, we serve by doing various works, but if we do this work to receive praise from people, what use will it be after we die? John came in the way of righteousness. He came in such a way, one that leads people to the kingdom of God, and he came to prepare that way. John the Baptist came to this earth and cried out in the wilderness. He cried out to people to repent, turn back, and receive the remission of sins. And he testified to them, telling them to believe in Jesus, that Jesus was going to the Cross having had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and that that Man was the very Lamb of God, the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament, and, now in the New Testament age, the Savior of mankind, who is the only Son of God the Father. Then people should have heard and believed the voice of John the Baptist's testimony; should they instead, without believing, absurdly play the role of high priest in the world, merely be recognized as elders, and try to lord it over others?

We must believe in the role of John the Baptist

Dear fellow believers, people who believe in Jesus and yet fail to go to the kingdom of heaven are the most pitiful and miserable people on this earth. Unlike those who do not believe in Jesus as the Savior, these people are this way only because

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

they do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but they know that Jesus is their own Savior, know that He is the Son of God, and know all about how He hung on the Cross and died for them. But it means that they do not believe that John came to this earth in the way of righteousness—they do not believe in the role of John. How important Jesus, too, declared the role of John to be! He said, *"Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11)*, and God said, *"I will send you Elijah the prophet" (Malachi 4:5)*. Dear fellow believers, if Jesus came to this earth and bore the sin of mankind, He did not bear it by Himself, but bore it by setting up a representative of mankind. God sent John the Baptist six months ahead of Jesus, and when Jesus was about thirty years old, John passed on the sin of mankind, all the sins of the world, through baptism. That was exactly why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in order to have the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all. And bearing that sin, He received judgment on the Cross and rose again. It is written so clearly in the Bible, in the four Gospels; why do you ignore the role of John the Baptist? In the word we read today as well, He said that John had come to them in the way of righteousness, and they had not believed him. The point is, why did they not believe? We must believe. We must not only believe in Jesus, but must also believe the words that the prophets, the servants of Jesus, spoke, and must believe the work that they did.

Dear fellow believers, if I preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to you here, you must not only believe this gospel, but must also believe that God speaks through the servant who preaches the gospel. If you do not accept the one who preaches the word as a servant sent by God, then no matter how much you hear the word, true faith does not enter your heart. If Jesus

wanted to have the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all through John the Baptist and to go to the Cross, then we must believe so, and if John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus and passed on all the sins of mankind, then we must believe so. That is why Jesus said to John, who was trying to stop Him from being baptized, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, and next it is recorded, *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water" (Matthew 3:16)*. That it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness in this way means, "It is fitting that you give baptism to Me and that I fulfill all righteousness through the baptism I receive from you—that is, that I make all people sinless." It means, "It is fitting that you pass on all the sins of mankind to Me, and that I have the sin of mankind transferred to Me through the baptism I receive from you and make all people sinless." So He said, "Bearing the sin of this world, I will go to the Cross as the lamb, the sacrificial offering before God the Father, and be nailed there." That is why Jesus was silent *"as a sheep before its shearers is silent" (Isaiah 53:7)*. It means that because He bore our sins, Jesus was silent in order to receive the judgment for sins in our place. In this way Jesus was silent, died on the Cross, rose again, and completed His becoming our Savior.

Dear fellow believers, if Jesus wanted to have the sin of mankind transferred to Him through John the Baptist, and did have it transferred to Him, then those who believe in Jesus must also believe in the role of John the Baptist. That is not a wrong faith. Some people say, "We only need to believe in Jesus; there is no need to believe in John the Baptist," but Jesus rebuked their unbelief, saying that John had come in the way of righteousness, so why had they not believed? Just as we believe that the apostle Paul or Peter is a servant of God, John the Baptist, too, is a

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

servant whom God appointed. He was the greatest among mankind. He was the greatest in the Old Testament Scriptures. He was greater even than Moses. This role of John the Baptist that I speak of is not found in Bible dictionaries, nor is it found anywhere else.

The salvation accomplished through the wisdom of God

Some people accumulate merit in order to go to the kingdom of heaven by way of purgatory. Can one go to the kingdom of heaven by accumulating human merit? Can one enter the kingdom of God? Supposing a person lives to be 100 years old, even if he does good perfectly until the age of 99, if he commits sin just once, all the good and the good deeds he did for 99 years collapse. That is the law. It is the law of God. Therefore, it means that you must believe. Why do you not believe? Because people do not believe in the role of John the Baptist, because they do not believe the word of God, they do not believe the work Jesus did either. The point is, Jesus came to the Jordan River and received baptism from John the Baptist, and thereby had the sin of mankind, the sins of your whole lifetime, and even the sins of your descendants and ancestors all transferred to Him once and for all, received judgment on the Cross, and rose again, so why do you not believe? People say, “Where in the Bible does it say that sin was passed on?” Do not say such a thing so easily. Did Jesus, who is the Savior of mankind and the only begotten Son of God, come to bear your sins and mine, or did He not? If He came, then would He, having come to bear sin, have unilaterally said, “I have borne your sins”? Did Jesus, like a person who collects scrap, carry a sack on His back, hold long tongs, and

pass through the village, and, as if picking up shoes that people had taken off and putting them in the sack, say on His own, "I must take away all your sins," and pick up our sins and bear them on His back? Jesus is One who knows that it is not fitting to do so. The reason He could not bear the sins of each and every person one by one is that there are also many people who have not yet been born. So Jesus set up one representative for all the people of mankind, had him pass on the sins of all people to Him once and for all by giving Him baptism, and so had them all transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and received judgment, and rose again, thereby saving all people from sin. It means that that was the wisdom of God.

I often say this. If Jesus had to receive sin through the laying on of hands every time we commit sin, Jesus would not have a single hair left on His head. You commit sin three or four times even in a single day; try doing the laying on of hands for all of them. Even if 8 billion people laid their hands on Him only twice a day, He would have to receive the laying on of hands 16 billion times. He would have to receive the laying on of hands faster than the speed of light. Would His head be left intact? Jesus, who is God, being great in wisdom and power, wanted to have sin transferred to Him once and for all through baptism, and He did so. Why do you not believe? What John the Baptist did after coming to this earth, and the work in which Jesus bore the sin of mankind through John the Baptist—that is, the work that John the Baptist and Jesus did together—is the work of righteousness and the work that causes us to enter the kingdom of God, and we must believe that. If people believe, they enter the kingdom of God, but they do not believe.

What difference is there between the life of faith that the chief priests, the elders, and the scribes of Jesus' time led and the life of faith that Christian believers today lead while

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

believing in Jesus? People must know that they do not know. If one does not know the Bible, one can come to know it all by listening to what a person who explains the Bible says. But if someone fits things together in human terms, sets forth his own logic, and tries to speak only of what can be understood with the head, that is not preaching. How can a person who does not know the Bible preach? Much preaching is done. But where is there preaching that solves people's problem of sin?

By all means, believe the fact that John the Baptist passed on sin to Jesus, that Jesus had sin transferred to Him through John the Baptist, received the judgment for sin on the Cross for us, and declared that it was finished, and the fact that your sins and mine were all passed on to Him. You must believe that Jesus was nailed to the Cross and received all the judgment for your sins and mine, and you must believe the fact that He died in place of you and me, came back to life, became the Savior of you and me, and gave us new life. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? That is why Jesus is our Savior. You must become a believer. It is not achieved by pretending to believe in Jesus; you must truly believe the words that Jesus spoke and the works that the servants of Jesus did. You must become a believer. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Relent and believe before the word

< Matthew 21:23–32 >

“Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, ‘By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?’ But Jesus answered and said to them, ‘I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?’ And they reasoned among themselves, saying, ‘If we say, “From heaven,” He will say to us, “Why then did you not believe him?” But if we say, “From men,” we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.’ So they answered Jesus and said, ‘We do not know.’ And He said to them, ‘Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things. But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, “Son, go, work today in my vineyard.” He answered and said, “I will not,” but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, “I go, sir,” but he did not go. Which of the two did the will of his father?’ They said to Him, ‘The first.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you. For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him.'"

The question that came back to those who asked about authority

When Jesus enters the temple and is teaching, the chief priests and the elders of the people come to Him and ask by what authority He is doing these things, and who gave Him that authority. They took issue with the authority of Jesus, who was teaching in the temple. Having received that question, Jesus asks them in return where the baptism of John came from. If we follow this conversation, it is revealed how a heart that seeks to know God's will differs from a heart that seeks to defend its own position.

Let us read verses 23 through 25. *"Now when He came into the temple, the chief priests and the elders of the people confronted Him as He was teaching, and said, 'By what authority are You doing these things? And who gave You this authority?' But Jesus answered and said to them, 'I also will ask you one thing, which if you tell Me, I likewise will tell you by what authority I do these things: The baptism of John—where was it from? From heaven or from men?' And they reasoned among themselves, saying, 'If we say, "From heaven," He will say to us, "Why then did you not believe him?"'" (Matthew 21:23–25)*. Jesus asks whether the baptism of John was from heaven or from men. It is a question that makes them answer how they had received John, whom God had sent; so those who had been questioning Jesus about the basis of His authority now came to stand before the question of whether they had believed what God had done. The baptism of John was from heaven. John

was a servant whom God had sent, and what he did was what God had commanded him to do.

But their deliberation did not flow toward finding which answer was true. If they said it was from heaven, they would be asked why they had not believed John, and if they said it was from men, they feared the people, who regarded John as a prophet. On one side lay the exposure of their own unbelief, and on the other side lay the reaction of the people; so rather than changing themselves according to the truth, they were looking for an answer that would not be unfavorable to them.

Let us read verses 26 and 27. *"'But if we say, "From men," we fear the multitude, for all count John as a prophet.' So they answered Jesus and said, 'We do not know.' And He said to them, 'Neither will I tell you by what authority I do these things'" (Matthew 21:26–27)*. They answer that they do not know. People who truly did not know and wanted to learn would have sought teaching, but these people, deliberating among themselves, weighed the consequences of their answer first. They avoided answering because they did not want to admit their own unbelief, nor did they want to receive the opposition of the people. Then Jesus also says that He will not tell them about His own authority. Those who would not accept a truth unfavorable to themselves could not rightly hear Jesus' answer either.

Open your heart so that the word may judge you

This conversation is a matter close to us as well. There are times when, while listening to the word, we come to realize that our own thoughts were wrong; but if we admit the wrong, we have to correct the words we have spoken and the way we have lived until now, so we put off that admission. Fearing how others

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

will see us, we set the truth we have already heard outside our hearts. When that happens, even if we listen to the word for a long time, accepting that word keeps being pushed back.

Asking about what we do not know is necessary for learning faith. But if we decide in advance that we will not change our position even after hearing the answer, that question no longer leads to learning. With a heart resolved to correct his judgment if the word of God is right, a person who believes in God takes that word as the standard and goes on correcting his own thoughts.

After exposing their evasion, Jesus tells the story of the two sons. The conversation surrounding authority leads into the question of who did the will of the father. To examine whether our attitude toward God is right, we must not look only at the words spoken with the mouth, but must see whether we have actually accepted God's will.

Who is the son who did the will of the father?

Let us read verses 28 through 30. *"But what do you think? A man had two sons, and he came to the first and said, 'Son, go, work today in my vineyard.' He answered and said, 'I will not,' but afterward he regretted it and went. Then he came to the second and said likewise. And he answered and said, 'I go, sir,' but he did not go" (Matthew 21:28–30)*. When the father told the first son to go and work in the vineyard today, the first son answered that he would not, but afterward he regretted it and went. When the father said the same thing to the second son, the second son answered that he would go, but he did not go. What divided the two sons was not how pleasing to hear their first

words were, but whether they actually went, following their father's word.

If we hear only the second son's answer, he looks like a son who respects his father's will, but contrary to his answer that he would go, he never went to the vineyard in the end. The first son's first answer was a wrong answer that refused his father's will. But he turned back from that refusal and regretted it, and following that regret he went to the vineyard to which his father had sent him.

Let us read verse 31. *"'Which of the two did the will of his father?' They said to Him, 'The first.' Jesus said to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you that tax collectors and harlots enter the kingdom of God before you'" (Matthew 21:31)*. When Jesus asks which of the two did the will of his father, they answer that it was the first son. They themselves also knew the difference between pleasant-sounding words and actual obedience. Jesus reflects that answer right back on them and says that the tax collectors and the harlots will enter the kingdom of God before them. This is because one does not enter the kingdom of God by a position of leadership or by an outward appearance of being respected.

This word does not make the sins of the tax collectors and the harlots lighter, and in the next verse He makes it clear that the reason they enter is that they believed. Before God, we are all sinners, exactly the same as the tax collectors and the harlots. Those who regard themselves as decent people come to think that they do not need Jesus, but those who know their own sins seek Jesus. So if someone has heard the words of the one whom God sent and has turned back and believed, that faith takes precedence over the reputation that people assign. On the other hand, even if someone has been known as a person who serves

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God well, that heart that did not believe is not covered by an office.

Those who believed when John came in the way of righteousness

Let us read verse 32. *"For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him" (Matthew 21:32)*. Jesus makes clear the problem to which the parable of the two sons points. John came in the way of righteousness, but the leaders did not believe him, while the tax collectors and the harlots believed. Just as the first son in the parable regretted it and went, the tax collectors and the harlots believed John. Therefore, we cannot take this parable as words telling us to work more diligently to produce our own qualifications. What Jesus rebuked was that very heart that to the end did not believe John, whom God had sent.

The way of righteousness that John brought was the way that makes people righteous and lets them enter the kingdom of heaven, that is, the way that lets them receive the remission of sins. John cried out to people to know their own sins and return to God, gave baptism to Jesus, and testified that Jesus is the Savior. So accepting what John did was itself going to Jesus, to whom he pointed, and it was believing in the way by which God accomplishes salvation, without pushing it away by one's own judgment.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and among those sins are also the sins we commit throughout our

lives. As the price of those sins, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death. By believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins. It is not one's own good answers or religious career that removes sin; rather, sins are remitted when we accept with our hearts the salvation that Jesus has accomplished.

To those who know their own sins, this gospel opens a way to return. It is not that they cannot come before God because they have already lived wrongly, nor is it that they can come only if they hide their wrongs. Because there is Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him, they can turn back from the heart that insisted on their own righteousness and believe in Him. Relenting begins not with a promise to pay for all one's own sins by oneself, but with discarding the heart that called oneself right and accepting that God is right.

Do not remain in the place of seeing and yet not believing

Jesus' final rebuke contains the fact that they did not turn back even after seeing the faith of other people. They saw the tax collectors and the harlots believe John. Nevertheless, they did not correct themselves. When people whom they had regarded as beneath them believed John, they too could have looked back on themselves through that event, but in the end they let that opportunity slip away.

We, too, can see another person changing his heart before the word while leaving our own problems as they are. If we remember only that person's past, the word he has now accepted hardly reaches our ears. When you see the grace that God has bestowed, give thanks together, and examine whether you

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

yourself are also standing rightly before that word. Evaluating another person's change cannot take the place of our own faith.

Those of you who already believe the gospel, too, do not take lightly hearing and following the Lord's word. Just as the father told his son to go and work in the vineyard, when the Lord entrusts you with the work of serving and preaching the gospel, do not let it end with only a pleasant-sounding promise. If you come to know that you have judged something wrongly, you need only correct that judgment. This is not paying more of the price for the remission of sins, but living while honoring the will of the Lord who has saved us.

The chief priests and the elders asked about Jesus' authority, but Jesus revealed how they had stood before John, whom God had sent. What we need today, too, is not gathering more grounds on which to speak, but opening our hearts before the word we have heard and relenting and believing in the way of righteousness preached by John, whom God had sent, and in Jesus, to whom he pointed. I hope that you will come out of the place of avoiding an answer in order to defend your own position, and live responding to the Father's will like the first son, who said *"I will not"* and yet regretted it and went to the vineyard. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The kingdom of God possessed by a people who bear fruit

< Matthew 21:33–43 >

“‘Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.” So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?’ They said to Him, ‘He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes”? Therefore I say to you, the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it.'"

This last age is the time when we must do the work of God by faith and live the life of faith by faith. If we read Genesis chapter 5, the genealogy of Adam appears, and the record continues in this manner: so-and-so begot a son at such-and-such an age, continued the genealogy of faith, lived out his years, and died; and again, so-and-so begot so-and-so at such-and-such an age, lived out his years, and died. Then at last it comes to Noah. After Noah's father begot Noah, it says, *"And he called his name Noah, saying, 'This one will comfort us concerning our work and the toil of our hands, because of the ground which the LORD has cursed'" (Genesis 5:29)*, and it is recorded that this father, too, died at such-and-such an age.

What kind of life is the life of these righteous people? It is a life of faith. It is believing the gospel, begetting and raising those who have the same faith as oneself, and handing this gospel down to them so that they may preach it, and then departing. Continuing the genealogy of faith in that way is what the people of faith do. Right before the word we read today, the Lord said, *"For John came to you in the way of righteousness, and you did not believe him; but tax collectors and harlots believed him; and when you saw it, you did not afterward relent and believe him" (Matthew 21:32)*. What the Lord demanded most when He came to this earth was faith. The Lord came to this earth, spoke many words to people, and spoke to them in parables, but people did not believe the Lord's words. If it had been us, we would have stopped even in the middle of speaking, but the Lord kept on speaking to them ceaselessly: when they did not catch His meaning, He spoke again, and He spoke again from another side.

The parable of the vinedressers of the vineyard

The Lord told the parable of the vineyard. A landowner planted a vineyard, put a fence around it, dug a winepress, built a tower, leased it to vinedressers, and went into a far country. And He said, *"Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another" (Matthew 21:34–35)*. So the owner sent other servants, more of them, but those servants, too, were treated the same way. Instead, in order to seize the land of the owner who had leased it to them and gone away, the vinedressers even cast the son whom the owner had sent out of the vineyard and killed him. When the Lord asked what the owner would do to these vinedressers when he came, the chief priests and the elders answered, *"He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons" (Matthew 21:41)*. Then the Lord said, *"Have you never read in the Scriptures: 'The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes'?" (Matthew 21:42)*.

The Lord intended to establish a vineyard on this earth, that is, the church, so that those who have been saved would offer sturdy clusters of grapes before God, but people did not accept the Lord. The stone that the builders rejected became the chief cornerstone, a very vital stone, but people rejected Jesus, did not accept the words of Jesus, and paid attention only to wealth. Many churches today, too, are treating Jesus as these vinedressers did. Jesus came to this earth, had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again; that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

is, He saved all mankind from sin by the water and the blood. And He entrusted this church to the disciples and to people and went away. The apostles kept and inherited the faith, but afterward, as the age of the Church Fathers went by, where did many people who believed in Jesus and many leaders set their attention? They set their attention only on wealth. They seized the owner's land, and they cast the servants whom the owner had sent out of the vineyard and killed them. Rather than believing in Jesus as the true Savior, these people set their hearts on amassing wealth. If they have leased the vineyard, they should farm diligently, eat only a little themselves, and bring the rent to the owner, but they try to take it all for themselves. They try to take everything for themselves.

A life that continues the genealogy of faith

Many people within Christianity today are like that. Jesus came to this earth and saved us human beings from sin through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, that is, through the water, the blood, and the Spirit; yet they have no interest at all in this, and within them is a heart that seeks to make the glory of God, the church's wealth, and the flock all their own. Even if I do not tell you, you will know well that this world is like that. This age is truly an age in which we must preach this gospel by faith and live by faith. No matter how hard the world may be, and even if the people of the world are busy amassing wealth and the religious leaders, too, are busy amassing wealth, how will we live? What we must do is preach the gospel to the souls of other people for the sake of the genealogy of faith and let them, too, have the same faith as ours. For us to live by faith on this earth is to teach them so that

they may have the same faith as ours, to preach the gospel to them, and to guide them. That is what you and I must do.

So it was with the servants of God in the Old Testament, and so it was with the servants of God in the New Testament. The apostles of the New Testament left behind on this earth people of faith who were the same as themselves. But before long, it all became corrupted. Things such as Greek philosophy came into the church. Those who first believed in Jesus in the age of the apostles suffered a great deal of persecution. But after a little time passed, people who believed in Jesus began to appear one by one among the nobles of Rome, and also among the powerful and the wealthy. And then Christianity became the state religion of Rome.

As the Roman Emperor Constantine accepted Christianity and Christianity subsequently became the state religion, corruption came. What happened was this: they did not draw a clear line between what was salvation and what was not, and since Christianity had become the state religion, they let their guard down and welcomed anyone as long as he said he believed in Jesus. That is how revival came about. It was not that many people who followed Jesus arose, but that many religious people arose. Moreover, within it there were many people who held Greek philosophy. They thought about everything in the manner of Greek culture, and with that way of thinking they approached the Bible and believed in Jesus. Therefore, it came to have nothing to do with being born again. In the old days, the cross was a cross of being ready to suffer, but now it has changed into a decorative cross without suffering. From that time on, it became corrupted. And after a long time passed, this last age has come. This word that Jesus spoke in a parable while He was on this earth was spoken with the Pharisees and scribes of that time, the leaders of the Jews, in view.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

"Given to a nation bearing the fruits of it"

Then what word is it for today? It is a word spoken with the leaders within Christianity today in view. Within Christianity, too, there are not a few cases of hearts being captivated by gathering wealth. They even regard the number of church members as wealth. And when the true gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached, they reject it, so there is no place for Jesus to dwell among them. The vinedressers rejected Jesus Christ, the Son of God, and, fearing that He would come and claim the land as His own, they seized and killed the servants whom God had sent and even the Son. This age is like that. Then how should we live in this age? Should we fight, denouncing what is bad, just as they do? That becomes nothing but a fight and is of no use at all. What they seek in the end is wealth. If so, how should you and I live before God? You and I must do the work of handing down this faith by which we have been saved, this faith that follows the Lord, and then depart. We must hand down our faith and our life of faith. This is what you and I must do, and it is what true people of faith do.

No matter how hard the world may be, even in this present age, if only we make up our minds to preach the gospel, we can preach it as much as we want. Even if we are lacking, it is important to keep on preaching the gospel steadily. Even if there are people who slander us, there is no need to get angry.

People, whether on this side or on that side, compete over the number of church members. They think of people as their own wealth. They consider it good only when there are many church members, and so they weigh up denominations and even try to belong to a large denomination. Jesus rebuked such people as those who opposed God and the servants of God, and said that such people would have the kingdom of God taken from them

and that it would be *"given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matthew 21:43)*. This means that the servants of God who bear fruit, the people of God, receive the kingdom of God as an inheritance.

The kingdom of God is what a people who bear fruit obtain. Whatever anyone may say, and no matter how loudly people who have only the outward appearance clamor, it is you and I who will come to possess the kingdom of God. As you and I live by faith on this earth, it is by handing down the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we have and that faith that follows the Lord that we come to possess the kingdom of God. Those who have the same faith as ours will also come to possess that kingdom of God to which we are going. Even if the country is in turmoil and the whole world is gloomy, it does not matter at all. We live by faith and then go by faith; we are not swayed this way and that by circumstances. The one and only thing that matters is how much we preach the gospel; the circumstances of the world have nothing to do with us. Therefore, I hope that you will keep your faith well, keep your hearts well, be joined together with the church, and do well.

We have no ability to do it by ourselves; we only pray that God will keep us. All we can do is live by the faith that believes in God. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

God, who set up the rejected stone as the chief cornerstone

< Matthew 21:33–46 >

“‘Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit. And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, “They will respect my son.” But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, “This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.” So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him. Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?’ They said to Him, ‘He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons.’ Jesus said to them, ‘Have you never read in the Scriptures: “The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD’s doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes”? Therefore I say to you, the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder.' Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet."

The vineyard the owner entrusted

Following the parable of the two sons, Jesus says, *"Hear another parable."* This time it is a word about the vinedressers entrusted with a vineyard, and the heart that had refused the father's will is now revealed in actions that seek to seize what belongs to the owner. The vinedressers had only received the right to work in the vineyard; they had not become the owners of that vineyard, and the problem in the parable begins with forgetting this relationship.

Let us read verses 33 and 34. *"Hear another parable: There was a certain landowner who planted a vineyard and set a hedge around it, dug a winepress in it and built a tower. And he leased it to vinedressers and went into a far country. Now when vintage-time drew near, he sent his servants to the vinedressers, that they might receive its fruit" (Matthew 21:33–34).* The one who made the vineyard is the landowner. He set a hedge around it, dug a winepress, and built a tower, and the vinedressers leased the vineyard that the owner had prepared in this way and came to work in it. The owner's going into a far country did not mean that ownership passed to the vinedressers; so when vintage-time drew near, the owner sent his servants to receive the fruit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

It was fitting for this relationship that the owner sought to receive the fruit, and the vinedressers, having been entrusted with the vineyard and working in it, had to give the owner what they were to give him. But they seize the servants who came to receive the fruit and harm them. Going beyond the problem of not farming properly, they rejected the owner's demand itself by harming the people the owner had sent.

For us, too, when we have done the work God has entrusted to us for a long time, the master of our hearts can change. The work we at first took on with thanksgiving we come, before we know it, to regard as our own place, and we come to think that even the people we meet through that work must move according to our will. It is putting our own judgment ahead of the word of God on the grounds that we have labored long. The fact of having been entrusted with something only gives us the responsibility to be faithful; it does not give us the right to push aside God's will.

The servants sent again and again and the son sent last of all

Let us read verses 35 through 39. *"And the vinedressers took his servants, beat one, killed one, and stoned another. Again he sent other servants, more than the first, and they did likewise to them. Then last of all he sent his son to them, saying, 'They will respect my son.' But when the vinedressers saw the son, they said among themselves, 'This is the heir. Come, let us kill him and seize his inheritance.' So they took him and cast him out of the vineyard and killed him" (Matthew 21:35–39).* The vinedressers beat one servant severely, killed one, and stoned one. Though the owner again sent more servants than the first,

they did the same to them. Even though opportunities to hear the owner's will were given again and again, the vinedressers did not change; they did not receive the owner's sending of people as an opportunity to correct their wrong, but treated it like something that hindered them from keeping their own possession.

Last of all, the owner sent his son, saying, *"They will respect my son."* But when the vinedressers see the son, they plot to kill him, saying, *"This is the heir."* Here their purpose is revealed just as it is: it was to get rid of the heir and take the inheritance. Although they knew who he was, because of their own greed they cast him out of the vineyard and killed him.

Jesus spoke this parable before the leaders who were rejecting Him. He revealed through a parable the picture of unbelief that rejects the servants God sent and at last spurns even the Son. If one is in the position of serving God and yet does not accept the Son whom God sent, that position cannot guarantee one's faith. If one turns the things that belong to God into a means of accomplishing one's own will, one comes to regard even the words of the Son as an obstacle.

This parable is also a warning not to take the owner's long-suffering lightly. The owner's sending servants again does not mean that the earlier violence was right; it is only that the same rejection continued even though there was an opportunity to correct it. When the word comes to us again, we too cannot pass over our past disobedience as if it were nothing; so while you can hear the word again, lay down your own will and accept the Lord's will.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The judgment they acknowledged with their own mouths

Let us read verses 40 and 41. *"'Therefore, when the owner of the vineyard comes, what will he do to those vinedressers?' They said to Him, 'He will destroy those wicked men miserably, and lease his vineyard to other vinedressers who will render to him the fruits in their seasons'" (Matthew 21:40–41)*. Jesus asks what the owner of the vineyard will do to these vinedressers when he comes. Those who were listening answer that he should destroy these wicked men and lease the vineyard to other vinedressers who would render the fruit in its season. They too knew that rebelling against the owner after being entrusted with what belongs to another is evil, and they themselves agreed that the vinedressers who had killed the owner's servants and son could not go on holding the vineyard.

But that answer comes back to them. When one hears it as someone else's story, it is easy to discern evil, but when that word reflects one's own image, it is hard to admit it. Right after this, Jesus says that the kingdom of God will be taken from them. One cannot make clear judgments on other people's wrongs while making an exception only of one's own unbelief; when God judges, the position a person has held on to cannot shield him from that judgment.

The words that the vineyard will be leased to other vinedressers also contain the fact that the owner's will continues to be fulfilled. The refusal of the wicked vinedressers does not mean that the vineyard becomes permanently theirs; rather, the owner returns and holds them accountable. This fact—that those who denied the owner's rights do not make the final decision—makes it possible to understand the word about the rejected stone that follows.

People's rejection cannot overthrow God's will

Let us read verse 42. *"Jesus said to them, 'Have you never read in the Scriptures: "The stone which the builders rejected Has become the chief cornerstone. This was the LORD's doing, And it is marvelous in our eyes"?'" (Matthew 21:42)*. The stone that the builders rejected has become the chief cornerstone. The judgment of those who rejected it did not determine the final place of that stone, because the Lord set up that stone as the chief cornerstone. Just as the chief cornerstone is the stone that binds the two walls together into one and supports them, Jesus, whom people rejected, became the One who connects God and us. Through this word of Scripture, Jesus reveals side by side the judgment of the people who were rejecting Him and the work God would accomplish.

Earlier, on the way going up to Jerusalem, Jesus told His disciples that He would be killed and would rise again on the third day, and the image of the vinedressers casting the son out of the vineyard and killing him also makes us look toward that suffering. Yet the One who set up the stone that people rejected as the chief cornerstone is the Lord. The Bible says that this came about through the Lord and is marvelous in our eyes.

The death of Jesus was a death that revealed people's evil and, at the same time, accomplished God's work of saving sinners. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and among them are also the sins we commit throughout our lives. As the price of those sins, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and saved us completely. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sins and become a people who belong to God.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Therefore we cannot keep the Son of God only in the place we want Him to be. Jesus is not One whom we accept only when He is helpful to our lives, but the Savior who had our sins passed on to Him, received the judgment in our place, and gave us new life. So those who believe in the salvation He has accomplished also receive His word as the Lord's will, entrust their lives to the One who has given them life, and acknowledge that He is their Master.

The people who receive the kingdom of God

Let us read verses 43 and 44. *"Therefore I say to you, the kingdom of God will be taken from you and given to a nation bearing the fruits of it. And whoever falls on this stone will be broken; but on whomever it falls, it will grind him to powder" (Matthew 21:43–44)*. Jesus says that a people who bear the fruit of that kingdom will receive the kingdom of God. This word breaks down the heart that regarded the kingdom of God as its own possession. That kingdom does not become one's own because one was in a position of speaking about God or enjoyed religious privileges for a long time; rather, a people who believe in God, the Owner of that kingdom, and receive His will receive that kingdom.

The vinedressers in the parable cast out the owner's son, but the people of God believe in that Son and receive Him. So fruit is not something to be counted as mere performance or outwardly visible achievement. The fruit that the owner desires is people who believe in and receive the Son, that is, people who have heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. Those who have received that grace come to follow His will with thanksgiving.

That faith is also revealed in the attitude with which we treat what has been entrusted to us. People's lives are not ours but God's, so we do not regard people as a means of extending our own influence, but serve them so that they may hear the gospel of salvation and believe in the Lord. If we have been entrusted with work, we look to the will of the One who entrusted it rather than to the praise that would come back to ourselves, and when wrongs are exposed before the word, we do not hide them but correct them. Such a life is not labor that tries to buy the kingdom of God with our own merit, but the response of those who have become the people of that kingdom by grace.

Next, Jesus speaks of what will come upon the one who falls on this stone and upon the person on whom this stone falls. In the words that they will be broken and ground to powder and scattered, there is a stern warning: whoever stands against that stone God has set up, holding on to his own thoughts, will be broken. A person's ignoring Jesus' authority does not make that authority disappear, so rejecting the One who came as the Savior cannot be regarded as a light difference of opinion.

How will you respond before the word you have understood?

Let us read verses 45 and 46. *"Now when the chief priests and Pharisees heard His parables, they perceived that He was speaking of them. But when they sought to lay hands on Him, they feared the multitudes, because they took Him for a prophet" (Matthew 21:45–46).* The chief priests and the Pharisees knew that this parable referred to them. Even so, they sought to seize Jesus, and what stopped them was not a heart of remorse before the word but a heart that feared the multitude. Even after

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

recognizing their own image, they followed exactly the path of the vinedressers in the parable. Understanding the meaning of the word and bowing one's heart before that word differ in this way.

Only when we hear even this last scene does the warning of the parable reach us as well. It is easy to say that the wicked vinedressers did wrong while leaving untouched the greed to take possession that is in our own hearts. Examine whether you are not regarding the people, the work, and the time the Lord has entrusted to you as though you were going to take possession of them, and when the word exposes that wrong, do not try to block its voice, but turn your heart back before the Lord.

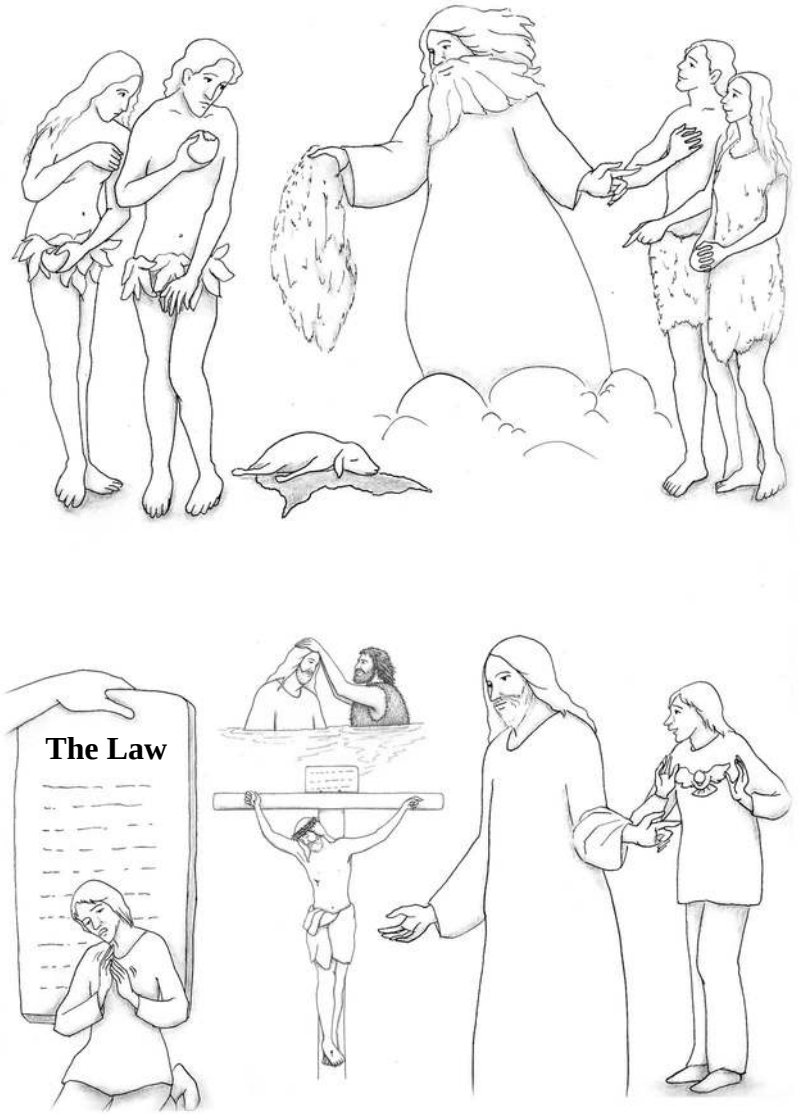
Jesus, who saved us, is the chief cornerstone God has set up. His glory did not vanish because people rejected Him, and though people killed Him, He rose again from death. Believe in that Lord and receive His word as the standard of your life. Gratefully hold in trust what you have received from the Lord, use it according to His will, and preach the grace that has given us life to the people who have not yet heard the gospel as well. As a people who have received the kingdom of God, respect that Son, the very Son of whom the owner said, *"They will respect my son."* ✉

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

CHAPTER

22–23

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



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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The grace of the remission of sins that makes us worthy of the feast of heaven

< Matthew 22:1–14 >

“And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.’” But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.” So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, “Friend, how did you

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

come in here without a wedding garment?" And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, "Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth." For many are called, but few are chosen.'"

God calls us to the feast of becoming one with the Son

The wedding feast is not a feast held according to the schedule of those who are invited, but a feast that the king arranged for his own son. So this parable makes us look first at who prepared the feast for whom, rather than at how many people gathered. The king in the parable is God, and the son is Jesus Christ. Since a marriage is two becoming one, this feast is the place where we, who are sinners, become one with the holy Son and become His. But since the Holy One and a sinner cannot become one just as they are, to enter this place we must first receive the remission of sins.

Jesus likened the kingdom of heaven to this feast. It is not a story about a person paving, by his own strength, a road to go up to God, but a story about the king first holding a feast and sending servants to call people. Since the invitation began with the king, we need not first calculate the qualifications we could present before God; we need only hear what God bestows and accept it.

But those who were invited first were not willing to come. The king opened a place for rejoicing together, but they would not take part in it; this is how far apart the news the servants brought and their response were. Merely having heard a gracious invitation does not mean that one comes to enjoy that grace. A

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

gracious invitation waits for the response of the one who has heard it.

God has prepared salvation completely

Let us read verse 4. *"Again, he sent out other servants, saying, 'Tell those who are invited, "See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding."'" (Matthew 22:4)*. Even after the first refusal, the king sent other servants and even told them the words they were to bring. The message was that since he had prepared his dinner, killed his oxen and fatted cattle, and made all things ready, they should come. There was not a single thing left for the guests to come and do to complete the feast; they had only to come to a feast that was already prepared. These words made the first invitation clearer so that they could respond to it.

The gospel that has come to our ears also makes known the work that God has fully prepared. God does not tell people who have sin to come to Him after they have become righteous by themselves; instead, He sent the Son and first solved the problem of the sins of the people who would become His bride. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and among them my sins and yours are also included without exception. And as the price of all those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and on the third day He rose again from death. Since the One who is the Bridegroom had the sins of the bride passed on to Him and received the judgment in the bride's place, those who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of sins, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and become children of God.

Since the basis of salvation lies in Jesus, there is no reason to keep away from that grace because one's own merit is lacking. What a person who has acknowledged his sin should rely on is not the grades of his own life but the salvation that Jesus accomplished, and the invitation to accept what the king has prepared is, in fact, a call to believe in that preparation. However hard a person may try to prepare by himself, how much could he have ready? When we believe what God has prepared for us, we can enter that feast.

Do not put off the king's invitation

But those who heard these words made light of it and went off, one to his own farm, another to his business. Tending a farm and doing business were not evil in themselves, but they turned away from the king's call that was given to them now and went off to do their own work. Their immediate needs were what set the value of the grace that God bestows.

We, too, easily put off the word of salvation on the grounds that we are fulfilling the responsibilities of life. We think that we will believe once we finish just this one task, but new tasks arise again, and while we wait for our schedule to clear completely, the time to stand before the word keeps being pushed back. If we have come to know that the gospel we have now heard is true, we cannot leave to some later circumstance the accepting of that truth in our hearts.

The rest even seized the servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. Since harming the servants who brought the invitation was going against the king who had sent them, the king became angry, sent his army, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. The generosity of the king who gives

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the feast and the authority of the king who judges evil appear together; so the fact that grace is great does not mean that it is all right to ignore the word of God endlessly.

Those seated at the feast are all people called by grace

Let us read verses 8 through 9. *"Then he said to his servants, 'The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding'" (Matthew 22:8–9).* Even after the judgment, the king says that the wedding feast is ready. Even though those who were invited first refused, the feast for the son was not canceled, and now the servants go out to the crossroads. People's refusal did not break the king's will; rather, the range of people the servants were to go to became wider. So when we see someone reject the word of salvation, we should not regard God's grace as having failed.

The servants brought in all whom they met, both bad and good. They did not sort out whom to call and whom to leave out by examining people's reputations, because the king had commanded them to invite as many as they met, and the servants' responsibility was to follow that command just as it was. Let us, too, who preach the grace of God, not, by our own judgment, take away from anyone the opportunity to hear.

If someone who came in that way boasts of his own qualifications while looking at other people's past, he has forgotten why he himself is in that place. The reason they all came to sit at the same feast is that the king called them. Someone who used to be called evil has no reason, because of that, to remain outside of grace, and someone who used to be

called good cannot, by that, take the place of the king's grace. When we know this situation, we do not forget that we ourselves are also people who came in by receiving grace.

Before the king, the faith of each person is revealed

When the king came in to see the guests, the wedding hall was full of guests. But among them the king sees one man who has not put on a wedding garment. That many people have come in and whether each person is standing worthily before the king are different matters; so the sense of relief at being within the crowd cannot take the place of one's own faith.

Let us read verse 12. *"So he said to him, 'Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?' And he was speechless" (Matthew 22:12)*. The king asked that very man, but though he had a mouth, he had nothing to say. Before the king, his own condition was revealed just as it was. Faith is also like this: the faith of the people we worship with, the word we have heard for a long time, or a familiar church life cannot take the place of our own believing the gospel.

The wedding garment is not clothing that adorns outward appearance. It is the remission of sins and being born again, which make us stand before God. And since that wedding garment is what the king has prepared, we receive it and put it on by believing in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has fulfilled. If someone knows that he needs the remission of sins and yet does not accept that gospel, then even if he has a reputation gained within the church, the sin in his heart remains just as it is.

That man was bound hand and foot and cast into outer darkness, and there was weeping and gnashing of teeth there.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus, who makes known the joy of the feast, did not hide that judgment either; so before we use this warning to pass judgment on others, we must first hear it as the word given to ourselves.

Let us accept by faith the invitation we have heard

Let us read verse 14. *"For many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14)*. Jesus does not let us be satisfied with the fact that many people were invited, but makes us recall together both those who heard the king's call and yet did not come and the man who came in and yet sat without a wedding garment. Being called is the call to come that is given to everyone, and those who are chosen are those who have believed and accepted that the Lord saved them through the water and the Spirit. So rather than asking us how many times we have heard the invitation or how the people around us believe, this conclusion asks us how we ourselves have accepted that grace.

You are now standing before the invitation to the feast that God has given. Do not take that call lightly on account of your own work, and do not think, putting forward your own goodness, that you have no need of the remission of sins. What makes us stand before God is the righteousness that Jesus has fulfilled, and for those who believe in their hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that gives that righteousness, this feast becomes not someone else's joy but their own joy. To that feast for which the king has prepared all things for his son, let us go forward with thanksgiving, accepting by faith the invitation we have heard. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Put your hope in God, who raises the dead

< Matthew 22:15–33 >

“Then the Pharisees went and plotted how they might entangle Him in His talk. And they sent to Him their disciples with the Herodians, saying, ‘Teacher, we know that You are true, and teach the way of God in truth; nor do You care about anyone, for You do not regard the person of men. Tell us, therefore, what do You think? Is it lawful to pay taxes to Caesar, or not?’ But Jesus perceived their wickedness, and said, ‘Why do you test Me, you hypocrites? Show Me the tax money.’ So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, ‘Whose image and inscription is this?’ They said to Him, ‘Caesar’s.’ And He said to them, ‘Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar’s, and to God the things that are God’s.’ When they had heard these words, they marveled, and left Him and went their way. The same day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came to Him and asked Him, saying: ‘Teacher, Moses said that if a man dies, having no children, his brother shall marry his wife and raise up offspring for his brother. Now there were with us seven brothers. The first died after he had married, and having no offspring, left his wife to his brother. Likewise the second also, and the third, even to the seventh. Last of all the woman died also. Therefore, in the resurrection, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had her.’ Jesus answered and said to them, ‘You are mistaken, not knowing

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven. But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, "I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob"? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living.' And when the multitudes heard this, they were astonished at His teaching."

Jesus knows the heart hidden in words

In this passage, two questions follow one after the other. First, the people sent by the Pharisees ask about the matter of paying taxes to Caesar, and next, the Sadducees ask about marriage in the resurrection. The subjects of the questions are different, but both times Jesus' answer goes beyond the framework that those who asked had set, and reveals the right and the power of God that they had left out.

Verse 15 makes known that the Pharisees plotted to entangle Jesus in a snare of words. The people they sent exalted Jesus as the One who teaches the way of God in truth, but they had not come in order to follow that teaching. Since they praised truth with their mouths while in their hearts they sought a way to entangle Him in a snare of words, Jesus first perceived their wickedness rather than their pleasant-sounding greeting, and said *to them, "Why do you test Me?"*

Before the Lord, who knows the heart hidden in words, we, too, must have a heart that is willing to entrust ourselves to the answer when we ask about the word. If we set in advance the conclusion we want and look in the Bible only for words that will support it, our learning does not deepen even if we have

many questions. So as we read the questions of the Pharisees, let us not stop at knowing their wrongs, but look back on whether we are trying to correct our own judgment by the word.

"Render to God the things that are God's"

Let us read verses 19 through 21. *"'Show Me the tax money.' So they brought Him a denarius. And He said to them, 'Whose image and inscription is this?' They said to Him, 'Caesar's.' And He said to them, 'Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's'" (Matthew 22:19–21)*. Jesus had them bring the tax money and asked whose were the image and the inscription on it. They answered that they were Caesar's, and Jesus, taking up that very fact which they had acknowledged, told them to render to Caesar what had Caesar's image and inscription engraved on it.

But Jesus added to this that they should render to God the things that are God's. The question they had put was whether or not to pay taxes, but Jesus' answer also asks about what must be offered to God. No matter how clever an answer one obtains concerning taxes, if one turns away from what is to be offered to God, one's faith has not stood rightly; so this answer makes us see rightly, together, both living on this earth and acknowledging God. Let us, too, look back on whether we are forgetting the things that are God's while talking about the matters of this earth.

Those who had asked heard this word, marveled, and left Jesus. Their scheme to entangle Jesus in a snare did not succeed, but having marveled did not mean that they had obeyed. What we need, too, is to go further than admiring the wisdom of the word, and to accept into our own lives what that word makes clear.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Believe the matter of the resurrection according to the word He has made known

That day the Sadducees, who say there is no resurrection, came. After bringing up Moses' words that a younger brother should raise up offspring for his older brother who had died without children, they put forward a story that seven brothers in turn took one woman as their wife and all died, and at last the woman also died. And they asked whose wife of the seven she would be in the resurrection.

That question already contained the thought that even after the resurrection, the marriage relationships of this earth must continue in the same way. If that thought is left as it is, a problem arises that is hard to answer, but the predicament they drew up does not become evidence that God's power is lacking. They should first have examined in the light of the word the picture of the resurrection that they themselves had drawn.

Let us read verses 29 and 30. *"Jesus answered and said to them, 'You are mistaken, not knowing the Scriptures nor the power of God. For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven'" (Matthew 22:29–30)*. Jesus did not choose one person among the seven. Because the question had come from a mistaken idea of the life of the resurrection, He corrected the premise of the question, making known that in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage. If we think of the new life that God gives only as our present life stretched out just as it is, we end up confining what He will do within our own experience.

The word that they are like the angels in heaven also lies within the flow of this answer. To them, who asked about marriage in the resurrection, Jesus made known that the marriage relationships of this earth cannot be measured against

it just as they are. Rather than filling with curiosity the world that we do not yet fully know, believing the word that the Lord has clearly made known comes first; so both making up as we please what we do not know and denying the life He has promised depart from the word.

God, who lives forever, makes those who believe live

After correcting their misunderstanding, Jesus led them to the word that God had spoken concerning the resurrection of the dead. The resurrection is not something to conclude by comparing this case and that with the human mind, but something about which we must hear how God has made Himself known; this is why Jesus spoke of the Scriptures and the power of God together.

Let us read verses 31 and 32. *"But concerning the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God, saying, 'I am the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob'? God is not the God of the dead, but of the living" (Matthew 22:31–32)*. God revealed Himself as the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Through that word recorded in Exodus, Jesus taught that it is because He is God who lives forever that He becomes the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob. Just as God lives forever, those who believe in Him also rise again and live forever.

Therefore, the hope of the resurrection does not lie in forcing ourselves to say that we are not afraid of death, but in the fact that God, who raises the dead, is there and that His word is true. Just because we cannot overcome death by our own strength does not mean that God cannot make us live either. When we do

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

not turn the limits of man into the limits of God's power, we can hold fast to a hope grounded in the word.

This hope is connected with the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished. God, who raises the dead, sent His Son so that we, who could not but die because of sin, might live; Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and as the price of that sin, He shed His blood on the Cross and died, receiving in our place the judgment we were to receive. And He rose again from death, Himself accomplishing that very resurrection which the Sadducees had said did not exist. A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and becomes a living person before God; so the word that God is the God of the living also means that He becomes the God of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel.

Those who have the remission of sins and the hope of the resurrection do not lightly cast away even today's life, and because the life that God gives is true, they faithfully carry out before that God the work entrusted to them now. And those who have that hope set their hearts on God's work of preaching this gospel. This is because even people whose souls are dead receive the remission of sins and gain a new hope when they hear this gospel. If the conditions of the world were everything, people would cling only to preventing what they lose, but those who believe in the life God has promised value His word more than the gains and losses before their eyes.

Let us correct our judgment by the answers we have heard

At the end, the multitudes heard Jesus' teaching and were astonished. The people who had earlier asked about taxes also marveled, but the word was not given for us to end with admiration. When we hear the two answers together, it becomes clear where our judgment must be corrected. We must neither forget what we must offer to God because of the things we do on this earth, nor narrow God's promise of the resurrection by the life before our eyes.

Even if there is something that is hard for you to understand, first listen to the word that God has spoken and look back on your own premises. Before the truth that Jesus has made clear, what is needed is not elaborate questions but a heart that learns humbly. Giving to God the things that are God's, put your hope in God, who raises the dead. The One who determines our end is the God of Abraham and Isaac and Jacob, God who lives forever. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Be chosen and put on the robe of righteousness

< Matthew 22:1–13 >

“And Jesus answered and spoke to them again by parables and said: ‘The kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who arranged a marriage for his son, and sent out his servants to call those who were invited to the wedding; and they were not willing to come. Again, he sent out other servants, saying, “Tell those who are invited, ‘See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding.’” But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city. Then he said to his servants, “The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.” So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, “Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?” And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, “Bind him

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”””

A king arranged a wedding feast for his son and invited people, but those who were invited were not willing to come. So the king sent other servants and had them say the following to those who were invited: *“See, I have prepared my dinner; my oxen and fatted cattle are killed, and all things are ready. Come to the wedding” (Matthew 22:4)*. But it is written, *“But they made light of it and went their ways, one to his own farm, another to his business. And the rest seized his servants, treated them spitefully, and killed them. But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers, and burned up their city” (Matthew 22:5–7)*.

Although they were told to attend because everything had been prepared for the wedding feast, the people scoffed and did not come. One went to weed his own field, another went to do business, and the rest seized the king’s servants and killed them. Then the king became furious, sent his armies, destroyed them, and burned that town down. The word continues as follows.

“Then he said to his servants, ‘The wedding is ready, but those who were invited were not worthy. Therefore go into the highways, and as many as you find, invite to the wedding.’ So those servants went out into the highways and gathered together all whom they found, both bad and good. And the wedding hall was filled with guests. But when the king came in to see the guests, he saw a man there who did not have on a wedding garment. So he said to him, ‘Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?’ And he was speechless. Then the king said to the servants, ‘Bind him hand and foot, take him

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth'" (Matthew 22:8–13).

This parable explains a spiritual fact by comparing it to something very similar to it, in order to make it easier to understand.

Two sins that are established before God

Let us see what sins are established against people before God. God prepares all things and invites people to the wedding feast. He is inviting people who will marry the king's son, that is, the Son of God the Father. This parable does not mean that literally, but spiritually it does mean that. But there is the sin of not coming when He told them to come. He prepared everything and invited them, but the sin of not coming, whatever the reason—that sin, too, is a sin that leads to hell. There is one more sin. It is the sin of attending the wedding feast after being invited but not wearing a wedding garment, that is, the sin of not believing. This means that before God there are these two sins: the sin of not responding to the invitation and the sin of not believing.

Even today, no matter how much we preach the gospel, there are people who do not believe, people who do not come. Even when we hold meetings, each of them is busy with his own affairs and does not come. Such people, too, receive judgment before God. It is because God has prepared everything. At the wedding feast He killed oxen and fatted cattle, set out all kinds of food in abundance, and told them to come and eat. To put this word spiritually, it means that God the Father sent His own Son to this earth and has perfectly removed all our sins, so He is telling anyone at all to come and just believe. Yet they do not

come. So the sin of not coming and the sin of not believing are established before God, and it means that such people do not receive salvation but go to hell.

We do not belong to the sin of not coming even though God has invited us. We have responded to the invitation. We have come into the church and are hearing the word of God. But among us there are people who have still not put on the wedding garment in their hearts—people who have not put on the robe of the remission of sins and so are still sinners in their hearts. Such people receive judgment. When the king saw the man who did not have on a wedding garment, he asked, *"Friend, how did you come in here without a wedding garment?" (Matthew 22:12)*. That man had a mouth, but he had nothing to say. "You were invited, responded to that invitation, and came all the way here, so why did you not believe?" There are people who do not believe even while being in the Church of God. God asks such people why they did not believe.

"Many are called, but few are chosen"

And the Lord said as follows: *"Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14)*.

Before God, everyone receives the call. God calls anyone at all to come, believe, and receive the remission of sins. But we must be chosen. Those who have not been chosen go to hell. What kind of people are those who have not been chosen? There were Esau and Jacob, and God said, *"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated" (Romans 9:13)*. Those who are called are many, but those who are chosen are few. This means that you and I must become people who are chosen.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

What kind of people does God choose? I hope you will know the fact that, besides choosing those who are lacking, of course, He chooses those who know that they themselves are so worthless that they cannot help but go to hell and who seek God's help. If someone has been called but does not put on the wedding garment—that is, does not believe—and so is not chosen, he goes to hell. Even if they say they believe, the faith of those who have not been chosen is in vain.

Being chosen before God does not mean that God loves some and hates others. God said, *"I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15)*. He chose them because they are pitiable. He does not choose those who live well even without God's help. God leaves such people as they are, saying, "Live your own way." If we look at the Bible, God chose Abel over Cain, Isaac over Ishmael, and Jacob over Esau, and in fleshly terms, those who were chosen were not the strong but the weak. What about you? Are you a strong person or a weak person? This word about not wearing a wedding garment tells us many things spiritually.

You must take off the old clothes to put on new clothes

Dear fellow believers, when going to the wedding feast of a great king's son, you cannot go wearing a beggar's clothes, can you? Should you not go wearing a wedding garment? Should you not wear the cleanest clothes possible? To do so, should you not change out of the dirty clothes you usually wear? It is saying that at the very least you must change your clothes. If someone went out to the field in work pants, rolled around on cow dung, and then took part in the feast still wearing those clothes, that

would be an act of great discourtesy to the master of the wedding feast.

If, at the very least, you want to believe in God, believe in the Son of God, believe in our Savior, and so receive the remission of sins and become a child of God, you must know and admit that your own clothes are dirty clothes. And you must take off those clothes, and you must want to take them off. To put on new clothes, you must take off the dirty clothes you were already wearing and then try to put the new ones on. Do you think that you go to heaven just because you have been called, just because you have responded to it, or just because you come to church and sit there? It means that those who have been called but have not been chosen are thrown out into outer darkness and go to hell.

If you truly want to receive the remission of sins, you must respond. You must respond just as the master wants.

Dear fellow believers, do you want to become a new person? Do you truly want to become a new person, not that self with the character, lineage, and habits you have inherited from your fleshly parents until now? If you want to become a new person, if you want to put on new clothes, you must take off the old clothes. In the flesh, you may take off your work clothes and put them on again, but spiritually, should you not have the heart that says, “This is not it. I truly hate what I am”? But there are people who say, “I am a decent person all the same. If there is anyone as good as I am, tell him to come forward.”

Those who miss their chance and gnash their teeth

Sinners who did not respond to the invitation go to hell, and those who do not believe even though they have been called also

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

go to hell. Those who attend church but do not believe, those who have been called but have not been chosen, and those who trust in their own strength too much go to hell. Those who do not want to put on the robe of righteousness that the Lord has made for them go to hell. No matter how much they sit in church and no matter how loyally they serve, it is no use. It is only natural that such people go to hell. Why will those who have not been chosen be thrown out into outer darkness and weep and gnash their teeth there? "If I had known I would come to hell, I would have looked at myself back then, quickly acknowledged it, confessed it, and believed. If I had believed, I would not have come here. Why was I so foolish and stubborn back then that I did not believe?" It is painful enough just to have come to hell, but they had the chance to go to heaven and yet did not make use of that chance, so it means that they are so resentful and feel so wronged that they gnash their teeth and weep bitterly.

They did not have to go to hell. God gave them a chance, and they even responded to God's invitation. When they came into the church and heard the word, they found that they truly were ones going to hell. They only needed to believe, saying, "God, I am one going to hell. I want to be clothed with the grace of God." If only they had acknowledged what they were, confessed before God that they were ones going to hell, and believed in the Lord's righteousness, they would have lived in heaven. That is why they weep and gnash their teeth.

I do not look at books such as collections of illustrations, but simply preach the word following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Still, let me give one example. Suppose that someone, while passing by a lottery stand, put money together with a friend out of boredom and bought one lottery ticket. But thinking, "Will this win? I do not expect anything," he said, "You keep it," and handed it over to his friend. Even when the friend asked,

"What will you do if this really wins?" he said, "Still, you keep it. There is no way it will ever win." But that lottery ticket really won. That friend bought a house, bought a car, and came to live well in grand style. Then whenever the one who handed over the lottery ticket sees that, he will pound the ground and regret it all his life. "Why did I give that lottery ticket to my friend back then? We bought it together and paid for it together, so I should have said that if it won we would share it, and if it lost we would lose together." Would he not lament with tears streaming down whenever he drinks? That is why people sometimes even file lawsuits because they feel so wronged.

But something far more unfair than that is being inside the Church of God and yet not being chosen. Frankly speaking, how lacking are you and I before God! We are truly lacking people. In human terms, do we have faithfulness? Do we have sincerity? If we have them, it is fortunate, but if we examine it strictly, there is much in which we are not so. A sincere person is always consistently sincere. But a person who is up and down is not faithful. When he is sincere, he only appears sincere for a moment for his own benefit; in fact, he is not sincere.

God chooses those who cannot help but go to hell

Not only are we worthless, but we are people who deserve to go to hell before God. Even if you and I had not inherited sin, we are people who sin so much that the sins we commit while living in this world alone are more than enough for us to go to hell. Despite this, people do not believe. They do not try to receive pity before God. Saying, "I believe. If I believe, God will not be able to judge me. I cannot help being like this, so how could He send me to hell?" they act as if they alone were smart.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

But we must be chosen by God. Those whom God chooses are pitiable people, people who cannot help but go to hell, worthless people. He does not choose decent people; it is the exact opposite. I hope you will know the fact that when people hire employees at a company, they give tests and hold interviews to pick and hire decent people, but when God chooses us, it is the exact opposite. He chooses the worthless, those who are going to hell, the offspring of evildoers, the children of the devil.

And the Lord gives each person who has come by invitation a wedding garment and has him change his clothes. Has our Lord not clothed you and me with the wedding garment of the remission of sins, the robe of righteousness? Even after we came into the church, has He not brought it to us every day, telling us to put it on? Even now He is bringing it every day, telling us to put on the wedding garment. He keeps urging us, saying, "Will you put it on today? Will you put it on tomorrow? Will you put it on the day after tomorrow?" Yet some people say, "I do not want it. I have already put it on," even though, in the Lord's eyes, they have not put it on. They are saying, "I like my own clothes better than that wedding garment." Before the Lord, there are two sins that lead to hell. The sin of not responding to the invitation means hell. The sin of not putting on the wedding garment even after being invited, that is, the sin of not believing, also means hell.

The Lord said that the kingdom of God would be *"given to a nation bearing the fruits of it" (Matthew 21:43)*. If you and I truly want to live bearing the fruit of the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit must first come into our hearts. If the Holy Spirit is not even in our hearts, how can we bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and how can we live for the Lord? I hope you will know and accept in your heart the fact that God has chosen the worthless, who cannot help but go to hell. I hope you will believe it.

Are you not one who has been called but has not been chosen? You must become one who is chosen. When you look at yourself, are you sure that you are one going to hell? When you step back a little from yourself and look at yourself objectively, does the verdict not come, "That person is going to hell"? If you yourself do not reach such a verdict, you are still one who has not been chosen. All of us, without a single exception, are ones going to hell before God. Yet we live puffed up with our own conceit. What is there to be so proud of?

I, too, was one bound for hell

Dear fellow believers, why do you not believe even after being called? Why do you not put on the robe of righteousness? Why do you not want to be chosen? Should you not look at yourself and want to be chosen? Those who regard themselves as great and live by human means and methods cannot be chosen by God. How lacking are you and I in the flesh! How many parts of us are not perfect! We must acknowledge that. At this time, I am preaching this word with a heart that hopes that you and I, and all who believe in Jesus, will truly be chosen.

I am one who has been chosen. But my temper is truly nasty. I could not tolerate it when other people lived much better than I did. Even as a child, I thought, "Why does that person live so well? That should not be. Everyone should live equally." It was as if I were saying, "You live well and this side lives poorly, so divide it equally. It would be good for you to do so while I am asking nicely. Otherwise, I will not leave you alone." My temper was that fierce. If I had acted according to that temper every time I felt that way, I might have committed a great sin of harming others. I am one who is bound for hell. Death is one thing, but I

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

am going to hell as well. If someone has such a wicked temper, cannot restrain himself, and rages as though he himself were the judge, how could he go to heaven before God? Such a person is an arrogant one.

People do not know themselves well. But if they look back once on the past they have lived, they may come to know. If you still do not know well, look at the word of God. And acknowledge God and God's law. I hope you will examine whether you are living according to the law of God for even one day. If you are someone who acknowledges God and acknowledges the law of God, you will naturally come to acknowledge that you are a sinner and, as a sinner, one who goes to hell. How can you say that it is not so? You must say that it is so. Yet people do not acknowledge it. We do not live a life of faith before people, but before God. If I had lived my life of faith not before God but before people, I would not be doing this kind of pastoral ministry.

When I deal with you on a human level, I joke with you and tell you various stories so that we may come to know that I am like that and you are like that too. But before God, I cannot do that. Before God, I am clearly one who is to go to hell. Therefore, unless God has pity on me, unless He rescues me from hell, I cannot help but go to hell. So I seek God's help. And God saved me through His own Son with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So how could I not believe? So I believed and received the remission of sins. There is nothing especially outstanding that sets me apart from you, nor am I any worse than you. We are all much alike.

This is the very part the Bible is talking about. The king sent soldiers to the town of those who did not respond to the invitation, burned that town, and destroyed them all. Then again he told them to go to the crossroads and invite people. People

responded to the invitation. But one man did not put on the wedding garment. We must respond to the invitation, but we must also have the faith that puts on the wedding garment. We must acknowledge that we are ones who are to go to hell, and know and believe that the Lord has made the robe of righteousness for us. We must change our clothes. Only when we put on the robe of righteousness by faith on this earth do we go to heaven. Dear fellow believers, do you not want to do so?

Put on the robe of righteousness by faith

It is truly a terrible thing. If the king invited people to his son's wedding feast and had prepared everything, would he not have prepared wedding garments as well? A king's wedding feast is different from an ordinary wedding feast. It is different from the wedding of an ordinary person. When a king invited people in order to have the prince married, no one could enter wearing shabby clothes. Perhaps in the kingdom of God there is a place where such wedding garments are prepared. So at the door, they may have said even to people who had come wearing the finest clothes, "Please go in there for a moment and change your clothes. Put your clothes away safely in the closet and take the key. When you leave, you can change back into them and go." That is why it is called a wedding garment. For us to enter the kingdom of God, we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only when we receive the remission of sins by believing in that gospel and put on the robe of righteousness by faith do we enter heaven and become children of God. And we can live well with God in that kingdom.

Have you put on the wedding garment? You must answer by faith and examine yourself. You must not be too relaxed,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

thinking that there is much time left. You do not know when you will die. Even just the people who lose their lives in traffic accidents every year are countless. Neither I nor you know when we will die. At the very least, if you have come to the Church of God, have you not come because you were invited? You must put on by faith the robe of righteousness that God has made for you with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By faith you must take off your own clothes, the clothes that go to hell. You must throw away that faith that goes to hell. Should you not do so?

No matter how learned the words spoken by the world's famous literary giants, philosophers, or scientists may be, they do not solve the problem of our salvation. The problem now facing you and me is whether or not we acknowledge that we are sinners and ones going to hell and so put on by faith the robe of righteousness that God has made for us. If we do not put on the garment of faith within this pressing time, we will go to hell. When that time comes, no matter how much we lament, it will be of no use.

Respond to God's invitation

Setting other people aside, I hope you will look back on yourselves. As I look at this word, is it not because I am lacking and inferior that I have been chosen before God? As it turns out, because my parents are descendants of Adam, I, too, was one going to hell and was someone who had to be chosen. So God chose me, and because God chose me, I responded to God's invitation of love. I responded with thanks, saying, "You loved me and made me a righteous person and made me a child of God!" That is the only thing I did well. There is nothing other than believing.

I earnestly ask you this, in case there is anyone among us who has not been chosen. You are ones who are to go to hell. Respond to God's choosing. If you do not respond, you will go to hell. Even if you go to hell, there will be no one who will weep for you. The devil will shed a false tear for you once in a while. But the one who suffers the torment of hell is you yourself. Please do not let that happen. It is not that the church gains any additional benefit because you believe, and it is absolutely not that the Church of God suffers loss because you do not believe.

Spoiled children throw tantrums for someone to buy them snacks, and if no one buys them any, they cry and wail. They act spoiled, thinking that if they cry like that, their parents' hearts will ache. But there are also parents who say, "Then roll around here. Live here by yourself. A child like you who only throws tantrums is not my child," and leave the child behind and go. Many children end up getting lost that way. Before God, acting spoiled and throwing tantrums does not work. He only says, "If you want to keep doing that, then do so."

What kind of people should we rightly become before God? Should we not respond to God's invitation and become people who are right both in reason and in manners? God has prepared the wedding garment and is waiting in order to send us to heaven, to make us people of the kingdom of God. God sent His own Son to this earth and had that Son have our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and die on the Cross, and then rise again from death. In that way He made Him the Savior of you and me, and gave the right to become children of God to anyone who only believes. Then why do you not put on the wedding garment? It is because you have not been chosen. It is because you do not know yourself and are still immature, in the state of a spoiled child. Dear fellow believers, do you want to be cast out by God? God does for you

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

just as you want. I hope that you will become people who believe while there is still a chance. I hope that God will give you faith. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

To believe according to God's intention is to be chosen

< Matthew 22:14, Ephesians 1:1–12 >

"Many are called, but few are chosen"

"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus: Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ. Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved. In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him. (In whom also we were

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will –ASV). That we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory".

The Lord said in a parable that the kingdom of heaven is like a king who arranged a wedding feast for his son. And at the end of that parable He said, *"Many are called, but few are chosen" (Matthew 22:14)*. Today, examining this word together, I would like to share the word that God wants to speak to us.

When all the guests had come in, the king, the host of the wedding feast, appeared and looked around to see the guests. But there was a man who was not wearing a wedding garment. So the king asked him how he had come in here without a wedding garment. Though that man had a mouth, he had nothing to say, so he remained silent. Then the king said to the servants, *"Bind him hand and foot, take him away, and cast him into outer darkness; there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 22:13)*. After speaking the parable in this way, the Lord said that many are called, but few are chosen.

Many are called to the king's wedding feast. But few are chosen. Our Lord invited all, both bad and good, and told them to come in. He invited them after having prepared the gospel of the water and the Spirit completely. But He cast out the man who was not wearing a wedding garment. So today I would like to share together who those who are chosen really are.

The one who is chosen is one who has come to be so according to God's intention

There are many things to share in this word, but if we look at God's leading in the word we read together today, it will be easy to understand. Here we find the word, *"According to His good pleasure which He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times" (Ephesians 1:9–10)*. The phrase *"the dispensation of the fullness of the times"* here refers to God's leading. It speaks of with what intention God chose us in Jesus Christ. As shown in the next verse, the reason God did so is just as the word says, *"He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him" (Ephesians 1:10)*.

It means that God intended to make the creatures He had made and people, especially those who are chosen before God, one in Christ. It means that He did so in order to make them one, in order to make them the people of God, in order to make them children of God, and in order to let them obtain the same status as God Himself. Therefore, we can know that the one who is chosen is one who has come to be so according to God's intention. The apostle Paul explains well in this letter with what intention God chose us, that is, the dispensation of God.

Looking at it in order from the beginning, it says, *"Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ by the will of God, To the saints who are in Ephesus, and faithful in Christ Jesus" (Ephesians 1:1)*. It means that Paul became an apostle of Christ Jesus by *"the will of God,"* that is, according to God's intention. It means that Paul's becoming a servant of God also came about according to God's intention, and that even Paul's becoming one of God's people, before he was a servant of God, came about according

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

to God's intention. And it is saying that all the saints of the church in Ephesus also became the people of God in God.

Next it says, *"Grace to you and peace from God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Ephesians 1:2)*. Here, God's intention is not spoken of only in terms of Jesus Christ. The Father of Jesus Christ becomes the Father of you and me, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, it is telling us that our having been chosen before God, having become children of God, and having come to enter and live in the kingdom of God in the future came about according to the intention of God the Father, according to the intention of Jesus Christ, and according to the intention of the Holy Spirit. And it has actually come about in that way.

He predestined us in Christ before the foundation of the world

Then Paul goes on to explain how we were chosen. It says, *"Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will, to the praise of the glory of His grace, by which He made us accepted in the Beloved" (Ephesians 1:3–6)*. Here appears the word, *"Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:5)*. It means that God the Father predestined us in His Son Jesus Christ according to the will in which He takes pleasure. This predestination means that, from

before He made us, from before He made the universe and mankind, He predestined us in His own Son in that way, according to the intention of God the Father.

To put it simply, it is not like a certain doctrine that teaches that, from the time people were made, it was determined that God would unconditionally love some and unconditionally hate others. The intention God the Father had when He made the universe and mankind is as follows. He knew that man, being weak, would fall to Satan and commit sin; He knew that, after committing sin, man would sink into sin and die; and He knew even that He would save such people as us through His Son Jesus Christ. Knowing all this, He determined it in that way. Just as a person who builds a house builds it with a blueprint, God the Father also predestined us according to His own will, plan, and purpose.

It means that He knew fully that we would be born on this earth, commit sin, fall into weakness, and fall into destruction; that He knew fully that Satan the devil would entice us and make us fall; and that, within this whole process, He prepared and determined beforehand to make us children of God in Jesus Christ.

The one who believes according to God's intention is the one who is chosen

Then what does the word that many are called, but few are chosen mean? God, having determined and predestined it in this way, made us His own sons through Jesus Christ according to His intention. And He caused us to praise the grace He has freely given us and the blessing of having made us His children. Those who believe this are chosen, and those who do not are not chosen.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

It is not that God did not choose them; rather, although He predestined everything in Christ and chose them, they did not believe according to God's intention.

God knew everything about us beforehand and predestined it, so He made it so that we cannot help but seek Jesus Christ. And He caused those who truly seek Him to obtain salvation by the grace of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has given, to become children of God, and to receive the blessing of becoming one with God. But there are people who are stubborn and do not believe according to the Lord's will. Man was made so that he cannot help but believe in the Lord, but they went against that intention of God. That is why He said that many are called, but few are chosen.

We must understand this word well and have the faith that believes it. We come to be as God the Father leads. Even though we did not want to be born, we were born on this earth, and even though we did not wish it, we were born with sin because we were born as descendants of Adam and as the children of our parents. Since we were born that way, we cannot be saved without believing in Jesus Christ. In particular, since Jesus Christ has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, our sins are removed only when we believe in that way. By believing in that way, we must become children of God and praise God the Father and Jesus Christ through the Holy Spirit. This is the intention God has determined. It means that He did so in the same way a bridegroom and the bridegroom's father call together many people to be the bride and choose those who fit their intention. The point is this: there are many people who believe in Jesus, but who truly believes according to God's intention? Those who believe according to God's intention are chosen people, and those who stray from God's intention and believe as they please are merely people who are called.

Therefore, it is greatly mistaken to say that someone is chosen just by looking at the fact that he believes in Jesus. Who is chosen? It is the one who believes according to the Lord's will, according to God's intention. God the Father intended to save us from sin through His Son and to make us His children. According to that plan, He sent His Son to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John, and through that baptism had the sin of mankind transferred to Him. Next, He had Him nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and come to death, and then had Him rise again. So it means that we, too, must believe in that way. Only then do we become those who are chosen. It means that because we believed according to God's intention, because we entered into God's will, God chooses us, who have such faith. That is exactly what it is to be chosen.

All things come about according to God's intention

How many people on this earth receive the invitation to believe in Jesus! But how many people are believing as they please! The word of the Bible is such evident truth that it cannot lie. The word of the Bible is truly the word of God. Even if it cannot be understood at all by human standards, when we look at it by the standard of what God says, there is no error. He said that the kingdom of heaven is like a certain king who, when giving his son in marriage, invited people to the wedding feast. Those who respond to the invitation according to the will of God the Father and believe in that way become children of God. But it means that God destroyed all those who rejected the invitation, opposed it, argued against it, and in the end became enemies.

The parable says, *"But when the king heard about it, he was furious. And he sent out his armies, destroyed those murderers,*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and burned up their city" (Matthew 22:7). In this short word the Lord is speaking of the destruction of this earth. It means that, on that day, God will destroy and burn up those who do not respond to it, those who oppose us, even though we now believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit according to God's intention and preach it according to God's will. It means that He will burn up this earth with fire, and that after they have died He will raise them again and cast them into the unquenchable fire of hell.

All things come about according to God's intention. They do not come about by whatever a man, a created being, does in whatever way. People strive to find living things outside the earth, but the place where Jesus Christ was born, spoke to the prophets, and fulfilled His will is this very earth. This earth, too, is a small planet that God made. Therefore, it, too, will be destroyed and disappear.

So, because people know that this earth will disappear someday, they strive to find a way to move to another planet and live there. But an environment that man has made artificially may work a little, yet it can never last long.

Almighty God created the heavens and the earth and all things by the word in the beginning. And He formed man from the dust and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils and made him a living being. It means that things come to be just as God does them, and it is not that man can artificially prolong life or do anything with it.

In ancient times there was even a person who lived to 969 years, like Methuselah, but that, too, was only as much as God permitted. In this way, the material phenomena of this world, too, come about only as God has determined, and spiritual salvation, the remission of our sins, becoming children of God, going to the kingdom of God, and being chosen by God are also

accomplished only when we believe according to God's intention. Only then can we become children of God, become one with God, and live together in His kingdom. We all believe in Jesus alike, but some people were only called and were not chosen, and some people were both called and chosen. We must receive both. We must be both called and chosen.

Those who are chosen are few

A person who is not chosen draws a blank. If countless maidens came to marry a prince but were not chosen, would they not have drawn a blank? It is like spending a lot of money to buy lottery tickets and having all of them turn out to be blanks. To believe in Jesus as the Savior, to believe in Jesus, who came by the water and the Spirit, as the Savior, is to believe according to the intention of God the Father. Because we believe according to the intention of God the Father, we are chosen through the righteousness of God. If people were chosen by God even when each of them believed as he pleased, heaven would already be full. The Lord said that many are called, but few are chosen. It means that those who are chosen are few.

Today there are many people who believe in Jesus, but those who are actually chosen are few. Yet when asked who is chosen, some people say, "It cannot be known. Only God knows that." This is not the right answer. God has taught it to His servants; if they did not know God's intention, how could they preach God's intention? How could they know what the true gospel is, believe it themselves first, and preach the true gospel to people? God raises up His servants on this earth and does that work through them. Therefore, the saying that only God knows whether one

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

has been chosen by God or not is saying of oneself that one is spiritually blind.

Those who do not know and do not believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit are people who have only been called, people who have only been invited, to the wedding feast with Jesus. There are many such people among those who believe in Jesus. There are many people who believe in Jesus, but those who have been both called and chosen are very few. Isn't that so?

Ephesians says, *"Having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will" (Ephesians 1:5)*. It means that He predestined us according to His good pleasure, according to His intention. It means that He knew beforehand and determined it. It is not that God determined that He would save some and would not save others. God the Father made Adam and Eve on this earth and knew that they would be enticed by Satan the devil and commit sin. So it means that He had fully determined to send His Son to this earth, to pass on to His Son not only all their sins but also all the sin of mankind and thereby wash away our sins, and to have His Son nailed to the Cross and receive in our place the judgment for all our sins. In that way He saved us and chose us.

But people often take Jacob and Esau as an example in a way that is off the mark. They speak as if it had already been determined, from the time the two were in Rebekah's womb, that one would be loved more and the other loved less, and that the younger would become the greater and the elder the lesser. That is absolutely not so. Why did God speak that way? It means that because a person like Esau lives trusting in his own strength, he becomes one who does not receive God's love, and because a person like Jacob, who is somewhat crafty, lacking, and weak, holds on to God, believes the word of God, and pleads for

blessing, God gave the younger brother a greater blessing and did not do so for the elder. A person who is born on this earth and lives trusting only in his own strength is a person like Esau, and a person who, though born the same way and having the same strength, knows and acknowledges God, follows God's will, and seeks to obey and believe God's intention is a person like Jacob. Therefore, God loves people like Jacob and hates people like Esau. Why is that? Because Esau is a person who does not believe according to the intention of God the Father, and Jacob is a person who believes according to God's intention.

Therefore, we must discern well this proposition that many are called, but few are chosen. Where did God's intention lie in making the universe and mankind, in causing you and me to be born on this earth, and in causing us to believe in Jesus? It was to make us holy just as God is holy, to make us truly without sin, so that we may partake of the divine nature and enjoy that glory, riches, and honor in heaven. It means that God predestined us in Jesus Christ according to that intention, and when the time came, He saved us and fulfilled His purpose. It is truly a great thing. We must believe God's intention. To have been chosen means to have believed according to God's intention.

We have received the remission of sins through His blood

Then what is it to believe according to God's intention? Let us read the following word together. "*In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace which He made to abound toward us in all wisdom and prudence, having made known to us the mystery of His will, according to His good pleasure which*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

He purposed in Himself, that in the dispensation of the fullness of the times He might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven and which are on earth—in Him" (Ephesians 1:7–10).

What is this word that we have received the remission of sins through His blood in Christ? God knew that we would fall into sin, so He sent His own Son for sinners, passed on our sins to His own Son, and offered up that Son before God the Father as the sacrificial offering. It means that through that sacrifice, in which He offered the body of that Son as the eternal sacrificial offering of atonement, He made you and me children of God. That sacrifice is exactly the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Look at the sacrifices of the Tabernacle. The priests offered finely ground flour before God, and also offered bread baked on a griddle, which in today's words is something like flat bread baked on an iron plate. But just as the Bible rebukes a cake unturned, a cake that is done on only one side will not do; it must be done on both sides. This tells us that only when our human thoughts that go against God's intention, our own subjective thoughts and stubbornness, are all broken can we believe according to God's intention. It means that only when we believe in that way does God accept that sacrifice of faith. And almost all the sacrifices of the Tabernacle are sacrifices with blood. To offer a sacrifice to God, there always had to be blood. A sinner always had to bring an offering without blemish, lay his hands on its head to pass on his sins, always offer its blood before God, and burn its flesh before God as an offering. That sacrifice with blood is exactly your sacrifice and mine.

God sent His Son to this earth to wash away our sins according to His intention. That Son had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and was hung on the Cross and shed His blood in our place. It means that

because the Son of God became the perfect sacrificial offering of atonement before God the Father, because He washed away our sins with that sacrifice, we have come to obtain the remission of sins by believing in that sacrifice. It means that we have become children of God according to God's intention. This is exactly the faith that believes according to God's intention.

Next it says that He made it overflow toward us with all wisdom and understanding and made known to us the mystery of His will. The mystery of His will means that He made His intention known to us. It means that He let us know, and caused us to believe, that God the Father saves us from all sins through His Son, that is, that He passes on sins to His Son, makes that Son an offering and puts Him to death, and raises Him again, and thereby removes our sins. It means that the dispensation of the fullness of the times in Christ, the intention of God the Father, has been fulfilled through Jesus Christ. It means that all this was predestined. God the Father intended to save us from sin through His Son, and when the time came, He sent His Son to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John, had Him hung on the Cross, raised Him again from death, making Him rise again, and made Him sit at the right hand of God. So it means that God the Father decided to save those who believe according to that will—that He has removed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ fulfilled by coming to this earth—and to make them His sons just like His own Son. So it means that He intended to make all things, both those in heaven and those on earth, one in Christ.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God's intention is great and amazing

The word that follows says, *"In whom also we were made a heritage, having been foreordained according to the purpose of him who worketh all things after the counsel of his will" (Ephesians 1:11).* All things are planned and are surely fulfilled according to the will that God the Father intended toward us through His Son. It means that, knowing that intention of God and believing it, we are saved, become children of God, partake of the divine nature, sit on the throne of glory, and come to enjoy riches and honor together with God. It means that this was God's intention.

Dear fellow believers, isn't this amazing? Isn't God's intention amazing? God's purpose in creating the universe and making mankind was to make us His children so that we might go beyond the limits of created beings and live enjoying riches and honor forever. Isn't it truly something to be thankful for and amazed at that He made us with such an intention? It is something to be thankful for even just that He has saved us, yet do you think that, whether or not you know such things, you would like to just get by somehow and, when that day comes, leave this wearisome world quickly? God the Father had a vast and amazing plan of blessing toward us in His Son Jesus Christ. It means that this was the intention and the will of God the Father, our Lord Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit.

Why did God make mankind, and why did He cause us to be born on this earth? It means that He made you and me in order to save us from sin, let us partake of the divine nature, and let us live well forever in heaven, neither dying nor fading, while enjoying riches and honor. Therefore, people can never be pessimistic. If they know God's intention, they must never be pessimistic. Sometimes there are things that are sad, painful, and

discouraging, but we must never be pessimistic. This is because we know and believe that God's intention toward us is so blessed and great. It means that we can never be discouraged. It is a great blessing to have been born on this earth as a human being by God.

The intention God has for people is great and vast. It is wide, high, and great, and its depth cannot be measured with words. The Bible says, *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God!" (Romans 11:33)*, and also says, *"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Romans 11:36)*. It means that all things were created by the Lord, and everything was created according to God's intention and completed according to God's intention. Therefore, we must believe in line with God's intention. Man must not be the one at the center. Your thoughts and mine, or the words of man, must not be at the center. God must be at the center.

Just think about it. When God made Adam and Eve, He made all things in the universe for five days and made man on the sixth day, and we must know and believe how great, amazing, and vast an intention of blessing toward us lay within that. It is truly an amazing thing. That is why He said that many are called, but few are chosen. In this age there are truly many people who are called. But how many people are chosen? They are few.

We, who are both called and chosen

We have been chosen by God. Because we believed according to God's intention, we were saved, became children of God, and became masters of heaven. Because we believed according to His intention, it came about according to His will. We come to ask why God loves people like us. How could we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

have known why He loves us, who are not even worthy of being loved? God's intention was to make us His children, clothe us with spiritual and perfect bodies, and let us enjoy riches and honor forever in His kingdom. Because He made us with such an intention, we cannot help but give thanks, and give thanks again, before His love, plan, and intention toward us.

All things come about according to the will of the One who works as His heart desires, that is, according to His intention. That we have been predestined and have become an inheritance in Him means that we have become Christ's own. It means that you and I have been predestined. Who has been predestined? All of us, you and me. All mankind has been predestined. Those who believe according to His intention are chosen, and those who do not believe are not chosen. Therefore, we must believe according to His intention in order to be chosen by God. God has given us the word of the Bible so that we may do so.

I cannot tell you how amazing and great a mystery this is. It is truly a great mystery. Just knowing that God had such a plan toward you and me, just knowing that one intention, just knowing the intention with which God created mankind, we are simply moved. We are truly moved, and moved again. So it is greatly amazing that we have come to believe according to that intention. When the Lord sent the seventy to each region to heal diseases and proclaim the Lord's kingdom, they returned and rejoiced, saying that even the demons were subject to them in the Lord's name. Then the Lord said, "*Nevertheless do not rejoice in this, that the spirits are subject to you, but rather rejoice because your names are written in heaven" (Luke 10:20)*. Also, when the apostle Peter confessed his faith, saying, "*You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*, the Lord said, "*Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17)*. In this way, that you

and I have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit according to the intention of God the Father and received the remission of sins is because God the Father led us in that way, gave us understanding, and saved us. God has done it.

How could we have known God's intention? But God removed our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and let us know God's intention. Now that you have believed in Jesus for a long time, how is it? "Ah, so this is truly how God's will is fulfilled, and we come to enter and live in the kingdom of God just as God intended. All this is not something we planned, but something God planned for us." Coming to know this, we have become able to give thanks to God. We are truly thankful, and thankful again. You and I are people who have been chosen. We are people who were called but were also chosen. Among those who believe in Jesus, there are many people who were called but have not yet been chosen. Someday the Lord will come and take us to the Lord's kingdom. Before long, He will take us.

This world is becoming more and more perilous as the days go by. As it does so more and more, all that remains for us is to go to the kingdom of God according to God's will. We have been saved according to the dispensation of the fullness of the times, and now all that remains is to go to the kingdom of God according to His will and intention. It is truly a great and amazing thing. We give thanks that we were not only called by God but chosen. We give thanks as we believe in God. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites!

< Matthew 23:1–13 >

“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, “Rabbi, Rabbi.” But you, do not be called “Rabbi”; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in.’”

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus said, *"The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat" (Matthew 23:2),* speaking about the religious leaders, that is, those who were called teachers of the law. It means that they sat in Moses' seat. At that time, the scholars of the law and the Pharisees claimed to be the official successors of Moses. What we must know well as we read the Bible is that Moses is the representative of the law. In the Bible, the scribes and the Pharisees often appear together.

How the scribes and the Pharisees came into being

When the people of Israel returned after seventy years of captivity, the nation had been laid waste. At that time, among those who returned, people such as Ezra and Nehemiah were administrators and religious leaders. They played the role of leaders who taught the word of God to the people, and because Israel needed administration at that time, they also played the role of administrators. It means that they were politicians who governed the nation and at the same time religious leaders. People such as Ezra, Nehemiah, and the prophet Haggai, who returned from captivity, led the people of Israel. That became a tradition and was handed down to the people of Israel.

So even when Jesus came, there was such a tradition. While they played the role of the leaders of Israel, they ran the nation as administrators. Because Israel was a theocracy ruled by God, these two things were absolutely necessary. But this hardened into an official system. Israel of old was not a nation in which religion and the state were separated, but a nation in which religion and politics were combined, and the people were under their rule. So the scribes were scholars who studied and taught the law, and the Pharisees were religious leaders. It means that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

these people sat in Moses' seat and did many evil things of every kind.

When Jesus came, they did not acknowledge Jesus. Thinking that Jesus coveted their position, they opposed Him and rejected Him. In fact, those who took the lead, together with the chief priests, in trying to kill Jesus were also the scribes and the Pharisees. Because Jesus raised the dead, fed the hungry people with bread and fish, and also healed the sick, Jesus' popularity among the people was far higher than that of the scribes and the Pharisees. So, because their position would be in danger unless they seized Jesus and killed Him, they opposed and hated Him at every turn.

Those who shut the door of heaven

Today I will speak about this part. Let us all read it together. *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13)*.

"Woe to you" means that they are people who will receive calamity and wrath from God. The scribes and the Pharisees are exactly such people. He said that they shut the door of heaven before people, and that they themselves do not go in and do not let those who are trying to go in enter either. It means that the Pharisees and the scribes sat in Moses' seat and shut the door of heaven. While teaching the law, they did not believe in Jesus but did the work of opposing Jesus and shut the door of heaven, and they themselves received honor. When we listen to what the Lord says, their deeds are worthless. It means that, while preaching the words of the law, they told people to pray and fast

well, to tithe well, to be faithful, and to serve, but in reality they themselves did not do so and only made noise with their mouths. Everyone who has not met the Lord is this way.

What people such as Ezra and Nehemiah had done in playing the role of leaders who taught the law, the scribes and the Pharisees institutionalized, forming schools of the law such as that of the disciples of Gamaliel, and those who learned there acted as religious leaders. Paul, too, when he was Saul, was a person who had learned under Gamaliel. So he was a person who could play the role of a teacher of the law and a leader of the people of Israel. Before he met the Lord, when he was Saul, Paul seized those who believed in Jesus and handed them over, went from house to house searching out those who believed in Jesus, and regarded it as right to stone the deacon Stephen to death, calling him one who opposed God. Then, breathing murderous rage, on the road to Damascus where he was going to seize those who believed in Jesus, he met Jesus, turned back, and became a servant of Jesus.

Those who have not met the Lord will suffer woe

The experts in the law who have not met the Lord are all people who will receive woe. The leaders of the Old Testament times, such as Ezra and Nehemiah, worked for the Lord, but this became corrupted and institutionalized, so that in the New Testament times the scribes and the Pharisees came forth, and they changed into people who opposed Jesus and those who believed in Jesus. So they became people who would receive woe, people who would receive a curse. Why do they receive a curse? Because they shut the door of heaven, and they themselves do not go in and also block those who are trying to

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

go in from going in. There are many such people today as well. They are people who keep others from believing in Jesus.

Therefore, we must meet Jesus. People who have not met Jesus are all sinners and people who hinder the work of God, and as time passes they receive a curse. How hard the Pharisees tried to believe well, and how hard the experts in the law tried to keep the law well! But Jesus rebuked them. Calling them whitewashed tombs, He called them hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. It means that, while saying that they believed in God, they did so only in words, only in letters, and in reality they did not believe.

It means that, after the Old Testament times passed and the times of the early church also passed, there are such people in this world too. Their root is commonly traced to the time of the Roman Emperor Constantine in the fourth century. Around that time, Christianity was officially recognized in the Roman Empire, and through the Council of Nicaea (325), doctrine hardened into a system, and that current has continued to this day. Whenever they open their mouths, they cry out about God, love, and forgiveness, but they only make noise with their mouths and do not accept Jesus Christ, who came to this earth as the Savior. It means that they do not believe.

They study and research everything and know what the Bible says. However, they always leave out the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist. They never talk about it. They say that baptism was merely a ritual that Jesus received because He was humble, and they sometimes even call John the Baptist a failure. That has also entered the world of pastors in today's Christianity. Some pastors, as soon as they graduate from seminary and receive ordination as pastors in their own denomination, try to sit in that very seat that the scribes and the Pharisees enjoyed and to enjoy riches and glory.

Leaders who have not met the Lord easily fail to labor for the saints apart from preaching. Of course, not all of them are like that, and there are also people who strive to live according to the Lord's will. But because they are people who have not met the Lord, who came by the water and the Spirit, they can neither work for the Lord nor spread the gospel. When an epidemic covered the whole world and church doors had to be shut, many could not preach the gospel, either through literature or by any other means. When the church doors were shut, there was not much they could do. But those who met the Lord through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins could preach the gospel all the more even at such a time. That is the difference.

So, though we do believe in Jesus, have we become people who have met the Lord, or people who have not met Him? Have we become people who have met Jesus Christ, who came by the water and the Spirit, and received the remission of sins in our hearts, or people who have not? That is a threshold. Whether we receive blessing or receive a curse, whether we become people of God or people of the devil, whether we are people who help the work of God or people who become servants of the devil and hinder the work of God, is clearly divided right there. That is why the Lord said that woe would come upon these people. It is because they shut the door of heaven.

We cannot meet God through the law

In the Old Testament times, Ezra and Nehemiah once again preached the word of God and the law to the people of Israel, who had lost the law, lost the word of God, and intermarried and become mixed with the Gentiles. "Because we sinned before

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God, God became angry and made us live in captivity for seventy years. But did not God show mercy, so that we have come back? Even now, we must return to God, cast away our idols, and serve God alone." How good a thing that is!

So they were able to maintain their faith in the Old Testament times, but in the end the people could not meet God through the law. People cannot keep the law. How could people keep all of God's law? The law is a right and holy law, and it is the word of God that rightly presents to us what is right, but because we are weak and cannot keep it, we are sinners. Because we are sinners, we must after all meet our Lord. Jesus is our Savior, and it means that only by meeting that Jesus do we receive the remission of sins and become the people of God. Only then can we live receiving God's blessings. But it means that it is not so.

Let us read the next word. *"Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'" (Matthew 23:3–7).*

Dear fellow believers, as you read this, does nothing come to mind? Do not many of today's religious leaders come to mind? They dress properly, carry the Bible under their arms, and go and sit in the highest seats. When they are treated with honor, they also sit in the highest seats, and when they receive respect from people, all they have to do is sit in a high seat. They themselves are the law and they themselves are the superiors, so who could touch them? And yet it means that they only talk.

Because these people know only the law and are people who have not met Jesus Christ, who came by the water and the Spirit, they shut the door of heaven, and they themselves do not go in and do not let those who want to go in enter. So they are people who cannot help but be cursed. Those whom God hates most are religious leaders who, in this way, emphasize only the law and are hypocritical.

The hypocrisy that leaves out the baptism He received from John

It means that those who know only the word of God and do not make known what really must be known are the ones most deserving of a curse. They are those who do not make known why the Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John, how He had our sins transferred to Him through that baptism, what He accomplished by bearing those sins, dying on the Cross, and rising again, and why we must believe in that Jesus. That is the work of the devil.

The Apostle Paul, too, became a servant of the Lord after meeting the Lord. Even before he met the Lord, Paul knew the word of God so well that he could recite it fluently. But did he acknowledge Jesus? He opposed Him. The people of Israel, too, wrote the word of God, bound it on their foreheads and arms, and went about always reciting it. They were people who always recited the word, meditated on it, and strove to live following the words of the law. But when Jesus came, they opposed Jesus.

Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again, and so became our Savior, but they oppose that truth. Leaving out that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

through baptism, they only say in words that because Jesus loved us and was nailed to the Cross and died, Jesus is our Savior. In reality, they do not acknowledge the work of Jesus. They do not believe in Jesus. Even while speaking the name of Jesus, they do not accept His work.

You and I also say that we believe the word and that we live according to the word, but what if we do not believe in that Jesus, who came to this earth, had your sins and mine transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, bore those sins, was nailed to the Cross, received the judgment for sin in our place, and so became our Savior? If we have not, by believing, met the Lord and come into a relationship of saying, "The Lord is my Savior, and I am the Lord's people," it means that we are still experts in the law and hypocrites.

Hypocrisy is pretending to believe while not believing in the heart. There is so much pretending. They do not even know the word of truth, yet they pretend to know it. How many religious leaders there are! But when did they ever discover and acknowledge the fact that Jesus took away the sin of this world through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again? They turn away from the work in which Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Because they turn away from it, they become hypocrites. Because they do not accept it, they become false.

Religion made by man is like a drug. For a while it seems to give joy, but it continually brings suffering. The more one believes, the more suffering follows. If there are any among you, too, who suffer more the more you believe, such a person is being a hypocrite. That person has not truly met the Lord as a whole person.

Have you ever, as a whole person, passed your sins on to Jesus? Do you know that Jesus had your sins transferred to Him

through the baptism He received from John and took them away with His own body? And do you know and believe the fact that He was nailed to the Cross, suffered, shed His blood, and received the judgment for our sins in our place, and that He rose again and became our Savior? If not, you have not met Him as a whole person. It means that you have not tried knowing, feeling, and taking hold of it with your will. Just saying in a religious way, "Is Jesus that kind of One? I believe," is being a hypocrite. Such a person is one who has not been born again, one who will suffer woe, and one who is not true before God and people.

So religious leaders seldom preach on such words. It is because they are words spoken to themselves, to those who have not been born again. While saying that they preach the word of God, while saying that they preach Jesus, there are not many religious leaders who believe and preach the baptism Jesus received. Not even outwardly, not even half-heartedly, do they say a single word that Jesus took away our sins through the baptism He received from John. Even if they themselves do not believe, they should at least make it known to others, but they do not speak of it. And when other people believe and try to enter heaven and wish to have their sins washed away, they hinder and oppose the people who preach in that way. So it becomes a state in which they have blocked the door of heaven. Jesus said, *"I am the door of the sheep" (John 10:7)*. When believers come in, Jesus becomes the door for them. But it means that those who are not sheep cannot go in through that door.

Religious leaders who lay heavy burdens on people

For people whose consciences are pricked, it is very hard to preach on this word. It is written, *"For they bind heavy burdens,*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:4). The church members go out into the world, work by the sweat of their brows, and give offerings, but if the leader lays heavy burdens on them only with words and does not move a single finger himself, is that right? Religious leaders, too, must labor themselves and live doing what benefits the church and benefits the spread of the gospel. Because their own consciences are pricked, they do not deal with such words.

Therefore, those who preach the word must not think of preaching a few sermons, being treated with honor, and talking big, but must labor themselves and serve the brothers. The Apostle Paul, too, after meeting the Lord, lived while doing the work of making tents.

If, because they have graduated from seminary and become pastors, they devote themselves only to preaching while receiving a stipend, what is there that they do to help or guide the work that the church members do? Such people, too, must take to heart this rebuke directed at the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. If I preach like this, people will not like it. Whether people like it or not is a later matter; I must make known exactly to whom the words written in the Bible are addressed. It is because, if I do not do so, people cannot know it.

Since the Bible says not to be called leaders, if we follow the word, Jesus Christ is our leader. The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that I preach to you also belongs to the Lord, not to me. It is not something I have done. Jesus Christ is our leader, our teacher, our Savior, our God, the Absolute One, and our shepherd. In Christ, we are all brothers and sisters; only our offices differ.

Do you know what the highest office is? The highest treatment is to call someone "Brother" or "Sister." It

acknowledges that the person has received the remission of sins, so that is the highest. Then why are there offices such as pastor or evangelist? Because this place is the kingdom of God, they are set up in order to do the work. Those with high offices were given such offices in the sense that they are people entrusted with responsibility. A pastor, as a shepherd, does the work of feeding and raising the sheep. An evangelist helps with the work of preaching the gospel. A deacon is one who helps with the work of God's house. Brothers and sisters are the people of God. That is all they mean. People think there is something great in them, but that is not so.

Why do people fail to enter the door of heaven even after believing in Jesus? Why do they fail to receive the remission of sins? Why do they fail to meet the Lord as whole persons? It is because the religious leaders do not preach to them properly. All they have to do is preach properly. Believing is something people will take care of themselves. In war, there is a person who blows the trumpet. Blowing the trumpet one way is the signal to advance, and blowing it another way is the signal to retreat. The trumpeter only has to blow as he has been instructed. A religious leader is like a trumpeter. He is nothing more and nothing less. He is one who, when false people invade, blocks them and fights for you, and who preaches that Jesus is your Savior, shepherd, and God, so that you can meet the Lord personally, as whole persons. It means that people who play the role of religious leaders without doing that will suffer woe.

It is right to please God rather than people

After I met the Lord through the word and spoke about this, people persecuted me and disliked it, so there was also a time

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

when I thought about leaving out the talk of baptism and only telling people to repent.

But the Lord, the Holy Spirit, did not permit it in my heart. So I kept preaching it, and people disliked it. I was hesitating by myself, thinking, "I must save my family, and I must save the people I know, but these people are religious people and dislike this, so what should I do?" Then God spoke. It was that if I did not preach this gospel to people and they went to hell, He would require their blood from me. The Bible also says, *"His blood I will require at your hand" (Ezekiel 3:18)*.

When I try to preach the word of God, I am hated by people, and when I try to please people, I am hated by God. Then what should I do? It is right to please God. So I left everything else to God and chose the way of preaching this gospel.

Cast away religious faith

Dear fellow believers, we must know how hated by God and how cursed the hypocritical religious leaders are, and we must cast away religious faith. We are true people of faith who look up to what God has done, believe it, and follow. Religion is something that people have made and that people believe. Whether one believes in another religion or believes in Christianity, it is the same in that it is something people have made and believe. Committing sin and then offering prayers of repentance, repeating, "I have done wrong; please forgive me," is, when you come to know it, no different. Having sin in the heart is also the same. It is only that the objects they have made and believe in are different.

People must be whole persons. Knowing, feeling, and acting must be consistent. First, we must know the truth properly. And

we must feel the Lord's love, thinking, "The Lord has removed my sins in this way. That is why He came to this earth, bore my sins through the baptism He received from John, and suffered so much." And we must take hold of it with our will. When these three become one, that person becomes a whole person. He becomes a person who knows, feels, and acts properly, a person worthy of respect. But if someone knows wrongly, feels wrongly, and acts wrongly, he is not a whole person.

If we truly know, believe, feel, and act toward Jesus Christ as our Savior, would the Lord not love us? And is there any reason for us not to follow the Lord? We come to follow the Lord by faith, to rejoice in what the Lord rejoices in, and to dislike what the Lord dislikes. This is a true person of faith. A religious leader, if his position is high, acts as a superior. He himself does not move, but only wags his finger and says with his mouth, "Do this, do that." But a person who has truly met the Lord serves the Lord himself, does what is helpful to the brothers and sisters in their work of serving, and fills in whatever is lacking.

What kind of people ought we to become before God? Even at this very hour, in many churches, how zealously people say, "Lord, Lord," give offerings when the offering bag is passed around, pay tithes, give thanksgiving offerings, are faithful to meetings, go on overseas missions, and devote their lives! But it means that doing that without having met the Lord is of no use before the Lord. What the Lord wants from us is neither attending seminary nor learning theology. Can we learn God by studying Him as an academic subject? That in itself makes no sense.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Doctrines made by man

Who made people learn God as an academic subject? The apostles of old were not like that. Paul and Timothy and their disciples went out in person and preached the gospel, nurtured people and lived their lives together with them, and traveled the whole world preaching the gospel in which the Lord rejoices; they did not preach it as an academic subject. They preached it with the faith of their hearts. But from Emperor Constantine onward, as Christianity became institutionalized, doctrine took on a system, and those who learned and mastered it received offices such as that of bishop and came to have religious authority. Christian doctrine is something made by man. What they made is the religious doctrine of Christianity, and what we believe is the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What we preach is not an academic subject.

We have preached what we believe in our hearts, and we have recorded it and are delivering it in writing. People read those writings, come to know what the Lord has done, feel it, believe it in their hearts, and receive the remission of sins. What religious leaders do is master Christian doctrine that someone made and so obtain offices and authority. It means that the two are completely different. People who block the door of heaven and keep those who want to go in from going in must truly repent and turn back.

How many such people there are! In the world, Catholicism and Protestantism are commonly regarded as the same Christianity. The Catholic Church sometimes even calls Protestants “separated brethren.” The word “Protestant,” which refers to Protestantism, means “one who protests.” It means that they are people who, at the time of the Reformation, protested against the doctrines and oppression of the Catholic Church and

came out separately. But though they came out in body, what they brought out with them was Catholic doctrine. So they believe in the same way. That is why, in the world's religious statistics too, Catholicism and Protestantism are commonly grouped together as Christianity. It means that, when you come to know it, they are one and the same.

In the Catholic Church, they make confession. They go into a place where there is a screen between the priest and the church member and confess, "Father, I committed such-and-such a sin at such-and-such a time and place." Then the priest declares that the sin has been remitted and tells them, as penance for that sin, to pray a certain number of times. In Protestantism, they say that if you have committed sin, all you have to do is offer a prayer of repentance. Even so, if their hearts do not feel relieved and they do not have the assurance that they have been forgiven, they sometimes fast and pray earnestly. They think, "If I have done this much, wouldn't the Lord have forgiven me?" It is the same thing. All of that is only a religion that people have made and that people believe.

People of old, saying that even an object they had used for a long time seemed to have a miraculous power, set it up to one side, bowed down to it, and prayed, "Protect me and make things go well for me." If something looks unusual in their eyes and seems a little better than themselves, they make it a god, pray to it, and bow down to it. That is religion. Religion is something people make for themselves and believe, so how foolish it is! It means that even now, in the twenty-first century, people still believe what the philosophers of old made.

The Apostles' Creed is the core summary of the religious doctrine that they made. "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, and in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord, who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Virgin Mary, suffered under Pontius Pilate….” Believing in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth, agrees with the Bible. His Son Jesus Christ is also right, and that He was conceived by the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary is also right. But it suddenly jumps to His having suffered under Pontius Pilate.

What is missing is Jesus Christ, who was born of the Virgin Mary, at the age of thirty received baptism from John, who was baptizing at the Jordan River, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross and received all the judgment for our sins in our place, rose again from death, and saved us. The fact that He suffered under Pilate actually need not be included, so why did they include only the Cross and leave out the baptism? If you compare this with the Bible, you can see that it does not agree with the Bible. You must not believe in this way. So you must search the words of the Bible, correct your faith according to the Bible, and believe. Why do you believe only as the religious leaders and pastors who learned it, attended seminary, and received holy orders preach?

The Bible is the measuring rod of faith

Why can religious leaders not see this? All they would have to do is search the words of the Bible. This Bible remains unchanged even now. I carry out the literature ministry together with you. All writings in this world have something to correct. If you look at them a hundred times, there is something to correct a hundred times, and if you look at them a thousand times, there is something to correct a thousand times. Writings all differ according to their purpose. But do the words of the Old and New Testaments have anything to correct, or not? What Peter

preached was written down, yet why is there nothing to correct? Even though Moses was educated as a prince in Egypt, why is there nothing to correct in the words he recorded?

When I think about it, it is truly wondrous beyond understanding. Looking at this one thing alone, the Bible is the Bible. In the translations that people today have revised as they please, there may be many things to correct, but the original text of the Bible is not so. That is why the Bible is called a measuring rod. People of old usually set the length from the elbow to the fingertips, about 45 centimeters, as one cubit and used it. The Bible is called the "canon," which means "a measuring rod." If you want to meet God, you can meet Him by looking at this word, and you can also know what kind of One God is by looking at this Bible. By looking at this Bible, you can know what kind of One God is, what work He has done, how He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and how He saved us from sin.

What I teach you is what I came to know by looking at the Bible; with only the knowledge learned at seminary, there would not be much to preach for long. If Christian doctrine is taught for one hour, there is a little that is worth hearing, but if the same story is told in the second hour, people will say to stop. But this word of truth is worth hearing again even if the word one has heard is spoken again a little later. It is because the words of the Bible are the truth.

The Bible is the measuring rod. So even people who learned at seminary and became religious leaders come at me with the Bible. Opening the Bible, they ask how I can say that I have no sin when it is written, *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*, and they say that I am wrong. Then I say to them as follows: "Bring the Bible that you have. You read from here to here, didn't you? This is a quotation of the word of the Psalms

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

in the Old Testament. It records that, just as that word says, there was not one righteous person under the law, but that in the New Testament Jesus came and made us righteous." It is not that there are no righteous people. It is not that we had no sin to begin with. It is that we have no sin because Jesus came and removed all our sins. I say that I have no sin because I believe that.

Then, this time, they ask whether the Apostle Paul did not say in 1 Timothy, *"Sinners, of whom I am chief" (1 Timothy 1:15)*. Then I say again, "Bring that Bible. If you look at what comes before and after this word too, it is saying, 'I was formerly the chief of sinners, who persecuted Jesus, but God counted me faithful and entrusted me with an office.'" When people who were said to be highly learned, people who had learned in the orthodox way at seminary and held high offices, came before me and argued, I closed my own Bible, for fear that if I opened it and spoke, they would say it was different from their Bible, and I told them to bring their own Bible and explained it to them. So I refuted them all.

Once, to a person who came to me to refute me, I also explained it step by step with the Bible he had brought. We must know, believe, and be saved just as it is in the word.

There are people who pray with the laying on of hands and prophesy in a way that is not in the Bible. It is in this manner: "When I prayed with the laying on of hands, I saw countless flocks of sheep in green pastures, and God said that you are the servant of God who will raise those sheep." God is not One who does such things. When a person who has believed according to the words of the Bible, received the remission of sins in his heart, and had the Holy Spirit come upon his heart obeys according to this word, the Holy Spirit, in due season, makes him see this word and believe it, and makes him into a person who preaches this word and uses him.

We are not religious people but people of faith

Before this word, religious leaders must first look back on themselves. Almost no one preaches this word properly. This word says to them that they are people who are blocking the door of heaven and that they are people who will be cursed. Today I have spoken only about the first woe.

We are not religious people but people of faith. A person of faith is one who looks up to God and accepts what He has done. We come to know it through the word, accept it, feel it, and believe it, and so become people of faith. We become the born-again. Because people are doing this, I cannot help but preach such words. Before long, the Lord will come. When that will be depends on the Lord's will, but when we look at the events of the last days recorded in the Bible, it is a fact that that time is approaching.

The Lord will come again. He will come again and, as He promised, take us into His own kingdom and let us live in that kingdom enjoying riches and honor and everlasting life. I hope that you will live by faith, hoping for that day. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Love God and your neighbor by the grace you have received

< Matthew 22:34–40 >

“But when the Pharisees heard that He had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. Then one of them, a lawyer, asked Him a question, testing Him, and saying, ‘Teacher, which is the great commandment in the law?’ Jesus said to him, ‘“You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.” This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets.’”

Jesus answered a testing question with the commandment of love

The Pharisees heard the news that Jesus had made the Sadducees unable to answer, and they gathered together. One of them, a lawyer, asked which commandment in the law was great, and the Bible makes it clear that he asked, testing Jesus. Although it was an occasion of asking about the word of God, he did not ask in order to learn but asked in order to test. Because it is an answer given in the face of such a question, the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

commandment of love is directed to everyone who hears it, including that lawyer.

Knowledge that can explain the ranking of the commandments can exalt a person, but if one turns away from the purpose for which God gave those commandments, then even with much knowledge one moves away from the center of the word. Jesus did not praise the learning of the man who asked or carry on with complicated comparisons, but through the word to love God and to love one's neighbor, He made clear where the whole law is directed.

Before this commandment, we come to know our own sins

Let us read verses 37 and 38. *"Jesus said to him, '"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind." This is the first and great commandment'" (Matthew 22:37–38).* Attached to the word to love God are the words to give all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This means that not only our outward appearance or a few religious acts but our whole life must be directed toward God; so if, while inwardly regarding something else as most precious, we exalt God only with our lips, that is not worthy of the word to love with all your heart.

The word about giving all your soul means to love God with all your strength as long as you are alive. If we enjoy what God has given while always putting His will behind, that amounts to treasuring the gift while neglecting the One who gave it; so Jesus has us love God not by placing Him in one part of our life but as the Master of our whole life.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Love that gives all the mind is love whose purpose of being for God is clear. Moving only outwardly while keeping our hearts detached, even though we know what we must do, falls short; we must know what pleases God and incline our thoughts toward that will. That the heart, the soul, and the mind are spoken of together in this way is meant to keep us from separating from each other the place where we confess love with our mouths and the place where we actually live.

But before this commandment, we cannot inflate ourselves. Where is there anyone who could say that he has always loved God with all his heart? All that is revealed is judgments that put our own interests first and choices that pushed God back. Acknowledging that fact is not discarding the commandment; it is knowing our own sins in the light of the holy word and laying down the thought that we can establish righteousness by ourselves.

A person who has been saved loves God out of gratitude

If we try to cover with good deeds the sin that the law has revealed, we end up continually piling up our own righteousness. But God sent Jesus Christ to rescue us from sin; so the news that we, who have failed before the commandment to love, must hear first is the salvation that God has bestowed through His Son. When we believe that grace with our hearts, we receive the remission of sins.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, including even our sins of failing to love God with all our hearts and failing to regard our neighbors as our own bodies. And as the price of those sins

that had been passed on to Him, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died in our place, and He overcame death and rose again. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the Holy Spirit as a gift together with the remission of sins. Therefore, a life of loving God is not a price paid to obtain salvation but a life that responds in gratitude to God, who has saved us.

When we know this order, there is no reason to pretend to love while hiding our own shortcomings. We need only acknowledge before the word the wrongs we have done and set our lives right, relying on the righteousness already given. Grace does not make the commandment of love useless; rather, it causes us, as people who have been loved by God, to treasure His will. So those who have been saved do the work entrusted to them not as if doing it before people but as if doing it before God, with all their heart, strength, and mind.

"You shall love your neighbor as yourself"

Let us read verse 39. *"And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Matthew 22:39)*. After answering with the first commandment, Jesus spoke of the second commandment together with it. The question was which commandment was great, but the answer lets us hear loving God and loving our neighbor together. This is because a person who is truly devoted to God comes to be devoted to people as well; to love God above and to love our neighbor below—these are the two commandments. We cannot treat the person before our eyes carelessly while putting forward only our zeal toward God.

The word to love as one's own body is a standard that anyone can understand. When we are sick, we want care; when we suffer

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

injustice, we want to be judged rightly; we try to explain our own circumstances in detail, and we do not easily forget our own needs. It tells us to give that much attention to our neighbor as well, so it is a word that makes us turn back from a heart that weighs only our own inconvenience without listening to the other person's circumstances.

Seeking the benefit of our neighbor does not mean approving even that person's wrongdoing as right. Just as we need true help, the other person also needs true help; so preaching the gospel of the remission of sins to a person who is in sin, looking after the situation of a person who is going through difficulties, and not deceiving him for our own benefit all come from valuing that person. If we love our neighbor as our own body, we also come to consider the position of the person who receives help. Just as we do not want to be put to shame before others, we also cover the other person's difficulties without exposing them before others.

Loving God continues into a day of valuing our neighbor

Let us read verse 40. *"On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 22:40)*. Jesus said that these two commandments are the sum of the whole Law and the Prophets. He did not reduce many words to a few words and do away with the rest, but made clear the center of what those words teach and require. What the law of God requires and what the servants of God have taught all gather in these two commandments. So if, while claiming to learn the will of God, we have lost the heart that fears God and the love toward people, we must examine again how we are hearing the word.

This standard makes us look back even on small actions. We can examine whether we press down the other person in conversation in order to show that we are right, and whether, wanting only to be evaluated as having done the work well, we neglect the people who labored together with us. The word makes us examine ourselves not to give us more grounds for judging others, but so that the heart directed toward God may be revealed also in our life of dealing with people.

You have no reason to strive to prove, through the commandment of love, that you are qualified to be saved. As those who believe in the righteousness that Jesus has given, love God, and within that love, live valuing people. When you do not see the people you meet today merely as objects for your own benefit but listen to their circumstances, the commandment you have known becomes life. I hope that the confession that you love God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind will in this way continue into a day of seeking the benefit of your neighbor. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the Christ whom David called Lord

< Matthew 22:41–46 >

“While the Pharisees were gathered together, Jesus asked them, saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David.’ He said to them, ‘How then does David in the Spirit call Him “Lord,” saying: “The LORD said to my Lord, ‘Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool’”? If David then calls Him “Lord,” how is He his Son?’ And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore.”

Jesus asks whom they know the Christ to be

When the Pharisees had gathered together, this time Jesus asked them a question. Earlier, people had asked about taxes, the resurrection, and the great commandment, but now Jesus asks what they think about the Christ. This is because, even if one says many words about the will of God, if one does not rightly know the Christ who fulfills that will, one ends up only continuing a dispute while missing the center of faith.

Let us read verse 42. *“Saying, ‘What do you think about the Christ? Whose Son is He?’ They said to Him, ‘The Son of David’” (Matthew 22:42)*. They answered that the Christ was the Son of David, and after hearing that answer, Jesus asked how David had

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

called the Christ Lord. It was a question meant not to make them say a name they already knew, but to make them look more deeply, according to the Scriptures, at what kind of One the Christ is whom they themselves had confessed.

We, too, have familiar words about Jesus, and so we easily say that He is the Savior and King and the Son of God. But if we do not know what those words truly mean, it is easy to treat Jesus only as One who meets our own needs; so what we call the Christ and what kind of One we actually believe Him to be always go together.

The Christ is the Son of David and the Lord of David

Let us read verses 43 and 44. *"He said to them, 'How then does David in the Spirit call Him "Lord," saying: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool'"?'" (Matthew 22:43–44)*. Jesus said that David, moved by the Holy Spirit, called the Christ Lord. David's words were not an expectation about a descendant or a personal compliment, but words he spoke as he was moved by the Holy Spirit; so as we come to know the Christ, we put this testimony ahead of people's common notions.

The answer that He is the Son of David connects the Christ with David. But David's own confession exalts the Christ as the Lord who is above David. In the face of the thought that sought to explain the descendant by the name of the ancestor and end there, there stands the One whom even that ancestor called Lord; thus Jesus' question reveals that the glory of the Christ cannot be fully explained by lineage alone.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

These two facts are not in a relationship in which one must be erased for the other to stand. Jesus came as the Son of David, and He is also the Christ whom David calls Lord. Therefore, we cannot look down on the authority of the Son of God just because He came among people; and to recognize the One who has come near and speaks, we must believe both the lowly form in which He came and what kind of One He originally is.

Those who believe in the Christ as Lord lay down their own judgment

The word that is quoted speaks of the right hand of God and of putting the enemies under His feet. The Christ is not One who displays His wisdom in order to gain a place among people, but the One whom God has exalted and to whom He has promised victory over the enemies. His authority does not depend on whether those who question Him acknowledge it.

If we know this fact, our attitude toward the words of Jesus changes. Those who try to test and evaluate Jesus act as if they could decide right and wrong from above Him, but before the Christ whom God has exalted, people are those who hear His word. The people who had been testing Jesus earlier were testing, by their own standards, the Lord whom they should have recognized and acknowledged.

We, too, easily accept only the words we understand well and push the rest of the words aside. To believe in the Christ as Lord is to acknowledge that our judgment is not higher than He is; so learning when our understanding is lacking and correcting ourselves when we have understood wrongly is the attitude of faith. Saying that we learn from the Lord contains the meaning that we acknowledge His right to correct our thinking.

Jesus, who saved us, is the Lord whom we will follow forever

To know who Jesus truly is is not separate from faith concerning salvation. It is here that the way divides: whether we will entrust salvation to our own wishes or resolve, or entrust it to the Christ, who came to save sinners. If we had a savior confined within human limits, we could not entrust the problem of sin and judgment to him to the very end, but our Savior is the Son of God, who came as a man.

Because He who came to this earth as the Son of David is the very Son of God whom David called Lord, we can entrust our sins to Him. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even your sins and mine contained in them, passed on to Him; as the price of those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment in our place, and died; and He rose again from death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the news of the salvation that Christ has accomplished for us, and those who believe it in their hearts receive the remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Therefore, the confession that calls Jesus Lord contains the faith that believes in the One who saved us. Words that merely exalt His name do not make the sin in our hearts disappear; so we must know how Jesus removed all sins and believe that work. The Lord, though He is God, became our Savior for us. The true confession of the heart that knows this is the confession that calls Jesus Lord.

Even after receiving the remission of sins, we learn from the same Lord. No one can go beyond the word of Christ just because his own experience has accumulated; so Jesus, who is the Savior, is not One whom we may leave after receiving help,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

but the Lord on whom we will rely and whom we will follow forever.

Acknowledge the truth that has been revealed and learn

Let us read verses 45 and 46. *"'If David then calls Him "Lord," how is He his Son?' And no one was able to answer Him a word, nor from that day on did anyone dare question Him anymore" (Matthew 22:45–46).* In the face of Jesus' question, they could not answer a single word, and from that day on there was no one who dared to ask Him anything either. This silence reveals that Jesus' wisdom surpasses their dispute. But being left speechless did not mean that they had believed in the Christ; even after the questions stopped, the question of how they would treat the One of whom the Scriptures testified still remained as it was.

We, too, as we hear the Scriptures, meet times when we cannot answer with our own thinking. At such times, keeping silent to save face and accepting and learning from the Lord's word are different; so if a fact we did not know has been revealed, all we need to do now is acknowledge that fact. Having our thinking corrected by the word is not a loss, but the benefit of coming to know the truth.

The Christ, whom even David called Lord, has made Himself known to us. He has accomplished salvation, and His word teaches us; so do not let your faith stop at the confidence that you can explain Jesus. Believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has given you the remission of sins, entrust your own judgment and life to the Christ, believe in Him, whom David, moved by the Holy Spirit, called Lord, as your Lord, and learn under His word. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The scribes and the Pharisees of today

< Matthew 23:1–22 >

"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, "Rabbi, Rabbi." But you, do not be called "Rabbi"; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted. But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

to you, blind guides, who say, "Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it." Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, "Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it." Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.'"

These days, as I look at the Christian believers and preachers of this age and all the things they do, the thought comes to me that the time has come for the Christianity of this age to collapse. As I see such things, the words the Lord spoke come to mind, and I have a heart that wants to preach those words and rescue, from among them, the people who truly seek God. The word begins as follows: *"Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: 'The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do'" (Matthew 23:1–3).*

Those who sit in Moses' seat

Jesus saw the offices and the deeds that the religious people of old, that is, the scribes and the Pharisees, were carrying out, and He said that woe would come to them. He said that they sat

in Moses' seat. What kind of person was Moses? He played the role of receiving the law from God and conveying it to the people. That is to say, religious people look at the word of God and play the role of conveying God's will to everyone who comes to church. This is not a bad thing but a good thing. This is because it is conveying God's will through the word of God. Up to that point it is good, but the Lord said that what was wrong was that they sat in Moses' seat and, while not lifting a finger themselves, wanted only to be treated with honor.

"Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do" (Matthew 23:3). They only speak and tell people to do whatever it may be. When we listen to sermons these days, they are stale. You, too, may find it stale because I always preach only the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even so, you must listen. But Christian leaders keep only speaking and do not do. I cannot tell you how well they talk about how we must become the light of the world, how we must become salt, how we must give to charity, and how we must help the poor. But they only speak and do not do. It means that, as the Lord saw it, the scribes and the Pharisees, the religious leaders of old, were like that. If we look at this word, we can see all the things the leaders within modern Christianity are doing. These are all words He speaks to leaders.

However much a leader who regards the church as his own possession works up his emotions at the pulpit and cries out about the Cross, if he is not preaching it because he is truly grateful to the Lord, he is only speaking and not doing.

If pastors or evangelists or those who are ahead in the church do not do it themselves and keep telling the church members, only during sermon time, to serve the Lord, to do missions, and to spread the gospel, would that be right? Would Jesus be

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

pleased? Only when they themselves serve the gospel and also tell the people under them to serve the gospel are they right before God. But the religious people of the world preach the words the Lord spoke only with their mouths. They say, "We are the light and the salt of the world," but there are also not a few people who in reality only speak and do not do. The Lord said, *"You will know them by their fruits" (Matthew 7:16)*. They themselves must serve the gospel and preach, and though they also receive honor, they must also serve. If the people under them serve the gospel while giving up their lives and throwing away their youth, but they themselves do not serve and only speak, would that be acceptable?

Truly, pastors, too, must work while serving. You serve the gospel, and I also serve the gospel. I am not trying to assert my own views; I am saying this to those who only speak and do not serve. This is because there is no one who preaches this word to people. There is almost no one who preaches a sermon on this word. Everyone just slips past it. So I, at least, must preach it.

"They bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders"

The word also says that they bind heavy burdens and lay them on men's shoulders. It means that they attach this office or that office and lay heavy burdens on people's shoulders and keep entrusting them with work. I, too, entrust you with God's work, and I also do God's work. But the religious leaders within Christianity lay heavy burdens on people's shoulders. They keep giving out offices. In some places they give offices easily, and they also expect more service and offerings according to those offices. What do they do by giving those offices? It means that

they make people work. Every time the pastor goes on a pastoral visit, the office holders have to follow him around. It means that they lay heavy burdens on them and only make them work.

I am not saying this for nothing. Is this not a heavy burden? They must serve the gospel, must go on pastoral visits, and must give offerings. They must offer tithes, must give mission offerings, must contribute to travel expenses when missionaries are sent overseas, and must give special offerings at any time. That is not all. They must read the Bible and memorize Bible verses, and while earning their own living, they must also come and serve. If doing such things had an effect, they should be done. But it is not good because they keep making people do things that have no effect in order to show them to people. It means that this becomes a heavy burden.

A farmer sows seed, weeds the field, digs furrows, and gives water because there is something to reap in the fall. He does it because it is worthwhile. But if there were no gain at all even after doing so, how heavy that burden would be! Yet it means that they themselves do not lift even one finger.

Deeds done to be seen by men

Next it says, *"But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments" (Matthew 23:5)*. Do you know what the words "make the phylacteries they wear broad" mean? Phylacteries are the word of God written down and worn on the body. The Jews put small scrolls on which the word of God was written into phylactery cases and went about with them tied on their foreheads and arms. Making the phylacteries they wear broad means making them bigger and broader than other people's in

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

order to look godly. And it says that they enlarge the borders of their garments. Next it says, "*They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'" (Matthew 23:6–7).* It means that this is what these religious leaders do.

They wore large robes, tied big phylacteries on their foreheads and arms, and attached large borders to their garments and went about with them flapping. Also, when they were invited to a feast, they sat in the highest place. Because, to the people of Israel, the rabbis and the scribes and the Pharisees were all leaders and teachers of the law, the best places were prepared for them when they came to a feast. When they came to the synagogue, too, there were high seats where they sat separately.

Today, if you go into the sanctuary of certain churches, there are chairs placed separately at the front. Who sits there? Invited pastors sit there, and elders sit there. They are doing just what the Jews did. When they go out to the marketplace, the people of the neighborhood greet them, saying, "Pastor, have you come?" They are treated with honor if they go here, and they are treated with honor if they go there. There is nothing but being treated with honor. They themselves do it only with their mouths and never with action. So wouldn't that be pleasant for them? Therefore, a heart that desires such treatment easily creeps in. This is what is wrong with the religious leaders within Christianity. The word says that they like the title of teacher.

"One is your Teacher, the Christ"

So the Lord said as follows: "*But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all*

brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven" (Matthew 23:8–9). He told them not to be called Rabbi, saying that their Teacher is One and that they are all brothers. Our true Teacher is Jesus Christ. He told them not to call anyone on earth father, saying that their Father is the One who is in heaven. Fundamentally speaking, since God made us, our real Father is God. That does not mean that our physical parents are not parents. Since God caused us to be born through our physical parents, parents are parents. However, they are not equal to the Father who is in heaven. Would Jesus have said this to make us fatherless children? That is not so. The words of the Lord are all correct words even when examined by reason.

So just because one is a father does not mean that he can govern everything concerning his children. If the child believes in Jesus Christ, one guides that child by thinking carefully and weighing things according to the word of God. The Lord said, *"And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ" (Matthew 23:10)*. The real leader is Jesus Christ. I believe so. I hope you also believe so. Jesus Christ is our Chief Shepherd, and we are small shepherds who are entrusted with a very small part and work in it. Next the Lord said, *"But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:11–12)*.

The Lord said this about the religious leaders of that time. The Judaism of that time was a religion that believed in the LORD God. Since they did not believe in Jesus, it was wrong, but it was a religion that believed in God. In today's terms, it is like Christianity. What is there that is wrong in the Lord's words? Did the Lord not see it rightly, laying it completely bare? People do not know that the rabbis and the teachers of the law are wrong.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

But Jesus saw accurately. They are people who only speak and do it only with their mouths, and who lay heavy burdens on people while they themselves do not lift a finger. Such people are wrong.

Those who shut the door of the kingdom of heaven

The Lord also said, *"But woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you shut up the kingdom of heaven against men; for you neither go in yourselves, nor do you allow those who are entering to go in" (Matthew 23:13)*. Everyone knows this word well, but take a look at its content. The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees, that is, the religious leaders, shut the door of the kingdom of heaven in front of people, and they themselves do not go in, and they do not let those who want to go in enter. At that time, the scribes and the Pharisees did not accept Jesus. The religious leaders of today's Christianity also do not accept the righteousness of Jesus, the righteousness of God. They do not accept that Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, died hanging on the Cross, rose again, and saved us. They themselves do not accept it, and they also block the people who want to believe this. It means that they themselves do not enter the kingdom of heaven, and they also block the people who want to enter the kingdom of heaven.

Specifically, how do they block them? *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matthew 23:15)*. They go about zealously to preach the gospel and to do missions. Some people go from house to house preaching the gospel.

Dear fellow believers, have you ever crossed the sea and traveled over land to preach the gospel? It means that religious people are exceedingly zealous in this way. When they go about like that and someone appears who is persuaded by their words and accepts them, what do they do? They make him twice as much a son of hell as themselves. They teach falsely. Some sects even teach that there is no burning hell and that the grave itself is hell. Is it only such sects that do so? Even the leaders of Christianity that call themselves orthodox do so. They do not say that there is no hell, but they teach that if one only believes in the blood of the Cross of Jesus, all sins are gone, and they say that believing anything else besides that is wrong. And while doing so, they themselves do not accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which becomes the righteousness of God, and they also block the people who want to accept it. This is what the word means when it says that they themselves do not enter the kingdom of heaven and block the people who want to enter.

Blind guides

"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it'" (Matthew 23:16). It means that woe will come upon the blind guides. I mean people who talk as if they know, though they themselves have seen nothing. They say that if one swears by the temple it is nothing, but if one swears by the gold of the temple one must keep it—this is truly appalling. It means that among the people of Israel, if someone swore by the temple in Jerusalem, people said nothing even if he did not keep it. But if he swore by the gold of the temple, that is, swore that he would offer a certain amount to God, they said that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

he must keep it without fail. This word applies just as it is even today.

In Christianity today, it is fine to say something by swearing by a certain denomination. It is also fine to say something by swearing by the name and honor of a certain church. Even if it is not kept, there is no great problem. But if someone has promised a leader that he will sell his house and offer a certain amount to the church, it means that he must keep that promise without fail. In the end, it means that they set their hearts only on what is offered. People make many prayers of vows: "God, if You heal my disease, I will do such and such." Suppose a person who has a large fortune prays that he will offer half of it if his disease is healed, and asks a pastor to pray for him. They say that later, when the disease is healed, he must bring half of that fortune. Yet it means that what was sworn by the denomination need not be kept. If money was not staked, it need not be kept, and if money was staked, it must be kept.

The Lord said of them, *"Fools and blind" (Matthew 23:17)*. It means foolish and blind people. *"Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it'" (Matthew 23:17–18)*. The leaders say it is fine regarding words spoken by swearing by the denomination, but they find fault with words saying that one will offer money. It is a way of pressing people to keep without fail what they said they would offer. Next He said, *"Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it" (Matthew 23:19–22)*. They insist that if one has promised to

offer something, one must keep it without fail. Therefore they are foolish and blind people, blind people who have no spiritual eyes. In fact, swearing by the temple is greater than swearing by the gift. This is because God is in it.

Those who follow the blind will also meet with woe

I do not know how you feel, but this is tremendously wrong. We must look at today's Christianity in the light of the word of God. There may also be many things that are wrong in us. Even so, we must know what we should know and hear what we should hear. Are there not cases where offices and offerings are put ahead of the gospel? Woe will come to such people. God will bring woe on them. We know well that God will bring woe on them. But those who go under religious leaders who pursue only money and live a life of faith with their heads bowed are also blind. Such people, too, will in the end meet with woe.

Church members say this: "Whatever kind of person the pastor is, it does not matter to me. I am living a life of faith before God. Those who are caught by this word will meet with woe, but since I have served and done volunteer work rightly for God, even if the leader who guides me is wrong, I will not meet with woe." But they must know for certain: as for those who live a life of faith under false leaders, when their head is judged by God, the people who followed him will all meet with woe as well. When the chief of mountain bandits plans and carries out evil deeds, those who sided with him and all helped him are judged in the same way when they are later caught by soldiers. It is exactly the same as all those who sided with the head of a band of robbers being judged.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

People who live a religious life within Christianity say, "I did it because I did not know; I did it because the leader did not teach me; I did it with all my heart, so what sin do I have?" But why did the Lord speak this word, and why did He have it recorded so that we today read it and preach it? It is to let us know that those who lead wrongly in that way and those who follow them will all meet with woe in the same way. If we do not apply this word to ourselves but apply it only to others, saying that it was a word spoken to the scribes and the Pharisees of Jesus' time, our hearts would be at ease. But we must apply any word of God to ourselves. When we apply it, no one has done anything well before God in deeds. We fall short. But what matters is whether, in our hearts, we have responded "Yes" before the word of God, believed what is right as right, received the remission of sins by believing that the Lord saved us through the water and the Spirit, and lived giving thanks, praising, and serving the gospel. If people have lived a life of faith being of one heart with leaders who reject the righteousness of God in their hearts and deceive their hearts, it means that they, too, will be judged in the same way.

Modern Christianity is tremendously wrong. There is no one who speaks of this. Even I am speaking of it too mildly. The Lord called them *"Serpents, brood of vipers" (Matthew 23:33)*. Those who follow them are the same. The Lord said, *"If the blind leads the blind, both will fall into a ditch" (Matthew 15:14)*. If people are led by the blind and follow them to the end, they fall into a ditch and die. We must know that our Lord spoke this word to such people.

Return to the righteousness of God

The Lord has spoken everything here to the Christian believers and leaders of today. He said, *"Laying aside the commandment of God, you hold the tradition of men" (Mark 7:8)*. We must examine, in the light of the word of God, whether that is so or not. This is because He has recorded it here. Even so, if people follow the words of men, saying, "Our denomination did not teach it that way," they will not escape the judgment of God. Knowing that, they must quickly turn back. To receive the remission of sins, one must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. One must know that God is our Father and Creator and acknowledge the words He has spoken. If one is going to live a life of faith anyway, one should do it well; why do something that will be cursed? Even if all our actions fall short, it is enough just to turn our hearts and say "Yes" to the word of God, yet I do not know why they insist so stubbornly, as if they were so great that they had something to show God through their actions.

They are those who sit in Moses' seat. Moses was a person whose work went as far as conveying the law. Moses did not enter the land of Canaan. That does not mean that Moses was not saved. Moses is the representative of the law. We cannot be saved by keeping the law. We are saved not by keeping all of God's commandments, but by believing in the righteousness of God.

All the Christian believers in the whole world must know the righteousness of God, return to God's bosom, and receive the remission of sins. The world will perish anyway. Fire will fall from heaven. Since we are living in such an age, we must be saved. Why do you not receive the salvation that God gives freely as a gift, the salvation that one receives if one only

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

believes in the righteousness of God? There are people on this earth whose spiritual eyes have been opened, so why do you not follow their words but follow the blind? I want you to return to God. It is not I who want it; God wants it. I hope that you will return to God and believe in the righteousness of God, so that you will receive God's love and blessings, obtain everlasting life in the world to come, and also live on this earth under God's protection and blessings. I hope that God will give such blessings to all mankind and give even more blessings and protection to His menservants and maidservants. ✉

Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

The hypocritical scribes and Pharisees

< Matthew 23:23–39 >

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, ‘If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.’ Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers’ guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation. O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'"

I will share the word that God brings woe upon hypocrites. First, let us read this word together. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matthew 23:23–24).*

Those to whom the Lord is speaking are the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees. Which sin of these people did the Lord point out when He said that woe would come upon them? He said that the blind guides strain out a gnat while swallowing a camel.

Those who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel

This means that they swallow a camel whole. It means that they are those who play the role of guides even though they have become blind, and who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel. To strain out something as tiny as a gnat means that they say they were wrong about this or that small fault, before God and before people. They say that they borrowed something from their parents, from their brothers, from their husbands, from their relatives and neighbors and did not return it, and that they were wrong. Yet at the same time, the Lord said, they swallow whole a great sin as big as a camel. For example, it means that they swallow whole, as their own, property that was offered to God, and say that they were wrong only about faults as tiny as a speck. The Lord calls such people hypocrites. This is the word He speaks concerning those leaders, the scribes and the Pharisees.

Here the scribes refer to the leaders who studied and taught the law and led the people. Because Israel lived under a theocracy, with the leaders of the law in the synagogues teaching the people, if these men practiced hypocrisy, all the people also practiced hypocrisy, and if these men served idols, all the people also came to serve idols. We cannot know everything about what sins they specifically committed, but what we can know is that they commit a great sin. It means that it is not merely a matter of one person doing a little wrong to another person, but that they commit an enormous sin before God.

Because they were the teachers of the law and religious leaders, it is said that they paid tithe of mint and anise and cummin. It means that they faithfully paid tithes from what they farmed and from everything they gained in life. But they neglected what God had spoken of as important, that is, the word that says to love your neighbor as your own body, and the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

righteousness of God, and the faith that believes in God. They should have cast away idols, departed from the sin of Jeroboam, and believed in and followed the LORD God as their own God as David did, but it means that they were inclined toward outward forms. They had a tendency to gather in the synagogues and offer worship in a holy manner, to go out to the crossroads and pray in a loud voice, and to pay tithes of what they farmed with thoroughgoing strictness.

Let us take one example of the weightier matters of the law. On the Sabbath an animal fell into a pit and was about to die. If one thinks only of the letter of the law of the Sabbath, one may consider that it must not be pulled out. When the animal has fallen in and is dying, a person bound only by the letter of the law will waver, asking whether he should pull it out or not, since pulling it out would break the law that says to keep the Sabbath holy, and then he will leave the animal to die. And he will think that, since the ox died because he was keeping the law of the Sabbath, it is a loss materially but a truly righteous thing. They neglected justice and mercy and faith.

God loved them and, in order to be their God and to be their shepherd, watched over and protected them from the time of their fathers until now. But it means that they cast away that righteousness of God, and came before God and insisted only on their own rightness. This is what was wrong. That is why they suffer woe. They regarded keeping the letter of the law as weightier than having kindness and compassion on people. That is why it is said that they practice hypocrisy. If they truly kept the commandments of God, they should love God above and love their neighbors as their own bodies beside them, but it means that they did not do that and kept the commandments only according to the letter. It means that they come to suffer woe because they lived a life of faith in a state in which the center of

their hearts was not contained in the word of God. *"Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matthew 23:24)*. It is very hard to discern people who practice hypocrisy. But Jesus spoke of this very bluntly.

Hypocrisy that looks upright on the outside

Because we are also human, it is hard for us to discern the hypocritical religious people within Christianity. When we look at their worship services or their lives, it is very difficult to say that they are wrong. This is because they are so polished. They seem to live the life of faith very well. If we compare their outward appearance and deeds with ours, it seems that we hardly have the right to tell them that they are wrong. This is because they seem to live the life of faith so uprightly. They fervently sing hymns asking that the doors of heaven be opened and that grace come down, and they also pray earnestly. They live the life of faith with all their strength, saying, "We earnestly beseech You, we long for it, and we beseech You."

So when we look at them practicing hypocrisy, we know that it is hypocrisy, but it is hard to say, by looking at their deeds, that they are those who must suffer woe from God in this way, be cursed, and go to hell. Because He is the Lord, He was able to speak this way, and He also told us to speak this way. They are so upright on the outside. They speak coherently, they do not use abusive words, and they seem to keep well the ethics and morals that a person must keep. But when something seriously displeases them, the hatred and greed they have hidden are sometimes revealed. The righteous do not do so. But although they present themselves as very good in their relationships with people, their hidden inner hearts are full of greed and of a heart

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that puts their own benefit first. That is why the Lord said that they were those who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel whole.

You understand, don't you? When we read it, we understand all of it, but only when we actually apply it, think it over, and accept the Lord's word into our hearts can we know that it is so and treat them that way. And yet we must have compassion on them, love them, and preach the gospel to them so that they may obtain salvation. But if we compare in fleshly terms, we are not in a position to have compassion on them; rather, they are in a position to have compassion on us. It has been turned upside down. If they came to our gathering, they would find nothing outwardly to show off; we do not even recite the Apostles' Creed, and they would hear sermons pointing out the errors of the churches of the world, so would they not say, "God, have mercy on those people"? By outward appearance there is nothing worth showing off. Before God we can say that we are upright and better than they are, but outwardly and in fleshly terms we can by no means say that we are better. However, before God they are hypocrites, those who commit a great sin, and those who will suffer woe.

"First cleanse the inside of the cup and dish"

Let us read the next word. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also" (Matthew 23:25–26).*

If we look in fleshly terms, the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees are so clean. In their speech and in their faith as well, I cannot tell you how piously they live the life of faith. They sell

what they own and offer it to the church. Offering enormous sums of money and the land they own to what they call the Church of God is a matter of course. Sometimes schools are built on the wide land that believers have offered. It means that they offer these things to God because they believe in Jesus and are thankful.

The Lord said that you must first cleanse the inside, and then the outside would also become clean. He said that these people cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but make the inside full of greed and self-indulgence. It means that when they ate food, they washed their hands and feet clean and made everything that showed clean. The order of their worship services is the same. Then why do they suffer woe before God? It is because their hearts are self-indulgent and filled with greed. They were filled with desire, both for riches and for people. And yet outwardly they put on clean clothes, go out, and concentrate on making the outside clean, as though they had done nothing wrong. It means that Jesus told them to first cleanse the inside, and that then the outside would also become clean.

In fact, if we first receive the remission of sins in our hearts, make our hearts clean, and make up our minds, then what shows on the outside is also revealed as clean. Rather than forcing ourselves, thinking, "I must do it this way," if we make up our minds by faith that this is what is right, it actually appears in our bodies of its own accord. That is the fragrance of Christ. When it is firmly settled in our hearts that serving the gospel is right, it happens of its own accord. We can do this, and we can do that as well. But even if we make our outward appearance clean when we offer worship and are smooth and humble in our relationships with people, if our hearts are full of greed, then no matter how clean our outward appearance and words are, the fruit that appears is dirty. That is why the Lord said to first

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

cleanse the inside, and that otherwise we suffer woe from God. We must first believe in the righteousness of God in our hearts and receive the remission of sins. And it means that if we make up our minds and serve, thinking, "The Lord has saved me and has also saved all other people, and though I have heard and believed this gospel and received salvation, other people have not yet heard it and are dying, so it is right to serve this gospel in order to preach the gospel to them," then it happens of its own accord.

If the hypocritical scribes and Pharisees were to become truly clean and holy before God, they would first have to accept and believe in the righteousness that God has given, the rightness and love of God. Then, because their hearts become clean, what appears on the outside also becomes clean. But they did not do so. Because they tried to make only the shell clean, their insides were filled with self-indulgence and greed. Christian believers today who do not know and do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are like that. Their hearts are filled with desire, greed, and self-indulgence toward the things of the world. They only refrain from doing things for fear that someone might see or someone might know, but if only an opportunity is given, they want to do every sort of thing.

Of course, we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also be like that. But even though we could do things that are too extreme, we restrain ourselves. This is because the Lord has made our hearts clean. But it means that in the hearts of people who are not so, the righteousness and love of the Lord, the gospel of righteousness that has made us holy, has not entered, and their hearts are full of all kinds of odds and ends of greed and self-indulgence. It means that this is what is wrong.

No matter how much Christian believers today try to live holy lives, pray prayers of repentance well, pay their tithes well,

keep the Lord's Day well, and do early morning prayers, all-night prayers, and fasting prayers well, and even if they offer not one tenth but nine tenths and offer half of all their property, if they do not accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the righteousness of God, and receive the remission of sins in their hearts, but reject the love of God, that very thing becomes a sin that goes to hell. They become the dirtiest sinners. Such people are destroyed. Christian believers must know what they must do now.

Not ethics but the remission of sins

Some people insist on prayers of repentance, saying that a repentance movement must be launched now as in the time of a certain revival movement long ago, and they hold large meetings here and there. As in the old days, people say, "I secretly picked and ate someone else's pumpkin. I was wrong," and, crying loudly, go to its owner and pay for the pumpkin. It means that they want such a movement to arise again.

The sermons preached most in churches today are ethical sermons, and next are sermons about social movements. They say that we must become the salt of our neighbors and the light of the world, that we must not lie, and that whether we run a business or engage in trade, even if we become rich, we must become clean rich people. But the original spirit of a business is to make a profit, so where are there clean rich people and dirty rich people separately? If someone did not take things from others by pointing a knife at them or by swindling them, but earned it by working for them and selling goods fairly and squarely, then he is a rich person who is fair and square. What is important is how he uses the money after making a profit. But is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that the spirit of Christianity? Is that what the Lord wants from Christians?

Is what God wants from us that we become good people and live doing business without lying? No, it is not. Even if we did not do bad things, we were already bad people and were already those who were going to hell. We were those who were born with sins so dirty before God that they were more than enough to send us to hell, sins that could not be washed away even if we were washed with lye, and who lived such lives. Then what does God truly want from us? He wants us to receive the remission of all our sins, be washed clean, be saved from sin, enter the kingdom of heaven, and become children of God. God washed all those dirty sins of ours clean through the baptism His Son received from John and the blood of the Cross. In that way, it was the will of God to make us His perfect and holy people and to have us go to the everlasting kingdom of God and live with Him forever and ever.

Do Christian believers want to live as the light and salt of the world? That is a matter of course. If we believe in the righteousness of God and receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we do not do bad things to others, because we have no sin. Having accepted the gospel of God is itself becoming the light and becoming the salt of the world. People are most afraid of meeting people. This is because people do bad things to people. In this world, a person who does not do bad things to people like himself is the most upright person, the light and salt of the world, and a person who broadly benefits people. If, in addition to that, he preaches and serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit, then that person is truly a person whom all people should look up to. We must cleanse the inside; can the inside become clean just because we cleanse the outside? If we do not cleanse the inside, there is destruction. It

is just as the Lord, further on, called them serpents and a brood of vipers.

"You are like whitewashed tombs"

Let us read the next word. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:27–28).* It is a matter of course that a person who has not received the remission of sins because he does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is judged. But why are these people judged before God? It is because they live the life of faith only as a shell. It means that outwardly they appear righteous to people, but inside they are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Although it is a word that is repeated, the Lord keeps on speaking. So the Lord said that religious people are like whitewashed tombs.

In some places, graves are made by burying the body in flat ground without a mound, covering it with marble or cement, and then painting it cleanly with white lime. They engrave on it the dates, the name, and a Bible verse, paint the letters black, and sometimes engrave rose patterns and paint them in color. How clean they are! It means that the scribes and Pharisees were like that. It means that, like whitewashed tombs, they appear beautiful outwardly. They look so clean, upright, and good that ordinary people who look at them find nothing to rebuke. There is only one thing to rebuke them for, that one sin of not wholly accepting and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the righteousness and love of God; apart from that, there

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

is nothing at all to rebuke. People have nothing to rebuke them for, but the Lord has something to rebuke. It means that the outside is clean, but the inside is dirty. It means that inside they are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness. They appear righteous to people.

These days some churches provide free meals and lend their church buildings for neighborhood gatherings or concerts, and they receive praise from people. When a church does such things, will it not appear righteous to people, and will not everyone applaud? But if there is no gospel, then its inside is full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. It has missed the will of God. It means that although God told them to receive the remission of sins, build church buildings, and preach the gospel, and told them to preach the gospel in His name, pray in His name, and give charity to the poor in His name, they do not preach the gospel but are doing other things.

What is the use of attending church and hearing the word of God? What is the use of rising in office when one goes to hell because one has sin? People believe in Jesus at church in order to go to heaven and to receive the remission of sins, so they must hear and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins; if they do not believe in that gospel and go to hell because they have sin, what is the use of believing in Jesus? If they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, what is the use of paying tithes, what is the use of keeping the Lord's Day, what is the use of offering worship, and what is the use of offering land to the church? They have sin in their own hearts, and so they themselves go to hell and their children also go to hell.

"Sons of those who murdered the prophets"

Let us continue reading. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation" (Matthew 23:29–36)*. Who are those who will suffer woe before God? They are those who persecute the servants of God. The Lord said, *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets" (Matthew 23:29–31)*. Looking at the Old Testament, they say that if they had lived in those times, they would not have killed the prophets. But in reality they are their descendants, and religious people are their descendants. They do the same in the last days as well. They seize and kill the prophets, the righteous, and the servants of God, crucify them, scourge them in the synagogues, mistreat

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

them, drive them out, and persecute them. So the Lord said it in a word as follows: *"Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:32–33)*. It means that they cannot escape the condemnation of hell. It means that they go to hell.

The Lord said, *"That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar" (Matthew 23:35)*. It means that religious people seized and killed the righteous. The Lord came to this earth and said that He would judge that sin, including all the sin of killing the righteous and the sin in their hearts. It means that the judgment of God comes upon people who act like this. Even today people persecute countless times those who have this gospel. Pastors who know the people who have this gospel sometimes avoid them. In New Testament times as well, people seized and killed the righteous, the servants of God, and in these last times as well, religious leaders, hypocrites, and people who come to the Church of God yet do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, insist only on their own rightness, and are desperate to appear righteous to people persecute the righteous. God said of these people that they are those who will suffer woe.

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem"

Finally, let us read together. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!*

See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" (Matthew 23:37–39). The place that represents Israel is Jerusalem. It is the largest city, like the capital of a nation. In Jerusalem, which killed the prophets and stoned those who were sent to it, there were the high priest, the priests, and the leaders. The Lord said how often He had wanted to gather her children together as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but that they were not willing. Jeroboam, the first king of Northern Israel, made golden calves and had the people serve them, replacing God with idols. And he kept committing that sin and taught it to the people, and the people of Israel followed that sin and carried it on to the end, and the people of Judah also could not depart from idol worship. God rebuked and chastened them, and then again showed mercy, kept that nation alive, and protected it, but they kept on doing the same. When God chastened them, they turned back for a while; and when God sent prophets, they seized, killed, and persecuted those prophets as well, and they themselves also served idols, did not depart from the sin of Jeroboam, who replaced God, and did not return to God. That is why they were ruined.

Just as the word of God said, Jerusalem became desolate, and Israel lost its nation for a long time, was scattered, and suffered hardships. And the gospel was preached to the Gentiles. Spiritually speaking, this word is spoken to the leaders and church members within Christianity today who do not have the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is a word that says they will suffer woe. When something is too serious, a person cannot even cry out. That is why we preach the gospel to them. Although we have little that appears righteous to people and are often cursed at, our insides are clean.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Living a new life as children of God

Dear fellow believers, are your hearts clean inside? Are you without sin? We want to do what is right. We want to preach the gospel to them. God is working through us. As for those who hear and believe in the gospel through us, God loves them too, and whatever sins they have committed until now, He will remit all those sins, make them without blemish, and embrace all their weaknesses as well. But if they do not believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, they will be judged forever. They will go into the fire that is not quenched. They will hear God call them serpents and a brood of vipers. They will go to hell.

The Bible says, *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. I cannot tell you how quickly time passes. We must hold on to this time. The Bible said, *"Redeeming the time" (Ephesians 5:16)*. We must make plans and preach the gospel. Then much fruit comes forth. If people hear the gospel we preach and receive the remission of sins, it is fortunate, but if they do not receive it, what will become of them? After toiling to their heart's content in the name of believing in Jesus, they still go to hell. The Lord is coming soon. The world will soon be ruined. We will see all those things with our own eyes. Tremendous things will take place.

We who now believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are truly happy people. This is because when the time comes, we will go to the Lord's kingdom, and from now on we are starting a new life. We are now not living out a human life to its end, but living a new life, that is, a newborn life. We live as children of God, enjoying everlasting life amid riches and glory. Do you think about such things? People usually think only about life on this earth and do not think about the newborn life. Perhaps they do not even have time to think because they are busy with work.

But in a little while we will live the newborn life. A life that is new and a life lived with the status of children of God—that is the newborn life. Human life is to be born once and to die once, and after that comes the judgment, and after that comes the newborn life. I think about how much the Lord is striving to gather and embrace the Christian believers who say they believe in God. I hope that God will give the needed grace to the male and female workers and bless them. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

He who humbles himself will be exalted

< Matthew 23:1–12 >

“Then Jesus spoke to the multitudes and to His disciples, saying: ‘The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses’ seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men’s shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers. But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, “Rabbi, Rabbi.” But you, do not be called “Rabbi”; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ. But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.’”

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The life of the one who teaches is also under the word

While speaking to the multitudes and the disciples about the ways of the scribes and the Pharisees, Jesus had them look at both what those who teach say and how they act. This is because being in the position of being entrusted with the word and teaching it does not make even all of that person's actions right. So a person who hears must discern the teaching, and a person who teaches must know that he himself also stands under that word.

Let us read verses 2 through 4. "*The scribes and the Pharisees sit in Moses' seat. Therefore whatever they tell you to observe, that observe and do, but do not do according to their works; for they say, and do not do. For they bind heavy burdens, hard to bear, and lay them on men's shoulders; but they themselves will not move them with one of their fingers" (Matthew 23:2–4)*. The words that they sit in Moses' seat are followed by the command to do and observe what they say, and right after that comes the word not to imitate their works. Here the authority of the word and the conduct of the person who preaches the word are distinguished; so we must not abandon even God's command because of the wrongs of the person who teaches, nor must we follow even that person's wrongs on the grounds that he teaches God's command.

Jesus said that they only speak and do not do, and the word about heavy burdens shows that discrepancy more concretely. They bound heavy burdens and laid them on men's shoulders while they themselves would not move them even with one finger; that is, they only spoke and did not serve together with others. When that happens, teaching ends up becoming not a work of helping people but a means of moving others while not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

moving oneself. Preaching the word much and presenting oneself before the word are not the same thing.

Examine the reason for your labor before God

Let us read verses 5 through 7. *"But all their works they do to be seen by men. They make their phylacteries broad and enlarge the borders of their garments. They love the best places at feasts, the best seats in the synagogues, greetings in the marketplaces, and to be called by men, 'Rabbi, Rabbi'" (Matthew 23:5–7).* Before speaking of broad phylacteries and large borders, Jesus first made clear that they do all their works to be seen by men. So the problem lies not in the size of the outward appearance but in the heart that seeks to receive people's recognition through that appearance. Even if we change the outside to be a little plainer, if we still make people's praise our goal, we are facing in the same direction. And at the root of works done to be seen by people lies a heart that does not accept the righteousness God has given but seeks to establish one's own righteousness. The apostle Paul also wrote, *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3).*

The best places at feasts and the best seats in the synagogues, the greetings received in the marketplaces, and the title of being called Rabbi also show that direction. Though the places differ, the attention is gathered on being exalted oneself; so if how one is treated comes before what difficulties the people who hear one's teaching are going through, it becomes hard to see the other person as a brother to be served. This is because one comes

to examine first whether the other person is someone who acknowledges one's own high standing.

We who hear this warning must also first examine our own hearts before evaluating other people's positions. When no one recognizes the labor you have done, consider whether that work is still necessary work. If it was work that benefited a brother, that benefit does not disappear just because there is no praise from people. If we examine what the reason is that keeps us continuing our labor, it is also revealed which way our hearts had been facing.

"One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren"

Let us read verses 8 through 10. *"But you, do not be called 'Rabbi'; for One is your Teacher, the Christ, and you are all brethren. Do not call anyone on earth your father; for One is your Father, He who is in heaven. And do not be called teachers; for One is your Teacher, the Christ" (Matthew 23:8–10)*. Jesus did not end with words telling them not to become exalted, but He let them know the basis of that relationship—why the disciples must not lord it over one another. The Teacher is One, the Father is in heaven, the leader is Christ, and the disciples are all brothers. So we cannot set any one person above others and make him the final standard of faith.

A person who has learned first can explain the word to someone who does not yet know it, and he also has the responsibility to teach and help according to the work entrusted to him. But that responsibility does not become a right that takes the place of Christ, so both the one who is taught and the one who teaches must learn from the same Lord. The moment one

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

regards one's own words as always right, one comes to forget the fact that the one who teaches is also one who learns.

By speaking of the Father in heaven, He also made clear the One on whom the disciples are to rely. Do not place the source of your faith and salvation in people. If you think that you can go to God only when you have a certain person's approval, you are, in effect, giving that person an authority he does not originally have. The saints are not the possession of people, and those who call God Father are brothers who have received grace together before Him.

Let us hold dear the brothers who have become children by the same grace

Then how does a sinner become a child who calls God Father? It is not by holding an excellent office or by being recognized by many people, but because the Lord has accomplished salvation for people who cannot resolve the problem of sin by themselves. The Lord said that our leader is only One, Christ, and Christ is the very One who saved us from sin. The relationship of brothers is seen rightly when we know by what grace all of us have come to stand before God.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and among them are also our sins of seeking to be exalted and seeking to be seen by people. And as the price of those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and died, and He rose again from death. We have received the remission of sins and become children of God by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts, so we stand

before God not with a righteousness we have produced but with the righteousness Christ has accomplished.

This grace becomes the basis for our attitude toward our brothers. If we did not become children of God because we are better than other people, then we cannot look down on a brother by putting forward the office entrusted to us, and even when we see shortcomings in the other person, we come to remember first that he is a person who has received the Lord's salvation together with us. Let us point out wrongs but not bind people beneath ourselves; let us help them follow the Lord's word together.

The work entrusted to him who is great is to serve

Let us read verses 11 and 12. *"But he who is greatest among you shall be your servant. And whoever exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted" (Matthew 23:11–12)*. The Lord said that he who is great must become one who serves. He who is great is revealed not by how much others move for him, but by how he helps other people with what has been entrusted to him. What the person who has gone first must do is not to lord it over others but to care for those who are still young so that they live the life of faith well and their faith grows; so a person who knows more helps one who does not know, and a person entrusted with more responsibility looks more closely at the difficulties his brother bears.

The word to humble oneself, too, does not mean to put on a humble appearance in order to receive praise. Such calculation still sets the heart on exalting oneself; so actually acknowledging one's own lack, listening to the words of one's brothers, and taking on the labor that one must do—this is humbling oneself. If there is anything that has been accomplished through us, it is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

what the Lord has done through us, and when we know this, we do not attribute the merit to ourselves. We need only leave being exalted to God and perform the service now entrusted to us.

The picture of the community that Jesus showed is clear. It is a community that learns from Christ, who is One, relies on the heavenly Father, and treats one another as brothers. If you must teach someone today, first remember that you yourself are also a person who hears the same word, and if you see someone's burden, do not stop at explaining that burden, but look for the work of bearing it together. The faith that humbles itself before the Lord is revealed in the place of serving the people He has given us as brothers. ✉

Sermon 11 by Paul C. Jong

Regard God as greater than anything else

< Matthew 23:15–22 >

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves. Woe to you, blind guides, who say, ‘Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.’ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold? And, ‘Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.’ Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift? Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it.”

The content of faith determines the direction of zeal

We cannot say that a work was right merely because someone labored hard at it; so we also come to look at what the labor was for and where that labor led people. Jesus rebuked those who traveled land and sea to win one convert. It was not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

because their activity was lacking, but because what they taught the person they had won in that way was wrong.

Let us read verse 15. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you travel land and sea to win one proselyte, and when he is won, you make him twice as much a son of hell as yourselves" (Matthew 23:15)*. They traveled far to win one person, but the end of it was not the joy of salvation but an error that had grown deeper. Jesus said that such a person becomes twice as much a son of hell as they were. If someone is taught in a way that keeps him from rightly knowing the salvation that Jesus has accomplished, that person remains unable to escape from sin, even while saying that he believes in Jesus. If the direction of the teaching is wrong, the greater the zeal, the more widely that error also spreads; so the mere result of having won people cannot tell us whether the teaching is right.

Therefore, we too must examine what we are leading people to accept. Even if more people are coming to the meetings, if they do not know the salvation that Jesus has accomplished, we have failed to preach the most important thing; and if someone has come to have zeal, we come to look at what belief that zeal came from. This is because the content of faith determines the direction of labor.

The temple that sanctifies the gold is greater

Let us read verses 16 and 17. *"Woe to you, blind guides, who say, 'Whoever swears by the temple, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gold of the temple, he is obliged to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gold or the temple that sanctifies the gold?" (Matthew 23:16–17)*. They applied a different standard to each oath, teaching that if one swears by

the temple it is nothing, but if one swears by the gold of the temple one must keep it. Then Jesus asked which was greater. Is it the gold, or the temple that sanctifies the gold? This question reveals what the standard they had set up was missing.

They regarded the gold of the temple as special, yet they took lightly the temple that sanctifies that gold. Jesus did not compare the value of the gold with the construction cost of the temple, but asked what sanctifies what; so this question cannot be answered by thinking only of the value that the gold itself has. If we set our hearts only on the worth of what is visible, we miss the holiness that comes from God.

If people are guided by such judgment, a standard is conveyed that regards gold—that is, visible material things—as more precious than the name of God. Since those who teach what should be treasured had set up its basis upside down, those who listened also learned that inverted standard, and this is the reason Jesus called them blind guides. Those who claimed to show the way were not seeing what they should have seen first.

Salvation is based on what God has accomplished through Christ

Let us read verses 18 and 19. *"And, 'Whoever swears by the altar, it is nothing; but whoever swears by the gift that is on it, he is obliged to perform it.' Fools and blind! For which is greater, the gift or the altar that sanctifies the gift?" (Matthew 23:18–19).* The teaching about the altar and the gift also reveals the same error. They regarded an oath made by the gift placed on the altar as weightier than one made by the altar, but Jesus makes them see the altar that sanctifies the gift. When people's

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

hearts are taken up with the things they offer, they come to forget the fact that these are being offered to God.

As we hear this word, we too can examine what we are putting first in our faith. It is easy for us to regard what we have offered and the deeds we have done as great while pushing God, who bestowed grace, into the background; and if we think that because we have offered much we have obtained a higher standing before God, we have turned what we ourselves have done into the basis of our faith. Before God, who bestowed grace so that we could offer, even the one who offers cannot help but be humble.

No matter how valuable gold or gifts may be, they cannot remove people's sins. If what people have brought to God is made the basis of salvation, those who have much boast of themselves and those who have little become afraid; but the grace that saves sinners does not depend on the amount each person puts forward, so we look at what God has accomplished through Jesus Christ.

Let us place the content of salvation at the center of the zeal to preach the gospel

Since sin cannot be washed away with the gold or gifts we have offered, Jesus Himself had all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. And to pay the price for the sins that were passed on to Him, He was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died in our place, and He overcame death and rose again. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the basis of the remission of sins, so sinners become righteous by believing in their hearts in this salvation that Jesus has accomplished.

Therefore, offering to God is not paying the price of salvation, but offering because we believe in the grace He has already bestowed on us and are thankful for it. What we offer is service, as people who have received grace, so that this gospel may be preached; only when this order is set straight do we not boast of what we have offered and not evaluate others by the amount they have offered. This is because the salvation we have received is, for all of us, based on the same work of Jesus Christ.

Those who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit must also make this basis clear. The responsibility of those who teach the word is correspondingly heavy, so let us not make listeners rely on their own merits or on the evaluation of their leaders, but help them to know and believe in the salvation that Christ has accomplished. If the zeal to win people is to bear right fruit, this very content of salvation must be at the center of that zeal.

Do not forget God in any oath

Let us read verses 20 through 22. *"Therefore he who swears by the altar, swears by it and by all things on it. He who swears by the temple, swears by it and by Him who dwells in it. And he who swears by heaven, swears by the throne of God and by Him who sits on it" (Matthew 23:20–22)*. Jesus speaks of the altar and all things on it, the temple and Him who dwells in it, and heaven and the throne of God as joined together. The things they had separated, assigning different weights of responsibility, were all connected before God; so no one can avoid responsibility before God by verbal distinctions that are convenient for himself.

In particular, the last word shows that even words that invoke heaven are not separate from God, who sits on it. When people

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

cling only to which expressions they have chosen, they easily forget before whom they are actually speaking; but Jesus turns the eyes of those who argue over the words of oaths to God, who hears those words. When God is at the center of our judgment, we also come to know rightly our responsibility for our words.

When you look back on your promises as well, do not first look for a way out that suits your own interests. If you made an inflated promise to do something you cannot do, admit that fact; and if you said something wrongly, you need only correct it. If you speak words of faith to people and then try to evade the actual responsibility, the pious expressions contained in those words will not cover up the wrong.

Keep in your heart the question that Jesus asked: *"Which is greater?"* God is greater than the results before our eyes, the material things that are visible, or the rules that are favorable to us, and the One who saved us is also that very God. Regarding Him who sits on the throne of heaven as greater than anything else, let us live before Him, teaching people and keeping our promises. ✉

Sermon 12 by Paul C. Jong

Do these, and do not leave the others undone

< Matthew 23:23–24 >

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone. Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!”

Examine what God regards as weighty

The scribes and the Pharisees whom Jesus rebuked were not people who did nothing religious. They paid attention even to small things, to the point of paying tithe of mint and anise and cummin, yet it was these very people who neglected the weightier matters of the law. Here lies the reason one cannot regard one’s whole faith as right merely because there are things one has faithfully done.

Let us read verse 23. *“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: justice and mercy and faith. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone” (Matthew 23:23).* While acknowledging that they had paid tithe, Jesus said that they had neglected justice and mercy and faith; so He looked at what they had done and what

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

they had neglected together. People try to cover what they have done wrong by putting forward what they have done well, but before Jesus not a single thing is hidden, and having faithfully kept small items does not remove the responsibility for having neglected the weightier matters.

This word also corrects the way we look back on our life of faith. We must not merely count how many things we have done, but must examine whether we have put into our lives what God regards as weighty; even if the list of things we have done is long, if faith in God and the heart with which we treat our neighbors are empty, that empty place remains just as it is. Do not avoid this question on the grounds that your labors are many.

Keep justice and mercy and faith in your heart

The Lord spoke of justice and mercy and faith as the weightier matters of the law. We must believe in the righteousness of God, who has remitted sins, have compassion on our neighbors, and have faith that believes the word of God. If one departs from God, who gave the law, and boasts only of the items one has kept, one has not rightly received the law; so accept the will of God contained in His commands.

That they neglected justice—that is, righteousness—means that they regarded the items they had kept as weightier than the rightness God accomplished for sinners, that is, the righteousness of God, who has remitted sins. When one's own righteousness thus comes first, even in dealing with people one comes to treat one's own wrongs lightly and to deal heavily with the same wrongs in others, and so one places one's own interest, rather than God's rightness, at the center of one's judgment. Let

us also lay down before the word the heart that becomes generous only toward those who stand on our side.

A person who keeps mercy in his heart looks at a neighbor who is in difficulty and considers that neighbor's situation. If one only argues about why it came to be that way, one cannot go as far as helping that person; so the work of making wrongs clear and the work of having compassion on difficulties must be present together. It means not being satisfied with confirming that one is right, but thinking about the help that person needs in order to stand upright.

And faith is faith that believes in God. If a person who claims to keep the commands of God does not actually rely on God, his faith turns into the work of proving his own sincerity; but a person who believes in God puts the word ahead of his own judgment and relies on the grace bestowed on him rather than on his own merit. When there is such faith, rightness does not become something to boast of, and mercy, too, does not become a means of gaining praise.

The grace that has made us righteous leads to mercy toward our neighbors

A person who listens seriously to this word comes to know that he, too, has things he has neglected. He sees in himself a heart that put great care into small matters yet changed its judgment when faced with its own interest, and that spoke harsh words to someone yet was indifferent to that person's suffering. Therefore, what we must do before this warning is not to put forward the items we have kept even more, but to acknowledge that we cannot stand righteous before God by our own deeds.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus came to save such sinners, and the righteousness of God that the scribes and the Pharisees neglected is right here. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and as the price of those sins, He hung on the Cross and shed His blood, received in His body all the judgment we were to receive, and died in our place, and on the third day He rose again from death. We receive the remission of sins by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit; so the basis on which we are made righteous before God is not the sum of the items we have kept, but the salvation Jesus has accomplished.

If we believe this grace, the heart with which we look at our neighbors also changes. Because we know that we, too, are people who have obtained mercy, we cannot exalt only our own righteousness when faced with the shortcomings of others; and if we believe that we have been made righteous through the Lord's salvation and yet demand only merit from our neighbors, we are forgetting, in our dealings with people, the grace we have received. Grace leads to thanksgiving toward God and mercy toward people.

For a saved person to live according to the will of God is not to collect points for salvation again, but to follow that will because he knows what God, who saved him, is pleased with. Faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and a life that treats neighbors rightly thus go together. Good deeds cannot take the place of the price of the remission of sins, but neither can the confession that one has received the remission of sins become an excuse for being indifferent to one's neighbors.

Hold on to the greatest salvation of God

After speaking of the weightier matters, Jesus said to do these and not to leave the others undone; so He was not saying that small things are all useless. Holding on to what is important while not neglecting small responsibilities either—that is what sets the order of life right, and it is different from picking out and getting rid of the responsibilities that are inconvenient to oneself.

Doing small things with devotion is a good thing, but if, using that devotion as an excuse, one turns away from the people one ought to look after, one has lost the center. Conversely, speaking of great purposes while treating lightly one's everyday promises and the responsibilities entrusted to one is the same wrong; the Lord's word does not open a way to hide on one side, but makes us discern what the center is and fulfill small things, too, in keeping with that center.

Let us read verse 24. *"Blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel!" (Matthew 23:24)*. The picture of straining out a gnat while swallowing a camel reveals a judgment that has reversed the great and the small. This is the contradiction of carefully straining out small things while entirely missing the greatest thing God has bestowed, that is, the salvation of the remission of sins. The reason Jesus called them blind guides is that, even if one has the confidence that one examines things closely, if one does not see what is most important, one cannot guide people rightly.

Think about the work you are putting your strength into today. Examine whether that labor comes from faith in God and goes together with treating your neighbors rightly and having compassion on them; but there is no reason to throw away even what you have done well. We are lacking people who cannot

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

strain out all the small things perfectly, but we are holding on by faith to the greatest salvation God has bestowed. Within that grace, I hope that we will keep justice and mercy and faith in our hearts and become people who, even in the face of small things, do not miss the salvation of God, which is greater than a camel. ✉

Sermon 13 by Paul C. Jong

First cleanse the inside of the cup and dish

< Matthew 23:25–26 >

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence. Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also."

Do not cover the filth of your heart with your reputation

The appearance seen by people and the heart that is before God can differ. Even if someone is careful with words and proper in conduct, what that person holds in the heart cannot be known from outward appearance alone; so Jesus, speaking of the outside and the inside of the cup and dish, exposed this condition of the scribes and the Pharisees. What they needed was not the skill to adorn the outside better, but the work of making the inside clean.

Let us read verse 25. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you cleanse the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of extortion and self-indulgence" (Matthew 23:25)*. The outside of the cup and dish was clean, but inside they were full of greed and self-indulgence; and Jesus did not overlook the filth of the inside just because the outside had been

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

cleansed, but exposed that the outside and the inside were different and rebuked their hypocrisy. Hypocrisy is adorning only the outward appearance to look holy while not believing with the heart; so even though the form looks holy, sin remains in the heart just as it is. Just because we have tidied up the places that people's eyes reach does not mean that even the heart God sees becomes clean.

Before this word, do not try to explain your heart by your reputation. That people know you as a good person and what kind of heart you hold before God are matters to be examined separately; so if you cover up the problems in your heart on the basis of people's approval, you will keep holding on to that very difference between the outside and the inside that Jesus exposed.

Do not leave as it is the greed that fills the inside

Jesus made it clear that what is inside is extortion and self-indulgence—that is, greed and self-indulgence. Greed makes us treat people with a heart that thinks only of our own share and wants to have more, and self-indulgence makes us give ourselves over to our desires without restraining them. If we leave this heart as it is and try only to look godly on the outside, the form of faith comes to be used to cover up selfish desire.

The selfish desire in the heart sometimes puts forward a good cause. While saying that it is for the community, we may in fact cling only to the share of recognition we will receive; and while saying that we are helping others, we may also want them to be grateful to us and to follow us. Therefore, let us examine not only what we have done but also what we are trying to gain from that work, and let us confirm before the word whether there is in us a heart that uses people for our own benefit.

Even when we come to know that our heart is wrong, it is easy for us to try to resolve it by making the outside look neater. But greed does not disappear just because we learn how to hide it; rather, because of the relief of not having been found out by people, we end up leaving that heart as it is. The reason Jesus speaks of the inside first is that hiding a problem and removing it are entirely different things.

The heart is made clean when we believe the gospel

Let us read verse 26. *"Blind Pharisee, first cleanse the inside of the cup and dish, that the outside of them may be clean also" (Matthew 23:26)*. Jesus made the order clear, saying first to cleanse the inside. If we leave the inside as it is and change only the appearance seen from the outside, we end up following our selfish desires again when no one is watching; only when the inside stands upright can what we do outwardly also head in the same direction.

Then, with what can a heart defiled by sin be made clean? Looking into one's own inner self and recognizing one's wrongs is necessary, but sin is not removed merely by having been discovered; and although there are times when we can suppress our selfish desires by resolution, that resolution cannot receive in our place the judgment for the sins we have already committed. The remission of sins in the heart comes from believing in what the Savior has accomplished.

Because we cannot wash the inside of the cup with our own hands, Jesus Himself, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world passed on to Him, even the greed and self-indulgence that came out of our hearts. And as the price of those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, received

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the judgment for sin in our place, and died, and He shattered death and rose again. We receive the remission of sins by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts; so the basis on which our hearts are made clean lies not in correcting our own appearance, but in this work that Jesus accomplished.

Therefore, if you have come to know the filth of your own heart, do not hide it, but believe in the salvation that Christ accomplished. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not teach a way of pretending to be clean, but makes known how Jesus removed all sins. When we accept that fact with our hearts, we come out of the place where we had leaned on people's evaluation and come to rely on the remission of sins that the Lord has given.

A heart that has been made clean is revealed through a life of serving

Even in those who have received the remission of sins, the selfish desires of the flesh that seek to put their own interests first arise. At such times, we must not doubt the salvation we have already received and go back to adorning the outside again; rather, even though we are lacking, we must stand in the place of serving the Lord by faith. Having received the remission of sins cannot become an excuse to go on following our selfish desires as they are; the grace that saved us was not given so that we would hide that heart.

For example, while doing a task entrusted to us together, there are times when we come to want to credit another person's labor to our own merit. It is not set right if we speak as that heart wants and then add humble words only on the outside; so say

who actually labored, and acknowledge that person's share. When we lay down the selfish desire within, our outward words also become right.

If we have tried to move other people to suit our own needs, we must correct that attitude as well. When you ask for help, consider whether the other person's circumstances allow them to handle it, and do not pile up hatred in your heart because they refused. When we do not let getting what we want become the purpose of our relationships, and, as people who have received grace from the Lord, respect others, our deeds, too, change little by little.

Jesus said that if the inside is cleansed, the outside will be clean also. This is not a word telling us to give up the life we live outwardly, but He made known the way by which the inside and the outside become clean together; so those who have received the remission of sins in their hearts serve the Lord by faith even though they are lacking, and their deeds, too, gradually change. Do not set your heart on leaving only a good image before people, but believe in the remission of sins you have received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. From that inside which has first been made clean, let a life of serving the Lord flow out to the outside. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 14 by Paul C. Jong

Nothing can be hidden before God

< Matthew 23:27–28 >

“Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness.”

There are times when a person is rebuked by Jesus even while being acknowledged by people as a righteous person, and so it was with the scribes and the Pharisees in today’s word. Outwardly they had the appearance of faith, but Jesus spoke of what filled them inside, and there was such a great difference between the evaluation people made and the judgment of Jesus. When we know this difference, we can break free from the mistake of taking people’s praise as evidence of faith.

Jesus likened them to whitewashed tombs, speaking together of the outside that appears beautiful and the inside that is full of uncleanness. So let us, too, in the light of this word, not look only at how we appear to others, but look back on what we believe as we live before God. For being acknowledged by people cannot remove the sin that is in our hearts.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

A beautiful outward appearance cannot change the inside of a tomb

Let us read verse 27. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which indeed appear beautiful outwardly, but inside are full of dead men's bones and all uncleanness" (Matthew 23:27)*. A whitewashed tomb appears beautiful outwardly. But after speaking of that beauty, Jesus immediately pointed out the dead men's bones and all uncleanness that are inside it. Although the outside may feel beautiful to those who look at it, that does not make even what is inside clean; so the weight of this comparison lies not in how beautiful the outward appearance is, but in the reality that this beauty is hiding.

It is the same with Jesus' exposing the hypocrisy of the scribes and the Pharisees. They had an appearance worth showing to others, but with that appearance they could not resolve their own sin before God. If, because there is something outwardly worthy of praise, we do not examine the sin of our hearts, it is the same as looking only at the beautiful outside and not thinking about the inside of the tomb.

People's praise cannot change God's judgment

Let us read verse 28. *"Even so you also outwardly appear righteous to men, but inside you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness" (Matthew 23:28)*. Jesus applied the comparison of the tomb directly to them. They appeared righteous to men, but inside they were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness; thus the appearance revealed to people's eyes and the reality before God were different from each other. The good evaluation that people

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

made by looking at the outside did not change even the lawlessness within them into something right.

In this kind of faith, the standard for discerning what is right easily becomes bound to people's reactions. When people praise them, they think they are believing rightly, and when no one notices their wrongs, they consider that there is no problem. But people do not fully know what is inside other people; so no one can hold up the praise of those who do not know his inner self and insist on his own righteousness before God, who knows all things.

Even while stating just as it was that they appeared righteous to men, Jesus declared woe on them. This means that God's rebuke does not disappear just because people view someone favorably. Let us, too, who hear this word, examine what we put forward first when we speak of our own faith. Are we not first putting forward the position we have kept for a long time and the recognition we have received from others, while being unable to give an answer concerning the very sin of our hearts?

Our record in the life of faith cannot take the place of the remission of sins; so if we have been saying that we believe in Jesus, what we actually believe must be clear. If we lean on the fact that people know us as people of good faith, it becomes hard to lay our hearts open before the word, and, worried that we may lose our reputation if it is exposed, we end up avoiding the very word we ourselves need.

Hypocrisy covers sin, but Jesus exposes sin

Jesus said that inside them they were full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. Outwardly showing faith and inwardly going against the will of God existed together in them; so hypocrisy

does not stop at an attitude of trying to look a little better than one really is, but is the wrong of trying to stand before God as though one were righteous while leaving the lawlessness in one's heart just as it is.

If, even while knowing that we have done wrong, we keep it covered because people do not know about it, the gap between the appearance we show and our actual heart grows wider. What we must do then is not to defend ourselves so that no one can ask any further, but to acknowledge as sin what Jesus calls sin; if we reject that judgment in order to protect our reputation, we end up continually standing against the word that brings sin to light.

However, just because we lay down the heart that tries to hide sin before God, the sin within us does not disappear by itself. Even a person who has admitted his own sin still needs the remission of sins, and it is right here that the reason we must believe in Jesus becomes clear. What we need is not a way to appear sinless, but the salvation that has removed sin.

Jesus fulfilled the righteousness we need

Let us read the word Jesus spoke when He received baptism from John. *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15)*. Because no one can stand before God with a righteousness that appears right to men, Jesus fulfilled the righteousness that is truly right before God. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and among them are also our hypocrisy and lawlessness that we have hidden before people. And as the price of that sin, He shed

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

His blood on the Cross, received the judgment in our place, and died, and He rose again from death and became our Savior. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in our hearts.

This salvation is not a matter of hiding sin to make us look good to people, but the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished by having sin passed on to Him and even receiving its judgment. Therefore, cast away the heart that tries to persuade God by putting forward your own deeds, and believe in the righteousness of God that Jesus fulfilled. The righteousness of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit lies not in the good evaluations people have given them, but in Jesus Christ, who saved them from sin.

Even if we have not been able to speak of our shortcomings to people, there is no reason to live hiding them even before God. This is because Jesus, who knows all our sins, accomplished salvation for those very sins; so believing the gospel is not insisting that we were clean to begin with, but accepting that Jesus has completely saved us, who were sinners.

Let us live with nothing to hide before God

Even after we have received the remission of sins, a heart that seeks people's recognition can arise. At such times, what we must rely on is not the reputation we have already gained, but the righteousness of God, who has saved us; so do not think that if you acknowledge your shortcomings, even your faith will collapse. Our salvation lies not in never having shown any shortcomings before people, but in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This faith turns us back from the attitude of trying to maintain only a godly appearance while hiding our wrongs. If you have wronged someone, acknowledge your words and actions and apologize, and do not shift the responsibility onto the other person because you want to keep hearing that you are a person of good faith. The same goes for doing what is needed to set things right if you have caused someone loss. This is not paying a price in order to obtain the remission of sins, but a life that, within the grace we have received, no longer tries to protect itself with hypocrisy.

Living with nothing to hide before God is not explaining our inner selves in every detail to everyone and gaining their acknowledgment, but accepting the reality of ourselves that God has spoken of and following what He has called right. Doing what we ought to do even when no one recognizes it, and casting away what goes against the word even when people view it favorably, let us guard our hearts so that people's eyes do not become greater than the word of God.

The whitewashed tomb could not change its inside with its beautiful outside, and neither can we cover our sin before God with people's acknowledgment. Therefore, let us stand before God with a heart that believes in the righteousness Jesus Christ fulfilled, rather than with a heart that tries to make ourselves look righteous. We give thanks to the Lord, who, though He knows all that is inside us, which is like a tomb full of dead men's bones, accomplished salvation for that very sin. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 15 by Paul C. Jong

Obey the word He has now sent

< Matthew 23:29–36 >

"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets.' Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell? Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city, that on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to you, all these things will come upon this generation."

The scribes and the Pharisees, while building the tombs of the prophets and adorning the monuments of the righteous, said that they themselves were different from their fathers, who had killed the prophets. They were confident that if they had lived in the days of their fathers, they would not have taken part in such

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

an evil deed, but Jesus, having heard those words, did not call them righteous; rather, He rebuked them, saying that they were bearing witness against themselves that they were the descendants of those who killed the prophets.

Why was such a rebuke handed down to people who honored the prophets? Jesus revealed together the words they spoke about past events and what they would do to the people He would now send. While they built the tombs of the dead prophets and adorned the monuments of the righteous, they were the very ones who would persecute those He was sending to them. Therefore, this word teaches that we cannot prove our own faith merely by words criticizing the evil of the past, and that what matters is how we stand before the word God is letting us hear now.

A person who exalts a prophet follows the will he conveyed

Let us read verses 29 and 30. *"Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! Because you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, and say, 'If we had lived in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets'" (Matthew 23:29–30)*. They knew that their fathers' shedding the blood of the prophets had been wrong. So they built the tombs of the prophets, adorned the monuments of the righteous, and said that if they had lived at that time, they would not have taken part in the shedding of blood; this was a claim that they were people who stood on the side of the righteous. But that was a judgment they had pronounced with their own mouths concerning a time that had already passed.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Concerning things that have already passed, it is easy to choose the right side. Speaking of who was a prophet and what deeds were evil and accepting the word that has come to us are different matters; accepting the word means acknowledging that God is right even where it clashes with our own thoughts and even when our own wrongs are exposed.

The scribes and the Pharisees, while doing the work of honoring the prophets, said that they were on the side of the prophets, but before God's sending they were people who would act contrary to that. Therefore, we cannot judge their faith by looking only at their building of tombs and adorning of monuments; we must see whether they follow the will of God that the prophets conveyed. Exalting only the prophets while rejecting that will cannot be a faith that obeys God.

Let us bring our own rebellion, rather than the wrongs of others, before the word

Let us read verses 31 through 33. *"Therefore you are witnesses against yourselves that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. Fill up, then, the measure of your fathers' guilt. Serpents, brood of vipers! How can you escape the condemnation of hell?" (Matthew 23:31–33)*. Their speaking of their fathers was also a statement by which they themselves admitted that they were the descendants of those who killed the prophets. Jesus did not acknowledge there the righteousness they had boasted of, because in the words that followed He made clear that those descendants, too, would go against God's sending and persecute those sent. Saying that they were different from their fathers and yet carrying on the same rebellion—that was their real state.

In the word in which Jesus told them to fill up the measure of their fathers' guilt, a fearful rebuke is contained, and right after it He asked how they could escape the condemnation of hell. It is not a word permitting their way, but a word making clear the condemnation that those who carry on the evil of their fathers will finally receive; they said that they had nothing to do with the sins of the past, but while committing the same sin, they could not be freed from that responsibility.

The weight of this word lies not so much in who their fathers were as in what they, who are now hearing the word, do. Jesus specifically made clear what they would do; even if they speak well of their own faith by comparing it with their fathers, their present attitude of going against God does not become right.

We, too, have a heart by which we regard ourselves as right while pointing out the wrongs of other people. But it does not follow that we are obeying God just because other people are wrong, so let us look back on whether we accept the word of God when it exposes our wrongs. Lips that rebuke the rebellion of others and a heart that covers its own rebellion being present together—that is the very picture this text reveals.

Jesus sends them even though He knows they will be persecuted

Let us read verse 34. *"Therefore, indeed, I send you prophets, wise men, and scribes: some of them you will kill and crucify, and some of them you will scourge in your synagogues and persecute from city to city" (Matthew 23:34)*. Jesus said that He Himself would send prophets, wise men, and scribes. The same name as that of the scribes who were rebuked earlier appears, but here it is clear that they are people whom Jesus sends; what

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

matters is not a religious title but by whose sending they have been sent and what word they preach.

But the treatment that those whom Jesus sends would receive was persecution. He said that they would kill and crucify some of them, and scourge some of them in the synagogues and persecute them from city to city. Those who had said that they would not have taken part in the bloodshed of the past would now do that very thing to those who had been sent to them; this is the actual evidence that overturns their claim.

It is a fearful thing that people who say they serve God reject God's sending. They exalted the names of the prophets but did not submit to the will of God, who sends those prophets; when people's own judgment comes before the word of God, they come to reject even the one who preaches the word that rebukes them, and that does not end with falling out with one person but becomes the sin of opposing the word God has sent.

Jesus said that He would send them even though He knew that those He would send would be persecuted. The actions of those who persecute cannot make God's will go wrong, and the truth of the word is not determined by whether the one who preaches it is welcomed or rejected. Therefore, we, too, examine whether we rightly preach the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished, rather than how much people support us.

God does not forget the righteous blood that was shed

Let us read verses 35 and 36. *"That on you may come all the righteous blood shed on the earth, from the blood of righteous Abel to the blood of Zechariah, son of Berechiah, whom you murdered between the temple and the altar. Assuredly, I say to*

you, all these things will come upon this generation" (Matthew 23:35–36). Jesus spoke of the blood of righteous Abel through to the blood of Zechariah. However those who built the tombs of the prophets and adorned the monuments of the righteous might explain past events, God knew the righteous blood shed on the earth; the evil that killed a person does not disappear through an outward show of honoring the one who was killed, and God judges that deed and holds them responsible for it.

In particular, Jesus said that all these things would come upon this generation. He declared judgment on those who had claimed that they were different from their fathers; while they reproached the persecution of the past, they were the ones who would themselves persecute those He was sending to them. Jesus' warning goes beyond the good reputation they had built up and holds them responsible for having rebelled against God.

Having many religious words and deeds does not become grounds for escaping God's condemnation. The One who judges does not, on seeing how well the monuments have been adorned, regard sin as though it had never happened; He judges the reality of having harmed those whom God sent and rejected His word. Therefore, we must not take comfort in an appearance of faith that others recognize, but must know what salvation we, who have sin before God, need.

We need the faith that believes in the Savior He has sent

The heart that says it respects the prophets while rejecting God's sending is revealed in saying that one believes in God while not accepting the salvation God has bestowed. We cannot make religious knowledge or experience the basis of salvation;

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

we, who cannot remove by ourselves the sin for which we would receive the condemnation of hell, need Jesus Christ, who had that sin passed on to Him.

We cannot by ourselves escape the condemnation of which He said, *"How can you escape the condemnation of hell?"* Therefore, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him. And as the price of those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, received in our place the condemnation we were to receive, and died, and He rose again from death. This news, which has given us the remission of sins, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and sinners receive salvation by believing this gospel in their hearts.

This faith is different from the claim that we are less evil than others. It is acknowledging that God is right to judge our sins and accepting the salvation Jesus has accomplished; a heart that puts forward its own righteousness makes a person think there is no need to accept the gospel even when it is heard, but a person who knows that he needs the remission of sins sets his heart on Jesus Christ, who has saved him.

The reason we value the people of God, too, is not that they establish our righteousness for us, but that they preach to us the word of salvation Jesus has accomplished. So let us hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that they preach, and let us correct our thoughts that are contrary to the word. If we speak highly of those who preach the word while pushing out of our hearts the very truth that is preached, it is no different from the error of honoring the prophets while rejecting that sending.

Let us follow the word when it corrects us

While reading the Bible, we can easily speak of the wickedness of the people who killed the prophets, but we cannot make that judgment the evidence of our own faith. Examine whether you follow the word God has given even when it breaks down your boasting and makes you correct your thoughts. Rather than saying that we would have done well if we had lived in the past, what we need is a heart that believes the truth He has now let us hear.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit value the word of God because of the grace they have received. When your wrongs are pointed out, do not first hate the one who preached the word in order to protect your own name, but examine what the will of God is and turn back where you are wrong. Then we do not stop at praising the faith of the past, but we ourselves also come to live according to the word.

Jesus was not deceived by their words honoring the prophets; knowing how they would treat God's sending, He clearly declared judgment on that sin. Do not pass over this warning as a story of people of old that has nothing to do with us. Let us not speak of our faith by building tombs and adorning monuments, but let us bow our hearts before the truth He is letting us hear now and follow that word. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 16 by Paul C. Jong

Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD

< Matthew 23:37–39 >

“O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate; for I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, ‘Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!’”

Jesus called out the name of Jerusalem again and again, turning toward it. While speaking of the sin of killing the prophets and stoning those who were sent, He at the same time revealed His will to gather them; so the fact that Jerusalem’s sin was heavy and the fact that Jesus sought to embrace them are together within one word. When we know the Lord’s heart toward them, we can also rightly hear the warning of desolation that follows.

Today’s word shows what the will of God bestowed on Jerusalem was and how they treated that will. They were not willing to be gathered into the Lord’s embrace, but even while speaking of that refusal, Jesus spoke of the time when they would praise the One who comes in the name of the Lord. So, before this word, we fear the consequences of rebellion and set our hope on the Lord, who saves sinners.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Lord sought to gather Jerusalem

Let us read verse 37. *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing!" (Matthew 23:37)*. The will that Jesus revealed was that He had sought to gather the children of Jerusalem, and He spoke of that will through the image of a hen gathering her chicks under her wings. The image of spreading the wings toward the chicks contains the will to embrace and protect; so Jesus was saying how often He Himself had sought to gather them, even toward Jerusalem, which had killed those whom God had sent.

The prophets He sent to them and those who were sent were people who conveyed the Lord's will, and in His sending them there was the will to make Jerusalem return to God. Therefore, their opposing that word did not end as something done because they disliked the speakers; it was a rejection of the will of the Lord, who had sought to gather them.

God points out the wrongdoing of people who are in sin in order to turn them back. Even a rebuke that is painful to hear is a word that makes us realize what sin we are in and return to God; so do not let your heart be taken up only with the fact of being rebuked, but see the will of God, who calls us through that word. That the people of God were sent to Jerusalem was also because of that very will.

Jesus did not say that He had done that only once, but asked how many times He had sought to gather them. Even while Jerusalem was rebelling, the Lord made His will known to them, and just because they did not listen, the heart the Lord had held toward them does not become something that never existed.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jerusalem was a people who had to respond before that grace bestowed on them.

Treasure the calling by which He sought to embrace you

Jesus said that He had sought to gather them, but they were not willing. What the Lord sought to bestow and what they wanted were different from each other, and that refusal did not stay only within their hearts but was revealed in killing the prophets and stoning those who were sent. They did not accept the will of God that had come to them, and they harmed those who conveyed that will.

Jerusalem was not a place that had had no opportunity to hear the word God sent, but a place that had been sent to many times. But having heard the word and having believed that word are not the same; so one cannot feel secure on the grounds of being in a place related to God while rejecting in one's heart the word that has been heard. It was toward that very place that Jesus said, *"You were not willing."*

Let us, too, not regard ourselves as giving our hearts to God merely because we have been hearing the word for a long time. Even when God corrects your thoughts, examine whether you accept that word. If we hold on to our own will as it is while only hoping that God will protect us, we are putting our own will ahead of the Lord's will to gather us; a heart that seeks the Lord's grace also listens to the truth that the Lord lets us hear.

Knowing God's love cannot become a reason to take His will lightly; because we know His will to embrace us, we treasure that calling. Jerusalem rejected that will, and here lies the reason

Jesus went on to speak of desolation. That warning reveals how heavy the sin of rejecting the grace the Lord bestowed is.

The house of Jerusalem, which refused, is left desolate

Let us read verse 38. *"See! Your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:38)*. Jesus said that their house would be left desolate. Earlier He spoke of having sought to gather them under His wings, and here He speaks of the result of being left desolate; so rejecting the will by which the Lord sought to embrace them cannot be separated from its result. This word shatters the thought that one will continue to be safe under God's care even while rejecting Him.

This warning makes Jerusalem look back on the things it had been trusting in by itself. Just because they had a house familiar to them and their religious life continued, they could not consider that God accepted that faith; the One truly to be relied on is God, who looks after that house. Holding on to the outward appearance that remains while going against God cannot prevent desolation.

Let us, too, beware of enjoying what God has given while taking God Himself lightly. Having enjoyed grace cannot become permission to reject the word; so if you can hear the word today as well, examine yourself by that word and turn your heart to the Lord. To hear Jesus' warning and yet pass it off, thinking that we are all right, is exactly repeating Jerusalem's wrong.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Those who believe in Jesus as the Savior praise Him

Let us read verse 39. *"For I say to you, you shall see Me no more till you say, 'Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD!'" (Matthew 23:39)*. Jesus said that from now on they would not see Him, adding that this would be until they praised the One who comes in the name of the Lord. Those who were now rejecting Jesus needed a confession that acknowledges who Jesus is and welcomes Him; so the center of this praise is He who comes in the name of the Lord, and it is returning from the place of rejecting Him to the place of praising and welcoming Him.

If we think of Jesus only as one among many prophets, we cannot fully know the meaning of this confession. Jesus is the Son of God the Father and the Christ who came to save us; so although the very One who had sought to gather Jerusalem was right before them, they were pushing away, by their own thoughts, the Savior whom they should have waited for and welcomed.

Let us, too, not separate exalting and calling on the name of Jesus from believing in the salvation He has accomplished. Praise toward the Lord does not stop at the expectation that He is the One who will give the help we desire, but is a confession of faith that knows what salvation Jesus has bestowed and acknowledges as Savior the Christ who delivered us from sin.

In order to deliver us from sin according to that very will by which He sought to gather them under His wings, Jesus came to this earth and, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world transferred to Him. And as the price of those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for sin in our place, and died; and He rose again from

death and became our living Savior. Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with their hearts receive the remission of sins that Jesus has bestowed.

To welcome Jesus as Savior is to believe this salvation as your own; so do not reject that grace because of a heart that seeks to keep your own righteousness. Those who believe in what Jesus has done in saving us cannot boast that they were accepted because they had righteousness to present before the Lord; because the Lord has fully accomplished the salvation they needed, they give thanks and praise Him.

Let us pray that this gospel may be preached to Israel as well

Jesus, who declared desolation, also spoke of the time when they would praise the One who comes in the name of the Lord. The word *"till you say"* makes us look ahead to the time when they will praise and welcome the One who comes in the name of the Lord; so let us not look only at their present rejection and forget the salvation the Lord will bestow.

Therefore, we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit pray that among the people of Israel, too, people may rise up who believe in the same Savior. We ask that they may rightly know who Jesus is and come to believe in the remission of sins that Jesus has accomplished, and that among them there may be raised up those who will clearly preach the truth of salvation and lead people to faith.

Such prayer contains a heart that knows the grace that saved us. We, too, could not become right before God by ourselves, but we heard and believed the gospel the Lord gave and received the remission of sins; so when we see people who do not yet

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

accept Jesus as Savior, we cannot boast of our own righteousness. It is that we hope that the Lord's salvation may be made known to them as well, and that they, too, may come to believe in that grace.

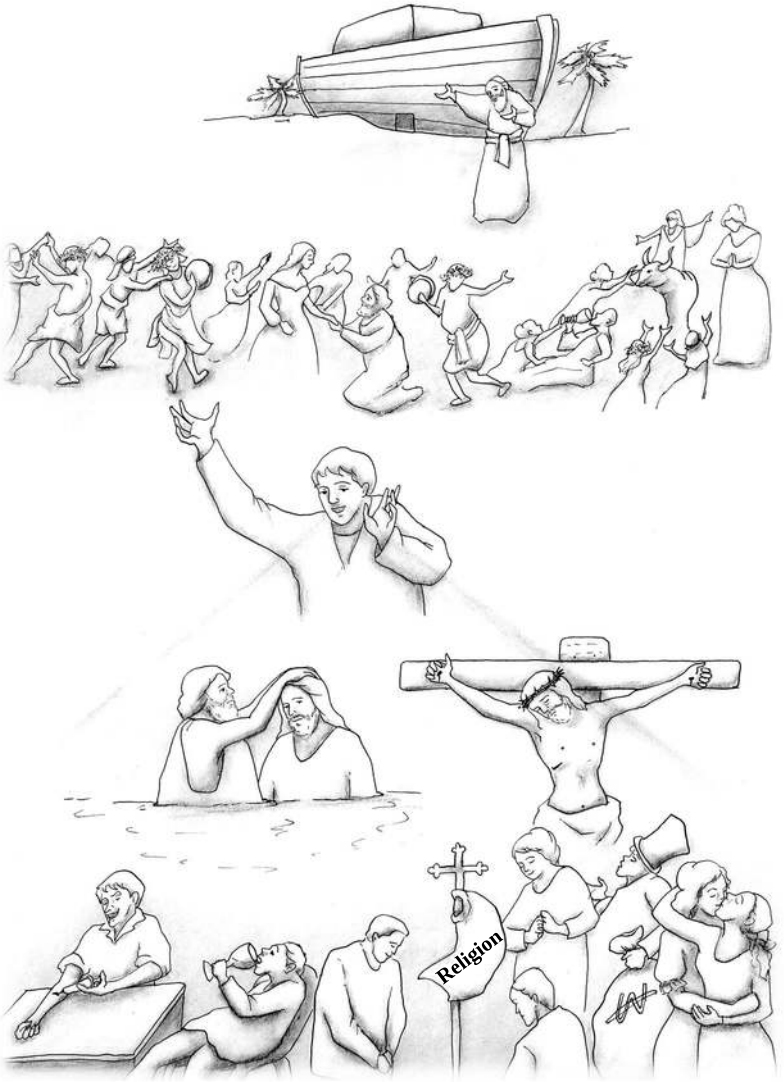
Jesus, who called Jerusalem again and again, revealed His will to embrace them under His wings. We know that will and give thanks to the Lord, and we humble our hearts in the face of their rejection and the warning of desolation. We hope that among Israel, too, faith may arise that says, *"Blessed is He who comes in the name of the LORD,"* and that the gospel of the water and the Spirit may be clearly preached to them. ✉

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

CHAPTER

24

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



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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The word of Jesus, which is more certain than the stones of the temple

< Matthew 24:1–2 >

“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’”

It is Jesus who knows the future of the temple

Jesus was on His way, having come out of the temple. On that road, His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple, and Jesus said that those buildings would all be thrown down. What the disciples pointed to was the appearance standing before their eyes at that moment, and what Jesus made known was the end that would come just as He had said. This short conversation asks us what we must believe as we live.

In verse 1, the disciples came to Jesus and pointed out to Him the buildings of the temple. In that act was a heart that looked proudly upon the magnificent temple. Regarding the same temple, the disciples took pride in its buildings, while Jesus saw that those stones would be thrown down without a single one left.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

What people can point to is the outward appearance, but it is Jesus who knows how long that appearance will remain as it is. Therefore, a disciple who follows Jesus must not stop at boasting of what he has seen, but must listen to the words Jesus speaks.

The same thing happens in a life of faith as well. While we look upon the visible form of religion as something familiar, we can let pass unheeded the very words Jesus speaks concerning sin, judgment, and salvation. People easily pick out only what they have done well and boast of it, but Jesus knows everything, both our outward appearance and even the sin that is in our hearts.

Before the word that it would be thrown down, look back at what you lean on

Let us read verse 2 again. *"And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down'" (Matthew 24:2)*. Jesus points to *"all these things"* that the disciples are looking at. He did not deny the fact that those buildings were standing, but said that those very buildings would all be thrown down. So we need eyes that see, together with the visible present, the future that the word makes known. We cannot conclude that something will be safe in the future as well just because it looks solid now.

The word that not one stone will be left upon another makes known a thorough destruction, in which everything is thrown down without anything left. When people see something large and old, they easily think that it will go on remaining, but that thought cannot stop the word of Jesus. In the previous chapter, Jesus had already said, *"See! Your house is left to you desolate"*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

(Matthew 23:38). The word that the temple would be thrown down was a word making known that this warning would actually be fulfilled.

Here we come to look back at what we are leaning our hearts on. Our sins do not go away through the visible form of religion or through a religious life that people recognize. If we lean on such things and feel at ease while leaving the sin in our hearts as it is, we are in effect regarding what is seen as greater than the word of Jesus. When Jesus spoke of the destruction, what the disciples needed was not so much to examine the buildings more closely as to have the faith that accepted that declaration as fact. We, too, need the faith that acknowledges the word concerning sin and judgment and turns our hearts to the Savior.

Jesus, who announced judgment, had our sins passed on to Him

The word by which Jesus announces judgment is not a word meant to abandon us to vague fear. This is because the One who spoke that word is the One who came to save sinners. The basis on which we can rely on Him lies in the salvation He actually accomplished; so we must not look for the remission of sins in the size of our religious life or in our long years of experience, but must know how Jesus removed our sins.

Let us read Matthew chapter 3, verse 15. *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).* The stones the disciples boasted of were going to be thrown down, but Jesus, who was walking beside those stones, was the One who would accomplish a salvation that would not be thrown down. Through the baptism He received

from John at the Jordan River, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and in that sin were your sins and mine as well. It is not that we pile up religious deeds to move our sins over to Jesus, but that Jesus has already had our sins passed on to Him through that baptism He received from John.

Because He had our sins passed on to Him, Jesus had to shed His blood. The Bible says, *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22).* As the price of that sin which had been passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and became our living Savior. Those who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of all sins and become children of God. Salvation does not lie in having what we have built up acknowledged by God, but in believing with our hearts in the righteousness that Jesus has fulfilled.

So our attitude in hearing the word of Jesus also becomes new. We cannot hold on only to the promise of salvation while taking lightly the word that He judges sin. It was because sin truly had to be judged that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him and made the atoning sacrifice in our place. We who believe this gospel can stand honestly before the word, relying on that grace, and without striving to adorn ourselves so as to look like safe people, we need only accept the truth that Jesus makes known to us.

The temple was thrown down just as He had said

The first two verses of chapter 24 begin with a conversation about the buildings of the temple, but that conversation makes us who hear it look back at the basis of our faith. The buildings

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that looked solid in the disciples' eyes were going to be thrown down, and the word of Jesus that made that destruction known was fulfilled exactly. In A.D. 70 the Roman army attacked Jerusalem and threw down the temple, just as Jesus had said. However large what is visible may be, it cannot be more certain than Jesus, who speaks.

The disciples who heard this word later come to ask Him on the Mount of Olives when these things would happen. In this way, the word that made known the destruction of the temple leads into the word in which He teaches about what will happen at the end of the age.

What is it that makes your heart feel at ease? If you feel at ease looking at your own religious life, you must examine again the basis of your remission of sins. If you feel at ease because you believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled, keep that faith. The One who took our salvation upon Himself and accomplished it is Jesus. Even if the day comes when not one stone is left upon another, the heart that believes the word He spoke will not lose the Savior on whom it relies. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

What faith should we have in the age of spiritual disasters?

< Matthew 24:3–8 >

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows.'"

Jesus is telling us that now is the time of disasters. Today I would like to share the word about the time of disasters that has come upon us—about the disasters that come physically and the disasters that come spiritually.

Is this world now at the beginning of disasters, or in the age of disasters? One may ask such a question. The answer to this question may include not simply natural disasters or social chaos

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

but even spiritual, moral, environmental, and political chaos. In the following respects, there are grounds on which we can call the present the age of disasters. First, let us look at a few things about physical disasters.

Physical disasters have begun

The first is natural disasters and climate change. Unprecedented floods and droughts, wildfires, earthquakes, typhoons, and the like are occurring frequently all over the world. Because of climate change, the reactions of nature, which human beings cannot control, are growing more and more severe.

The second is war and social unrest. War and violence continue in many parts of the world. Because of political polarization, social distrust, and economic disparity, the solidarity among people is weakening.

The third is epidemics and global health crises. Since the world recently went through a global epidemic, epidemics are now recognized as global disasters. Epidemics have had repercussions not only on health but even on mental and economic aspects.

The fourth is moral crisis and spiritual crisis. Because of the distortion of the truth, human-centered thinking, and rampant materialism, people are moving further and further away from spiritual values. The Bible also says, *"But know this, that in the last days perilous times will come: For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, unloving, unforgiving, slanderers, without self-control, brutal, despisers of good, traitors, headstrong, haughty, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God" (2 Timothy 3:1–4).*

From the Biblical perspective as well, Matthew chapter 24, which we read today, says that the age of disasters has come. Jesus, too, spoke of famines and earthquakes, wars between nations, and the appearance of false prophets as signs of the last days, and in the Gospel of Luke He also spoke of pestilences. But at the same time, He said that all these things are the beginning of sorrows, and that the end will come after the true gospel has been preached in all the world.

This is speaking of disasters in worldly terms. All of this is true, and these are the disasters that the people of the world speak of. But disasters have not come to us only physically; they have also begun in great measure morally and spiritually in our hearts. And now they will no longer stop but will keep progressing from here on. Until now I have spoken about a part of the physical disasters, and from now on I will speak about the spiritual disasters that have already begun.

The spiritual disaster in which the truth is distorted

The first is the distortion of the truth. Because of human-centered thinking, theological ideas and philosophical ideas, and rampant materialism, human beings are moving further and further away from the word of salvation that God has given. Physical disasters are such that we cannot cope with them, so if they go all the way to the end, we will all die. But now it has become the age of spiritual disasters. Theology is so widespread that people regard philosophical things and human thoughts as higher than the word of God.

For example, these days a certain denomination says that theology is not an academic discipline, and if we think carefully

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

about that statement, it means that theology is the same as the word of God. And so both the students who learn theology and the people who teach it, while praying, are saying that one must hold on to the human-centered doctrines that their theological predecessors made, and believe them as the word of God.

Dear fellow believers, if you believe theology as the word of God, then there is no God. That is why the truth is distorted. The word of God is distorted. God gave us the law of salvation, but people have changed that law of salvation. People must know this.

Now is the age of spiritual disasters, yet to people the word of God is not important. Their hearts are absorbed in what theology says and what philosophers have said.

Their hearts are absorbed in what the pastors of their own churches have said. And so people today, even while believing in Jesus, offer prayers of repentance, try and resolve to live good lives, and exert their will to offer fasting prayers. But that is exactly the same as the time in the Old Testament age when people brought sacrificial offerings to the tabernacle of meeting and offered sacrifices. The people of Israel committed sins, offered prayers of repentance, and made resolutions; and again, because of their sins, they brought sacrificial offerings and laid their hands on the heads of the offerings; and once a year the high priest laid his hands on the offering on behalf of the people, killed it, and offered the sacrificial offering to God. The faith of people today is the same as in that Old Testament age.

Now is not the Old Testament age. Now is the New Testament age. It has been more than two thousand years since Jesus came to this earth. Therefore we must know that the law of salvation has changed. God said that He would now give you a law other than the law He had given you long ago, that He would plant the word of God in your hearts and give you a new

covenant, and that He had sent His Son and removed all your sins.

He said that He would engrave it on the tablets of your hearts and keep you from forgetting it. And so He sent His own Son and saved us from sin. The law of salvation that God has given us has changed. He has changed it into a new law of salvation for us. It is by believing in Jesus Christ that we obtain salvation.

"The Word was God"

In this age of spiritual disasters, we must believe that the word of God is God. No matter how many other things we may know, who fundamentally is God? God revealed Himself to us, and how did He reveal Himself? He revealed Himself through the word.

Let us all read the word together. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John 1:1)*. The word of God recorded in the Bible is God. Even if we believe in Jesus by forming an image of Him, that is of no use at all. *"In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:1–3)*.

All things in the universe came into being because He said by the word, "Let there be, let there be." The One who spoke in that way is Jesus Christ in the New Testament age.

Let us continue. *"In Him was life, and the life was the light of men. And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it" (John 1:4–5)*.

Jesus, who is God who created the heavens and the earth by the word, came among us, just as it is written that *"the Word*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14). Life was in Him, and it says that this life was the light of men. *"And the light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not comprehend it. There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe" (John 1:5–7).*

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

The word is God. *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1). "Then God said, 'Let there be light'" (Genesis 1:3)*. The One who spoke in this way was none other than Jesus Christ, and the God of that word came to this earth and saved us from sin.

That God is speaking to us even now through the word written here. Because this word is God, through this word we come to know what kind of God He is, come to feel it, and come to act, and when we believe in our hearts, we are saved.

In this age, the age of disasters has come physically in full. Then has the age of disasters come spiritually? Spiritually, disasters have never come as they have in this age. From around the time of the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, the church gradually joined hands with worldly power and came to dominate religion, and that trend has continued to this day for nearly 1,700 years.

Even now, theological seminaries all over the world are teaching human theology and doctrines established since that

time rather than the word of the Bible. That is why such severe disasters have now come morally and spiritually. If we are not saved, we will perish. In such an age, we must return to the word, hold fast to the word, accept it just as that word says, and obtain salvation by faith.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him

Jesus came to this earth as the Savior of mankind. *"And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).*

Jesus came as our Savior. As the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, the Creator who made all things in the universe was born as a human being by borrowing the body of Mary in order to save human beings from sin. He came as the Savior. And Jesus Christ not only came as our Savior, but when He turned thirty, as recorded in Matthew chapter 3, He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went down into the water and came up, and so pleased the heart of God the Father.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). God the Father sent His own Son, intending to save those who believe.

Let us read that word. *"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. When He had been baptized, Jesus came*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:13–17).

What was the baptism that Jesus Christ received from John for? It was to save us from sin. The Gospel of John says, *"There was a man sent from God, whose name was John. This man came for a witness, to bear witness of the Light, that all through him might believe" (John 1:6–7).*

It is written in the word of God as follows: it says that God sent John the Baptist so that, through John the Baptist's testifying of Jesus, all people would come to know that Jesus is the true Light and the true Savior.

Since it is written this way in the word of God, how can people ignore John the Baptist and say something else? If we believe the word, we will naturally receive salvation. That is because the word leads us into the real truth.

When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, John at first tried to prevent Him, but in the end, because Jesus commanded him, John the Baptist gave Jesus baptism. *"'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).* In this way, by receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, was nailed to the Cross once and for all, died, and rose again, and so became our Savior.

Therefore we must be saved from the spiritual disaster. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, who came as our Savior—He is the Creator and our God, and He came to this earth clothed in a human body to save His people from their sins.

And when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him, also received the judgment for sin, died, and rose again, and so became our Savior. God the Father is testifying of that. Then we must believe so.

John the Baptist testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. It means that this Jesus is the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world because He had the sin of the world transferred to Him through John himself. Where did He go? He went to the Cross. He was nailed to it. He hung on the Cross and died. And Jesus rose again from death.

"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them"

"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you'" (John 20:19).

Jesus rose again in three days from death, from the tomb, and that evening He appeared to His disciples; the Bible called that time the evening of this day, the first day after the Sabbath. In the Old Testament, the complete Sabbath is from when the sun begins to set on Friday until the sun sets on Saturday. And Jesus rose again at dawn on the next day, the third day.

So it says, *"Then, the same day at evening, being the first day of the week, when the doors were shut where the disciples were assembled, for fear of the Jews, Jesus came and stood in the midst, and said to them, 'Peace be with you.'"* This means that the Lord had risen again. Our Savior became the complete Savior. If the Lord had died and not risen again, our salvation

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

would also be in vain. Having risen again, He said to them that peace would be with them.

Let us all read the following word together. *"When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His side. Then the disciples were glad when they saw the Lord. So Jesus said to them again, 'Peace to you! As the Father has sent Me, I also send you.' And when He had said this, He breathed on them, and said to them, 'Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained'" (John 20:20–23).*

Jesus rose again, appeared to His disciples, and spoke to them as follows. *"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:22–23).*

He gave us the authority to remit sins. Jesus removed people's sins with the water and the blood. To us who believe the truth that Jesus came to this earth and gave us the remission of sins, He said that if we preach the gospel and preach what Jesus has done, those people will believe and receive the remission of sins, and if we do not preach it to them, their sins will remain with them.

And so those who do not believe this gospel that we preach simply remain with their sins, while those who believe this gospel—even people far away—read a single book, receive the remission of sins, receive the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and even now are living toward the gospel.

Jesus is our true Savior now in this age of spiritual disasters. Have disasters begun physically in this age? Not only have disasters begun, but they are racing toward the end of disasters. Now disasters have come upon everything—mentally, in our hearts, physically, through diseases and through earthquakes.

People's hearts are hideous, and the politics of the world has also failed to reach the standard. Looking at the life of faith of Christian believers now, is there a church that talks to people about their sins and tells them how Jesus has removed sin and how they can be saved?

It is hard to find such a church. They only say that Jesus hung on the Cross and saved us. Without a cause, there is no result. There is no such thing as a result alone. Because there is a cause, there is a result. Illness, too, has a cause, and that is why people fall ill and die; death, too, has a cause. Death came to us because we sinned against God. It is because of that sin that death came and that we go to hell. It is not so simply because we were a little disobedient.

God has established a law, and if we do not keep that law, sin is established; when sin is established, the judgment for sin follows; and when the judgment for sin follows, we suffer destruction and also go to hell. That is the natural order.

"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit"

Let us look at the Great Commission that Jesus gave us. *"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age'" (Matthew 28:16–20).*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Everything Jesus said here is deeply significant, but in particular it says that *"Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (Matthew 28:18)*. There is authority in the name of Jesus. That is why, when a demon-possessed person comes and causes a disturbance, if one says, "I command you in the name of Jesus Christ: Satan, get away," Satan cannot move at all, because the command is given in the name of Jesus. Since authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him, Jesus is the Savior, but He is also the Judge, and He is the Master of the kingdom of heaven.

And He said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)*. Dear fellow believers, it is because there is the baptism that there is the Cross. Because Jesus came as the Savior and had sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, there was naturally the death on the Cross.

And so, when Jesus gave His disciples the Great Commission at the end, He commanded baptism. He said to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The Cross is naturally contained within the baptism.

And after baptizing, He said, *"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)*.

How is He with us to the end of the age? He has come and is with us as the Holy Spirit. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—these three are equally God to us. These three created us, these three commanded us, and God the Father sent His Son and saved us.

We must be saved in this age of spiritual disasters. People are now struggling because of physical disasters, but those are

hard in any case. In this age, how will we live on this earth without being saved? Then we will go to hell. If a person has been born on this earth from a mother's womb, what he must receive without fail is the remission of sins.

I must know that Jesus is my Savior, know that Jesus received baptism from John for me, know that Jesus bore my sin, went to the Cross, and was nailed there and died, know that He died and rose again and became my Savior, and believe it in my heart. This is the truth.

"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32). We must know what is true. Dear fellow believers, people who ignore the baptism that Jesus received from John must turn back. Did Jesus become our Savior without any basis?

Would He simply have been born, gone to the Cross, and been nailed there, saying, "I am being nailed for you. I will die in your place, so if you believe in Me, you will be saved"? Jesus is not such an absurd One.

It was because there was a reason that He was nailed to the Cross. If there had been no baptism He received from John, if He had not had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, Jesus would not have hung on the Cross and died.

Before Jesus died on the Cross, He prayed earnestly to God the Father three times in the garden of Gethsemane. He prayed, asking whether it would not be possible for Him not to be nailed to the Cross, and asking that, if at all possible, this cup be taken away. Do you think that, just because He is Jesus, He was not afraid of hanging on the Cross and dying but rejoiced in it? Because that pain hurts beyond words, anyone hates it.

The Savior, too, hated it. He prayed earnestly three times, said, "Let it be done according to Your will, Father. If You have

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

determined that I am to be nailed to the Cross because I have received baptism, then let it be so. I will obey," and obeyed.

And so, before Jesus ascended to the kingdom of heaven, He called His disciples together and spoke to them for the last time. *"Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit'" (Matthew 28:18–19)*. This means that we are to baptize.

Baptism is laying hands on the head and passing on sin. Going into the water is death. Going into the water and coming up is resurrection.

"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20). Serving the gospel is what the Lord taught us. He is telling us to serve the gospel. He is telling us to preach it in all the earth. It is not something we do for fun or as a hobby. And the Lord is with us to the end of the age.

If we hold on only to the Cross, we cannot be saved from the spiritual disaster

I believe that spiritual disasters have now come. These are the last days. Physical disasters have already begun, and they will only get worse, not better; now everyone will die. Everyone will perish. Then anyone who is not saved in this age will go to hell. Are you asking how I can say that so easily? What can be done about what has been so determined? It says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. If there is sin, there is death. If there is sin, one goes to hell. In the Bible there is the burning hell, there is Hades, and there is everything.

It says that all who are not written in the Book of Life will go into the fire that is never quenched. If it is written that way in the word, you must know that it is so. There is nothing but believing. These days the churches of the world never touch on people's sins and do not talk about hell either, but do you know why church members come to church? They have come to know Jesus, yet they commit sins. That is why they come to church—to hear the word of the remission of sins.

They should not come to church to give offerings but should come to church and hear the word, yet many churches preach theological doctrines rather than the word of truth. In theology there is no doctrine that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John.

They preach that Jesus bore the sin of the world of His own accord, went to the Cross of His own accord, was nailed there and died, rose again, and saved us. In this age we must be saved by faith and wait for the Lord's second coming. In any case, disasters have begun on this earth, it has become the age of the black horse, and before long the age of the pale horse will come. Now is the age of martyrdom. The Antichrist will appear.

In Matthew chapter 24, when the disciples asked what sign there would be at the end of the age, Jesus answered, *"Take heed that no one deceives you" (Matthew 24:4)*. Those who deceive in this age are people who call themselves religious leaders without knowing the truth. He is telling us to be careful not to be deceived by those people. They blindly say that all our sins were removed on the Cross. On the Cross He received the judgment for our sins; it was not on the Cross but in the baptism He received from John that He had our sins transferred to Him.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of all people in the whole world transferred to Him, and because of that sin He was nailed to the Cross. Those who do not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

believe in the baptism Jesus received, the blood of the Cross, and the fact that He gave us new life go to hell.

They go to the burning hell. He has given the chance to be saved once. Everyone has been given a chance once. It says, *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27).* It means that there is judgment.

While you are alive, know that Jesus is our Savior, know the fact that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John when He was thirty, know that He was nailed to the Cross, died, rose again, and became our eternal Savior, and believe in Him. Then, when the Antichrist appears, resist him by faith. If you wait a little while, Jesus will come again in the air to destroy the Antichrist.

And He will raise all who believe. He will catch them up into the air and take them to the Lord's kingdom. This is the first beginning of the new heaven and the new earth. Dear fellow believers, you must not believe in Jesus just any way. You must not blindly believe only in the Cross. You must not believe in Jesus through ethics and morality, nor must you believe religiously. If you hold on to doctrines, will you go to the kingdom of heaven? Absolutely not.

You must receive the remission of sins in your heart. Even if there was clearly sin in your heart, when you receive the remission of sins, the sin in your heart is clearly gone, as white as snow. Whether one has sin or not, one can know oneself.

Whether we have sin or not depends on this: our sins disappear when we know and believe that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and removed them on the Cross; our sins do not disappear just because we ourselves believe religious doctrines.

Therefore, now that destruction has come near to the world, if you hold on only to the Cross, it is hell. When the Apostle Paul

speaks of the message of the Cross, it presupposes the baptism Jesus received. *"For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27)*. The Apostle Paul always speaks of the baptism Jesus received. He speaks of the body washed with pure water, and he says, *"I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20)*. Dear fellow believers, the reason we can be crucified with Jesus Christ is that when Jesus received baptism from John and the sin of the world was passed on to Him, the Apostle Paul's sins were also passed on to Jesus through the hands of John the Baptist. That is why he said that he had been crucified with Christ.

Dear fellow believers, that my sin was passed on to Jesus and Jesus died in my place is exactly the same as my having died. That Jesus rose again from death is exactly the same as His having made me live. That is why the Apostle Paul testified in that way.

Let us live through the age of disasters by faith

That is why Jesus said, *"For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:5–6)*.

Many come in the name of Jesus and say that they are the Christ. Dear fellow believers, throughout the world there are many people who say that they are the Christ. Among pastors today, too, though they do not say such a thing, there are people who, without knowing the truth, without properly knowing the Bible, without receiving the remission of sins, and without properly knowing or believing the gospel of the water and the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Spirit, teach church members that they receive the forgiveness of sins by believing in the blood of the Cross. Sin is not something that is forgiven. It is something that is washed away, and being completely saved from judgment is what is called salvation.

Jesus spoke as follows about this last age of disasters, the age of the black horse, the age of famine. *"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:7–8)*. Dear fellow believers, disasters have now begun, they are now in progress, and they will continue from here on. From now on more wars will break out.

I hope that you will be saved in the age of disasters. Now we must prepare wisely. We must have wisdom and understanding.

What is clear is that this age has become the age of disasters, that it has already progressed a great deal, that it is racing toward the end, and that this material world will all perish. When it perishes, we too are included in it, but we will meet the Lord. The Lord will come to take us. Why? Because we have been born again, because we are the Lord's people. So we are preparing so that we will not live miserably until the very moment we meet the Lord. Dear fellow believers, have you ever gone hungry? Not counting not eating when you have food, have you ever gone hungry because you had nothing? Dear fellow believers, having nothing to eat is miserable.

Even if we are taken away by the Antichrist tomorrow, even if we suffer martyrdom, through today we must eat well and live well. If people cannot eat because they have nothing, they become miserable. If things go wrong, we may even betray the Lord because of hardship in making a living.

Above all, the work of preaching the gospel must not be cut off. If we do not preach the gospel, we cannot even ask, “Do you have sin?”

Dear fellow believers, those who know the gospel of the remission of sins theoretically and those who believe it in their hearts are different. Because I came to know this while reading the word, I can preach the word anywhere. I cannot tell you how fortunate and good that is.

In this age of disasters, let us manage our bodies wisely and well, and let us live preaching the gospel and helping one another until the day the Lord comes, until the moment we die. I hope that you will know and believe this. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The end comes only when the gospel of the kingdom of heaven has been fully spread

< Matthew 24:3–14 >

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come.'"

Jesus first said to beware of deception

The disciples asked Jesus when these things would happen and what would be the sign of the Lord's coming and of the end of the age. In answering that question, Jesus first said to take heed not to be deceived by people. This is because knowing the last days and believing rightly until that time are connected with each other. If someone talks a great deal about what will happen and yet comes to leave Jesus, knowledge about the signs cannot protect that person.

Let us read verses 4 and 5. *"And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, "I am the Christ," and will deceive many'" (Matthew 24:4–5)*. Deception is clouding the mind so that something seems to be right and also seems not to be right. So deception comes not so much from places that do not know the name of Jesus at all as from people who use the name of Jesus while putting themselves forward as the Christ. The fact that many people follow those words does not make that claim true, and if one follows words that replace the Savior, one obtains neither the safety nor the life that such a person promises.

Then by what do we discern? A true servant of God does not reveal himself but reveals Jesus. The heedfulness needed in the last days is different from being startled at every rumor and going around looking for a new leader. It is knowing rightly Jesus, who has already spoken, and setting our hearts on Him.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The end is not yet, so do not be afraid

Verses 6 through 8 speak of wars and the rumors of them, hostility between nations and kingdoms, and famines and earthquakes. Jesus did not hide that these things would take place, yet He told them to take care not to be afraid, and He said that these things must take place, but the end is not yet. He did not reassure the disciples with a promise that these things would not happen; rather, He let them know that even if such things happen, what God has determined still remains.

This word keeps us from hastily judging that everything has come to an end when we meet difficulties. When we are seized by fear, the news we have just heard feels as though it explains the whole world, but Jesus distinguished the beginning from the end. The word “sorrows” here, that is, disasters, refers to misfortunes that strike unexpectedly, and verse 8 calls all these things the beginning of those disasters. That beginning is an alarm bell announcing the tribulation that will come later, so disciples must hear that sound and stay awake, yet they must not judge God’s will and the future of the gospel by that alone.

Even so, this does not mean that we should take lightly the pain of people who are going through difficulties. When there is famine, there is not enough to eat, and when there is war, lives are threatened. While knowing that reality, Jesus keeps the hearts of the disciples from being gripped by fear. So, while we seek the help we need and look after one another’s difficulties, we hold on to the word of Jesus. Even if we cannot resolve every circumstance all at once, what we are to believe and do today still remains.

The end comes only when the gospel of the kingdom of heaven has been fully spread

Those who rely only on the gospel hold on to their brothers in times of tribulation

From verse 9, Jesus speaks of the tribulation the disciples will undergo. People will deliver them up to tribulation and kill them, and all nations will hate them because of Jesus' name. We, too, who believe in Jesus in the last days do not get around this tribulation, but come to keep our faith in the midst of it. Being persecuted does not mean that we have been forsaken by Jesus. Jesus knew beforehand the sufferings that those who believe in His name would go through, and He is speaking of them.

Verse 10 shows what will happen among people in the midst of that suffering. At that time many will fall into temptation, hand one another over, and hate one another. Those who relied on something else added on top of the gospel, and those who did not prepare their faith beforehand, may at that time come to stand in the position of handing over those with whom they had believed. To this is added the deception of false prophets, and as lawlessness abounds, the love of many grows cold. Tribulation does not only torment the body; it shakes even whom we believe and how we treat people.

Therefore, while things are quiet, we must examine what we believe and rely on. Those who believe only in the one gospel Jesus has accomplished are bound together as one, because of that faith, with those who believe with them. Remember the love of the salvation you have already received. When the fact that Jesus has delivered us from sin is clear, we can hold on to one another without turning our brothers into enemies because of fear.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Faith that endures to the end holds on to the salvation Jesus has accomplished

Let us read verse 13. *"But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13)*. Enduring to the end is not fully explained by saying that one grits one's teeth and holds out until suffering disappears. Looking at the warnings that have continued up to now, it is keeping faith against the deception that makes people forsake Jesus and against the lawlessness that makes love grow cold. Since the One who will save the disciples is Jesus, the faith that endures to the end is the faith that holds on to that Savior to the end. That time of enduring is not long; if we endure for a little while, the Lord will come.

So what we believe as we endure is important. When Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River, He had all our sins passed on to Him. Because those sins were passed on to Jesus, John the Baptist pointed to Him the next day and testified as follows: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).*

At the end of the road the Lamb of God walked, there was the Cross. As the price of the sin of the world that He had transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and with that blood He received in full the judgment for sin that we should have received. And He rose again from death and became the Savior who delivered us from sin and death. Those who have received the remission of all sins by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit do not put forward their own perseverance as the price of salvation, but endure suffering relying on the righteousness of Jesus, who has already saved them.

If we speak of perseverance while leaving the content of salvation empty, people end up looking to their own strength. On the other hand, if we clearly believe in the salvation Jesus has accomplished, we come to know that even we, who are weak in strength, have One on whom to rely. Jesus, who has given the remission of sins and eternal life, holds on to His disciples to the end; here lies the reason we do not deny Him but keep our faith even in the face of persecution that threatens the life of the flesh.

Let us testify of the gospel to those nations by whom we are hated

Jesus carries His word about tribulation on into the promise of the spread of the gospel. Let us read verse 14. *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14)*. In verse 9 He said that they would be hated by all nations, but in verse 14 He says that the gospel will be testified to all those very nations. Even if there are people who hate, those to whom the gospel is to be preached do not disappear, and Jesus speaks of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven being spread in that very world. If we hear only the words about suffering and miss this promise, it is as if we have not listened to Jesus' answer to the end.

Testifying of the gospel is different from vaguely promising good days to anxious people. It is preaching the remission of sins that Jesus has accomplished and the kingdom of God to people who are to be judged for their sins, so that they may know and believe in the Savior. The more people's lives are threatened and the sure things of the world are shaken, the more the testimony of the salvation that gives eternal life is needed.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus said that the end would come after the gospel has been testified. The One who determines the end is not people who spread rumors but God. The gospel being fully spread is the Lord's will being fulfilled, and at that time the end comes. So rather than making up dates and alarming people, let us believe the word Jesus has given and do the work He has entrusted to us. Let us regard the warnings Jesus gave as weightier than the rumors we hear, and even amid the hatred the world sends, let us fill our today with the work of preaching the gospel of the kingdom of heaven to those nations. ✉

The end comes only when the gospel of the kingdom of heaven has been fully spread

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

See, I have told you beforehand

< Matthew 24:15–28 >

“Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together.”

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

You who read, understand this warning as your own matter

While speaking of the great tribulation, Jesus made known beforehand what voices one would hear at that time and how one must move. In verse 16 He commands them to flee to the mountains, and in verse 26 He says that even if they hear it said that the Christ is in the desert, they must not go out. Neither moving unconditionally nor staying still unconditionally can be the answer of faith, so it is important to discern and follow the word Jesus has given.

Let us read verse 15. "*Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place (whoever reads, let him understand)" (Matthew 24:15)*. The abomination of desolation standing in the holy place means that one who opposes God occupies the holy place. The most abominable thing is a person calling himself God. That is why Jesus pointed to the word of Daniel and said that whoever reads must understand. We must not look only at the place he has occupied outwardly and accept that authority as belonging to God, but must recognize through the word the true identity of the Antichrist, who opposes God and exalts himself.

This warning is not a word to listen to as an intriguing story about the future, but a word that lets those who will live in that time know what they must do. The intent of Jesus' speaking beforehand lies not in making us think of the tribulation as if we were looking on at a spectacle, but in preparing us for what word we must remember and what judgment we must make when we face that event. So listen to this word, considering that you could be in that place at that time.

The tribulation of that day is so severe that there is no time even to look back

In verses 16–18, Jesus tells those who are in Judea to flee to the mountains. He says that he who is on the housetop must not go down to take the things in his house, and he who is in the field must not turn back to get his outer garment. This was not said because the things in the house or the outer garment were useless, but because at that time the crisis is so urgent that delaying in order to gather one's belongings threatens one's life.

The human heart cannot easily let go of what it has usually held on to and lived with, so even at the moment when one must flee in haste, the things left behind come to mind. Jesus has us follow His command first, rather than such a heart. Believing the word does not end with agreeing to the fact that there is danger, but leads to the obedience of not turning back when He says not to turn back. Do not let the thought of keeping what you have, while lingering over the world, block the way Jesus has made known.

In verse 19, He says that on that day woe will be to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies. At a time that is hard even for adults to endure, fleeing while carrying and nurturing a child is all the harder. It means that the tribulation of that time is that severe. Then Jesus said to pray that the flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. It is a word telling those who are in Judea to pray beforehand so that the way of escape may not be blocked for them.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God shortens those days for the sake of the elect

Let us read verses 21 through 22. *"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21–22)*. Jesus speaks of the magnitude of that tribulation very solemnly. He says that it is a tribulation that has not been since the beginning of the world, and that unless those days are shortened, no flesh will be saved. In the midst of that solemn word, which human strength cannot withstand, there is the promise that those days will be shortened for the sake of the elect.

Even so, beside this promise the warning about the suffering of the tribulation and about martyrdom remains just as it is. Earlier, Jesus spoke even of the disciples being delivered up to tribulation and being killed. That the days are shortened is different from saying that the saints avoid the tribulation. Born-again saints are also in the midst of that tribulation, and God shortens those days for the sake of those who believe. There is no one who will escape it and pass it by. But the One who determines the future of His people is not the one in power who seeks to kill them, but God; so we do not look at the power of the one who threatens and judge that everything has come to an end, but rely on God, who remembers the elect.

The conviction that we are God's people also does not come from vague optimism, but from the work of Jesus, who saved us. Jesus, the Son of God, came to save sinners, and when John the Baptist laid his hands on Jesus' head and gave Him baptism, all our sins were passed on to Jesus. Jesus, who in this way had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and died in our

place as the price for that sin, and He rose again from death and gave us new life.

We have received the remission of sins and become children of God by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is the token that comes upon those who have received the remission of sins, and because that Holy Spirit is present, even when the great tribulation comes, we do not submit to the Antichrist, and there is no reason for us to go around looking for another savior. Jesus, who saved us from sin and death, is now warning us of the tribulation, so let us engrave deeply in our hearts the warning of Him who loved us.

The Lord comes like lightning so that all people may see

In verses 23–24, false christs and false prophets appear. They do not merely make claims, but show great signs and wonders and, if possible, try to deceive even the elect. God works through the word, but even the devil can show amazing signs. So we cannot believe in a person merely because there are amazing phenomena, and Jesus made known beforehand that such phenomena will be used to make people follow false claims.

When people say that the Christ is here or there, the disciple already has a word he has heard. Let us read verses 25 through 26. *"See, I have told you beforehand. Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it" (Matthew 24:25–26).* Jesus spoke beforehand so that we would not be deceived. If we know beforehand, we are not deceived. It means that we must not begin looking for a standard only after a crisis has come, but must judge the voices heard at that time by the word He has

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

already given. He said that even if they say the Christ is in the desert we must not go out, and even if they say the Christ is in the inner rooms we must not believe it; so we need only let words that a place is special or that something is being made known in secret flow past without giving ear to them.

In verse 27, Jesus compares the coming of the Son of Man to lightning that comes from the east and flashes to the west. Completely unlike a secret appearance that can be confirmed only by going to a place that only a few people know, the Lord comes from heaven so that all people can see. And at that time He catches up the born-again saints in an instant, whether they have died or are alive. The rapture, in which the saints are caught up, is something that happens after there has been martyrdom in the midst of the tribulation, after the Lord has come. Therefore, when someone says that there is a christ whom only he knows and tells people to come and find him, the one who remembers Jesus' word can refuse that invitation.

The word about the carcass and the eagles in verse 28 is placed at the end of this solemn warning. When the Antichrist rises, there come to be those who kill and those who are killed, and just as eagles gather where the carcass is, death is revealed everywhere. The last days of which Jesus speaks are not a spectacle for people to follow around out of curiosity, but a time when there are great tribulation and death. Do not give your heart to the voices that, turning away from that reality, speak as though one will be saved by going to find a special figure.

Follow the word you have heard rather than fear and curiosity

Dear fellow believers, what a disciple who has tribulation ahead needs is the word Jesus has already made known, rather than more sensational rumors. When He tells us to flee, we must not turn back because of the things we left behind, and when He tells us not to go out to seek a false christ, we must not follow because of amazing signs. The person who accepts the two commands together does not judge by being drawn along by fear and curiosity.

We have the true Savior and the salvation He has accomplished. We who have become children of God by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit accept together both the word that warns of the tribulation and the promise in which He remembers His own people. Regard the word as all the weightier as the threat grows greater. Even if they say the Christ is in the desert, even if they say the Christ is in the inner rooms, refuse those voices in the light of the word Jesus let you hear beforehand. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Do not hide the grace you have received in the ground

< Matthew 25:14–30 >

"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

your lord.' Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

Jesus told the disciples, who were waiting for the time when He would come again, the parable of the talents that the servants were entrusted with. Before going to a far country, the master entrusted his goods to his servants, and even while he was away, that wealth was the master's, so the servants had the responsibility to work with it. So the time of waiting for the master was a time of carrying out the work entrusted to them and living toward the day when he would return.

What we must see first in this parable is the fact that the master gave to his servants. The one who received five talents, as well as the ones who received two talents and one talent, received from the master. It is the same with us: whether it is our health, our time, the place where we now live, or even our very lives, there is not a single thing that we have not received from

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God. The difference revealed when the master returned lay not so much in the size of what they had received as in how they treated what they had received.

Each of us carries on the trade of the gospel with what we have received

Let us read verses 14 and 15. *"For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey" (Matthew 25:14–15).* The master entrusted to each according to his ability. The amounts the servants received differed from one another, but all of them were people entrusted with the master's work, so no one can regard what has been given to him as trivial on the grounds that it is less than what others have received. The one who decided the amount to entrust is the master, and the one who will ask how that wealth was used is also the master.

Jesus has entrusted us, who have received the remission of sins, with carrying on the trade of the gospel on this earth, and He has also given us the abilities and opportunities to carry out that work. Some people preach the word, and some people help with the work of preaching. Although the work each person can do differs, the gospel is preached to other people through that service, so the fact that there is work entrusted to us means that Jesus, who saved us, uses us in that work.

Therefore, if our hearts are taken up with comparing what others have received with what is ours, we miss the work we should actually be doing. In the passage, he who had received

five talents went at once and traded with them, and he who had received two talents did likewise. They put what they had received to work and carried out their master's will, and both servants worked with what had already been entrusted into their own hands. They did not add something of their own and offer it, but traded with what they had received.

Let us, too, value the service we can do now. We can pray for those who preach the word, help with the parts that those working with us find hard to handle, and prepare the work we have been entrusted with and carry it out faithfully. Such services are connected to one another, so supporting others from close by so that they may do the work of the gospel well also becomes a real labor offered to the trade of the gospel. It is not that we become one only when everyone does the same work; rather, by each person doing the work entrusted to him, we serve the gospel together.

The master says "Well done" to the two servants alike

After a long time the master returned and settled accounts with his servants. Even though the time of his return was delayed, the day when he would ask about the work he had entrusted surely came. He who had received five talents brought five more talents, and he who had received two talents brought two more talents. Both servants reported to the master what they had received from him and what they had done with it. The master did not demand from them what they had not received. He saw their faithfulness in working with as much as he had given them.

The master praised the two servants with the same words. Let us read verse 21. *"His lord said to him, 'Well done, good*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord'" (Matthew 25:21). In verse 23, he gave the same praise and promise to the one who had received two talents as well. It was not only the servant who had gained five more talents who entered into the master's joy; the servant who had gained two more talents also entered into it with him. The master knew what he had entrusted to each person, and he rejoiced in their faithfulness in that work.

The master called even the work done with five talents "a few things." So there is no reason for our faithfulness to be regarded as lower just because its number is smaller than the fruit of others. This word gives strength to those who think that their own service is insignificant. If you are faithfully doing the work entrusted to you for the gospel, do not think only about how great it looks in people's eyes. Jesus, who entrusted it to you, is watching that work, and the praise that you were faithful over a few things means that He has not forgotten that labor.

The promise that he would entrust many more things and the invitation to enter into the master's joy were also given together. It is the master calling the servant who has become one in heart with him and letting him live together in his joy, and this is the reward given to the faithful servant. We, too, while serving the gospel in which Jesus delights, look toward that joy which we will enjoy together with Him.

If we regard what we have received as though we had not received it, the work entrusted to us becomes a burden

He who had received the one talent said something different. He regarded his master as a hard man who reaps where he has not sown, and he said that he had been afraid and had hidden it in the ground. And he handed back what had been entrusted to him just as it was, saying, *"Look, there you have what is yours" (Matthew 25:25)*.

But that money had not been entrusted to him to be hidden away. The other two servants worked with it, and the master rejoiced in their faithfulness, but the servant who had received one talent turned away from the purpose for which the master had entrusted it. Even while holding in his own hand the money he had received, he thought of his master as a man who gives nothing and only tries to reap. Because he regarded what he had received as though he had not received it, he hid it in the ground and did not trade with it.

The master rejected that servant's excuse with the very words he had put forward. If he had truly known his master that way, he should have deposited the money with the bankers so that his master would receive back the principal with interest. The attitude of doing nothing at all on the pretext of the master's character could not be made right, so the master rebuked him as a wicked and lazy servant.

When, after being saved, we think of the work of serving the gospel only as a loss, we must guard against the heart of this servant. If we forget the salvation and the opportunities to serve that we have received from Jesus and think that only our time and our labor are being taken away, the work entrusted to us looks only like a heavy demand. What we need then is to know

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

again what Jesus has bestowed on us. The Jesus we serve is not One who only reaps from us, but the One who first gave us everything.

Know the grace of salvation and value the work entrusted to you

Just as the master first gave to his servants, Jesus first came to save us before we offered Him anything. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and included in them are all the sins we have committed as well. As the price for the sins thus passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He received all the judgment for sin that we were to receive. And He rose again from death and became our Savior.

It is not our service that produced that remission of sins. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus fulfilled, we received the remission of sins, and to those who have received that grace, Jesus has entrusted the work of serving the gospel so that others may also hear of the same salvation. If we rightly know the order of salvation and service, we will neither regard the work entrusted to us as a price paid to buy salvation nor cast it aside as a bothersome task that has nothing to do with those who are saved.

Here we must also receive Jesus' warning in full. Let us read verse 30. *"And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:30)*. The rebuke did not end with the one talent being taken from that servant. The unprofitable servant could not enter into his master's joy but was cast out into the outer darkness, so this is not a matter of receiving a slightly smaller

reward, but a word of judgment. Jesus does not take lightly the attitude of hiding in the ground what one has received from the master, turning away from his will, and living only for oneself.

We who have received the remission of sins also do not hear this warning lightly. Our service does not keep our salvation, but using the claim that we have been saved to do away with the responsibility to serve Jesus and turning away from the gospel and the church is regarding the grace we have received as nonexistent, like the servant who received one talent. This servant's story makes us turn away from just such a heart, so we must value Jesus' grace and set our hearts on the will He has entrusted to us.

The master had that one talent taken from the servant and given to him who had ten talents. He entrusted more to the servant who used what he had received and was faithful, and from the servant who turned away from the purpose of what had been entrusted to him, he took away even what he had. The abilities and opportunities we have today are also not things that we can keep buried as we please forever, so it is right to use them for His will while Jesus has entrusted them to us.

Remember the praise that the two servants heard on the day their master returned. The two servants each worked with what had been entrusted to them and received the same praise. The work entrusted to us is also precious. Whether what is in our hands today is five or two or one, let us not hide it in the ground, but offer it to the trade of the gospel according to the will of the One who entrusted it. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Know the time of the rapture correctly and prepare your faith

< Matthew 24:28–31 >

“For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

Let us read today’s word again. *“For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together” (Matthew 24:28).* It is chilling. It is a word that cannot possibly be understood in our culture. A carcass refers to death.

It says that wherever the carcass is, there the eagles gather. Eagles like things that are rotten and spoiled. They like things such as dead bodies, things that are spoiled, and things that have been thrown away.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

In some places, when it becomes the dead of winter and the eagles have nothing to eat, they flock to a certain area. So people with good intentions bring things such as rotten meat and put them out in the fields.

Then hundreds of eagles gather and eat that food. When animals lie dead in the mountains, such birds and animals eat them all up. That is why the whole mountain is clean.

Otherwise, this earth would be too filthy to bear.

There is such a word in the Bible. As for what this word, that wherever the carcass is the eagles gather, means, it is connected with verse 29. *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Matthew 24:29).*

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days"

It says, after the tribulation of those days. It says not before the tribulation but after the tribulation. *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken."*

That it says after the tribulation means that, just as the Lord's word says, we the righteous, that is, the people whom God has chosen, will suffer tribulation and be martyred on this earth.

The Antichrist will appear and kill us.

Because we do not listen to him as he wishes, he kills us, and after that, Jesus Christ accomplishes on this earth what He spoke of: *"The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken" (Matthew 24:29).* Therefore, it means

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that the Lord will completely remove all the benefits of nature that He has bestowed on this earth until now.

In the passage of the seven trumpets in Revelation as well, such things appear as God carries on His work while having angels blow the trumpets.

Today's word says that immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened; let us read the word that comes before it.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake" (Matthew 24:9). It says that then they will deliver you up to tribulation, and before that it says, *"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:7–8).*

It says "then" after the age of the black horse, the age of disasters, has continued, and this "then" points to a time. It says "then" by pointing to a certain point in time. The phrase "after the tribulation of those days" in verse 29 also points to a time.

Verse 30 also says "then" and "then," pointing to times that come one after another.

Verse 9 says that then they will deliver you up to tribulation. It means that when the Antichrist appears, even among the people who say they believe in Jesus, those who have not received the Lord—that is, those who do not have the Holy Spirit in their hearts, those who have not had the sins of their hearts washed away by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—will deliver you up to tribulation. They, too, need only to be washed; they need only to believe. Yet it means that those people will seize you and deliver you up.

It means that they will seize such people, saying, "This person is also one of them; he is one of the people who do not

cooperate with the nation that the Antichrist rules," and will deliver them up and have them martyred.

So it says, *"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another" (Matthew 24:10)*. Therefore, the words that the sun will be darkened after the tribulation mean that after the martyrdom of the saints has taken place, after the Lord has saved all those whom He will save on this earth, the Lord will no longer bestow the benefits of nature on the sky and the land of this earth.

It means that He will take away the benefits of nature completely. It means that when the sun is darkened, it loses its light; since the sun does not give its light, the moon, which shines by receiving the light of the sun, also becomes dark; the stars also fall from heaven; and the powers of the heavens are shaken.

It means that God will remove them completely. People talk about the pre-tribulation rapture theory and reassure those who believe in Jesus. Reassuring them would be nice. I would like it, too.

It would be nice, but in reality it is not so. As this age of famine and this age of disasters continue, nation will rise against nation, wars will break out through economic struggles, diseases will break out, and the nations will become unable to survive. Since the nations have no strength to recover by themselves, at that time a certain organization will arise, and from that organization a unified nation will come about. That unified nation will have a head, and that head will do well at first, but later the devil will enter into him, and he will order that everyone who does not serve him be killed.

Because he says, "Call me God; praise me as God," the people who believe in Jesus flatly refuse.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Because we the born-again refuse, saying, "What kind of god are you?" he seizes people and kills them in order to establish his own kingdom. Since he is the king, his word is the law, and he seizes and kills everyone who falls foul of that law, so there is no hope. From God's standpoint, He knows full well that His own people, His own servants, are being killed. When His own people have all been killed on this earth, God will no longer hold back.

"They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory"

Let us read the next word. *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).*

When we look at Acts, it says, *"This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven" (Acts 1:11)*. But when we look at this word, it says that the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, the earth will become desolate, the sun will lose its light, the moon will lose its light, and the stars will fall from heaven. Would this earth remain intact?

If the stars of heaven fell to the earth, the earth would be shattered to pieces and not a trace would be left.

But it says that the sign of the Lord's coming will appear. The heavens will lose their light, and something happening in the heavens will be seen.

It means that all the tribes will mourn, thinking, "People said that Jesus would come, and He really is coming!" It is because they are so afraid, and because of the woe that they will suffer.

Because they joined together and went along with seizing and killing those who believe in Jesus, they are so afraid. And Jesus Christ is the King of kings, yet they had thought that His coming was just idle talk, a story that came out of one religion, but it means that this has become reality.

It means that the sun will lose its light, the moon will lose its light, the stars will fall, some omen will be seen in the heavens, and as a flash of light streaks across the heavens and clouds spread out everywhere, the sign will be seen so that all people can see it. And it means that they will see Jesus Christ and His angels standing arrayed in ranks. Because they have done what they have done, they are so afraid.

If they had done good, they would say, "Lord Jesus, come quickly," but because they seized and killed all those who believe, they are so afraid.

It says, *"They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).*

At His first coming, the Lord was born in great lowliness through the body of Mary. He was born through the body of a virgin; having no place to stay, He was born in a stable where animals live and was sheltered there; and no one knew. Only a few, such as the angels of heaven, the shepherds, and the wise men from the East, knew.

He came very humbly and quietly. And when He turned thirty, through the baptism He received from John He had the sin of mankind transferred to Him; as He hung on the Cross and died, He said that it was finished; and He rose again from death and quietly accomplished for us the work of saving us.

He did His work quietly, but through His people and His servants He spread the gospel to the whole world. Today, whether people realize it or not, there are countless people on this earth who say that they believe in Jesus.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

It is said that if all the various denominations are put together, the people who say they believe in Jesus number more than two billion.

That Jesus will come on the clouds with great power. It means that He will come bringing His heavenly host of angels. When the King of kings comes, would He come in the clouds just like that? A king's procession is by nature splendid, majestic, and magnificent. It has power.

Even on this earth, when a president goes out somewhere, the procession is magnificent. Likewise, when the King of kings comes to this earth on the clouds, bringing His heavenly host of angels, it will not be clouds like the ones we see; rather, dazzling, brilliant clouds will spread out everywhere, a light more brilliant than an exploding nuclear bomb will shine, the heavenly host of angels will be there blowing trumpets, and He will come with such majesty that people will faint merely at the sight of it.

It says that at that time they will mourn.

It means that they will beat their chests and wail because of the sins they committed and because of their opposition, saying, "Why did we do that? Why did we not believe? Why did we seize them and hand them over to be killed? Why did I seize the people next door and hand them over to be killed? Did we not applaud when they died? We felt a little sorry for them, but in order to survive, we had no choice but to take that side."

And it means that they will say to the mountains and the rocks, "Hide us," and that they want to escape the judgment of Christ, the King of kings, who is coming in such majesty.

It means that they will see all these things.

The rapture takes place after the tribulation

Let us read the next word. *"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31)*.

Only at this time—after the tribulation, after we have been martyred—will Jesus Christ come and draw us all up. We will already have died. There may also be some who are alive, but it says that He will gather His elect from all directions, from one end of heaven to the other.

What does this mean? If living people were gathered, one could say that they are gathered, but what does it mean to say that people who have already been martyred are gathered? It means drawing them up. Gathering them all up means drawing them up. Let us look at Revelation.

"Then I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and on the cloud sat One like the Son of Man, having on His head a golden crown, and in His hand a sharp sickle. And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to Him who sat on the cloud, 'Thrust in Your sickle and reap, for the time has come for You to reap, for the harvest of the earth is ripe.' So He who sat on the cloud thrust in His sickle on the earth, and the earth was reaped" (Revelation 14:14–16). All of this speaks of the rapture. So does what Jesus says in Matthew chapter 24. Our forerunners of faith kept waiting for when the Lord would come, but in fact the Lord does not come at a time like now.

Because people do not know the Bible well, they keep saying, "Is the Lord coming now?" but it means that the Lord comes after the tribulation. He comes after the tribulation, and before that He gives us the opportunity to preach the gospel.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Truly, for you and me, how good it would be if the Lord came before the tribulation! If He came before the tribulation, we would live at ease. We would say, “Oh, how good!” and work without worry.

What would there be to prepare? If it were truly certain that the Lord comes before the tribulation, there would be no need even to build houses. We would all live in rented houses. How good it would be to live in a borrowed place for the time being, spend our days at leisure, do the Lord’s work without worry, be content as long as we had something to eat tomorrow, and then depart! But it means that this is not how it is.

It means that in reality it is not so. It means that the actual situation is not so. In actuality, just as we prepare heating when winter comes, when the age of famine comes, we must prepare for it.

It means that we must prepare a place to live, and prepare again. And if the Lord comes after the tribulation, then until the time of the tribulation, until the Antichrist appears, we must do our best to preach the gospel quickly and do our best so that God’s people can live. We cannot live miserably before then, can we? I mean, would God be pleased if we starved to death miserably before the tribulation?

We must live doing our best at least for as long as we live, live until the time God permits, and when that time comes, we must depart valiantly with the sure faith that says, “It seems the time has come for Jesus Christ to come and take us; once this period passes, the Lord will come.”

We must depart with faith. “Lord, please do not let us die cowardly deaths.”

That time will be brief. We will go all at once and die. Since that time has not yet come, we talk about it with smiles, but even the thought of it is horrifying.

Yet that is our destiny, so what can we do? After Satan the devil has done his work of killing, the word *"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31)* will be fulfilled.

The Lord said in Revelation that the One who sat on the cloud would thrust in His sharp sickle and reap. He reaps us, and He also reaps the sinners once and throws them into the winepress and tramples them, and it says that the blood reached up to the horses' bridles. In any case, there is such a word, and I believe this word.

We must rescue those who are deceived by the wrong rapture theory

I suppose that some of you may think, "Whether He comes before the tribulation or after the tribulation, we will live like this anyway, so is that really so important?"

If we think only of ourselves, that may be so, but do not think only of ourselves; think about them as well. There are many people on this earth who say they believe in Jesus, so think about their situation.

Because people now and then talk about the pre-tribulation rapture theory, those who teach wrongly are now in high spirits.

Nature is in difficulty and the world is in difficulty, but they keep talking about the pre-tribulation rapture theory and are in high spirits, saying that the time has come. The people under them are all disheartened, but some leaders say, "Now that day has drawn near; the day when we will be raptured has drawn near."

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

It means that, saying, “So what must we do? Must we not preach the gospel quickly? What must we do to preach the gospel widely? Must we not give offerings? Why are you keeping what you have tightly tied up? What are you going to do with it later if you leave it as it is?” they sometimes end up leading the talk to offerings.

Then some people believe those words, sell their houses, move into rented houses, and give offerings. As such people appear, will those people stay quiet? They say to the people beside them, “Do you not believe in the pre-tribulation rapture theory? Do you believe in before the tribulation or after the tribulation?” and so disputes arise and they stir one another up.

Because they collect offerings by saying, “So how good is this? We will be raptured before the tribulation; would the Lord leave us as we are? Would He let us fall into the tribulation?” those who teach this way gain even more strength.

There are many such people among those who teach this way, among those who believe only in the blood of Jesus and say that they have no sin.

Three types of Christians

Broadly divided, there are three types of Christians in this world. The first is legalism. They do believe in Jesus, but they say that He took away original sin and that they receive the remission of their actual sins each day whenever they offer prayers of repentance. They call themselves evangelicals, but in fact they are legalists.

Bound by the law, they say that they receive the remission of sins only if they keep offering prayers of repentance. The various denominations that say one is saved by keeping the law also all

fall into legalism. The next is mysticism. It is mysticism that says that when they pray they make unintelligible sounds, that God gives them words of revelation, that diseases are healed, and that if they go into the mountains and pray, the Lord appears in person and speaks to them. And the third is people like us.

They are those who have truly accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the complete remission of sins, those who are without sin by faith, and those who by faith believe in the post-tribulation rapture. Broadly divided, these three types of people live in this world.

If we divide legalism here a little further, we can separate out evangelicalism. Evangelicalism refers to those who believe in the blood of Jesus' Cross and say that they have no sin and that He removed all sins on the Cross. Such teaching is widespread in this age.

These people believe and spread the pre-tribulation rapture theory. The people who are completely legalists offer prayers of repentance, saying, "What shall I do? I must have committed many sins," but these people who call themselves evangelicals believe the pre-tribulation rapture theory, so they say, "The time has come; there is not much time left."

Whether they are evangelicals, complete legalists, or mystics, let us think about them for a moment.

They now believe the pre-tribulation rapture theory, so they are all living at ease and are steeped in it, but we know that the Lord will not come, and that afterward the Antichrist will appear and a situation will unfold in which he seizes all those people and kills them.

Just as we save them from sin through the gospel, we also need to warn them about their wrong view of the rapture, we need to let them know, and we need to save them. As for you

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and me, it is fine whether He comes before the tribulation or after the tribulation; it is fine whenever He comes.

We only ask Him to wait a little longer because the gospel has not yet been fully spread, and even so, if He comes sooner, honestly, we would be thankful. Because it is hard.

If we put ourselves in their place and think about it, they are being deceived. They are being deceived spiritually about salvation, and they are being deceived materially as well. So we cannot just stay still, can we?

The order of the last days that the Bible speaks of

Long ago, I followed the pre-tribulation rapture theory. But as I kept reading the Old and New Testaments, I found that it was not so. It means that we will go on until the last days, that all who are to be martyred will be martyred, and that after all who are to be saved in this world have been saved, the Lord will completely destroy this nature and come on the clouds with His heavenly host of angels. And it means that He will draw us up.

It means that He will let us live in a new heaven and a new earth. It means that He will cast Satan the devil and his followers into the bottomless pit and keep them there for a thousand years, give rewards for a thousand years to us who have sacrificed ourselves for the Lord, and after the thousand years hold the great white throne judgment, completely separate those who will go to heaven from those who will go to hell, and bring everything to an end with an eternally happy conclusion.

It means that this is the will of God. You may find it strange and wonder why the pastor is making an issue of something that is not even a problem. But now this issue is very serious. Why is that? We must live knowing the times; if we live without

knowing the times, our life of faith also becomes a complete mess, and we cannot come to our senses. And we must also save those who are deceived by wrong teaching. We need only to make this word widely known.

In the past there were cases of people setting a date and crying out for a pre-tribulation rapture, but in the end those claims died down.

They do not say it openly now, but inwardly they are still teaching their church members that way.

Those people thought that they would go up before the tribulation, but the world grows more difficult, and Satan the devil appears and tries to seize and kill them. They say that they themselves will not do it, but because the devil tells them to praise him and seizes and kills them if they do not, they try not to die. But there truly are people who believe as we do. I mean, if they are told that they will be given immunity from punishment if they hunt out and report such people, would those people not report them?

And in this way these people sink even deeper into error. And when Jesus Christ comes, they will be frightened to death. Because they took the lead in killing God's people, they will feel that this sin is greater than any other sin.

When the people of the world are ruined in this way, should we just stay quiet? You, too, will come to meet people who fell into the pre-tribulation rapture theory and are crying out in despair, having ruined themselves and their families.

You will also come to meet people who are one step away from that. If you happen to meet such people and tell them that it is not so, telling them this word that we read and heard today, they will not be deceived at least while they live on this earth. They will not be deceived, and we can also preach the gospel to them. The rapture comes after the martyrdom at the end. Either

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the people of Israel will be martyred or we will be martyred, and even among those who now supposedly believe in Jesus, those who see us being martyred and come to their senses will be martyred. At that time they will confess, "I, too, believe as they do. What I have believed until now was a deception. I, too, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Truly, I, too, believe this way," and, filled with the Holy Spirit within, they will be martyred. It means that the Lord will come after all these people have been martyred.

He will come to take us and will reap at one time all the people in every corner of the whole world, this earth. When He says, "Come up," we will all go up. It says that we will go up in a changed form; I do not know what kind of form that is, but in any case we will go up in a changed form. Those who drowned in the water, those in the graves, and those who were burned at the stake will all go up from every direction. No matter in what situation or how they died, the people who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will all go up, even those who died before suffering the tribulation.

The keys of the kingdom of heaven are the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Therefore, this faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is tremendously important. It is the key for entering the kingdom of heaven.

When Jesus asked His disciples, *"But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15),* Peter answered, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16).* Then Jesus said that it was not that he had come to know this himself, but that the Father in heaven had made it known to him.

And He said to Peter, *"And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven, and whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven" (Matthew 16:19)*. Those keys of the kingdom of heaven are the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They are that faith.

The Lord is the Christ, the Son of the living God. It means that the Son of the living God came to this earth as the High Priest, as the Prophet, and as the King of kings and saved us.

The Lord takes the people who have that faith into His own kingdom. It means that those people are none other than you and me. Although we are worn out and panting from our work, we do this because we believe.

But the reason we have nothing to worry about is that, whether before the tribulation or after the tribulation, we will go up, and it is clear that we will go up after the tribulation.

That is why we must save those who believe in the pre-tribulation rapture, we must bring this news to them, and we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit until that day, until the day the martyrdom takes place.

We must testify. If we believe this, even if we are martyred, we will have nothing to feel wronged about. Because we will go to heaven. We must preach this to the end. That is why we must stay awake.

Dear fellow believers, do you understand? This is tremendously important. When I see people preaching on Matthew chapter 24, I feel frustrated inside.

When I open the word, I preach it clearly by the word itself, so when I see people forcing things to fit and saying that this part was mistranslated, I feel truly sorry. If one does not know, one should say that one does not know; if one wants to put forward

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

one's own argument, one should put it forward with the Bible, so how can it be right to put it forward with something else?

What the Bible says—that is what is most important. Today there are many false prophets.

There are many false prophets concerning believing in Jesus, concerning not believing, and concerning the rapture, and also among those who talk about the pre-tribulation rapture theory or the post-tribulation rapture theory.

There are many false prophets, and among them, especially in this world, there are many people who, while believing in Jesus, spread words that keep people from believing in Jesus.

They argue, saying, "It is said that the event of Noah's ark took place, but when was that historically? Is there any historical evidence for it?"

When they put forward their own logic like that and thrust scientific logic at people, those who hear it cannot say a word. When such people get together and make something like a movie, people see only that and think, "It must really be so. I must have believed in an illusion. The Old Testament must all be folk tales," and once they fall into it, they give up believing in Jesus.

There are many people who fall into it and are ruined. They also say, "Where is there such a thing as the rapture? Does it make any sense?" and call such things an illusion.

Some people spread absurd claims that blaspheme the divinity of Jesus.

I cannot tell you how many such things are going around on the Internet. There are also people who hear such words, fall into them, and give up believing in Jesus.

There are also people who say, "How can Jesus come on the clouds? It makes no sense." It means that such people are all false prophets. Among them there are also people who believe

only in the blood of Jesus' Cross, talk about the pre-tribulation rapture theory, and lead people astray.

They, too, in the end lead people astray. We cannot rescue all the people who have fallen into those people's deceptions and are struggling, but even if it is only a few, we must know and believe with certainty and do the work of rescuing them. We must depart while doing that. That is why we definitely need to know it this way.

"Wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together"

The Lord said in Matthew chapter 24 that wherever the carcass is, there the eagles gather; what on earth does this word, that if there is a carcass the eagles gather, mean?

After the tribulation, the sign that the Lord will come down will be seen, but when the martyrdom takes place, there will be so many dead bodies that there will be no way to deal with them. There will be no place even to bury them. They will sweep them all up and dump them all into some large basin or mountain valley.

The stench of rot will be overpowering, and since eagles like rotten things best of all, countless eagles will gather and tear at them and eat them there.

That means that there will be death and there will be martyrdom. It means that the Lord will come after the tribulation has taken place. It means that the sign will be seen. It means that the sun and the moon will lose their light and the stars will fall, strange clouds will form in the heavens, and above them Jesus Christ will truly be there in tremendous majesty as the King of kings with His heavenly host of angels; when He comes down,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the angels will sing praises, and all the people of this earth will see it.

It means that there will not be a single person among the living who does not see it. It means that all people will see it. It means that He will come in such majesty, take us away in majesty, and then completely remove the things on this earth. It means that, although there will be an interval of time, He will do so.

So we must believe. We must know correctly. We will each live in the places where we work, but until the day we go before the Lord, we will eat good food and stay healthy, and when that time comes, we will valiantly offer our bodies as a living sacrifice. We will give glory one last time and depart.

Even if we want to live longer, we cannot live. If the sun does not give its light, the moon does not give its light, and the stars of heaven fall, could people live? Do you want to live on this earth? The earth will be reduced to scorched ruins.

These benefits of nature exist only while we are alive. Once we are gone, the Lord will take away the benefits of nature completely. When there are no children of God, there is no longer any need for Him to give benefits. And since people killed and persecuted the children of God, however merciful God may be, what benefit would He give them? Are not you and I, the people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the born-again?

Are we children of God or not? I firmly believe that we are His children. Do you believe? We are the children of God. Whoever persecutes us is one who persecutes God, and whoever kills us is one who opposes God. If they persecute us and kill us, their life is finished.

Those who kill with the sword will be killed by the sword. They will be thrown together with the devil into the fire that

never goes out for eternity. That is why there is no devil in heaven.

There are no liars there either. There are many liars in this world, but there are no liars there. There are no deceivers either, and there are only pure people. I give thanks before God. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Saints who unite and give out food are the wise ones

< Matthew 24:34–46 >

"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing."

Just as the seasons change in this world, I believe that the end of this world will also come before long. The Lord said that all these things would take place before this generation passes away. He said that a sign would appear in heaven and that *"all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:30–31).* It means that this world that God has made will change. It means that the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, and when the Lord Himself comes, all the tribes will mourn. And He said that our Lord would come, send His angels, and gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.

The coming of the Son of Man

Our Lord will surely come, and He said that before this generation passes away, that is, before the nation of Israel disappears, He will surely fulfill all the things spoken of in this Bible. And He said that the Lord will indeed come, but no one knows that day and hour; not even the angels or the Son know, but only the Father knows. But it means that when the Lord comes, things like those in the days of Noah will take place in this world. *"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage,*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:37–42).

He said that no one knows the time when the Lord will come, that not even the Son knows, but only the Father knows. And as for what things are recorded to take place in this world when the Lord comes, it is recorded that things like those in the days of Noah will take place. Being like the days of Noah speaks of the end coming suddenly upon this world. It means that until just yesterday the sun was shining brightly and people lived making many plans, but in a single day the sky suddenly turned pitch-black, rain fell, and water came up from the ground, so that it was something that happened suddenly. It means that before the flood came, people ceaselessly did all the things of eating, drinking, being given in marriage, marrying, and building houses.

People in this world being given in marriage, marrying, building houses, eating, and drinking is not something of yesterday or today. It is something that has continued from the creation of heaven and earth until now. But being particularly like the days of Noah means that when the end is near, people devote all their strength to being given in marriage, marrying, eating, and drinking. They did not realize it until the flood came, and then suddenly met destruction. It means that the coming of the Son of Man will also be like this. Of course, would eating and drinking be a sin? Ecclesiastes also says that a man's joy lies in eating, so what sin would eating and drinking be? What sin would marrying and being given in marriage be? But it means

that when it happens that people focus excessively only on such things, we must know that the time of the Lord's coming has drawn near.

The preparation of faith

Throughout the whole world, eating, drinking, being given in marriage, and marrying are truly widespread. The thought even comes to me whether there has ever been an era as abundant in food as this era. These days, in fact, it is not that people cannot eat because there is no food, but that they pick out and eat tasty things according to what is delicious, isn't it? In any case, the word says that such things will take place when the Lord comes.

Second, when the Lord comes, one person will be taken and one person will be left. When the Lord comes, such things take place. It means that in this world some people will be called before God and God will take them, and some people will remain on this earth. This is called the rapture, and it refers to God drawing them up. It means that as people live in the last days, while two people are working in the field, while they are turning the millstone, or while they are sleeping, one person goes and one person remains. We live peacefully and well on this earth. But when the Lord comes, some people are taken. It means they disappear. But some people remain on this earth. It means that such things take place when the Lord comes.

That is why we must truly watch these last days with interest, make the preparation of faith, and also have our families and children make the preparation of faith. The reason lies here. It is the same with those who have died. Those who are asleep are the same as those who are alive: all the corpses are lying in the cemetery, but it means that when the Lord comes, some graves

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

will open wide and they will go up, and some graves will remain as they are. Remaining is an accursed thing. Those who are taken are those whom God has taken, and those who remain are people who have been forsaken by God. They have been left to suffer wrath, having stubbornly persisted to the end and not believed in God. Whether living or dead, those who are born again are taken by the Lord and go up, and those who are not born again remain on this earth. It means that such things will take place at that time.

Therefore, we must make this preparation of faith ourselves, have our families make it, and also have the souls around us make it. Because those among our families who remain on this earth are accursed people, we must live having them make the preparation of faith as we live in these last days. If we believe in the last days, this is how we must live. This is how we must have them prepare. There are surely those who remain even among our families. Even in a family, there can be someone who puts forward denomination and theology and stubbornly persists to the end. When the Lord comes, one thing I clearly know is this—and this is not a self-contradiction—that because I am born again, the Lord will take me, and the family members who have sin will surely remain. It is that I know it clearly.

It is not that one knows it only after getting there at that time, but that I know it precisely now. Even among your families, if you are born again, you go. But those in your families who are not born again will surely remain on this earth. And they will be destroyed. When we think about it, in this world, among our families, friends, or the people around us, there are those who will remain and those who will be called before God. Dear fellow believers, are your thoughts in order on that matter? Do you understand who among your families will remain? Therefore, we must preach the gospel. Whether they believe or

not, we must just preach it plainly, saying, “Jesus saved you in this way.” After preaching, we must pray to God, and then shake them awake. We must tell them, “If you keep being so stubborn, you will remain on this earth and receive an endless curse.”

The one who is taken and the one who is left

As for unbelieving family members or friends, we first exhort them, preach the gospel to them, teach them, and pray for them, and if it still does not work in the end, we speak to them strongly. And then it is love to tell them, “You will remain on this earth, and I will go before God. You will remain on this earth and die. It does not end after you die; you will go into the eternal fire of hell and suffer torment. Know that it is so.” If, hearing those words, they fear God, turn back, and believe in God rightly, that is fortunate, and if they are stubborn, they remain on this earth. Are those who will remain just one or two people? There are a great many people who must remain on this earth.

Because so many remain, perhaps they have little worry. “Am I going to hell alone? So many people are all going together, so I am not lonely. Rather, you who are going to the kingdom of heaven are only a few in number, so you are the lonely ones; you just stick together well. Even if we go to hell, we go in great numbers, so do not worry”—in that respect they take comfort. It may well be a comfort. If you take an exam and fail alone, it is very sad and lonely, but if two-thirds all fail, how much of a comfort that is! They take comfort, saying, “Even when going to hell, because so many go to hell in heaps like this, it is not dull and not frightening. What is there to fear when such a great force is going?”

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Go and see. See whether it is a comfort. The number being large does not matter. It is no comfort at all. It is no help.

What comfort is there once you go there? Each and every person suffers in the same way; only if there were someone among them who was even a little better off could he comfort others and shield them when it is hot, but all suffer in the same way. Would God, because He lacks the power to deal with them all at once, leave some people aside and deal with some people first? He puts them all in the same way and deals with them in the same way. Even if all the people on this earth go to hell, even if several billion times more people than that go to hell, there will be no lack of space in hell. If we look at the world of the universe that God has made, there are many lands tens of times and tens of thousands of times larger than this earth. He can do it as much as He wills. When we think of the people who will remain, it is not someone else's matter but mine and yours. Surely some will remain even among families, some will remain among friends, some will remain among the people around us, and some will remain in this country and in that country. When we think of how many will remain, we feel so stifled that we truly cannot stay still for even a moment, and we cannot help working. We cannot help preaching the gospel.

In any case, those who are born again are taken when the Lord comes. You and I are taken. Do you believe the fact that you will be taken? Do you have the assurance that God will take you? Also, do you believe the fact that certain people among your family members, unless they are born again by the time the Lord comes, will be forsaken and remain on this earth? It is certain. Such things will certainly take place. The Lord said, *"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not*

allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:42–44). That is why what we must do in these last days is to become faithful and wise servants. He said, *"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing" (Matthew 24:45–46)*. We must become faithful ones. We must become those who are ready and give out food.

The one who gives out food

As for what born-again people must do, it is that they must do the work of giving out food in due season. The servant who does so is blessed. The servant who faithfully preaches the gospel and supplies the word is blessed. This is not something said only to servants of God or ministers. Whoever they are, those who, until the Lord comes, preach the gospel, supply the word in due season to brothers and sisters, and supply all those things for the young ones are blessed. Dear fellow believers, this is the very work that we who are born again must do.

We are already born again. We are those who have secured the ticket to go to the kingdom of God. Then what must we do now? We must devote our strength to the work of preaching the gospel and nurturing the souls to whom we have preached the gospel. We must do the work of giving out food in due season. This is something that you and I must all do personally. Those who preach the gospel and, since food is needed, supply the word fit for the time—the saints and servants who do so until the Lord comes—are blessed. It means that in the last days, those who give out food are blessed. Until the Lord comes, those who

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

give out food are blessed. We truly must continue the work of preaching the gospel and nurturing. Not only preaching the gospel, but nurturing, supplying the word and supplying it again, and again preaching the gospel and supplying again—we must continue this work until the Lord comes. Such people are wise people. Such people are the wise ones.

Such saints and such servants receive rewards before God. Especially if in these last days there are servants who do so, those servants are truly blessed, and living a life of faith under such servants is also blessed. It means that those who lead the people who have received the remission of sins later than you and supply the word to them, live a life of faith together and serve the Lord, preach the gospel together and care for them, and live in that way are blessed. So we must live a life of devoting our strength to preaching the gospel and supplying food. We must ceaselessly preach the gospel and ceaselessly do the work of supplying food in due season. What we must do is the very work of preaching the gospel and supplying food. That is what we must do in these last days.

This is the work that you and I must do. Among those weaker than you, are there souls to whom each one of you supplies food? Personally, there may be or there may not be. It is not that there are always none, nor that there always are some. But in fact, all of us have them. Even if personally we may not have any, if we join and cooperate in the work of giving out food, we become the same ones who give out food.

The spiritual food given out through books

I want to give out food to people, but there are many people whom I cannot meet in person. So I think that making books and

giving them out to those souls is giving out food. That is why I diligently carry out the literature ministry. I am by no means doing this work just because I want to make books. I believe that there are many people who, though they have not yet come into this church, read the books and are changed. And I believe that there are many people who eat much of the spiritual food. That is why we concentrate on the work of making books and place great weight on it. Even if you personally have no soul to nurture, if you devote your heart, labor, and time together to the work of making books, you achieve the same effect. You become servants who give out food in due season.

As we live in these last days, if you want to live wisely and truly receive praise before God, you must give yourselves to the work of giving out food. It is enough to give it out in whatever form. You must not think that you give it out only by meeting souls in person.

We will make books until the Lord comes. There will be people who read the books and receive the remission of sins, and there are also many people who read the books and think to themselves, "Ah, so this is what it is." There are many people who believe in secret. Because our books are by no means lies, anyone who is truly seeking will surely receive the remission of sins if he reads these books. It is only that what I am saying sounds very unfamiliar; a book that is understood after one reading is not a good book. It is not a valuable book. A book that one reads once and then puts on the shelf is not a very important book. A truly important book is one that is not understood after one reading, is not understood even after two readings, and, even when read a third time, something does get understood, but one does not yet know it all, so one can keep reading it—that is a truly good book. So among the books placed on the bookshelf, there is always a book that one does not understand well even

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

when one looks at it, and that is a good thing. Someday one will build up one's ability and come to know it all.

I can tell you that this literature ministry we are now doing is also the work of giving out food. That is why we must not be lazy in such work. The souls we meet are extremely few, but please know the fact that through these books many people receive the remission of sins. It will happen even more in the future. Even those who were only keeping the books may, when the world becomes pressing, read those books and receive the remission of sins, and if they do not understand, they may come looking for us. They may come and ask, "It is written this way here; what does this mean? Is it true?" Such people will arise.

To someone who says that he has heard the gospel and believes, yet wants to confirm again whether it is true, you just need to tell the whole story starting from Matthew chapter 3 verse 13. That word itself is the evidence. It means that there is no separate evidence; in believing in God, where would there be greater evidence than this evidence, that the Bible has recorded it so? It is that through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sins of all people transferred to Him, and by dying on the Cross bearing those sins and rising again, He removed the sins of all people. Where is there greater evidence than this? However one gives out food, if one is faithful in the work of giving it out, that person receives praise before God. Also, preaching the gospel to every soul one meets is the same as giving out food. It is giving out the food of life. Whenever the Lord comes, if we do the work of giving out food until the day He comes, we will receive praise before God as faithful servants and receive many rewards.

The life of the evil servant

That is why what we must actually do in these last days is the work of giving out food. That is the wisest thing. You and I must meet the Lord while doing this work. Do you understand? Building up personal pride, honor, and wealth is also not entirely wrong. According to need, we must also do such things, and until the day the Lord comes, we must eat, live, be given in marriage, and marry. We must also keep working at our jobs until then, read the Bible until that day, live the life of faith until that day, and preach the gospel until the day the Lord comes.

But if we give out food until the day the Lord comes, that is living the life of faith best. If you focus on giving out food and know how to fear God, that faith of yours passes before God. Regarding the servant who, as the end draws near, neither gives out food nor even lives a life of faith himself, the Lord said, *"But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:48–51).* He says that the saints who, though the end is drawing near and the Lord's second coming is drawing near, are given in marriage, marry, eat, and drink without living a life of faith, give up the work of giving out food, give up the work of preaching the gospel, and live in that way—that such people are foolish. If someone, though he must do the work of giving out food, does not do that work, also gives up his own life of faith, and does so even as the end is drawing near, that person will surely, just as the word says, be appointed his portion with the hypocrites.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Do you know what the most evil thing is? The Apostle Paul said, *"Woe is me if I do not preach the gospel" (1 Corinthians 9:16)*. As for who the most evil person among people is, it is the person who, though he himself has received salvation, does not tell others about this salvation. That is a wrong heavier before God than any evil in the world. The evil people of the world did so because they did not know. But knowing that he himself has received the remission of sins, and knowing that if he preaches the gospel, this person can receive the remission of sins, yet not preaching it and giving up even his own life of faith—that is the most evil thing. The Lord says that He will appoint such a person his portion with the hypocrites, cast him outside, and make him weep and gnash his teeth. Such a person is truly an evil servant.

At the end, the Lord picks out sinners and the wicked. In the Psalms there appears the word, *"Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the wicked, Nor standeth in the way of sinners –ASV" (Psalm 1:1)*. There are the wicked. Among them there is an even more evil servant. As for what kind of person that is, it is a person who, even after receiving the remission of sins, does not live a life of faith. That is by no means a light matter. Among the brothers and sisters who have received salvation, there are people who, trying to live only for themselves, give up their life of faith, do not yield their hearts, do not unite with the church, quit their life of faith trying to live only for themselves alone, and live on their own in the world earning money, eating and drinking. Compared with this, those who have not received salvation are nothing. Even if such a person goes to hell, he goes not knowing, but the person who knows yet keeps his mouth shut and does not preach to others brings woe upon himself. God requires the sins of other people from this person. He requires the price of blood from the person who has received the remission of sins yet keeps his mouth shut

and does not live the life of faith. The very person whom God sees as the most evil in this world is such a person, the person who has received salvation yet does not live the life of faith.

Here He says, *"To eat and drink with the drunkards" (Matthew 24:49)*. If people do not live the life of faith, what will they do? They do nothing but eat and drink with drinking companions. There is nothing else to do. Dear fellow believers, if we do not live the life of faith, what will we do starting this very evening? Wouldn't we have a drink? Are you asking, "Then are you, a pastor, judging us because we drink?" No. You can drink. But if we do not live the life of faith, what we will do starting right today is nothing but eating, drinking, and having fun with the people of the world. Isn't that so?

If we were told to close the church doors, never to gather, and that we need not live the life of faith, there would be many people who would spend their time eating and drinking like the people of the world starting this evening. I would be the first to do so. If we were told not to give out food, it would turn out that way because there would be nothing to do. Isn't that so?

Taking part with material things is also the work of giving out food

Our taking part in any form is also taking part in the work of giving out food. The Lord treats it the same. He treats it the same, just as He said, *"I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink" (Matthew 25:35)*. Therefore, the person who takes part in it is doing the same work of giving out food. When we look at the word of God, if the word says that doing something this way is good, we should know, "Ah, it is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

good," and if it says that it is bad, "Ah, it is bad," but there are people who hold on to their own thoughts to the end.

It means that saying, "I will not take part in the Lord's work itself; I will avoid it; I will live only for myself, only for my own flesh," is by no means a light matter in the Lord's sight. It means that there is weight even among the kinds of sin, and He treats this as a very heavy sin.

Dear fellow believers, such hearts are in our hearts. We are all weak and lacking. Even so, the Lord wants us to join together with joy. But there are people who, though they receive much grace, slip out, saying they will not take part at all. If they do not take part, only they themselves lose. They could just come back to church, hear the word, and do it when faith arises, but such people, in the meantime, even give up their life of faith. They do not give up only themselves, but also cause other people to give up. That is evil.

Respect the Lord's will

Dear fellow believers, let us give out food. The only work for you and me is the work of giving out food. Do you understand? Though we are lacking, let us unite and all do the work of giving out food. Preaching the gospel with our mouths, always preaching the word, preaching by faith the word we have heard, and making books and giving them to the people we cannot meet—that is the work of giving out food before God. If we diligently do only that work, carry out overseas missions, preach the gospel in our own country too, pray for souls, and keep giving out books, then on the last day, when the Lord comes, the servants who do so will be blessed. Until the day the

Lord comes, just keep doing so. Then you will be blessed. Do not become an evil servant. Do you understand?

We must never become evil servants. We must respect the Lord's will more than our own will. Even if we admit that in the flesh we cannot live according to the Lord's word, at the very least it is respecting the Lord's will and following, though we are lacking. Do you understand? Then the Lord tolerates everything else and bestows grace. And He gives blessings. This is the very work that you and I must do. What power is there if we do it individually? Individually, there is no power. Let us unite and do the work of giving out food. Dear fellow believers, never think that this work of preaching the gospel is the work of any one individual. Because I was born again before you, because I met the Lord first, and because I know the Lord's will first, I follow first. If you follow, it is the way of taking part. That is the difference. It is not man's work but God's work.

That is why, if we unite in the work the church does, it is very abundant and blessed, and God gives blessings to those who unite in the work the church does. He surely gives blessings. Those who do not unite cannot enjoy that blessing. If your faith is young and believing does not come easily, just follow. You must not try to live the life of faith before God by working things over in your head this way and that to fit your own calculations. That is evil and foolish. All of us have foolish sides, but let us not act out that kind of foolishness. Though you are lacking, work and preach the gospel, and I hope you will think from now on, "Whom shall I meet and preach the gospel to? To whom shall I give food?" Do you understand?

When I make a book, I cannot tell you how many shortcomings there are and how many things make my face burn. Truly, if it were not for the Lord, if I were not brave, if I were not bold, I could not put it out. There is no one at all who is self-

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

confident before God. In fact, it is because there is the gospel and there is the word that I do the work of making books. In any case, dear fellow believers, let us unite in the work the church does and give out food. ✉

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

CHAPTER

25

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

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Why we must stay awake

< Matthew 25:1–13 >

“Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming.”

Waiting for the kingdom of heaven, that is, for the second coming of our Lord, is faith. We can say that not waiting for the second coming of the Lord is not faith but simply religion. The people of faith who appear in the Bible all waited for the day of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the Lord, that is, the day when the Lord comes again and establishes His kingdom on this earth. Today's word is also such a word. We believe in the Lord and live having received the remission of sins before the Lord, but are we truly waiting for the second coming of the Lord? We should ask ourselves this once and think about it.

The Lord, who comes on the clouds

Of course, when I first saw the word in which the Lord said that *"they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30)*, I, too, was not without the feeling that I was reading a fairy-tale book. I do not know whether those clouds are cirrus clouds, cumulus clouds, or dark rain clouds, but in our thinking, we may wonder, "How will the Lord come on the clouds? If one jumped down onto the clouds, wouldn't one sink right through? How can He come on the clouds?" But if the Lord says that He comes on the clouds, then He comes. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? If He says that He comes, He comes; what could we possibly say? If the Lord says that through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River He had our sins transferred to Him once and for all, received all the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose again and removed our sins, then He has removed them; do we believe because we understand it all in our heads?

In fact, the world of faith is a world that we do not know. The Bible says, *"Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen" (Hebrews 11:1)*. Actually, the Bible says that in this world there are more things that are not seen than things that are seen with the eyes. Therefore, there is no

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

reason we cannot believe just because something is not seen or because we have not seen it. And not believing is foolish.

If the Lord said that He would come on the clouds, then He comes. When I look down while flying in an airplane, there are times when milky clouds like cirrus clouds are spread thickly beneath my feet. The Lord said that He would come on the clouds, but when I imagine, "If I broke the window glass now and jumped down, would those clouds catch me?" it is out of the question. How could cirrus clouds hold up this heavy body? There are also times when I meet pitch-black rain clouds full of rain, and I think, "These clouds have weight, so if I jumped down, would they catch me?" but that, too, is impossible. In any case, because the Lord said that He will come again, the Lord comes.

Those who believe in God, whether they are born again or not, wait for the second coming of the Lord. Here, too, the ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom and were waiting. The wise virgins were waiting with oil in their vessels, and the foolish virgins were waiting holding only their lamps without having oil.

In any case, whether or not they believe the word that the Lord would come on the clouds, those who say they believe in God waited for the second coming of Jesus. Whether they were born again and waited or were not born again and waited only outwardly, in any case, they waited.

Those who say they believe in Jesus wait for the second coming of Jesus, even if they are not born again. They wait, thinking, "Jesus will come. When will He come?" Born-again people also wait for our Lord.

Among the predecessors of faith in the old days, there were also those who wrote hymns of praise while waiting for the Lord. Their content is that, day and night, with tears in their eyes, they waited for the Lord to come, and even when they just saw a cloud

floating in the sky, they waited, thinking that the Lord might perhaps be coming. We can see how much they longed for Him, since even when they just saw a cloud floating in the sky, they waited, thinking, "Perhaps our Lord will come on that cloud."

Do you wait for Jesus to come? Do you wait for the second coming of Jesus? Dear fellow believers, if there are clouds floating in that sky, do you find yourselves waiting, wondering whether Jesus will come on those clouds? Or, even though Jesus said that He comes on the clouds, when you see clouds, do you just think, "They are just clouds"? Jesus comes in exactly the same manner as He went up, with the sound of the archangel's trumpet, with majesty and royal authority.

In any case, they wait. We wait, and those who are not born again also wait. Those who believe in God all wait. The only difference is whether they wait having been born again or wait without being born again; the waiting is the same. If we are truly born-again people, we must live a life of faith while waiting for the second coming of our Lord. Even though we are born again, we must not just live without waiting for the second coming of the Lord. We must live a life of faith while waiting for the second coming of the Lord.

A noisy faith that has only the lamp without oil

Among the ten virgins who wait for the second coming of the Lord in this world, there are two kinds. The five foolish virgins, who are not born again, had lamps but did not have oil. When it comes to the lamp, you can think of an old oil lamp. The wick is raised up, so when you light it, the flame suddenly flares up, and then in a lamp that has oil, the flame settles down to just the right height, and a blue flame and a red flame rise up steadily.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

It rises up very powerfully and evenly, without going out. Those who have oil in this way are truly good, but these virgins who do not have oil have a very noisy faith. Because they have to buy oil and bring it, their life of faith is extremely busy. They cry out with loud voices, asking that the Holy Spirit like fire be sent down, and strive hard in their life of faith.

The Bible called the virgins who did not have oil foolish virgins, and such people always go around buying oil in this way throughout their whole life of faith on this earth. Because they are not born again, they do not have the Holy Spirit. A lamp has a wick, and in the Bible the wick is often spoken of as the heart of man. It means that they keep drawing up this heart. They are burning their hearts. When you light a good wick, it burns for a very long time and burns well. But if only the wick is burned, a bare wick without oil that has been lit sends its flame higher at first than a wick soaked in oil. At first it burns better. When a wick without oil is lit, the flame suddenly flares up. Then, while burning, it goes out. It goes out completely with a fizzle.

That is how the life of faith is. Those who are not born again do wait for Jesus, but I cannot tell you how noisy their life of faith is. Because they have no oil, their faith becomes a faith with no time to rest, in which they must always burn their hearts, fret anxiously, work harder, and always cling harder to prayer. Because they do not have the faith that believes the word of God, they cannot even believe the word. Because the word alone is not enough, and in the end their own hearts must catch fire, they pray diligently and zealously to set their hearts on fire.

Because their hearts must catch fire, they strive with all their strength. They even fast and are truly zealous. Those who are not born again live their lives of faith in this way while waiting for Jesus, until the time of His return finally arrives. However, such people cannot welcome the Lord as their Bridegroom. To

go to heaven, to wait for the second coming of Jesus, and to receive Jesus as the bridegroom, one must have the Holy Spirit. Those who do not have the Holy Spirit cannot welcome Jesus even when He comes. They cannot welcome Him, saying, "O Bridegroom, please come quickly." Even if they know that Jesus is coming, even if they know that date, and even if they see Jesus coming with their own eyes, they cannot welcome Him.

That is because they do not have within themselves that Holy Spirit, that oil, in which Jesus delights. Jesus likes those who have the oil, that is, the Holy Spirit, and because He promised to make such people His bride, He becomes the bridegroom to them. He does not become the bridegroom to those who have no oil.

The wise virgins, who dozed but had oil

There is another kind of people, and these people are born-again people. They are people who have both oil and lamps, that is, people who have received the remission of sins and, after being born again, belong to a church of born-again people. But such people nodded off and dozed. Thinking, "Jesus said that He would come, so why is the bridegroom coming so late? It has already been about two thousand years since He said that He would come, but He still has not come. It seemed that He would come soon; it seemed that the circumstances kept turning into ones in which He would come," they nodded off, dozed, and turned their attention elsewhere, and, tired of waiting, they did many other things.

Then one day, Jesus suddenly came. At the cry *"Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!" (Matthew 25:6)*, what did they do, having dozed for a long while? They went just

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

as they were. Because they themselves had already received the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit was within them, and they also had the church, they went just as they were.

Thus those born-again people were able to welcome the bridegroom and went into the bridegroom's wedding feast. Those who believe in Jesus Christ all wait, but the born-again went into the wedding feast when the Lord came, while those who are not born again, that is, those who have only lamps without having oil, strive while waiting for the day when the Lord comes, yet when the Lord actually comes, they fail to welcome Him, fail to go into the wedding feast together, and even after the door of the kingdom of heaven is shut, they keep striving and only realize it later.

They realize later, "Aha, so this is how it is! This is not by works! Just as the Apostle Paul or Luther, who long ago spoke of justification by faith, that is, the truth that one is made righteous by faith, said, one truly becomes a righteous person by believing in Jesus Christ with the heart!" Only after tribulation comes upon this earth, the Lord comes again and saves us, and the door of the wedding feast is shut, do they at last realize this way. Only then do they come to know at last, "Aha, this really is it! What those people believed was right! It was right that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him when He received baptism from John, it was precisely because of our sins that He received the judgment on the Cross, and He rose again and saved us!"

But in fact, it is too late. After everyone had gone in, the door of the kingdom of heaven, that is, the door of the wedding feast, was shut, and though they later knocked on the door, asking for it to be opened and saying, "We believe, too," the door of the kingdom of heaven ended up shut. Those who are not born again

acted foolishly to the very end and strove to be saved by their own works. But they, too, waited.

Born-again people waited, and those who are not born again also waited. This parable of the ten virgins tells us that only the wise virgins can meet the bridegroom and go into the wedding feast. None of the foolish virgins can go in.

Waiting without believing is foolish

What is foolish? Believing that Jesus has removed all our sins and has already made us His bride is wise; but a person who, unable to believe the fact that he has become the bride of Jesus Christ, strives to grind and polish himself further through works to earn a qualification from the bridegroom—that person who cannot believe is precisely the foolish person.

Dear fellow believers, on this earth there are foolish people and people who are not foolish, but what it means to be foolish is simple. It does not mean being foolish because one is poor at studying, foolish because one lacks learning, or foolish because one lacks intelligence. Not believing is what is foolish. Living without believing is foolish, and waiting for the second coming of Jesus Christ without believing is foolish. The word does not say that other things are foolish, but says that waiting without believing is foolish. Even now, many people are waiting.

People often say that the time for Jesus to come has almost arrived. If you ask what kinds of currents are flowing within Christianity now, there is one group of people who, though not born again, wait while saying that the time for the Lord to come has almost arrived, and another group consists of people who seek to make this world into the place that Christians hope for.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Christians have dreams they hold toward this world, hopes toward this world, and it seems that they hope this world will become very beautiful. Although I have not personally attended such gatherings, their conclusion is this: “If we live this way, we will change this world this way, and if we change it this way, this world will become a very beautiful world. Therefore, let us Christians take the lead in good deeds and live good lives.” So there is a group of people who try to change this world by living good lives, and there is a group of people who, though not born again, wait very urgently for the second coming of Jesus.

But those who believe without the Holy Spirit are all foolish people. Among those who believe in Jesus Christ, those who wait believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross become wise virgins, and those who wait without believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross will all be judged to be foolish virgins on the last day and will weep and gnash their teeth outside.

Such a thing will happen on the last day. We are all people who wait for the second coming of Jesus. Those who do not wait for the second coming of Jesus are complete unbelievers. They are people who do not believe in God at all. Those who believe in God wait for the second coming of Jesus.

Those who hope that our Lord will come again and build this world anew, and those who want a different world, saying that this world must not go on this way, are the people who wait for the second coming of Jesus. Our Lord will surely come. He said that He comes on the clouds with the sound of the archangel’s trumpet.

And our Lord said that He would send His angels to gather all His people from one end of heaven to the other and make them live with Jesus Christ. When this world is destroyed, our Lord will build a new world on this earth. That is the Millennial

Kingdom. And after our Lord lives with the people of God for a thousand years, He will do away with this world, and we will enter the kingdom of God, the eternal kingdom of heaven, and live there.

The servant who knows yet does not do

We must become saints who wait for the second coming of our Lord, who will make all things in this world new, and we must live the rest of our lives while waiting. Even if we are born again yet do not wait but nod off, doze, and even fall fast asleep, if we get up right away at the cry that the Lord has come, then in fact, as long as we have oil and lamps, we can welcome the Lord. But when we look at the word of God, those who knew yet did not do will be beaten on the last day. The word says, *"But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:48–51)*. It is truly frightening.

To be honest, there was a time when I was reading this word and did not read it to the end. With a fleshly heart, I honestly cannot say that I do not have the thought, "If the time for the Lord to come is near, couldn't I now just quit the hard things and simply live?" I do have it.

But this word is there. When we look at another word, even if we have dozed off, as long as we have oil and lamps, when, at the cry that the bridegroom is coming, we rub our eyes and say, "Oh, has the Bridegroom come?" the Bridegroom sees the oil

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

within us and receives us, and we welcome the Bridegroom, saying, "Bridegroom, thank You."

I believe that the Bridegroom will gladly welcome even a bride who dozed, as long as she has oil. The Lord said so here.

But when we look at the word in the chapter just before, it says that the servant will be beaten severely. And this word says that the master will *"appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:51)*. The hypocrites are those who are not born again. It means that He will treat such an evil servant exactly the same as a person who, though not born again, acts as a hypocrite pretending to be born again. If we did not know the word, we might somehow manage not knowing it, but having known the word, we cannot do so. In any case, because we are born again, when the Bridegroom comes, we will enter the Bridegroom's kingdom. Therefore, while living on this earth, we must stay awake and live a life of faith while waiting for the second coming.

"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13). As this word says, we must stay awake and live a life of faith. The nearer the end comes, the more we must stay awake and live a life of faith. The nearer the end of this world comes, the more all people fall asleep. All who believe in God are bound to fall asleep. But as the end draws nearer, it is right to stay awake and live a life of faith in this way.

And we must live a life of faith while waiting for the second coming. We must believe in the second coming. Dear fellow believers, do you believe in the second coming? A life of faith lived without believing in the second coming of Jesus is not a life of faith. The Lord clearly told us to wait for His second coming, so if we do not keep the Lord's word in our hearts and

live as we please in this world, that is something for which we will be severely beaten on the last day.

Dear fellow believers, if someone said something to us and we did not keep those words in our hearts and did not believe them, wouldn't that be something that would provoke anger? The Lord clearly said that He would come again, and said that when He comes such and such signs would occur, so how wrong it is if we do not believe it in our hearts! We must believe with our hearts and live a life of faith while waiting for the second coming of the Lord.

We do not know when the Lord will come. But judging by the times, and judging by all the things that are happening now, it is very urgent. Then you might think, "If it is urgent, what does he want us to do? Does he keep preaching such sermons without even knowing that, when such sermons are preached, there is in us a heart that wants to live even more as we please?"

You may also think, "It would be better if he did not preach such sermons at all and instead preached that Jesus will come two thousand years from now; then we would live our life of faith better. Doesn't he know that when he preaches with urgency, we are drawn more toward the other of our two hearts? Doesn't he know that the heart that says, 'Now that the time has come, let me roughly wrap things up, put things in order, live carelessly, and then meet the Lord,' rises up all the more?" I know that some of you may have such thoughts in your hearts.

Believe in the second coming and live each day earnestly

But we must deny such a heart. We must believe this word. We must believe in the second coming of the Lord. Even in the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

old days, there were many saints who lived while waiting for the second coming of the Lord.

But we are very different from them. For us, many of the words that the Lord spoke have come true in reality just as they were spoken, whereas they in the old days hoped for what was yet to be fulfilled. They believed, "Since He said it this way, it will be fulfilled this way." Therefore, no matter when Jesus comes, you and I must believe in the second coming and live our life of faith earnestly day by day. We must truly set our hearts as befits a life of faith, and even if the Lord were to come tomorrow, we must believe and live a life of faith until the day He comes. The Apostle Paul, about two thousand years before us, also believed in the second coming of Jesus. The twelve disciples also believed, and the saints in between all believed as well.

We are people of an age in which about two thousand years have passed since Jesus came. They believed, too, so if we who are born again live without believing, how wrong that is! Dear fellow believers, they died looking toward Jesus Christ, who was yet to come. We must now believe in Jesus, who will appear before our eyes, live a life of faith by faith, and then welcome the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, do you understand? Even if the Lord comes tomorrow, until today passes and tomorrow comes, even up to that moment, we must live by faith, live a life of faith engraving in our hearts the word the Lord spoke, preach the gospel, and live a life of sharing food.

And we must live while staying awake and praying. We must not live drunk with this world, but must stay awake and truly do the things that please the Lord, remember the Lord's will, and keep it in our hearts as we live. Not that much time remains ahead, but how many changes there are even in one year! How many changes there are even in just one week! We must advance

more and more by faith, making each month and each year very worthwhile. We must know and believe that the second coming of the Lord will surely take place, and live a life of faith. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The righteous, who were created for good works

< Matthew 25:31–46 >

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

We sing many hymns about the kingdom of heaven. That is because our Lord gives us the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord said, *"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 25:31–33)*. We who are born again know that God caused us to be born again and placed us on this earth so that we would do good works. The Bible says, *"Created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Ephesians 2:10)*. It means that God saved us for good works. He saved you and me for good works.

The Lord, who divides the sheep from the goats

When we look at today's word, it says that our Lord will come again to this earth and hold judgment, and that, just as a

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, He will sit on the throne of His glory and divide the righteous from sinners. He divides them, putting the righteous on the right and sinners on the left. And the Lord says to the righteous on the right that when He was hungry they gave Him food, when He was thirsty they gave Him something to drink, when He was naked they clothed Him, and when He was in prison they looked after Him. So He says, *"Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34)*.

At that time the righteous are bewildered. "When did we give food to the Lord, and when did the Lord come to this earth and become naked? When did we clothe Him? When was the Lord in prison? When did we help the Lord when He was suffering?" Bewildered in this way, they ask. Then our Lord says, *"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me" (Matthew 25:40)*. It means that what was done to one of the least among the born-again was done to the Lord. And with that He tells them to inherit the kingdom that their Father has prepared for them, to take possession of that kingdom. So we, the righteous, have a heart that wants to do good works. We have such a heart because of the Holy Spirit. Here the word says that when He was hungry they gave Him food, when He was thirsty they gave Him drink, and when He was naked they clothed Him, and truly we must help others spiritually, and must also help them physically when they are in need.

What was done to one of the least was done to the Lord

That is truly so. The word says that what we do for the saints, what we do for the righteous, what we do for the Church of God, and everything we do for souls is in fact not done for people. God the Father sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth, and Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, and in this way saved you and me. Having saved us in this way, He caused you and me to be born again and made us the people of God and the children of God. That is why doing good works for the people of God who have become children of God has become doing them for God Himself. For what is done to the children of God is exactly the same as what is done to God the Father, and what is done to our Lord's sheep is exactly the same as what is done to the Lord, who is the shepherd.

Therefore, I know that while we are on this earth, we must do many good works for God's Church, which is His body, for the saints, and for souls before we go. God, who is seated in our hearts, gives us this heart. Even though the righteous may seem to speak harshly and may seem to do this or that in jest, they cannot truly do evil. Though there are times when they fall into temptation, at root they are people who are for what is good. Therefore, while we live on this earth, we must do what is right, do more spiritual work than physical work, and serve God much, so that we become saints who receive praise before the Lord. Our Lord says that everything we do was done for Him, and He gives us rewards. I am so thankful.

Here He said, *"For I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me" (Matthew 25:35–36). Of course, I know that we must do this physically as well. If someone is having a very hard time, we must go and help that person. But because a person has both a spirit and a body, I know that we must also do such things spiritually: giving food when someone is hungry, giving drink when someone is thirsty, and taking someone in when that person is a stranger. How often the saints are in a spiritual famine! At such times we can do good works: looking after them, going and supplying them with the word, and, spiritually as well, clothing them as much as we can, looking after them, giving them food, and taking them into the Church. We must do such things spiritually as well; we must do them for the people of God, and we must also do them for all those who will believe in God and receive the remission of sins in the future.

In fact, all the work of our preaching the gospel is done for the Lord. For those who will receive the remission of sins before the Lord and those who will become children of God, we engage in missions, literature evangelism, personal evangelism, hospital evangelism, workplace evangelism, and all the work we do as a church. We are not living for ourselves in the least. We are doing it for the Lord. Truly we must give food to all the hungry people of this world. We must feed them the food of life, the food of the gospel, the food of salvation. Such a heart fills the hearts of us, the righteous. It is a heart that wants to give, a heart that wants to share. The Bible says, *"The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives" (Psalm 37:21)*. The righteous always give. They work because they always want to give, and they live and work on this earth because they want to share. There are few among them who try to live by storing things up on this earth for themselves. They live and work this way because they want to give. We can give physically, but we

can also give spiritually, and we can also give the word of truth, that is, the food of life, so that that person may obtain life. We are doing truly precious work.

All this work that you and I do in the Church is work we do because we are righteous, and it is truly blessed work. And our Lord takes note of all of it. It does not simply end with our doing this and then going to the kingdom of heaven; rather, our Lord knows all of it and in the end gives us rewards. I would want to live this way even if He gave no rewards, but since He even gives rewards, I am all the more thankful. Rather than doing such work to receive many rewards, I want to live acting this way before God even if I do not receive many. I know that you also have such a heart. I know that it is a heart the Lord gives through the Holy Spirit, whom He has given us.

Those who are like goats on the left

But in this world there are those who are not the sheep on the right but are like goats on the left, those who will be cursed. God the Father has said that He gives the kingdom of heaven to the righteous; and as for what He gives to those on the left who will be cursed, He says, *"Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me'" (Matthew 25:41–43).* They, too, are so bewildered that they say exactly the same thing as the righteous: *"Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

minister to You?'" (Matthew 25:44). Then our Lord says, *"Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me. And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:45–46)*.

"Inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me" (Matthew 25:45). What was not done for the righteous becomes what was not done for the Lord. Opposing the righteous is opposing God Himself. And as for what He has prepared for these people, He said, *"Into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels" (Matthew 25:41)*. Where is that place He has prepared for the devil and the devil's servants? It is hell. There is a place God has prepared in order to throw people into the everlasting fire that is never quenched, and it says that He will sweep all those on the left into it. It says that He will throw into that fire all those who are not born again, and those who do not cooperate with the work of God but oppose it, and, as if that were not enough, obstruct it.

Dear fellow believers, our having received the remission of sins does not end merely with our having received the remission of sins; there is the kingdom of heaven that God gives, that is, the kingdom of God. He makes us inherit that kingdom. He gives us the kingdom of heaven. I give great thanks that there is a kingdom of heaven. There is even a hymn of praise that says, "What would we do if there were no heaven?" Truly, if He did not give the Father's kingdom to those who are born again, if there were no kingdom of heaven, where could we be rewarded? About what it would mean if there were no living again after death, if there were no kingdom of heaven, the Apostle Paul said, *"If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most pitiable" (1 Corinthians 15:19)*. On this earth we are trampled on and insulted, and we live always hearing bad things

said about us even while always doing good works, and yet we cannot help but do good works; if, when we actually died, there were no kingdom of heaven, how empty that would be. It means that we would truly be pitiable people.

But the Apostle Paul says that there is a kingdom of heaven. It means that our Lord gives us the Father's kingdom. That is why we can be rewarded with the kingdom of heaven and the Millennial Kingdom, in which we will reign for a thousand years, that is, with God's reward. On the other hand, those who go to hell are the people who are like goats on the left. He said, *"And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 25:33)*. What is the characteristic of goats? It is butting. Sheep also butt, but goats butt so much that it becomes wearisome. That is how they are by nature. If there is a tree, they go and rub against it and butt it; even when they meet their own friends, they butt them; and when they get irritated, they butt even their own young. Butting is their specialty. And if you lead them from the front, they never follow. Only when you drive them from behind do they go along well, as they please. If you say, "Let us go this way," they never follow but go that way, and if you say, "Let us go that way," they go this way. That is a goat. So are those who are not born again, those who oppose God, those who are on the left. When we give them the word, telling them to be born again through the word of God, they oppose it by any means. If the word is right, then it is right; but whether it is right or not, they oppose it for the sake of opposing.

They simply oppose, hate, and dislike it. Even though we tell them to be born again and be blessed, to go to the kingdom of heaven, to become the people of God, that it is free, that because it is given they only have to receive it, that they only have to believe—even though we teach them all the right answers—they go astray and keep speaking only wrong answers. They believe

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

only wrong answers. He throws such people on the left into the everlasting fire that is never quenched.

"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness"

Dear fellow believers, there are the kingdom of heaven and hell. There is everlasting fire. Not wanting to serve even after receiving the remission of sins, and saying, "I cannot even make a living right now, so how can I serve?" is an excuse. Even after receiving the remission of sins, we may think that we can survive only if we work hard at something in the world, but in reality, after receiving the remission of sins, what comes first is to unite with the Church and hear the word. Just as it says, *"Beloved, I pray that you may prosper in all things and be in health, just as your soul prospers" (3 John 1:2)*, it means that if we first hear the word and grow sufficiently, God will fill our needs.

If, even after receiving the remission of sins, people worry about how they will live and so simply do nothing but work, and try to live by a way like the mathematical formulas of the world, they cannot even live a life of faith. Even if they work until their tongues hang out, they gain nothing. It is just like the prodigal son, who left home and toiled much but gained nothing. Dear fellow believers, those who have just received the remission of sins think that they must do something, and that only then will they barely be able to survive. But in reality, if they come to the Church, hear the word, receive by faith the word of God that is preached to them and become one, and pray and seek help together with those who went before them in faith, these people lead them well on the blessed path. So they come to live well in faith. And those who have received the remission of sins come

to do good. While helping others and living a righteous life, they themselves also live prosperously.

In Proverbs it is written, *"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24)*. It may seem that if people withhold excessively and spare only what is theirs, they will become rich, but in reality that is not so. If we live giving for the Lord, God instead fills us even though we give much, and if we gather things up only for ourselves and live only for ourselves, our lives instead become poor. That word of the Bible is the truth. It means that there must be God's blessing. Our lives are lived through God's blessing. Even after being born again, a heart that says, like a miser, "I will never do anything to help others," and "Only what is mine is mine," is not a spiritual heart.

The Bible says, *"Seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness" (Matthew 6:33)*. Seeking His kingdom is wishing that the kingdom of God, the people of God, and the Church of God may prosper, wishing that souls may be saved, devoting oneself to such work and praying, and living while offering to the Lord a part of what God has given, though it may be little. Then the Lord makes that person's life prosperous. It is very blessed. What greater joy is there for a person than helping others? It is greatly blessed. What is sadder for a person than living only for oneself? Yet some people absolutely refuse to help others. We must not learn a way like the mathematical formulas of this world and live only for ourselves. Also, some people have received the remission of sins but have no interest at all in serving souls and doing the work of God, so they leave the Church and never come to the Church. Such people become very poor spiritually. Their very lives are poor.

Dear fellow believers, the people of the world work until their tongues hang out. Yet they barely manage to eat. Only by

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

staking their lives and working desperately do they barely manage to eat. But we who serve the Lord live well even while living for others and living for souls, the kingdom of God, and the righteous. We are blessed. We eat well, laugh a lot, and live well and joyfully. Of course, there are times when we are tired. But because all of it is done for the Lord, we are rewarded for all of it, so it is all right.

Being used for good works is a glory

Dear fellow believers, while we live on this earth, we must truly live a spiritual life. We must live doing spiritual good. This is right, and we will have to live the rest of our lives in this way. Having received the remission of sins is itself good, but since there are hell and the kingdom of heaven and those who have not received the remission of sins go to hell, how thankful we are to have received the remission of sins in this age! What is greater than receiving the remission of sins? How good it is that, while those who have not received the remission of sins go into the everlasting fire, for those who have received the remission of sins there is a kingdom that the Father will make us inherit, and that we will one day obtain that kingdom of heaven and go and live there! Dear fellow believers, depending on whether they have been saved or not, some people go into the everlasting fire and some go into the eternal kingdom of God. This is how people are divided. They are clearly divided into goats and sheep, the kingdom of heaven and hell, those who will be blessed and those who will be cursed. There is no middle ground. We, the righteous, must think of righteous works and live doing righteous works every day. Then we ourselves become prosperous, the people around us become prosperous, and our

own faith becomes prosperous. If we have become righteous, we must now live the rest of our lives for spiritual, righteous works, for good works, without the slightest regret. Just the fact that you and I have become members of such a Church, which is His body, is a great blessing.

Dear fellow believers, whether we are ministers or brothers and sisters, the one fact alone that God lets you and me take part in the work of God and uses us for this right work is a great glory. Dear fellow believers, who would use us? The high positions of the world are tangled up with mutual connections and vested interests, so they do not use people like us. In such places only those who live for themselves, not those who live for others, are needed. We would think it an honor if such places would merely use us, so how glorious it is that God uses you and me for His good works! This is glory. It is something to be grateful for.

I think about this. Our ministers and brothers and sisters find it hard as they work, and at times they fall into temptation, and then inwardly I feel, "You should know how thankful you ought to be just to be used for such work." It is the same with me as well. What a great glory it is that I am used for such work! I believe you also think so. Coming to such a church is a glory. It is a glory for me, too, to have met you, and it is a very glorious thing that I have become a member of the Church of God, where the righteous gather and worship, and it is very glorious for you as well. It is God's blessing and grace. God has given you and me many blessings. Know that you have become righteous, that you are a sheep on the right before God, that you are not a goat but a sheep. It means that the sheep lived for the people of God, the kingdom of God, and God. It means that God gave us such works and gave us such a heart, faith, and blessings so that we could do such works. How great a glory this is! We must know

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

this, and know and believe that we have received great glory from God, and live accordingly.

Since we are those who were created for good works, we must live giving thanks and giving glory every day. We have received a great blessing. To those on the right He said, *"Inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world" (Matthew 25:34)*. What is that? Is it not the kingdom of heaven? It is the very kingdom of God.

A hymn sung with the thanks of our hearts is the fruit of our lips before God. Praise is praising God with our lips, and it is joyful and good. It is bearing the thanks in our hearts as fruit with our lips and praising God. It is very blessed. The time of praise is a very blessed time. Dear fellow believers, among the many blessings God has given us, He has given us the kingdom of heaven, He has kept us from going into the everlasting fire that is never quenched, and He has said that He will give us rewards, so it is a great blessing. And among these He has given us the blessing of being able to live all our lives for good works, so we must give thanks and thanks again and give glory. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? We do not know how much time you and I have left, but let us live by faith all our lives.

A life created for good works

We were created for good works. In the word of Ephesians it says, *"We are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works" (Ephesians 2:10)*. We were truly created for good works. We do not live on this earth in order to exalt ourselves. We were created for good works, that is, for the work of God. We do good works today, do good works tomorrow, and keep doing good works until we go to the Lord's kingdom. Dear

fellow believers, how good this is! Are there not many people in this world who do bad things today, bad things tomorrow, and do nothing but bad things until they go? We do good things today, good things tomorrow, and good things the day after tomorrow, yet there is so much work we cannot do because time is short. Because our ability as humans is so lacking, after working only a little we grow tired, bow our heads, and call on the Lord, and then, when we have recovered a little strength, we open our eyes again and work a little. Then our eyes grow dim again and we cannot see the letters, so we put on reading glasses; at first we can see well, but after a while things are blurry even with the reading glasses on, so we take them off and call on the Lord.

Even so, dear fellow believers, how great a blessing it is to be able to do good works for even a few hours a day! It is truly a blessing. Being able to do good works is a great blessing. God has given us many blessings. We are living a truly blessed life. If you have truly become righteous, be sure to keep in mind that God made you righteous for good works. God did not make us to live only for ourselves. All those who have received the remission of sins were made to live for others. Dear fellow believers, be sure to know that. It is destiny. It is an unchanging destiny. That God made us for good works and has us do that work is something God has firmly set for us. If we do not do this, it is sad and painful.

Dear fellow believers, you must do good works at all times. It does not mean doing worldly good works. Here He said that what was not done to the least was not done to the Lord, and what was done to the least was done to the Lord. You must do it for the people of God. You must do it for those who will receive the remission of sins. Dear fellow believers, it does not mean doing it for those who make a practice of evil. If a robber-like

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

person who robs others' things and harms people every day goes around without shoes, you must not buy him shoes because you feel sorry for him and then say that you did a good deed. You must help those among the righteous who truly need help, and also those who will be saved. The Lord said, *"And other sheep I have which are not of this fold" (John 10:16)*. You must do this for those who will come in. You must help them, give them booklets, go and preach the gospel to them, pray for them, and do this for them both spiritually and physically. Please do such work. This is your calling.

If you do such work, both you and I become happy, and if we do not do such work, we become unhappy. Do you think that the righteous would find it fun to do bad things? Not at all.

Our destiny has already been set. At first, I, too, only meant to serve as one brother in the Church, and I did not intend to live for myself. But now I have come to preach the word like this. Dear fellow believers, one way or another, we must live for the gospel of God, for the expansion of the kingdom of God, and for the Church, souls, brothers and sisters, and those who will be saved. Because this is the destiny given to you and me, we must surely know this and live accordingly. It is not right to give this up and say, "I will live as I please."

Just as a farmer must go and live in the countryside, we who are born again must live in the Church of God for good works. We must not act foolishly. Even if, finding life in the Church stifling, we try enjoying entertainment, it is only for a moment, and it soon stops being fun. We must live for good works and for the gospel. If we do not live for the kingdom of God, that will not do. Dear fellow believers, how blessed our lives are!

If the righteous do not live for good works, they will become like Naomi, who left Bethlehem, went to Moab, and lost both her husband and her two sons. They will lose everything. Dear

fellow believers, let us live for good works. You and I are saints who were created for good works. Let us live for good works, and when the Lord comes, let us go to that kingdom He has prepared for us to inherit.

The kingdom of heaven is an incomparably good place

Going to the moon on a rocket has become understandable as science has developed, but the fact that God gives us a glorious kingdom does not feel real to our minds. But, dear fellow believers, there is an extremely beautiful world. Even on this earth there are places where all of nature is beautiful. It means that all such things are shadows of the kingdom of heaven. I once saw a movie that showed a beautiful valley; a river flowed along the valley, and a large fish was caught on a fishing line and pulled up. I cannot tell you how beautiful that scenery was.

Dear fellow believers, how many beautiful places there are on this earth as well! But even those beautiful places are truly nothing compared with the kingdom of heaven. The kingdom of heaven is an exceedingly good place. It means that God has entrusted good works to us in order to let many people enter there. Dear fellow believers, please do not refuse. Please do not reject it out of ignorance. You have physical desires, and you also have spiritual desires. But if you pursue spiritual desires, your physical needs are all met. If you lose your spiritual desires and pursue only physical desires, your whole life becomes poor. I believe you know this well, too. It is truly so.

You and I are people whose destiny has already been set. We cannot escape it. I give thanks before God. The Lord said, *"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46). We are entering eternal life. Let us live that way, doing good works, and then go. When our Lord tells us to come, we just have to go. Then we will enter eternal life. Those who are not born again go into the everlasting fire. They receive everlasting punishment. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will be born again and do good works. Please do not take part in evil works. I truly give thanks to God that He has given us such a blessing. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The least ones who have become the Lord's brothers

< Matthew 25:31–46 >

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."

When Jesus sits on the throne of glory and divides all the nations, the people on the right and on the left are all astonished and ask a question. It is the question of when they saw the Lord hungry or sick. The two groups ask the same question, but the answers they hear are different: one side has what it did to a brother among the little ones acknowledged as done to Jesus, and the other side hears the word that what it did not do to a little one was not done to Jesus.

While this word makes known the judgment on the last day, it makes us look back on how we treat the people of God today. Jesus does not regard the hunger and thirst, the loneliness and hardship that His people go through as matters unrelated to Himself, and He does not forget the labor of those who cared for them either. The King who will sit on the throne of glory calls one of the least "*My brethren.*"

The children who inherit the kingdom are those who have become righteous through the remission of sins

In verse 31, Jesus says that He will come in His own glory with all the angels and sit on the throne of glory. All the nations are gathered before Him, and as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, Jesus separates people and sets the sheep on the right and the goats on the left. Both the One who gathers all people and the One who divides them are Jesus Christ.

People are sometimes deceived by outward words or by the outward form of a life of faith, but Jesus rightly knows those who believe in Him and those who do not. Before Him, no one can hide himself by putting forward only the name of being the people of God, and the distinction between those who have become righteous by believing in the salvation of Jesus and those who remain in sin is clearly revealed.

Let us first look at the word spoken to the people on the right. Let us read verse 34. *"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world'" (Matthew 25:34)*. Jesus calls them those blessed of His Father and tells them to inherit the kingdom prepared for them. Inheritance is what parents hand down to their children, so God has prepared that kingdom for His own children from the foundation of the world.

Then how did we become children who would inherit that kingdom? Jesus saved us, who had no ability to resolve our own sins before God. Through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, Jesus had all our sins passed on to Him, and in order to pay the price for the sins that had been passed on to Him, He shed His blood and died in our place on the Cross, and He

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

rose again from death. Because the Father sent the Son and accomplished this work, we have come to be called those blessed of the Father.

Those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of sins, become righteous, and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Entering the kingdom of God has nothing to do with our deeds; those who have received the remission of sins enter it. And because the Holy Spirit is present in the hearts of the people who have received the remission of sins, they look after the difficulties of God's children who have been saved together with them and serve them. The passage shows how those who received the remission of sins lived on this earth, and how Jesus receives that service.

The righteous, in whom the Holy Spirit is present, care for both the bodies and the souls of their brothers

The King says that when He was hungry they gave Him food, and when He was thirsty they gave Him drink. He says that when He was a stranger they took Him in, when He was naked they clothed Him, when He was sick they looked after Him, and when He was in prison they came to see Him. The hungry needed food, and the sick or the imprisoned needed a hand that would come and look after them; all of these were deeds of giving concrete help in concrete difficulties.

The righteous ask when they did such things for the Lord. As people who had received the remission of sins, they simply regarded caring for the people of God as the right thing to do, and they did not know that the King of glory would speak of that work as something done to Himself. So that service was not an

effort to pile up merit but something that came from the heart the Holy Spirit had given them. Jesus answers their question as follows. Let us read verse 40. *"And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me'" (Matthew 25:40)*.

Those whom Jesus calls His brothers are people who have become the people of God through His salvation, namely you and me, who have received the remission of sins. Among them, He spoke of one of the least; so even someone who does not stand out greatly before people or receive high treatment is a brother who belongs to Jesus. Because the Holy Spirit is present within the righteous, supplying what they need and acting for their sake becomes the very act of honoring God.

Therefore, do not push a brother's needs aside as a problem for that person to solve alone. The people of God are those who meet one another's needs. Actually sharing food with a hungry brother, looking into the circumstances of a sick person, and welcoming someone who needs a place to stay is treating that person as a brother who belongs to Jesus. A heart that loves Jesus shows itself in this way, in the labor of caring for His people.

This care does not stop at comforting with words alone but goes as far as finding out what is needed and meeting that need. If we look into one another's circumstances in the church and put our strength together, we can handle together even things that are hard to handle alone. Those who lead from the front, rather than first asking what will be done for them, look into what they can help with so that the people entrusted to them may live well by faith. Having been given the responsibility to serve means having been given the responsibility to look after people's needs.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

We must also look after our brothers when their faith is weak. The gospel is not something needed only once, so even those who have received salvation become thirsty again. We can listen to a brother whose heart is discouraged and pray together with him, and we can make the gospel of the water and the Spirit clear again to someone whose heart is weighed down because of sin. Helping him hold on to the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished and staying with him so that he may regain strength in the word—caring for one another's souls and lives in this way is a life of faith that serves Jesus.

As you see how those on the left turned away, look back on your own hearts

To those on the left, an entirely different word is given. Jesus tells them to depart from Him into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. He then says that He was hungry but they did not give Him food, He was thirsty but they did not give Him drink, they did not take in the stranger or clothe the naked, and they did not look after Him when He was sick and when He was in prison.

What is revealed here is what they did not do. It is a life that saw the needs of a little one and still regarded them as having nothing to do with itself. An unbelieving heart seeks many things for itself yet closes itself to the difficulties of God's people; so it says that it honors Jesus while turning away from His people. The King knows even that turning away.

They too ask in return when they saw the Lord in difficulty and did not minister to Him. Their words mean that if they had seen the King in person, they would not have refused. But Jesus answers that what they did not do to one of the least of these was

not done to Him. Since Jesus receives the little one whom they turned away from as His own concern, the claim that there was no opportunity to serve has no place to stand before Him.

When we hear verses 40 and 45 together, it becomes clear how we must live today. There is care that Jesus receives as done to Him, and Jesus also knows all of the turning away of those who do not believe. Do not regard your brother's needs as trivial. If you decide whom to serve by looking at a person's position or influence, you will miss a person whom Jesus holds precious.

The appearance of those on the left also makes us, who have already become righteous, look back on our hearts. Even those who have received the remission of sins sometimes close their hearts to the people of God and seek only their own benefit, and at such times we think again of the love of Jesus, who gave His own body for us. The Holy Spirit causes us to love the people of God and to look after their needs. Therefore, let us bear our brothers' difficulties together, following the heart He gives.

Looking toward the kingdom that has been prepared, let us attend to the brothers beside us

Let us read verse 46. *"And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life" (Matthew 25:46)*. The verdict of Jesus does not end at the level of being praised or rebuked for a while on this earth but is divided into everlasting punishment and eternal life. So those who are in sin must come forward to the salvation of Jesus. Preaching the gospel to those who have not yet received the remission of sins so that they may become children of God is also work done for the Lord. The saved righteous live looking toward the kingdom prepared for them. Jesus will fulfill both the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

word in which He promised that kingdom and the word that He will receive what is done to a brother among the little ones as done to Himself.

Giving thanks for the salvation God has given us, we look again at the brothers beside us. We look into what that person needs now and help together with what has been given to us. Even if it is labor that is not seen and not remembered, Jesus knows it. Before the King, who receives *"one of the least of these My brethren"* as His own concern, I hope that you will live treating the brothers beside you as people who belong to Jesus. ✉

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

CHAPTER

26

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

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus, who was delivered up at the very Passover He had spoken of

< Matthew 26:1–5 >

“Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.’ Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.’”

Jesus walked that road even though He knew He would be delivered up

Jesus did not hide from His disciples what was about to happen, but told them beforehand that He would be delivered up and nailed to the Cross. The leaders’ plot is recorded right after this, but Jesus’ words were not a measure He hurriedly prepared after hearing of that plot. Jesus knew which road He was going on, and He let His disciples know the meaning of that road. So we must not look only at the sight of Him being seized by

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

people's hands, but must also see the Lord, who spoke of that suffering beforehand.

Verse 1 says that, after Jesus had finished all these sayings, He spoke again to His disciples. Jesus, who had earlier taught about the judgment to come and the life of staying awake that we must live, has said to His disciples all the words He had to say, and now He makes known His own Cross. The One who speaks of judgment is Himself going forward on the road of death. Jesus is the One who has the authority to judge sin, and at the same time He is the Savior, who gives Himself up to save sinners.

Let us read chapter 26, verse 2. *"'You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified'" (Matthew 26:2).* Jesus speaks of the Passover, which the disciples also knew, and then says that the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified. That is, the time had drawn near when Jesus Himself, who came to this earth as the Son of Man, would be delivered up to be crucified. He revealed to His disciples beforehand the life He would give up at the time when the Passover came.

Also, Jesus spoke of His being delivered up and His being crucified one after the other, so He knew that it would not end with His being seized through betrayal, but would go as far as death. The suffering that would take place afterward was not a misfortune that Jesus walked into without knowing. Jesus is the Lord, who, though He knew everything that would come upon Him, walked that road for us to the end.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

What remained after the baptism He received from John was the Cross

To know why Jesus went forward toward the Cross, we must also look at what He did earlier at the Jordan River. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had already had the sin of the world transferred to Him three years before, and He carried out His work for three years while bearing that sin. And now that He had finished all the words He had to speak, what remained was to be hung on the Cross. So the announcement in verse 2 is not a sudden word, but a word that made known the last step of the work that began at the Jordan River.

At the Jordan River, John testified of Jesus as follows: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)*. Jesus, who said two days before the Passover that He would be delivered up, was that very One of whom John had long before testified that He was the Lamb of God. It is not that we now accomplish salvation by passing our own sins on to Jesus one by one, but that we know through the word and believe the fact that the Lord has already had all our sins, too, passed on to Him.

Now the Lamb of God goes to the Cross to pay the price of that sin which had been passed on to Him. As the price of that sin, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place; because Jesus paid in full the price of sin that should have fallen on us, those who believe receive the remission of sins. The work of having sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and the work of paying the price of that sin on the Cross are one salvation. And Jesus rose again from death and became the living Savior of us, who had been bound by sin and death. Those who believe in their hearts the gospel of the

water and the Spirit, which conveys this salvation, have all their sins washed away and become children of God. Therefore, the announcement of the Cross in verse 2 contains the purpose of salvation for us.

The leaders only put off the timing and did not abandon their evil intent

When Jesus was speaking to His disciples of His death, in another place the matter of killing Him was being discussed. Verses 3 and 4 record that the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas. At that time the religious leaders felt threatened, fearing that their popularity would fall and their religion would be shaken. So they did not assemble to learn Jesus' words, but discussed a way to seize Jesus by trickery and kill Him.

Their discussion started from the conclusion that they would kill Jesus. Instead of laying that conclusion down before the word, they only pondered how to carry it out. We, too, easily set our own conclusions first and look only for ways to achieve those conclusions. So before the Lord, ahead of considering what we can achieve, we must first examine whether what we want is in accord with the word of God.

Let us read verse 5. *"But they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people'" (Matthew 26:5)*. What they were worried about was an uproar among the people. There is no word that they abandoned their intent to kill Jesus; they merely put off the timing, saying not to do it during the feast. A heart that admits its wrong abandons that deed, but a heart that thinks only of the disadvantage that will come upon itself keeps the same intent while changing the method and the timing. Let

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

us not pass over the leaders' plot as only someone else's story, but look back before the Lord to see whether we are weighing first how we will look to people, leaving the wrong in our hearts as it is and fixing only our outward appearance.

God determines the time of salvation

The leaders said not to do it during the feast. But Jesus said that after two days was the Passover, and that He would be delivered up at that time. And the passage that follows records that Jesus was seized on that very night when He ate the Passover with His disciples. People tried to put off the timing, but the matter was accomplished at that very Passover Jesus had spoken of. The One who determined the time of salvation was God.

Jesus' words and the leaders' discussion head toward the same death, but their purposes are completely different. The leaders sought to get rid of Jesus, and Jesus sought to give up His own life to save sinners. The disciples had to hold on to what the Lord had said first. This is because, when the suffering came, what they saw was the sight of Him being seized and put to death, but before that, Jesus had let them know why He was going that road.

Dear fellow believers, do not leave the fact that the Lord has saved us up to the approval or opposition of the people around you. Confirm in the word and believe the salvation He accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. People tried to avoid the feast, but the Lamb of God was delivered up at that very Passover He had spoken of; so our salvation, which He accomplished, is not shaken by human calculations. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The fragrant oil for burial that will be remembered together with the gospel

< Matthew 26:6–13 >

“And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.’ But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’”

The disciples concluded that it was a waste before they knew Jesus’ will

After Jesus said that two days later, at the Passover, He would be delivered up and crucified, this event then took place in Bethany. A woman poured very costly fragrant oil on Jesus,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the disciples saw it and were indignant, and Jesus said that the woman had done a good work for Him. The fact that the fragrant oil was costly was the same for everyone. What differed was whether they knew what lay ahead of Jesus, who was receiving that fragrant oil.

Verse 6 records that Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. At a time when people would not go near a leper, saying that he was unclean, Jesus was eating at that house. The woman in verse 7 came in that place to Jesus as He was eating and poured the fragrant oil on His head. Because she recognized who Jesus was and believed in Him, she did not spare an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil but actually gave it to Jesus.

But the disciples counted the result of using the fragrant oil as a loss. Let us read verses 8 and 9. *"But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor'" (Matthew 26:8–9)*. They said that it would have been good if the fragrant oil had been sold for much and given to the poor. Helping the poor is precious, but they put forward those words and concluded that the service now being offered to Jesus was a waste. Before finding out for whom the woman was doing what, they rebuked her by the standard of the use they themselves had in mind; so speaking of a good cause does not make even that judgment right.

That fragrant oil was poured on the body that would soon die

In verse 10, Jesus firmly restrained the indignant disciples, asking why they were troubling this woman. They thought that

their own judgment was right, but by that judgment they were troubling a person who was serving Jesus. And Jesus made clear what the woman had done.

Let us read verses 11 and 12. *"For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial" (Matthew 26:11–12)*. However much the poor are helped, they will always be in this world. But Jesus would not always be with the disciples, because in a little while He would hang on the Cross and depart. And Jesus connected the pouring of the fragrant oil to His own burial. Just as oil is applied to a person's body when he dies, the woman poured fragrant oil in advance on the body of Jesus, who would soon die.

Jesus did not praise the woman by reckoning once more the value of the fragrant oil she had offered, but spoke of how that act was related to His own death. The disciples thought of the money they would get by selling it, and Jesus spoke of His burial. What they missed was the fact that Jesus' death was near, and the meaning of the service offered in view of that death.

So we, too, must listen to the word before judging other people's service. Even if you have a way that you consider more useful, do not carelessly call other people's labor futile, but examine whom that labor is directed toward and what truth it serves. If we put our own calculations first, we can block the work that the Lord accepts. Those who listen to the word lay down their own judgment when they realize that it is wrong.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The body of Jesus, who received the fragrant oil, is the body of the One who had our sins passed on to Him

The burial Jesus spoke of is the burial after an actual death. Jesus goes forward even to death in order to save sinners. It is not the woman's fragrant oil that removes our sins; rather, Jesus, who received the fragrant oil, saves us. So, to remember this woman's service rightly, we must first know what Jesus, who received that service, did.

The body on which the woman poured the fragrant oil was the body of the One who had already had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. The One who is without sin had our sins passed on to His own body, and all the sins we have committed are included in them as well. So the body of Jesus, who received the fragrant oil, was not a body going to death with no relation to us. As the price of those sins passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, was buried, and rose again from death. The burial the woman prepared in advance was the burial of the death that was for that very salvation.

Those who believe with their hearts in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which proclaims together the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, have their sins washed away. We do not buy salvation with the value of what we have offered; rather, we receive that grace by believing in what Jesus has accomplished. Our service cannot replace or supplement the salvation Jesus has accomplished; it is offered upon the salvation we have already received. So let us not read the word in which He praised the woman in a changed way, as meaning that the remission of sins is given according to

the size of one's devotion, but accept it with a heart that treasures Jesus, who has saved us.

The word that she will be commemorated means that we, too, should live in this way

Let us read verse 13. *"Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (Matthew 26:13)*. Even while His own death lay ahead of Him, Jesus made known the future in which the gospel would spread throughout the whole world, and He said that wherever that gospel spread, what this woman had done would also be told and commemorated. The fragrant oil that the disciples regarded as a waste became, through Jesus' word, a service to be remembered for a long time; so the value of this deed was determined not by the disciples' reaction but by Jesus.

What Jesus caused to be remembered is the service of recognizing who He is and pouring fragrant oil on His body. The center of the gospel is the salvation Jesus Christ has accomplished, and when that gospel is preached, the service of those who were of one heart with the Lord's will is also spoken of together with it. While we distinguish the content of salvation from the service of those who have received that salvation, we also see the two being preached together.

The word that she will be commemorated means that we, too, should live in this way. Those who do not stop at pouring fragrant oil once, as this woman did, but live that way until the day they go before the Lord are the ones who are right before the Lord. Even if they cannot do great things, the Lord regards as honorable those who serve the gospel in the places entrusted to

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

them. Cast off the attitude of the disciples, who hurt a person serving Jesus with their own calculations, and recognize that service in the light of the word.

Jesus corrected the judgment the disciples had made in Bethany. When we hear what the Lord called a good work, our judgment, too, changes. Let us, too, carry on that service, which will be spoken of together wherever this gospel spreads in the whole world, in the places entrusted to us until the day we go before the Lord. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Those who know what they themselves are like can serve the Lord and give thanks

< Matthew 26:6–13 >

“And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.’ But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’”

I believe the word we read today is a word we already know well. When Jesus was at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came and poured fragrant oil on Jesus’ head and so prepared for Jesus’ burial. But Jesus’ disciples said that it would have been

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

good to sell it and distribute it to the poor. When Jesus was on this earth, He spoke of many things, and here, too, He gives us a truly good teaching. I intend to examine that part together with you.

The Lord, who was at the house of Simon the leper

It says that Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper. There were houses Jesus visited when He was on this earth, and one of them was the house of Simon the leper. I think that Jesus had probably healed that leper, so that, although scars remained, his leprosy had been completely healed and no fluid oozed anymore. Since it is not recorded in the Bible, we cannot say whether it was this way or that way, but in any case, an incident happened when Jesus was at the house of Simon the leper. Ordinary people shun the house of a leper. But the Lord liked to stay in such houses, whether the house of a leper, the house of Zacchaeus, or the house of Lazarus. So the Lord went to the house of Simon the leper, and what I am saying is that we should think about this part a little spiritually.

Why is that? In fact, the house where the Lord can stay is indeed the house of a leper. The Lord came to save mankind from sin. So He removed all sins and rescued them from sin. Therefore, the Lord cannot dwell in the hearts of those who say that they have no sin—those who, though always committing sin, do not recognize that they are people who must go to hell because of that sin. Therefore, this word that the Lord was at the house of Simon the leper means that the Lord is in the hearts of people who always recognize that, because of the sins they have committed, they cannot but go to hell and cannot but receive the judgment for sin, who believe that the One who truly saved them

is the Lord, who accept Jesus into their hearts, and who accept into their hearts and believe the gospel of the truth of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given.

The Lord is in the hearts of those who, even after receiving the remission of sins, know and see what they themselves are like. But if, after receiving the remission of sins, people say, "I lack nothing, and I am fine," then, though the Lord is in fact in their hearts, they do not feel that He is there.

As we think about this part, that the Lord was at the house of Simon the leper, we must always know that we could not but die because of our sins, but our Lord saved us, give thanks with our hearts, and truly become people in whose hearts the Lord dwells. A person in whose heart the Lord dwells always has the heart of a leper. He always knows thoroughly his own self, which is lacking and weak. It is not that others know it; he himself knows it. Such people receive the Lord into their hearts and give thanks, praise the Lord and give Him glory, and when they are lacking, they ask for help.

The woman who broke the alabaster flask of fragrant oil

This woman came with an alabaster flask of fragrant oil and poured it on the head of Jesus as He was eating. The thoughts of the disciples and the thoughts of Jesus were very different. The disciples were indignant. Their point was: how could she pour out such expensive fragrant oil all at once, when, if she let fall just one drop as one sprinkles perfume, the whole house would be filled with its fragrance? We do not know whether she broke that flask or snapped off the neck of the bottle. It is said that because fragrant oil was so precious and its scent would fly away,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the bottle was completely sealed. Since the scent would all fly away once it was opened, the point is that she either opened it or broke it and poured it all out on Jesus' head. The fragrant oil must have flowed down from the head of Jesus as He was eating, and the whole house must have been filled with the fragrance. It is something that cannot be understood by human thinking, but the Lord says that what this woman did was well done. The disciples were extremely indignant. A grown man's wages for a whole year had flown away at one time.

The disciples' perspective and Jesus' perspective were different. The perspective from which this woman regarded Jesus was also very different from that of the disciples. Jesus and this woman seem to have been of one mind. The Lord said, *"You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always" (Matthew 26:11)*. He said so when He was in this world in the flesh, and in fact, our being born once into this world, meeting the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believing it, receiving the remission of sins, and serving the Lord is also not something that is always there. It happens only once. Meeting the Lord and coming to maturity and serving the Lord while we are born and live on this earth is an opportunity that comes only once in a lifetime. It is not an opportunity that lasts forever, but an opportunity that exists only while we live on this earth. And the Lord said that what this woman had done would be told as a memorial to her, and it is truly worth commemorating. Since she gave all that she had to serve the Lord and offered it for the spread of the gospel, it is truly worth commemorating, and because of such service, the gospel is spread widely.

We, too, are born into this world, meet the Lord, and live a life of faith, and as for those who always know their own shortcomings, the Lord is always in their hearts, they regard the Lord as precious, praising the Lord in their hearts is joyful and

delightful, and the work of serving the Lord is not forced but delightful and joyful. The difference in that heart is enormous. After receiving the remission of sins, those who truly know that without the Lord, and if they do not do the work of serving the Lord, they are people who can do nothing but useless things—that apart from the work of serving the Lord they are completely useless people who only commit sin—love serving the Lord so much and come to serve not by force but voluntarily.

Serving the Lord is the most worthwhile work

Dear fellow believers, I hope you will think deeply. After meeting the Lord, is there any work to do other than the work of serving the Lord? It seems that there are many good things and very many things to do in the world as well, but in fact there is nothing to do. This is because, even if we live for our flesh, for ourselves, or for the people of the world, all of it will perish and there is no benefit at all, and, strictly speaking, it is committing sin before God.

Following the flesh is committing sin. Therefore, people in whom the Holy Spirit dwells do not find much joy in it. Rather, it is sad and painful. Because there is nothing worthwhile at all in this world, serving the Lord is good. This is because apart from that there is no good work to do.

There is also a hymn that says that a worthless life that only makes mistakes without the Lord is like a ship without sails drifting on the sea. Truly, a ship with neither sails nor a rudder cannot but be pushed around and dragged around on the sea without any direction, wherever the waves strike. Likewise, in a life without the Lord there is neither a goal nor a center. Therefore, I hope you will become people who realize in your

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

hearts that being able to serve the Lord in whatever form, like this woman who met the Lord and poured fragrant oil on the Lord's head, and doing the Lord's work, are truly right and proper. It is not serving the Lord by force, but coming to actually serve because willingness arises in the heart.

Dear fellow believers, when you go out into the world and earn and spend money by receiving a salary, doing business, or running a company, you usually work eight hours a day even at that. If you are in a high position, you must cling to that work not for eight hours but for twelve hours or until you go to bed. But the point is that it is not worthwhile at all. There is nothing but receiving a few bills, and whether you receive five or ten, there is nothing more than that. The point is that if you receive it and do not use it for the gospel but use it only for yourself, only for the things the flesh follows after, there is nothing worthwhile in it. So the Bible says, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. Within true faith, we must realize how right the work of serving the Lord is and how happy it is that we can do such work. The point is that we must become possessors of a faith that has the realization to be able to give thanks that God has let us do such work.

"She has done a good work for Me"

A person who has such a realization in his heart truly brings a precious flask and pours all of it on Jesus' head. But Jesus' disciples criticized her. They were indignant, saying, "How can she do this? It is infuriating! It is outrageous! Is she out of her mind? To spend all of it for the gospel—what a grown man would have to save for a year without spending a single penny—

to pour all of it on Jesus' head!" But Jesus said, *"Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me" (Matthew 26:10),* and He said, *"You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always."* This means, "I will leave in a little while." And He said, *"Wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (Matthew 26:13).*

In fact, this woman's faith had grown more than that of Jesus' disciples. What is clear is that this woman knew that she was truly a person who could not but die because of sin, went to find Jesus, who was in the house of the leper, and poured fragrant oil on Jesus' head in front of many people. In another Gospel, too, there is a story of a woman who poured fragrant oil and wiped Jesus' feet with her own hair. Wiping another person's feet with one's own hair is something one could not do even before a king of this world. I believe it is something an ordinary person could never do. But what is clear is that this woman was so very thankful to Jesus. She recognized that Jesus was her Savior, that He was the Savior who had saved her from all sins, and that He was the Messiah. Because she believed in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit was already in this woman's heart. Because the Holy Spirit was in this woman's heart, she recognized who Jesus was and understood all the words Jesus spoke. In the Bible, there were many such sisters of good faith.

Jesus' disciples also did many great works. As the saying "Great vessels are completed late" goes, after Jesus died, they came to maturity belatedly, came fully to their senses, and did well. But the point is that this woman recognized Him while Jesus was alive and did this. The point is that her heart was so thankful that even giving all her possessions was not enough. Even ordinary people know at least that much: that after meeting the Lord, serving and following the Lord is precious. But those

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

who rightly realize that serving the world is vain and nothing and who say they are thankful if only He lets them serve the Lord, and those who love the Lord with a heart like one that says, *"I would rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God Than dwell in the tents of wickedness" (Psalm 84:10), "How lovely is Your tabernacle" (Psalm 84:1),* and who are so thankful, again and again, that the Lord saved them that they say they would wish for nothing more if only He lets them follow and serve the Lord—such people are truly happy people. The Lord always dwells together in the hearts of such people.

A person who has come to maturity after receiving the remission of sins

You and I, too, must have in our hearts the same realization and faith as this woman who poured a flask of fragrant oil on Jesus' head. This is not something achieved by force, but something achieved only when one examines one's own heart before God and rightly realizes it for oneself. This is nothing else. It is not achieved by teaching, nor by holding seminars, nor by force. In the life lived after meeting the Lord, those who know that worldly matters are nothing, that the work of serving the Lord is so very noble, and that, rather than serving anything else, being able to serve the Lord with their lifetime is itself happiness, are blessed people. They are truly blessed people.

In fact, it takes much time to know that, and those who have gone ahead must impart much faith. In fact, it is coming to maturity. This is exactly what it is to receive the remission of sins and come to maturity. It is coming to maturity like the woman who poured the flask on Jesus' head. A person who has not come to maturity, after receiving the remission of sins, thinks

about how he can live in a fun and enjoyable way now that he has no sin. Living that way, he ends up disappearing. There are many people who go out saying that they will wander a little for a while and come back, that they will be gone for a while and return, and never come back. After that, they live as servants of the devil. They are people who never come to maturity all their lives. After meeting the Lord, we must think about it quickly. In anything, the first step is important.

If you have met the Lord, you must first think about how you will live from now on. You must think about it for yourself, not by force. I, too, after meeting the Lord, thought about how to divide my life between earning a living and the work of serving the Lord. After first being born again, we must wrestle with how to live. We must think about what we should live for now and what is right, and since we do not have faith, it is a normal life of faith to wrestle with this, to consult and discuss with those who have gone ahead, and to receive their guidance. Rather than doing things passively and by force, like an owner forcibly dragging a cow to the stream and making it drink water it does not want to drink, a person who thinks, "If I am going to work all day today, I must drink this water now so that I will not get thirsty," and drinks voluntarily and does things voluntarily is a person who has come to maturity.

We must wrestle with it from the very beginning after meeting the Lord. To think, "No, I will do it after a little time has passed. What is this, right after being born again? I have only just met the Lord, and my life ahead of me stretches out far; serving the Lord from now on is too dreadful. I will live in the world for a while and then come back," is a thought that comes from being a person who has not come to maturity. But then it is hard. Dear fellow believers, after living so dissolutely like that, if you come back into the spiritual world and try to live a life of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

serving the Lord, to live by faith voluntarily, and to live for other souls, for the benefit of other people, and for the expansion of the Lord's kingdom, I cannot tell you how hard it is to adapt. You cannot adapt.

Therefore, the born-again, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must from the beginning—though they do not have great faith or the ability to do it—wrestle, consult, and receive guidance for their course, asking, "What should I do? How should I live? What way of living is right?" and for living rightly. At first they follow half by force, but later, when they truly come to maturity, they must become people who give thanks that He has let them live such a life. This is a perfectly normal Christian life. A life lived not by force but by faith—this is a perfectly normal life.

If you and I, while our faith is young, go out into the world by mistake, we can quickly become soaked in the world, our hearts can harden, and we can fail to understand that we must return to the Lord and die without knowing that the Lord's work is precious and that being used by the Lord is a blessing. But the Lord has let us live such a blessed life, so how thankful we are! Dear fellow believers, take a look right now. Many of those who received the remission of sins long ago and were led remain attached to the church, but there are people who say they have received the remission of sins yet do not come into the church and receive guidance.

I, too, have all this time gone around here and there, preaching the gospel, counseling, preaching the gospel together with others, and serving the Lord. I am truly thankful that He has let me live such a life. If the Lord had not led you and me into such a life of serving the Lord, you would have lived a worthless life without the Lord, a very vain and utterly vain life.

A vain life and a blessed life

Solomon was the son of David and a king, enjoyed wealth and glory, and had tremendous wisdom and understanding, but what was his conclusion after living through all of life? *"'Vanity of vanities,' says the Preacher; 'Vanity of vanities, all is vanity'" (Ecclesiastes 1:2)*. He concluded that everything is vain. When we look at Ecclesiastes, it is truly so. It is really vain. But how thankful we are that He has let us live such a life!

He has let us live a blessed life like this woman's. The point is that this woman broke the flask once and poured it, and Jesus acknowledged her. I do not know how this woman lived after that. Breaking a flask once and pouring it is something we, too, can do as much as we like. But what the Lord said was probably not meant in that sense. The point is that this woman knew the value of a life lived for the gospel. She knew not the quantity of life but the quality of life. The point is that she knew what way of living is the right life. This woman is our sister, recorded in the Gospels and recorded in the Book of Life, who believes just as we do.

Why were Jesus' disciples indignant? They were indignant because they looked at it in a fleshly way. Their point was: how could she pour that expensive thing on Jesus' head all at once? Would it not be enough to pour a little each day? But this woman poured out everything she had. That is what Jesus is speaking about. Jesus' disciples thought very much in fleshly terms.

Dear fellow believers, things become very different depending on how we think. It is so for me, and it is so for you, too. I am happy serving this gospel. If there were no work of serving the gospel, it is not merely that life would seem to have no joy; it would actually have no joy. I would not know why I should eat delicious food, and, having no meaning in eating, I

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

might not eat well and then die. Whether I eat food or do anything else, I am doing worthwhile work, and since the Lord has entrusted precious work to me, I can do everything for it. So I am happy. You are happy too, aren't you?

If you live in the world, most people are considered successful if they own one two- or three-story building. If someone has a great fortune, people say he has succeeded in the world. If someone dies after passing on a great fortune to his children, people say it is a successful life. But that is vain. He is a vain person who has lived his life in vain. Dear fellow believers, can that fortune be exchanged for the life of even one of us? There was a story that a certain large company went bankrupt and a high-ranking executive of that company became unemployed overnight, and he said that since he would live thirty more years, he would now start again. But that, too, is all a vain life. What is the use if he gathers money again in that way, sets up a company, and becomes chairman again? Where will he use that money? He will soon die. It seems that he will live thirty more years, but he will soon die. If he receives great stress just a few times, he will collapse. What I am saying here applies to everyone, whether older brothers and sisters or young people.

We must try making a plan for our own lives in our hearts. As to how it is right to live, there are those who serve the Lord for various reasons and in various forms, but when we think about it ultimately, we are living a very blessed life. That is why we are happy. As soon as we meet the Lord, how we should live must become a matter to wrestle with, a very spiritual matter to wrestle with. And those who have met the Lord but have never wrestled spiritually must wrestle spiritually even now. We must wrestle with what we will do and for what purpose we will live. A life lived without such wrestling is no different from a life lived only filling one's stomach.

Dear fellow believers, think about it as you live each day. If you did not live for the Lord today either, what worth is there? If you have truly received the remission of sins, and if the Holy Spirit is within you, it is natural to live for the Lord. This is natural. If you could not serve the Lord because no one led you, that would be a problem, but if you do not live for the Lord even though someone leads you, you are living in vain. Serving the Lord is a perfectly natural life.

Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John

Today many people, while claiming to preach the gospel, say that if you only believe in the blood of the Cross, you are without sin unconditionally. But saying that one is without sin unconditionally is not the gospel. That is only a hope. It is fitting one's own heart, by oneself, to the idea that the Lord did so by the blood of the Cross. The Lord clearly saved us by the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, without the baptism the Lord received from John, how could our sins be passed on to Jesus Christ? That is impossible. If not for the baptism the Lord received from John after coming to this earth, how could He have our sins transferred to Him? It is impossible. Why? This is because the Lord is not a liar but is righteous. God is absolutely fair. Among God's attributes are the attribute of righteousness and the attribute of holiness.

It is said that man resembles the image of God; is there a righteous heart in man's heart, or not? There is. That is exactly the measuring stick of conscience. We often say that something is unfair. When you do whatever you want as you please and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

later your conscience says, "You were not right"—that is righteousness. Because of this attribute of righteousness, the Lord is One who never says that He has borne our sins without having come to this earth to bear the sin of mankind and having that sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Therefore, the very first thing the Lord did to save all sinners from sin was the baptism He received from John.

When Jesus turned thirty, He went to John the Baptist at the Jordan River and said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. That is, He was saying, "It is fitting that you baptize Me and so fulfill all righteous deeds. Baptize Me and pass all sins on to Me. Through you I will have all the sin of mankind transferred to Me, and I will bear this sin, go to the Cross, be nailed to it, receive the judgment for sin, rise again, and save all this mankind."

Children, too, need the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Some people say that children under twelve years of age cannot distinguish well between good and evil, so when the Lord comes they will be raptured unconditionally. But not only at twelve—even at just one year of age, they distinguish good and evil fully. An older brother hits his younger brother and tries to poke his eyes with a finger. He does so instinctively. Of course, God said to Jonah, *"Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left" (Jonah 4:11)*, and had pity on them. But that means that they do not know it by human notions of good and evil; children, too, were already born with the nature of sin in their hearts and, resembling the

image of God, have a righteous heart, so they know by themselves whether they did right or wrong. Then do children under twelve go to heaven without even receiving the remission of sins? Are you saying that they go to heaven without even hearing or believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Believing that one is saved through infant baptism is very wrong. We can preach the gospel to a child. If you hold the child in your arms, preach the gospel to him, and talk to him, the parent's heart is conveyed to the child. So the child can believe the gospel and be saved. A child does not yet know many things well. But if you keep talking to him—though it is very small knowledge and a small realization—if you teach him, "The Lord has taken away all your sins," that heart and faith are conveyed, and he can be saved. But, dear fellow believers, just because you have baptized a little child does not mean that the child goes to heaven. It is tying a single string by which the parents pledge to take responsibility for the child's faith and lead it; even if you baptize a little child, what would the child know?

Yet it is truly regrettable that many people believe such a claim just as it is.

A life of serving the Lord is happy

This is something you must think about as soon as you are born again. Like this woman who poured the flask on Jesus' head, you must think about what you will live for and make a decision in your heart. Though you are lacking, it is right to make that decision first, to know what is right, and, though you are lacking, to keep following by faith while seeking faith, and so to obtain faith and follow.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

How happy it is that we can live serving the Lord after meeting Him! Is this forced? If you think it is forced, you will come to know once you leave the Lord and try living in the world. People think that if they live in society without serving the Lord, they will eat well and live well, but that is not so. Frankly speaking, being united with the church and serving the Lord while working at a job is not an easy thing. Dear fellow believers, for a person who lives wholly for the Lord, it may rather be easier. This is because he has only to go one way. Serving the Lord and being united with the church while working at a job and living in society is going two ways. Going this way once and that way once, when you come here you must follow here, and when you go there you must follow there, so it is harder.

Serving the Lord is a very happy thing, but some people are truly strange. After serving the Lord all that while, one day they say they want to go out into the world and live freely, and they say they will leave. It is truly regrettable. Whether you live this way or that way, it is one lifetime; your hair soon turns white, and life soon passes away. Frankly speaking, is life not heading toward death as soon as one is born?

Dear fellow believers, have you ever thought about your own death? As soon as we are born, we are already heading toward death. We see a child who was once tiny already graduating from high school. Life heads toward death, and one day we die, so we must think about how we will live our lives before we go, and what is right. We must know what is right, believe it, firmly settle our hearts by faith, and remove the dregs of our hearts. In fact, there is a great deal to do.

Though it is an invisible world, there is a great deal to do after meeting the Lord. There are many things to be resolved within the heart and many things to be done by faith. So when we look at the brothers, sisters, and servants of God who appear

in the Bible, they are amazing and admirable. But the lives of the Apostle Paul or Peter and our lives are the same. Dear fellow believers, it is not that they are special and we are not. We are the same.

When we read the Bible, we can see that born-again people, in the past and now, are the same—that what they go through, how they serve, and how they work are the same, that living by faith in their hearts and being persecuted are also the same, and that there is nothing different at all. That is why doing this work is happy and worthwhile. We do it because working is worthwhile and happy. We do it by faith. I hope we will live by faith like this. You are living well. It must first happen in the heart, and then it must come out in action. If you have made up your mind but your flesh does not follow well, you must entrust your body entirely to God's work. Then you will naturally come to do God's work.

Dear fellow believers, you want to do God's work, but if you are not in the Church of God, can you do God's work? If you do not receive the guidance of the church and do not do what the church asks, can you do the work? You cannot. Can you go out alone to the top of a mountain and do God's work? You cannot. We must meet one another. Because the Lord said, *"I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5),* we must be connected to one another. I am truly thankful and happy that He has let us do such worthwhile work. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Do not exchange Jesus for thirty pieces of silver

< Matthew 26:14–16 >

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him."

Even a person who was close by can set his heart elsewhere

In introducing Judas Iscariot, the Gospel of Matthew records that he was one of the twelve. He was not a person who had seen Jesus only from afar, but a person who had followed Jesus around as a disciple. Yet the ones he went to were the chief priests, who had been consulting together about seizing Jesus and killing Him. The fact of having been close to Jesus and the heart toward Jesus were not the same thing; where his heart was directed is revealed in the people he went to and in the words he said to them.

Verse 14 records that Judas went to the chief priests and spoke. It was not that someone dragged him there; he himself went and brought up the matter, then asked about the price, and after receiving thirty pieces of silver, he sought an opportunity

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

to hand Jesus over. Following this order, the text clearly reveals his betrayal.

In the light of this fact, it is hard for us to feel secure by relying only on the name of disciple. Having heard the word for a long time and having been beside believers for a long time does not mean that our hearts are now directed toward the Lord. We must look at whom we believe Jesus to be and how we are treating His word. If, even after hearing the word, we value our own interests more highly, the name of following Jesus and our actual choices part ways.

The question of how much they would give was a remark that put money ahead of Jesus

Let us read verse 15. *"And said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver" (Matthew 26:15)*. While saying that he would hand Jesus over, Judas asked how much they would give him. It was not a question asking about the words Jesus had spoken or the grace He had bestowed on him, but a question asking what he himself would receive as the price for handing Jesus over. He put a price on the One whom he should have believed in and followed as the Savior, and made Him an object from which to gain his own profit.

The Gospel of John records of Judas, *"He was a thief, and had the money box; and he used to take what was put in it" (John 12:6)*. Even while following Jesus around, he had set his heart on money. So when the chief priests weighed out thirty pieces of silver to him, their will to seize Jesus and Judas's will to obtain a price met in this deal. The sin of handing Jesus over

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

does not change, whether its price is thirty pieces of silver or more than that.

The matter of using money does not in itself explain Judas's sin. The problem lies in the fact that he handed Jesus over in order to obtain money. If we, too, change the content of the gospel or abandon the truth in order to gain some benefit, we must look back on what we are valuing more highly. An attitude that speaks the name of Jesus while using that name for one's own interests cannot go together with the faith that follows the Lord; so faith is revealed not so much by what we have gained as by whose word we have followed.

Jesus, who was sold for thirty pieces of silver, paid the price of our sins

Even though Jesus hung on the Cross and salvation was accomplished through that event, it does not mean that Judas was a person who was sacrificed in playing a part that helped salvation. The One who was sacrificed is Jesus Himself, and Judas only sought to obtain the price he wanted.

Long before He was seized, Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River. The words Jesus spoke to John at that time are in Matthew 3:15. *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15)*. Through the baptism He received from John, by which He thus fulfilled all righteousness, Jesus had the sin of the world all passed on to Him, and the sins that each of us has committed are also contained in it.

Judas set the price of Jesus at thirty pieces of silver, but Jesus paid with His own life the price of our sins, which had been

passed on to Him. As the price of those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and became the Savior who delivers us from sin and death. Those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which conveys this work, have all their sins washed away; so the basis of salvation is not Judas's betrayal, nor the years we have spent in church or our record in the life of faith, but the righteousness that Jesus has fulfilled for us.

Therefore, do not take your own wrong choices lightly on the grounds that you believe in grace. An attitude that uses the Savior for one's own interests is not an attitude that values that grace. Those who have received the remission of sins through the gospel follow the word of Jesus, who gave up His life for them, and even when they come to see their shortcomings, instead of defending their own interests, they admit their wrongs and turn their hearts in the direction the Lord wants.

Turn back today from the heart that sought opportunity

Let us read verse 16. *"So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him" (Matthew 26:16)*. From the very time he received the thirty pieces of silver, Judas sought an opportunity to hand Jesus over. He did not let a thought that had briefly come to mind drift away, but kept watching in order to carry it out; so it was not something someone made him do, but something he himself wanted and he himself decided. The steps with which he went to the chief priests led to words asking for the price, and those words led to the action of seeking an opportunity.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Let us also examine our own hearts. Are we not, while knowing that we must follow the word, seeking only ways to obtain the profit we want? With a heart that waits for a good time to carry out a wrong, we cannot keep our faith. If the word has already exposed that wrong, it is right to turn back now, while we are harboring that intent.

Just before this, a woman poured precious fragrant oil on Jesus, and Judas, who was one of the twelve, decided to hand Jesus over for thirty pieces of silver. Even while being equally beside Jesus, each person decides which way to go. Value Jesus, who gave Himself for us, above all else. Do not think of exchanging the grace of salvation He has accomplished for your own benefit, and do not, like Judas, who sought opportunity from that time, harbor the evil intent you must cast away today and make it an opportunity for tomorrow. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Calling to mind again the gospel of the water and the blood

< Matthew 26:26–28 >

“And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins.’”

Whenever we observe the Lord’s Supper, we remember the Lord, Jesus, who came to this earth, gave His own body and blood to us to remit our sins, made us the people of the kingdom of God, and saved us so that we would lack nothing to enter the kingdom of God. Today’s word is saying that the Lord gave His own body and blood to us to remit our sins, and gave us the food of life, true life, and everlasting life.

God’s great and perfect plan of salvation

The plan of God and the work of God are very mysterious. God created the universe, made man, and had every plan to let

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

us enter the kingdom of God. And the word says that Jesus, who is God, came to this earth Himself, bore our sins on His own body, and, by offering His body as the sacrificial offering, let us enter the kingdom of God. From before the foundation of the world, God chose us, called us, and saved us in Jesus Christ, and let us enter the kingdom of God. God the Father sent His Son to this earth and made Him the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, and not with the blood of the sacrificial animals of this earth, but through Jesus Christ, the Son of God, He removed all our sins and made us children of God. Although we did not know it well, God had an eternal plan of salvation toward us, and He fulfilled that plan and let us enter the kingdom of God by faith, obtain everlasting life, and enjoy eternal happiness and blessings. The more we think about all these things, the more we can only be amazed.

God's plan is so great, perfect, and blessed. We are His, the Lord has a connection with us, and we also have a connection with Him. We made no plan at all and did nothing at all, yet as we face the Lord's Supper, we come to feel all the more how beautiful, beneficial, amazing, eternal, and perfect the plan God has made toward us is. The Lord's Supper commemorates that the Lord offered Himself to God as the sacrificial offering and saved us forever in order to let us enter the kingdom of God.

In order to let us enter the kingdom of God, the Lord came to this earth, had our sins transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John, offered up His own body on the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again, and by this He gave us true life and the true remission of sins and saved us completely so that we would lack nothing to enter the kingdom of God. The Lord's Supper commemorates this. The Lord's Supper is what our Lord Himself commanded, and through this Lord's Supper

we once again call to mind the Lord's love and the Lord's plan and once again establish our faith.

We must not forget but remember that the Lord loved you and me, and in order to save us, sacrificed Himself and gave true life to you and me, and we must believe it in our hearts and give thanks.

The bread is the Lord's body, and the cup is the Lord's blood

Today's word says, *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'" (Matthew 26:26)*. The Lord gave His body to us. The Lord also said, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day. For My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:54–55)*.

The Lord gave His body to us and had our sins transferred onto that body for us. That is why the Lord's body becomes our food of life. The Lord came to this earth, and through the baptism He received from John our sins were transferred to Jesus Christ, so we became people without sin; and Jesus Christ bore our sins, was nailed to the Cross, shed the blood of life and died, rose from the dead in three days, and gave us the remission of sins, the true food of life, and true salvation.

The word says, *"Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:27–28)*. The Lord said to drink His blood and that His blood is true drink. The Lord bore our sins on His body, was hung on the Cross, and received in full,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

for us, the judgment for all sins. By shedding His blood and giving His life to us, He let us obtain new life.

The Bible says, *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. Because we had sin, we had to receive the judgment for sin, but the Lord was hung on the Cross and received in full, in our place, the judgment for our sins. So He let us obtain salvation, and by the water and the blood—that is, by the body onto which Jesus Christ had our sins transferred through the baptism He received from John and by the blood He shed on the Cross—He remitted our sins. So He let those who believe enter the kingdom of God.

The Lord's Supper is a confession of faith

As we observe the Lord's Supper, we should make this a sign of what we believe in our hearts. In the Lord's Supper there are bread and wine: the bread speaks of Jesus bearing our sins on His own flesh, and the wine, which symbolizes the blood of Jesus, commemorates that He received in full, for us, the judgment for our sins and gave us true life.

When we receive baptism in the name of Jesus Christ, we receive baptism in exactly the same way that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. It is the confession, "Lord, this is what I believe." The Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins transferred to Him once and for all; His going down into the water showed that He would receive on the Cross, in our place, the judgment for your sins and mine, and His coming back up showed that He would rise again and become our eternal Savior. The confession of faith that we believe this is precisely the baptism we receive. The Lord's Supper is the same. It is not done as a formality or

with some other meaning, but it is a confession that we believe that the Lord came to this earth, by His body and blood bore our sins and received our judgment for us, and so saved us. The Lord has saved us in this way, and we believe in this way. Therefore we have become people without sin and have become a people who enter the kingdom of God. It is with such a confession of faith that we observe the Lord's Supper.

Also, the Lord said, *"Do this in remembrance of Me" (1 Corinthians 11:24)*, and when we preach to the whole world this gospel—that the Lord saved us by the gospel of the water and the blood, that is, by having our sins transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John, being hung on the Cross and dying, and rising again from death—we must preach it without leaving out a single thing. We must not preach only the blood of the Cross or only the baptism, but must believe the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross as one salvation, one love, and one true life, that is, as that work by which the Lord, who is the High Priest, saved us in order to let us enter the kingdom of God. We must believe it and preach it. What you and I must surely remember is exactly this. Remembering the grace of the Lord, who has saved us in this way, let us give thanks. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The body He gave for the remission of sins and the blood of the covenant

< Matthew 26:17–29 >

“Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, ‘Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?’ And He said, ‘Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, “The Teacher says, ‘My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.’”’ So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.’ And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, ‘Lord, is it I?’ He answered and said, ‘He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.’ Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, ‘Rabbi, is it I?’ He said to him, ‘You have said it.’ And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, ‘Take, eat; this is My body.’ Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, ‘Drink from it,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.'"

What the blood of the Passover pointed to is the body and blood of Jesus

The disciples asked Jesus where they should prepare for Him to eat the Passover. Jesus told them the place and said that His time was at hand. Before the eyes of the disciples, who were preparing the meal, there was work to be prepared, but Jesus, who was leading that meal, knew the time when He would give Himself up; so the words He let them hear at this table make clear what that death gives to the disciples.

From verse 17 through verse 19, the disciples ask Jesus, receive His word, and prepare the Passover as He directed them. Even as the adversaries were moving to seize Jesus, the One who led the place and the preparation of the meal was Jesus, and the words the disciples were to convey also contained His intention to keep the Passover with them. With death before Him, Jesus teaches His beloved disciples the salvation He will accomplish.

The Passover was a feast that made people remember the work in which God delivered His people from the judgment of death. In Egypt, God said that He would pass over the houses where the blood of the sacrificial offering was. *"Now the blood shall be a sign for you on the houses where you are. And when I see the blood, I will pass over you; and the plague shall not be on you to destroy you when I strike the land of Egypt" (Exodus 12:13)*. The word Passover means passing over, so it was that the judgment saw that blood and passed over.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

At that time, what the people were to rely on was not the size of their houses or the merit of the people who lived there, but the word God had given and the blood of the sacrificial offering. But in the New Testament, the meaning of the Passover lies in the flesh and blood of Jesus. Now, as Jesus speaks of His own body and blood at that Passover table, the meal the disciples prepared becomes the very place where they hear of the salvation by which He delivers from judgment.

Even though the Lord goes just as it is written, the responsibility of the one who sells Him remains

When evening had come, Jesus sat down with the twelve disciples, and as they were eating, He said that one among them would sell Him. Let us read verses 21 and 22. *"Now as they were eating, He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, 'Lord, is it I?'" (Matthew 26:21–22)*. The disciples did not point to anyone else, but, being exceedingly sorrowful, each of them asked about himself, saying, "*Lord, is it I?"* Jesus already knew all about the betrayal hidden from people, so this word sets us before the fact that the Lord knows even our hearts and the intentions we harbor.

In verse 23, Jesus said that he who put his hand in the dish with Him would sell Him, and in verse 25, when Judas called Him Rabbi and asked whether it was he, Jesus answered by pointing back to his words just as they were, saying that he had said it. Judas ate with Jesus, but he did not believe in Him as the Savior. So the words with which he asked whether it was he could not erase the betrayal he had already prepared.

Jesus did not stop at saying that He knew of the betrayal, but warned of its responsibility. Let us read verse 24. *"The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24)*. The Son of Man goes just as it is written of Him. But that does not mean that the one who sells Him escapes the responsibility for sin; even while accomplishing salvation according to the Scriptures, Jesus solemnly pronounces woe on the one who sells Him. The fact that God's will is fulfilled and the responsibility of a person who chose evil are revealed together here. Therefore, we who hear the word must not hide evil intentions with words such as grace or providence, but when the Lord knows them and reveals them, we must turn our hearts back before that word.

The command to take and eat means to believe in that body with the heart

At the table of the disciples, who were sorrowful in this way, Jesus took bread, blessed it, and then broke it and gave it to them. Let us read verse 26. *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'" (Matthew 26:26)*. This body is the body of Jesus, who came clothed in human flesh to give life to sinners. Jesus did not leave the disciples' salvation to their own righteousness, but, knowing that they were weak people who commit sin, He Himself gave Himself up. So the disciples who receive the bread cannot boast of what they offered to Jesus; they only hear and receive what Jesus gives.

Our sins had actually been passed on to that body Jesus gave. When Jesus received baptism from John, He had all the sins of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the world transferred to Him, and within them are all the sins we have committed with the flesh and the sins we have committed with the heart. In Matthew chapter 3, verse 15, Jesus told John the Baptist to permit it now and said that it was fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way. Jesus, who at that time had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, now points to that body and says that this is His body.

Therefore, the command to take and eat means to believe with the heart in that body in which He had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John. Today, when we take part in the Lord's Supper as well, its content must be clear. It is not that the act of eating the bread makes us righteous; rather, it is believing in the body of Jesus, to which the bread points, and in the work He did. If we perform only the ceremony before our eyes and our hearts do not believe that work, we will miss the meaning of the word; so our hearts must be turned toward Jesus Christ, who had all our sins passed on to that body of His.

Our assurance lies in Jesus, who shed the blood of the covenant

Let us read verses 27 and 28. "*Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:27–28).* Jesus gave the cup and told them all to drink, saying that it was His blood, and He also made clear the purpose for which He sheds that blood. It is to let many people receive the remission of sins. So if we think of the shedding of His blood only as a moving sacrifice, we will miss this purpose.

As the price of our sins, which had been passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place. He received through that blood all the judgment for sin that we sinners were to receive; so if we believe only one of the two—the body in which He had sin passed on to Him and the blood by which He received the judgment for that sin—it is not complete faith. And Jesus was buried and rose again from death, and He has completely saved us who believe from sin and death. The person who believes with the heart in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which conveys this salvation, receives the remission of sins and is born again.

Receiving the cup at the Lord's Supper is a sign of faith that believes and remembers that salvation. We do not make the cup we drink a merit that washes away sin; rather, it is believing in the blood of Jesus shed for us. Jesus called that blood the blood of the covenant, and it is the blood of life by which He promised to save us in our place. The assurance we need does not depend on how strongly our hearts are moved, but lies in Jesus, who promised salvation and Himself accomplished it. So even when our hearts are weak, we can stand, believing again in the meaning of the body and blood He gave.

Let us look toward the day when we will drink together again in the Father's kingdom

After speaking of His own blood, Jesus spoke of the day when He would drink with the disciples in the Father's kingdom. Let us read verse 29. *"But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29)*. Looking

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

beyond His death, Jesus promises the day when they will be together again. The disciples were sorrowful at the word that there was a betrayer among them, but Jesus gave them His own body and blood and made clear even the hope they would share in the Father's kingdom. The basis of that hope is not a confidence that the disciples would never fail even once from then on, but Jesus, who gives Himself up, and the salvation He accomplishes.

The text conveys together a warning about betrayal and the gift of salvation. If we miss that the responsibility for betrayal is grave, we may regard grace lightly, and if we miss the salvation Jesus gives, we may look only at our own weakness and remain in sorrow. Even while revealing evil, Jesus gives the body and blood that give life to sinners; so we do not hide the evil intentions of our hearts, but believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has accomplished.

The disciples prepared the Passover as Jesus had said, and now, through the words He let them hear at that table, they had to realize and believe the salvation Jesus gives. Let us, too, not stop at having taken part in the ceremony, but keep in our hearts the content of the grace the Lord has given. Since the One who had all our sins passed on to Him does not leave us as forsaken ones but leads us to the hope of the Father's kingdom, let us look toward that day when we will drink new together in the Father's kingdom, believing in the body He gave and the blood of the covenant. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The shepherd, who goes before the sheep that will be scattered

< Matthew 26:30–35 >

“And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, ‘All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: “I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.” But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.’ Peter answered and said to Him, ‘Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.’ Jesus said to him, ‘Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.’ Peter said to Him, ‘Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!’ And so said all the disciples.”

The Lord’s warning lets us know our weakness beforehand

After finishing the Passover meal at which He spoke of His body and the blood of the covenant, Jesus and the disciples sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. But on that very road on which they had sung a hymn together, unexpected words follow. It is that all of them will forsake Him this night. Those

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

who had eaten and sung a hymn together a little while before would soon be scattered; here lies the reason why we cannot be sure that we can overcome, with only our present heart toward the Lord, all the trials that will come upon us. Jesus first lets the disciples know their own weakness, which they do not yet see.

Let us read verse 31. *"Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered."'" (Matthew 26:31)*. Jesus did not speak of a vague danger in the distant future, but said that this very night all the disciples would forsake Him. This means that when Jesus was arrested and taken away, the disciples would be afraid and run away, leaving Him behind. And He connected that event with the written word that if the shepherd is struck, the sheep will be scattered. It is written in the Book of Zechariah as follows: *"'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion,' Says the LORD of hosts. 'Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones'" (Zechariah 13:7)*.

The disciples did not know what would happen that night, but Jesus knew that He had to be arrested and taken away that night, be nailed to the Cross, and die. The disciples thought that they could protect their Teacher, but when the shepherd is struck, the sheep will be scattered. They did not know the danger that would come upon them and their own weakness as well as Jesus did; here lies the reason why they had to listen to the warning the Lord gave beforehand. Even if it seems by our own judgment that we can endure, the Lord knows our circumstances more clearly.

This warning is not a word mocking the disciples' hearts or ridiculing their love, but a word that, by letting them know what would soon come upon them, keeps them from holding on only

to their own self-confidence. So even when Jesus reveals our weakness, we have no need to take it as an insult. When we accept that word, we break free from regarding ourselves as stronger people than we really are, and we come to rely on the Lord.

The assurance of salvation is gained from what the shepherd has accomplished

Together with the scattering that would take place, Jesus also gave the promise that they would meet again. Let us read verse 32. *"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee" (Matthew 26:32)*. This promise is not a word given belatedly after the disciples had failed. Knowing that they would forsake Him, Jesus said that after He had risen He would go before them to Galilee; so the last word Jesus left to the disciples was not scattering but meeting again. Even before the disciples had yet fallen, this word of the shepherd had been laid before them.

It was Jesus who would be struck according to the word that the shepherd would be struck, but that death was not because of Jesus' own sins. Because the sinless Jesus had already had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, He now had to hang on the Cross. Within that sin are also included, without exception, the sins each of us has committed today, and it is Jesus who has already had passed on to Him even the sins we will commit in the future because we are weak. He is not One who saves people as a reward for their loyalty, but the One who, loving sinners, had their sins transferred onto His own body.

So the shepherd who was struck shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place as the price of that sin which had been

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

passed on to Him, and He rose again from death and became our living Savior. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, through faith in which we receive the remission of sins, conveys this actual work; so it is not our resolve that accomplishes salvation, but what Jesus has done makes those who believe righteous.

In the light of this gospel, the word that He would go before them to Galilee is all the more precious. Jesus was not One who waits without knowing the disciples' failure, but as the Savior who knew even their sins and had them passed on to Him, He promised a meeting beyond death. So what the disciples were to rely on again was not their own earlier confident claims, but this word Jesus had given them beforehand.

When we come to see our own wrongs, too, let us remember two things together: we acknowledge our wrongs just as they are before the word, and we gain the assurance of salvation from what Jesus has accomplished. Acknowledging our wrongs and denying the grace of salvation are different; so those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, while acknowledging that their own flesh is weak, can return to the Lord, who has washed away even the sins committed in that weakness, and seek help.

Put your hope in the promise Jesus made

But Peter's answer came out as words confidently claiming his own loyalty rather than words relying on Jesus' promise. Let us read verse 33. *"Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble'" (Matthew 26:33)*. Peter said that even if all the others forsook the Lord, he himself would never forsake Him. Comparing himself with the other disciples, he was confident

that his own loyalty would not change in the future either. But Jesus had already said that all the disciples would be scattered; so Peter believed in the self he thought himself to be more than in the self Jesus knew him to be.

In verse 34, Jesus said specifically that this night, before the rooster crowed, Peter would deny Him three times. What Peter needed, rather than a greater resolve, was to hear that word and humble himself. But in verse 35 he said again that even if he had to die with the Lord, he would not deny Him, and all the disciples said likewise. When one person made a strong resolve, all of them put forth the same resolve, but the weakness of the flesh did not disappear just because the number of people making the resolve increased.

The heart that desires to follow the Lord is precious. But the way to keep that heart lies not in boasting of one's own will, but in hearing the words of Jesus and acknowledging that one is a person who must receive help. If, while putting forward words that one will do anything for the Lord, one does not listen to the very word with which He warns one, that resolve is different from the assurance of faith; for faith is accepting what Jesus has said and relying on Him.

In this passage, the disciples' promise and Jesus' promise stand side by side. The disciples said that they would not forsake Jesus, and Jesus said that after He had risen He would go before them. The disciples' promise would collapse that night, but Jesus walks the road He spoke of to the end. It is clear where we are to place our hope.

Dear fellow believers, do not boast of your own loyalty by comparing it with others, but humbly receive the warning the Lord lets you hear. Jesus knows even our weakness that has not yet been revealed. Believe the word of salvation He first gave, and following that word, walk the road entrusted to you today.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Because there is the shepherd who, even while knowing the sheep that will be scattered, has risen and goes before them to Galilee, we lay down the heart that boasted of ourselves and rely on Him. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The cup that cannot pass away unless He drinks it

< Matthew 26:36–46 >

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.' And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.' And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.'"

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus sought the Father's will even in the midst of sorrow

When Jesus came to Gethsemane, He told the disciples to sit here and went to pray. Jesus, who took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee with Him, was distressed and sorrowful. Although He already knew what He was about to suffer, He did not regard that pain lightly; the sinless Son of God truly came clothed in a human body and, with the Cross before Him, actually went through sorrow.

Let us read verse 38. *"Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me'" (Matthew 26:38)*. Jesus said that His heart was exceedingly distressed, even to death, and told the three disciples to stay awake with Him. We who believe in the Lord must not hurry past this word. This is because we cannot regard the work of saving us as something that involved no pain at all for Jesus. The Lord walked the road for us while actually going through the anguish of facing death.

At that time, what Jesus did was to go to the Father and pray. Let us read verse 39. *"He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will'" (Matthew 26:39)*. Jesus knew that, because He had already had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He had to be nailed to the Cross. Even so, because that pain was so terrible, He asked the Father to let that thing pass if it were at all possible.

But even while speaking of His own wish, Jesus asked that it be done as the Father willed. It was not that He obeyed because He felt no pain; rather, He sought the Father's will in the midst of pain. So when we read this prayer, there is no need to erase

the Lord's sorrow, nor any need to think that His obedience fell short because of that sorrow. The text shows together Jesus, who is sorrowful, and Jesus, who entrusts Himself to the Father's will.

It was the cup in which He would receive the judgment for our sins

The cup that Jesus was to receive was the death on the Cross that was soon to come. Why did the sinless Jesus have to receive that death? It is because, in order to save sinners, He had already had their sins passed on to His own body. When we look at the baptism He received from John and the Cross together, we can know that the Father's will that He sought in Gethsemane was also the will of salvation.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and within it the sins we have committed are also included, without omission. Jesus had the sin that should have been on the bodies of sinners passed on to His own body. The sin that was passed on to Jesus was real sin, and judgment follows that sin. That is why the death on the Cross lay before Jesus, who bore our sins. As the price of that sin, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and saved us. When we believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which conveys this work, we receive the remission of sins. So let us not stop at our hearts aching as we see Jesus' suffering, but let us accept by faith for whose sins that suffering came and for whom that judgment was.

The prayer in Gethsemane is the prayer of Jesus, who was going to accomplish that salvation. The Father loved sinners and sent His Son, and the Son had our sins passed on to Him and gave Himself over to the road of receiving the judgment for them.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus did not put off the road of salvation until His sorrow went away; after seeking the Father's will, He at last went forward to face the people who were coming to seize Him. The salvation on which we rely is thus based on what Jesus endured in His own body.

We who are weak in the flesh need prayer

When Jesus came back after praying, He saw the disciples sleeping and asked Peter whether they could not stay awake with Him even for one hour like this. The disciple who a little earlier had said that even if he had to die with the Lord, he would not deny Him, was now unable to keep even the word to stay awake with Him. Seeing that, Jesus lets the disciples know what they need to do.

Let us read verse 41. *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matthew 26:41)*. The word that the spirit, that is, the heart, is willing but the flesh is weak is the word of the Lord, who knows the disciples exactly. Even if they have a heart that wants to be with the Lord, they cannot overcome by their own strength all the temptations that come upon their bodies and minds, and that is why He tells them to watch and pray. If we know our own weakness, we must not use that weakness as an excuse to stay as we are, but must seek help from the Lord; the command to pray contains whom the weak disciples must rely on.

To pray so as not to enter into temptation does not stop at meaning that we ask that difficult things not happen at all. Before the disciples, the hour when Jesus would be seized was already drawing near, and in that danger they had to seek God's help so that they would not abandon their faith. We, too, are

people who, because of fear, easily deny with our lips what we believe, or push aside the word to follow the convenience of the moment; so we ask that our faith be kept and that we be given the strength to follow the word.

Those who have received the remission of sins also need this kind of prayer. This is because, although the salvation we have received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is complete, it is not that our flesh has become strong enough to overcome all temptations by itself. Let us not overly trust our own judgment and will because of the fact that we have been saved, but let us, too, learn the prayer that the Lord commanded His disciples. Do not admit your weakness only after difficulties come upon you, but have a heart that relies on God right here, where you hear the word today.

After praying three times, Jesus made up His mind

Jesus went again and prayed. Let us read verse 42. *"Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done'" (Matthew 26:42)*. In the first prayer, He asked that this cup be made to pass if it were possible, but in the second prayer, He says to the Father, "If this cup cannot pass away unless I drink it." Because He had already had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, this cup could not pass away unless He received death, the wages of that sin. So Jesus' prayer became a prayer of obeying the Father's will by deciding to drink that cup.

When He came back again, the disciples were sleeping, for their eyes were tired. Jesus left them and prayed a third time with the same words, and after praying three times, He made up His

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

mind to do according to the Father's will. The disciples fell asleep again and again, and Jesus prayed to the Father again and again; even at that time, when He could not receive help from the disciples, Jesus did not depart from the road He was to go. Even when they failed to stay awake for Him, Jesus went forward according to the will to save sinners, including even them.

At last Jesus came to the disciples, said that the hour was at hand and the Son of Man was being betrayed into the hands of sinners, and told them to rise and go together. Although He knew that the one who was betraying Him had come near, Jesus, having finished praying, did not run away to avoid those people. He went forward to the place where He would be seized, just as He had prayed when He sought the Father's will, so the prayer in Gethsemane and the steps that followed it are joined as one.

The One who accomplished our salvation is this Jesus. Know the meaning of the cup that the Lord received, and believe in that love. And receive the word that the Lord gave to His weak disciples as the word given to you. We need God's help. Looking to Jesus, who got up and went toward the cup that could not pass away unless He drank it, let us, too, watch and pray today lest we enter into temptation. ✉

Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

Let us become those who labor for the work of the Lord

< Matthew 26:36–46 >

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.' And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.' And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.'"

Laboring for the Lord is a very precious thing. If there were no people who labor for the Lord, then even though our Lord has saved us and has removed all our sins, there would be no one on this earth to hear the gospel. I believe that if there were no people who take on the labor of preaching it to others, even this salvation of our Lord would come to be of no use.

It is just as the apostle Paul said, *"How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14)*. Only when there is someone who preaches it can people hear and be saved, and only when there is the labor of those who support the gospel can this gospel be spread powerfully throughout the whole world. When there are sacrifice and labor done by faith, this gospel comes to blossom throughout the whole world. In particular, the labor done after being born again by believing this word of blessing about receiving the remission of sins and being born again of water and the Spirit is labor more valuable than gold and more valuable than diamonds. It is more blessed labor. The labor of a person who has received the remission of sins is incomparably more valuable than the many labors done by a person who has not received the remission of sins.

In the word we read today appears the scene of Jesus going to a small garden called Gethsemane and praying. Before that, Jesus kept the Passover rite. At that time, when Jesus said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me" (Matthew 26:21)*, the disciples were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them asked, *"Lord, is it I?" (Matthew 26:22)*. Each of them asked whether he himself was the one who would sell the Lord. Then our Lord said, *"He who dipped his hand with Me in the*

dish will betray Me" (Matthew 26:23). The person who put his hand into the dish holding the bread at that time was none other than Judas. While everyone was saying, "Is it I? Is it I?" Judas was putting his hand into the dish. In fact, Jesus knew everything and had said this in advance. While thinking of selling his teacher for thirty pieces of silver, Judas thought, "My teacher will not know." Thirty pieces of silver was the amount set in the law as the price of one servant. This Judas did not believe in Jesus as God.

That is why he knew Jesus only as a teacher who was excellent in human terms, and he sold his own teacher. Of course, it was the devil who entered into him and did the work, but in Judas's own thoughts and will, too, there was a mind to sell his teacher. Concerning such a person, our Lord said, *"It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24)*. And after the disciples asked, "Is it I?" it is written, *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:26–28)*.

Dear fellow believers, at the Lord's Supper our Lord gave out bread and wine. First He gave the bread, and then the wine. Giving the bread, He said, "This is My body," and giving the wine, He said, "This is My blood." This was saying that Jesus' coming to this earth and saving us was saving us by giving us His own body and blood—that is, by bearing the sin of the world in His own flesh and giving His own life. And our Lord commanded two things. The first is: "Commemorate this until I come again; commemorate that I saved you by My body and blood, and be sure to preach it." The second is *"Go therefore*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20).

The Lord, who washed Peter's feet

John chapter 13 contains the account of Jesus washing Peter's feet. Why did Jesus wash the feet of Peter and the disciples after keeping the Passover rite? The Lord knew that after He died on the Cross, rose again, and ascended into heaven, the disciples would commit sins when His flesh was no longer in this world. And in order to tell them that He had remitted even those sins completely through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, He washed the feet of Peter and the disciples while giving bread and wine at the Passover rite.

When He washed Peter's feet, Peter, the chief disciple, said, "How can the Teacher, my Lord, wash my feet? It is proper for me to wash the Lord's feet." From the human side, one should naturally do so. But from the Lord's side, it was natural to wash Peter's feet. It is because He needed to tell the disciples, "I have already washed away completely even the sins you will commit in the future. It is not that you wash your feet, but that I have washed your feet. Through the baptism I received from John, I have had all your sins transferred to Me."

Dear fellow believers, if we had to resolve on our own the sins we commit, how would we resolve them? We ourselves would have to die, and be born once more and die again. But that cannot be done. It is because we have only one life. That is why our Lord did not leave our sins to us to resolve, but He Himself resolved them all for us. Saying, "I have saved you. I am your

Savior. I am your Creator," He told us that He had done it all. Dear fellow believers, did Peter actually wash his own feet, or did Jesus wash Peter's feet? Jesus washed them. People greatly confuse this.

People think that Peter and the disciples washed their own feet themselves, but, dear fellow believers, that is not so. It is that Jesus washed all the disciples' feet. Who washed them is what matters. Who removed all the sins committed in this world, even the sins to be committed in the future, is what matters. It is important to know whether we removed them or the Lord removed all our sins—who did that work. So we must keep in mind that Jesus washed the feet of Peter and the disciples. It is because Jesus said, *"What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this" (John 13:7).*

On the night when He kept the Passover rite, Jesus said, *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night" (Matthew 26:31).* Peter jumped up and said, "No! Forsake You? What do You mean, forsake? Even if I die, I will protect and follow the Lord." It was not only Peter who did so; all of Jesus' disciples said so. They said that they would follow the Lord even to death. But in fact, that very night, after He prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, when Judas came bringing the soldiers and they seized Jesus and took Him away, Peter did once flare up in his hot temper, draw his sword, and strike, cutting off the ear of the servant of the high priest; but when the soldiers seized Jesus and took Him away, the disciples all ran away, afraid that they themselves would also be seized and killed. A certain young man was following with a linen cloth wrapped around his naked body, and when he was seized, he left the linen cloth and fled naked. The Bible does not reveal who that person was. Peter, too, said that he would not deny Jesus and that he would not betray Him, but in the courtyard of the high priest's house he denied

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Him as many as three times. Yet the Lord knew that the disciples would commit sin in that way and washed their feet.

Knowing that we, too, after receiving the remission of sins, would commit sins while living in this world, and knowing that although our hearts are not like that, there is the weakness of the flesh, our Lord washed the disciples' feet in order to tell us, "I have washed away even those sins completely. I have borne them all. I have saved you completely." Yet some people preach that just as Jesus washed the disciples' feet, we must wash our own feet every day. It is not only one particular person who preaches so; many churches today preach so.

Four misunderstandings of Christians

If people commit sins themselves and receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance themselves, then is it that Jesus accomplished our salvation halfway, and we offer prayers of repentance for the remaining half and receive salvation by putting the two together? Was Jesus unable to bear our salvation completely through the baptism He received from John? Did He bear only our original sin? Did He leave our actual sins to us? It is that people misunderstand the words of the Bible far too much according to their own thoughts and believe in that way. That is why the apostle Peter said, *"Knowing this first, that no prophecy of Scripture is of any private interpretation, for prophecy never came by the will of man, but holy men of God spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit" (2 Peter 1:20–21).* If people interpret the Bible privately with their own thoughts, they meet destruction. What Christian believers misunderstand most is thinking that they receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance themselves. This is the first

misunderstanding of Christians. The second misunderstanding is thinking that one receives the remission of sins if one offers prayers of confession.

Dear fellow believers, it is not that one receives the remission of sins by offering prayers of confession. When a person who has received the remission of sins offers prayers of confession, he realizes it on his own and confesses, "I have sinned like this. I have done evil like this. I was wrong." Then, because our Lord already bore and removed completely in the past even the sins he confesses, he is set free from those sins by confessing. It is because there is that gospel. Do you understand? But Christians have many misunderstandings here as well.

The third misunderstanding of Christians is that Jesus took away original sin but did not take away actual sins. This, again, is the biggest misunderstanding of Christians. Dear fellow believers, *"Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever" (Hebrews 13:8)*. Jesus came about two thousand years ago and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And John the Baptist, pointing to Jesus, said, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. At that time He already bore all the sins of the world, including your sins and mine, and died on the Cross bearing that sin of the world; is it then that at that time He took away the sin of the world, but now He has taken away only original sin? Dear fellow believers, there are truly very many things that Christian believers misunderstand.

Why did such misunderstandings arise? It is because people have been interpreting the Bible with human philosophy and thoughts rather than with the word of God.

The fourth misunderstanding is saying that it is right to have sin even when one believes in Jesus. Dear fellow believers, saying that it is right to have sin even after believing in Jesus is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

a great misunderstanding of Christians. If you believe in Jesus rightly, you have no sin. *"Reject a divisive man after the first and second admonition, knowing that such a person is warped and sinning, being self-condemned" (Titus 3:10–11).* A person who, while believing in Jesus, condemns himself, saying, "I am a sinner. I have sin," believes differently from Jesus and believes wrongly. Also, thinking that a church recognized by the world is an orthodox church is also a misunderstanding of Christians. A church recognized by the world is not real Christianity. A church that believes according to the word, based on the word of God, is a truly orthodox church.

The prayer in the garden of Gethsemane

I did not read this word together today only to share this word with you; I read this word together in order to think together through what Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane and to tell you that we should labor for the Lord. Jesus kept the Passover rite, washed the disciples' feet, said, "You do not know now why I wash your feet, but you will know after this," and said, "All of you will forsake Me this night." And the place where He went after finishing the Passover rite was the garden of Gethsemane. He took the eleven disciples with Him, but He told eight of them to sit in one place, and taking only three—Peter, James, and John—He went a little farther and prayed.

He went and prayed, and as we have read, it is written, *"'Sit here while I go and pray over there.' And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed,*

saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will'" (Matthew 26:36–39).

That night Jesus told Peter in particular, very clearly, *"This night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times" (Matthew 26:34).* And it is written of what He said to the three disciples and how He prayed, *"'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will'" (Matthew 26:38–39).*

Why did Jesus say this? Why, while praying, did He say that He was exceedingly distressed, even to death? He put His face to the ground and prayed, "My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me"; what was our Lord thinking that He spoke like this? Our Lord thought about being nailed to the Cross, and because it was so horrible, He said, "If it is at all possible, can You not just let this cup pass by?" What He said was, "Receiving baptism from John, the representative of mankind, at the Jordan River according to the Father's will—up to that point is good. Having all the sin of mankind transferred to Me—up to that point is good. But dying on the Cross is so horrible that, if possible, I wish I did not have to do it. Nevertheless, not as I will, but let it be done according to Your will, Father."

Jesus received baptism from John when He began His public ministry at the age of thirty, died on the Cross at the end of His public ministry, and, having died, rose again in three days. When Jesus prayed in the garden of Gethsemane, "Father, if You can let this cup pass from Me, let it pass; nevertheless, not according to My will, but according to Your will," He had already had transferred to Him, through the baptism He received from John, all the sins of the world committed from the cradle to the grave,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

whether original sin or actual sins—not only the sins of Peter, James, John, and the twelve disciples, but even the sins of you and me, who would be born about two thousand years later. That is why our Lord had to die on the Cross. He had to be seized and taken away that very night.

As soon as He finishes this prayer, Judas comes with soldiers carrying torches and spears and takes Jesus away. When that night passes, He is tried at Pilate's court and is nailed to the Cross. It is that they drove not thin nails but very thick spikes into His hands and feet. Jesus faced this real problem. Knowing that tonight He would be seized and taken away and soon have to be nailed to the Cross, the Lord was distressed.

Dear fellow believers, why would Jesus have been distressed? He was distressed because He had come to this earth clothed in flesh. He knew how severe the pain of the flesh would be, and He knew how shameful the things He would suffer would be. He would be stripped of His clothes, be spat upon, be cruelly beaten with whips that had hooks attached so that His whole body would be covered with blood, have His body exposed before everyone while stripped naked, have brutal spikes driven into both His hands and both His feet, pour out all the blood in His heart, and die. Thinking in fleshly terms, I think that there is no one born into this world who suffers as much as a person who receives such punishment of the cross as Jesus did. The most shameful, most painful, and hardest thing is the pain of being nailed to a cross.

That is why the Lord was exceedingly distressed. It is because He had had our sins transferred to Him at the Jordan River through the baptism He received from John.

Jesus had all sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John

Another thing Christians misunderstand is saying that Jesus received baptism merely as a formality. This is a tremendous misunderstanding. That all our sins were passed on to Jesus through the baptism He received from John—this is the truth. Believing without knowing this is the ignorance and misunderstanding of Christians. Many churches today do not speak of this. But this is accurate even when seen in the light of the original text of the Bible.

Some people ask me whether what I say is right. Then I answer that I can interpret this word accurately with the original text. But people say that sins were not passed on to Him through the baptism Jesus received from John, and they know it only as an inaugural ceremony of His public ministry, a ceremony proclaiming the Messiah, a ceremony proclaiming the Savior. That is a tremendous misunderstanding. How can anyone believe in Jesus without knowing that our sins were passed on to Him when Jesus received baptism from John?

Dear fellow believers, how can anyone believe in Jesus without knowing the truth? *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. Jesus is the truth, and the truth is that Jesus came to this earth clothed in human flesh to save us, received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross and received the judgment for all our sins, and, having died, rose again in three days and is still living now and has become the true Savior of those who believe; to believe without knowing this is a shame. It is the shame of ignorance. That is why it is said in Revelation, *"Behold, I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him and dine with him, and he*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

with Me" (Revelation 3:20). Yet people do not open the door to the Lord, who knocks outside the door. We must know the truth; we must know the meaning of the baptism the Lord received from John, that is, that He had our sins transferred to Him through that baptism; and since it says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, we must know that Jesus, who bore our sins, had to die on the Cross in order to receive the judgment for those sins. But because people do not know this, even though the Lord says, "I have saved you. I am your Savior," they do not believe. So even when He knocks on the door, they have no sense of it. They do not even know who has come now, or that it is Jesus.

Dear fellow believers, if people do not open the door even though the word of truth is being spread, they meet destruction. Jesus cannot enter into such a person, nor can they enter into Jesus. Therefore, they are forsaken on the last day and meet destruction. This is a shame. For one born as a human being not to believe in Jesus is a human shame, and while believing in Jesus, to believe only in the blood of the Cross without knowing that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John is a greater shame. To believe without knowing that Jesus became one's own Savior by water and blood is an even greater shame. Jesus already bore all sins at the Jordan River. The word *"thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)* is "houtōs dikaiosynē" in the original language, that is, fulfilling all righteousness in this way.

"Your will be done"

Jesus was distressed like this. Since the time had come for Him to be nailed to the Cross, how distressed He must have been!

Dear fellow believers, it is because our Lord did not avoid but personally endured that labor of being nailed to the Cross that you and I have been saved. We have been completely saved from the judgment. The Lord prayed, *"'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done'" (Matthew 26:39–42)*. God the Father determined to send His Son to this earth clothed in human flesh, have Him receive baptism from John, and pass on all the sin of mankind to the Son.

That first determination had already been fulfilled. The second determination was that the Son, who had had all the sin of the world, the sin of mankind, transferred to Him, would be nailed to the Cross, be judged, and die, thereby having the Son receive in their place the judgment for the sins committed by all the sinners of this world, and that God would completely save those who believe in the Son's baptism and the blood of the Cross. Concerning this second determination, Jesus prayed, "If the judgment for people's sins is not finished unless I die on the Cross, then do as You, Father, have determined." After praying the second time, He looked back at the disciples, and they were all sleeping. While their teacher, with His face to the ground, fell down and cried out, "Father," the disciples, though feeling sorry, may have been overcome with sleep and fallen asleep huddled together and leaning on one another like chicks. In any case, they fell asleep.

After praying the third time with the same words, Jesus came again to the disciples, who had been apart from Him, and it is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

written, *"Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand'" (Matthew 26:45–46)*. At this time, Judas was already coming very near with soldiers. Dear fellow believers, our Lord was afterward seized and taken away, tried in Pilate's court, and also sent to King Herod and tried, so that He was tried several times. And He was stripped of His clothes, whipped, and suffered every kind of shameful thing. Created beings struck God, who came clothed in human flesh. Yet the Lord did not say a word.

The Lord, who bore the Cross as befits the King of kings

When Pilate, the governor with authority dispatched from Rome, said, "I have the authority to kill You and the authority to let You live. If You speak, I will let You live," the Lord said, *"You could have no power at all against Me unless it had been given you from above" (John 19:11)*. Also, when Pilate asked, "Are You the King of the Jews?" He answered, *"It is as you say" (Matthew 27:11)*. Dear fellow believers, if He were not the King of kings, if He were not the Creator, if He were not the Savior, He could not say such words.

If Jesus had truly not wanted to die, then if He had said just one word—"Governor Pilate, I respect you. As the governor dispatched from Rome, you let the people of this nation live in peace, so we live in peace. In fact, I have never committed a sin, but people have misunderstood and are trying to kill Me, so please release Me from here"—Pilate could have said, "All right, go. Go back home right now." But is our Lord not the King of

kings? What He meant was, "It is not that you are killing Me, but that I am obeying the Father's will. I am the Son of God, your Savior, and your God." The Lord was not servile in the least before Governor Pilate. Such words were words that only God could speak, as the King.

Jesus received the sentence of death. When Pilate tried and examined Him and, finding no crime at all for which to put Him to death, sought to release Him, the religious leaders such as the Pharisees and elders and the chief priests shouted, "Crucify Him!" and then all the people followed and cried out, "Crucify Him!" They protested, saying, "If you release this man, you are not Caesar's loyal subject. He said that He Himself is a king." Because the duty of the governor dispatched from Rome was to rule that country quietly and to make it pay its taxes to Rome well, if a riot broke out, that was his own responsibility. So, in order to keep a riot from breaking out, Pilate *"took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it'" (Matthew 27:24)*, and upon that, *"all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children'" (Matthew 27:25)*. After washing his hands in this way, Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified. Among the legends handed down to later generations, there is also a story that Pilate kept washing his hands even after that and was tormented.

The sentence of death is passed on Jesus, and the nails are driven in. At that time there were two more condemned criminals with Jesus. Those three men were to come out of Pilate's court carrying their crosses on their shoulders, go outside the city of Jerusalem, go up to a small hill called Golgotha, that is, the hill of the skull, and there be nailed to the crosses they had dragged along, be set upright, shed all the blood

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

in their bodies, and be put to death. Let us look at the word of John chapter 19 from before Jesus died on the Cross.

"After this, Jesus, knowing that all things were now accomplished, that the Scripture might be fulfilled, said, 'I thirst!' Now a vessel full of sour wine was sitting there; and they filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on hyssop, and put it to His mouth. So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:28–30). And in the preceding word it says, *"Where they crucified Him, and two others with Him, one on either side, and Jesus in the center. Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:18–19)*.

It says of the title that *"it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin" (John 19:20)*. What did they write on that title? They wrote, "Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews." It means that because a young man called Jesus from the region called Nazareth said that He Himself was the King of the Jews, He dies here for that crime. But, dear fellow believers, our Lord is spiritually the King of His people, who know the truth and believe. Jesus is truly our King and the King of those who believe. To those who do not believe He is a fearsome God, a God of wrath, and the Judge, and to those who believe He is a God of love, the Savior, and the shepherd. But when the chief priests of the Jews said, *"Do not write, 'The King of the Jews,' but, 'He said, "I am the King of the Jews."'" (John 19:21)*, Pilate answered, *"What I have written, I have written" (John 19:22)*. It means, "Are you interfering even in that?"

When Jesus was nailed to the Cross and died, He said, *"'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" (Matthew 27:46)*. How painful it must have been for Him to say such words! And as He died, He said, "It is

finished," and breathed His last on the Cross. And He rose again in three days, testified for forty days, ascended to heaven, and is now living at the right hand of the Father.

Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood

After Jesus died on the Cross, the Jews had to keep the Sabbath. Jesus died on Friday during the day. From around sunset on Friday until sunset the next day, Saturday, is the Sabbath of the Jews. Therefore, they had to remove all the bodies before that time. So if anyone had not yet died, they had to make him die and confirm it. So the Jews asked Pilate the governor to remove the bodies quickly because they had to keep the Sabbath.

They asked *"that their legs might be broken, and that they might be taken away" (John 19:31)*. The other two men had not yet died, so the soldiers broke their legs. It is said that when the legs are broken, a person cannot support his body and cannot breathe properly, and so soon dies. But when they checked Jesus, He had already died. Even so, a soldier pierced Jesus' side with a long spear to confirm it. Then it says, *"Immediately blood and water came out" (John 19:34)*. Some explain this as clear fluid that had collected in the chest in the process of dying flowing out together with blood.

Our Lord said, "I thirst," cried out in agony, "God, why have You forsaken Me?" and finally, as He breathed His last, said, *"It is finished!"* and breathed His last. When the Roman soldier pierced His side with a spear, water and blood poured out from there. What exactly is it by which our Lord saved us? Where do we finally confirm our salvation? It is the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross that saved us. When Jesus

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

died on the Cross, what came out of His pierced side? Water and blood came out.

Dear fellow believers, how did we become the bride? God made Adam, took out a rib from that Adam, and made a woman. That shows the bride of Jesus Christ. How did we become the bride of Jesus Christ? Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross for us. We became the bride of Jesus Christ by believing in that water and blood—that is, by believing that Jesus is God, that Jesus bore all our sins when He received baptism from John, and that through His death on the Cross and His resurrection He is still living now and has become the true Savior of those who believe. This is what made us children of God and the bride of Jesus Christ.

Our Lord came to this earth and labored like this. Jesus Christ bore the sin of this world and labored on this earth. If Jesus had kept insisting, "If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me," and had said, "I cannot follow," and had refused to die on the Cross, your salvation and mine would never have been accomplished. Let us look at the word of 1 John that says, *"Not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood" (1 John 5:6)*.

The apostle John says, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood –ASV" (1 John 5:6)*. Our Lord did not only receive baptism; He saved you and me from the sin of the world and from judgment by having all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross for us, and rising again. Because there was such labor of Jesus Christ, you and I were able to be saved. It is that because there was our Lord's labor of dying on the Cross for us, we were able to be saved. Therefore, you and I, too, must become people who labor for Jesus Christ. Though we who have received the remission of sins cannot do as much as Jesus Christ, we must

become people who labor, even in small things, for Jesus Christ, for the salvation of souls, and for God's work of salvation. Even if we are persecuted and ignored for the gospel, and whatever slander we hear and whatever abuse we receive from people, we must become people who labor for this gospel of the Lord.

Let us become those who labor for the Lord

Since our Lord suffered, we, too, must suffer for the Lord. Since our Lord laid down His life for us, we, too, would have to lay down ours if the Lord wanted it; but if this is not such a time now, we who have received the remission of sins must become people who labor for the Lord. If there is no labor that a person who has received the remission of sins does for the Lord, that is truly wrong. Of course, there is no one among you who does not labor for the Lord. Everyone labors. Nevertheless, it is proper to labor, and since the Lord has saved us, it is right to labor even more for the Lord and for the souls of others so that other people, too, may be saved just as we were. The Lord labored much for us. His being nailed to the Cross was the Lord's laboring for us and being despised for us.

Dear fellow believers, we all truly labor much. Among those who have received the remission of sins, there is no one who has not labored for the Lord. Each person labors, and knowingly or unknowingly gives support for the Lord, prays, preaches the gospel, does all the things needed to preach the gospel, serves the Lord with material things, prepares food, and so on—laboring for the Lord with everything. Nevertheless, from now on, too, we must labor for the Lord until the Lord comes, until our lives come to an end. Our Lord even labored to die on the Cross for us—He not only bore sin but even labored to die for

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

us—so we have nothing to say before God. I come to think, and I believe so, that though we are lacking, we should labor for the Lord, do more work if God entrusts it to us and allows it, and that all God's servants and saints—all those who are saved and righteous—should labor for the Lord. That is why I have shared this word.

Dear fellow believers, you have labored much until now, but let us labor much from now on as well. When we serve the Lord and live for the Lord, there are many difficulties. In fact, there are many who persecute us, and how much labor and how many material resources it takes for one soul to be saved! That is how we preach the gospel to one soul after another.

I think that you truly labor much. Nevertheless, I am preaching that we should continue this labor from now on as well. It is because this is right. Because I am not doing my own work but God's work, there are very many times when I must speak and act differently from what is in my heart. So if you look at me only in human terms, there may be things about me that are disappointing. When I can be warm and personal, I am, but there are times when I cannot be. It is because it is God's work. From now on as well, much labor from you is needed.

The labor of handling both work in the world and the Lord's work together

Dear fellow believers, do you think it is easy to serve the Lord while working at a job and keeping a family life? I know it is very difficult and hard. I know that working life is very hard. After being worn out at work, coming to church is a new world. Then you work anew again. Even so, you do it because when you come to church and work, it is rewarding, and you gain

spiritual strength and physical strength. In fact, in terms of labor, you are doing a great deal of labor. Even if you lived in the world, you would do such labor, but still, having been born again, you labor standing on the Lord's side. Living in society is not an easy thing. At times, there are many occasions when your pride is truly hurt. Yet because of money, you endure it patiently and get everything done, and you also serve the Lord and also keep your household going.

Because you have served the Lord until now, knowingly or unknowingly, the gospel continues to be spread. So I think that even ministers who have never worked at a job must surely know how hard it is to work and earn money, and how hard it is to serve the Lord while doing so. And if a minister does not do such work, he must have the labor of laboring with his whole body for God's work.

In a certain respect, when ministers who have received the remission of sins preach the word, they preach with what God has given them. Because it is done not by their own wisdom or understanding, but because God gives them understanding of the word, the heart, and the power, it is labor, but it is a very joyful labor that cannot be called labor. Preaching the word is very hard in some respects, but in other respects it is very joyful and good, and it is truly a blessed thing. But besides the time of preaching the word, we also do much labor in many ways for souls, such as producing literature or going on pastoral visits. Just as you, too, sometimes have times when your head spins, there are times when we become exhausted while doing such work.

When literature work is too hard, I sometimes put the manuscript away somewhere out of sight. Even so, it comes to mind even while I sleep. Once I start some work, it keeps weighing on my mind until it is all finished. Just as a pregnant woman, anxious until her baby is born, talks to the baby in her

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

womb, saying, “Did you sleep well?” it keeps weighing on my heart. Until that work is finished, I keep holding on to it in my heart. Once I start some work, it is that hard until I can say, “It is finished.” Therefore, I must do it with all my might.

Preaching the word and fellowshipping with souls through the gospel are all done with the strength God gives, but that work, too, sometimes wears people out. When such work becomes too hard, one wants to cool one’s head and live in a different world. Do you feel that way, too? Do you want to live in some world other than this one? I know that when things are hard, we sometimes look for various kinds of entertainment, wanting to go to another world and rest.

But we must truly labor. Only when there are those who labor is there something to reap. There is nothing to reap without labor. Only when something is planted in the ground can it be harvested later. So we must keep on laboring. Only when we look ahead by faith, take on challenges by faith, labor by faith, and keep planting will there continually be something to reap. Only when we keep preaching the gospel will souls come, be saved, be nurtured by the word, and grow. Only when we keep holding evangelistic meetings, making and distributing newspapers, leading people through personal evangelism, preaching the word to them, and fighting the spiritual battle does the work of souls being saved take place. This is how much labor we must do. What this word is saying is that we should labor much. We have labored much until now, but let us live laboring much from now on as well. That is exactly what we who have received the remission of sins must do.

If we do not labor, old habits rise up

If there is no labor for the Lord in the heart of a person who has received the remission of sins, evil becomes very abundant within that heart. There is no sin, but there is much evil.

Dear fellow believers, is there evil in your hearts or not? There is. There is much evil, isn't there? If you do not labor for the Lord, this evil begins to sprout anew and rise up. If you leave the evil in your heart as it rises and create the circumstances for it, there is no way to hold back the rising of evil. Think about the grafting of trees. When grafting a tree, you cut the original tree, leaving about one meter from the bottom. At the cut, you make a slit at a 45-degree angle with a very sharp knife, also whittle the tree to be grafted at a 45-degree angle, fit it snugly into that slit, and tie it. I tell you this because I have tried following along with it now and then, but I believe there are other methods too.

I tried grafting a sweet persimmon tree onto a wild persimmon tree in this way. After grafting, if you wrap it with something like tape, it grows the following year. Since the branches of the original trunk were cut off and a new branch was grafted on, when spring comes the following year, new shoots come up there. You have seen how the new shoots of pussy willows come up, fresh and green like down, haven't you? They come up like that and grow. The base is very thick and the new branch on top is very thin. But because the roots at the base vigorously draw in nourishment and water, new branches spring up like bamboo shoots after rain, not from the grafted new branch but from the roots and trunk of the old tree. The old branches band together among themselves, saying, "We are the original owners," grow upward, put out lush leaves, and block the sunlight. Then the grafted branch, though it draws up water from the roots, cannot receive sunlight, turns yellow, loses its

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

leaves, fails to grow, and in the end dies. The original trunk of the tree acts as the owner. At such a time, the owner must cut off the old branches. When new shoots come up vigorously, he snaps them off. Even if someone says, “If you grew these branches, they would bear more fruit; isn’t it a waste?” the owner does not regard it as a waste but cuts them all off.

Once I cut down a large tree. But every year when spring came, so many new shoots came up from its roots that I wondered why so many were coming up when I had not even planted any trees, and when I pulled them up, it was new shoots that had come up from those roots. Even after a year had passed since I cut it, new shoots kept coming up. If you do not pull them off from time to time, they keep coming up. That is how old habits come up from the old roots.

People are like that, too. We have grafted Jesus Christ onto the original trunk—our habits from before we received the remission of sins, full of evil within. Hearing the word, our faith in Jesus Christ grows. But from below, a power stronger than the power of Jesus Christ rises up, saying, “I am king,” and saying, “Faith? What faith?” it exerts its power and crushes faith. Inwardly we clearly know that this word is right, that this is the truth, and that we must live this way, but the old self rises up and covers it over. If that is not cut off when we come to church, that is evil. It is wrong.

Labor for the Lord. You must serve the Lord. If we do not give you work to do, saying, “Please go and hand out these flyers,” or “Please serve in this way,” old habits spring up like bamboo shoots after rain and keep you from living a life of faith. It is that after receiving the remission of sins, you fall even more deeply into evil. Then it becomes just as the word says, *“If the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot by men”*

(Matthew 5:13). Salt scattered on the street spoils the ground and keeps plants from growing. Salt brings out flavor only when it goes into food, but when a person who has received the remission of sins does not do the Lord's work, he becomes like salt scattered on the street and ruins the world.

Saying, "I have no sin," one lives recklessly and comes to speak harshly to others. When a person who has received the remission of sins goes out in an evil way, he has no regard for anything. This is how one loses flavor. That is why a person who has received the remission of sins must do the Lord's work.

We must do God's work and hear God's word. Dear fellow believers, does evil rise up in your hearts or not? It does. There is such a thing. That is why I keep telling you to come to church and to hear the word. Even if you think, "Having received the remission of sins is enough. I have not forgotten that. If I go this time, he will tell that story again," you must hear this word. And you must do the Lord's work. Do you understand? That is why we live a life of faith. That is why we need the church, we need a servant of God, we need companions, and we need the work of God. We have labored much until now, but from now on we must labor even more. Let us become those who labor for the work of the Lord. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus was seized to fulfill the Scriptures

< Matthew 26:47–56 >

"And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.' Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?' In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled."

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus knew the betrayal contained in the kiss and received it

When Jesus, having finished praying in Gethsemane, was speaking to the disciples, Judas came. With him came a great multitude with swords and clubs, sent from the chief priests and the elders of the people. It was just as He had said, "Rise, let us go together; the one who betrays Me has come near."

Let us read verse 48. *"Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him'" (Matthew 26:48)*. Judas had arranged a sign in advance, telling them to seize the person he kissed. The word used here for this sign refers to a signal used in the military, so Judas had come having made his plans that meticulously. Then he kissed Him, saying, "Greetings, Rabbi." In words and outward appearance it was a greeting between people who were close, but that greeting was a signal to let the multitude recognize Jesus and seize Him.

Jesus said to Judas, "Friend, do what you have come to do," and after that the multitude came and seized Jesus. Jesus was not seized without knowing what was contained in the greeting of Judas; He had already said that the one who betrays Him had come near. The betrayal of Judas is his own responsibility, but even that betrayal could neither get ahead of what Jesus knew nor overthrow the will of salvation.

First listen to the word He spoke, "Put your sword back in its place"

One of those who were with Jesus drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. Since they were taking his teacher away, he could not deal with it with his bare

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

hands, and so he tried to protect Jesus with a sword. But Jesus had him put that sword away. Let us read verse 52. *"But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword'" (Matthew 26:52)*. An action meant to protect the Lord did not, for that reason, become an action that agreed with the Lord's will. The fight that the disciple started by his own judgment was different from the way Jesus was going, so even when we put forward a heart that claims to be for the Lord, we must first listen to the word that the Lord actually commands.

Jesus is the Almighty One, so why was He seized like that? Let us read verses 53 through 54. *"Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?" (Matthew 26:53–54)*. Jesus said that He could ask the Father and have Him send more than twelve legions of angels. Even though the multitude was large and had come carrying weapons, that did not leave the Lord unable to do anything, nor was it a fight He would lose without the disciple's sword. The reason the Lord had the disciple put away his sword was that if a fight broke out there, the way by which He would be hung on the Cross and fulfill the Scriptures would be blocked.

This is the will the disciple had to learn in that place. To the disciple, stopping the arrest right away looked the most right, but Jesus knew the work of salvation He would accomplish after that arrest. Changing the way of Jesus according to our own thoughts can never become helping the Lord, so even our zeal needs the teaching of the word. The stronger our desire to do something is, the more we should first look back on whether that work agrees with the Lord's will.

Jesus was seized and taken away bearing our sins that had been passed on to Him

Then what was the work Jesus sought to accomplish without calling the angels? It was the work of delivering sinners from their sins and judgment. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and all the sins we have committed are also included in it. So Jesus, who is now being seized and taken away by the multitude, is the One who is going to receive judgment in that very body to which our sins had been passed on. As the price of that sin, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and became our Savior.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit preaches the salvation that Jesus accomplished in this way. To believe this gospel is not to make our own zeal the basis of salvation, but to accept with the heart what Jesus did in having our sins passed on to Him and even receiving the judgment for them.

When we know this salvation, we also come to know the reason Jesus did not ask for angels and escape the arrest. Instead of using His power to keep Himself safe, Jesus gave Himself up according to the will to save sinners. Judas sought to hand Jesus over, and the multitude sought to overpower Jesus and seize Him, but even in the midst of that, Jesus went the way by which He would save sinners.

Therefore, the basis on which we can be sure of the remission of sins does not lie in how well the disciples protected Jesus that night. The disciples would soon flee, but Jesus went to the end on the way of bearing our sins and receiving judgment. Our assurance lies in what He accomplished.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Even though the disciples all left, the word was fulfilled

Jesus spoke even to the multitude who had come to seize Him. He said, “Have you come out with swords and clubs to seize Me as you would seize a robber?” and He said, “I sat daily in the temple teaching, and you did not seize Me.” They had not seized Him when He was teaching before people every day, but now they had come looking for Him at night carrying weapons, and so Jesus revealed what it was that they were doing.

Let us read verse 56. *“But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled” (Matthew 26:56)*. Jesus said again that all these things were to fulfill the writings of the prophets. In both verse 54 and verse 56 He made clear that the Scriptures were being fulfilled, so even while the weapons of the multitude and the sword of the disciple threw the scene into confusion, Jesus explained the way He was going according to the written word. Through that word we come to know Jesus, who is being seized, as the One who fulfills the will of salvation.

In the end the disciples all forsook Jesus and fled. Even those who had said that they would die with the Lord rather than deny Him were scattered, so people instinctively flee when things go against them. But even though the disciples left, the way Jesus was going did not end. Jesus was dragged away alone and suffered, and the salvation He would accomplish on that way also included the sins of the disciples who had forsaken Him.

Dear fellow believers, believe in this Jesus with your heart. Do not put forward the action of stepping out boldly for the Lord as your own righteousness, but listen to the Lord’s word and rely on the salvation He accomplished. Even in the place where He was being seized, Jesus fulfilled the word of God. I hope that we

will believe in Jesus, who could have called more than twelve legions of angels but was taken away to fulfill the Scriptures, and become people who entrust our zeal and our steps, too, to His word. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 11 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus, who is the Christ even amid mockery

< Matthew 26:57–68 >

“And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.”’ And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’ Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?'"

Even many false witnesses cannot make a lie into the truth

Those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, and the scribes and the elders were assembled there. Peter followed at a distance and went as far as the courtyard of the high priest's house, and he sat with the servants to see the outcome. The disciple who had followed Jesus was watching in the courtyard, and Jesus was standing before the people who sought to kill Him.

Let us read verses 59 and 60. *"Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward" (Matthew 26:59–60)*. What the chief priests and the council sought was false testimony against Jesus. They sought testimony in order to kill Jesus; that is, they first settled on their intention to kill Him and then looked for words that fit that intention. The record that many witnesses came but they found none reveals that, however hard they searched, there was no wrong in Jesus for which He could be put to death.

Later, two people came and put forward the words that Jesus had said He was able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days. Because a person could be condemned if two people said the same thing, they dragged in words Jesus had spoken in ordinary times and used them as testimony. The high priest stood up and pressed Him, asking whether He answered nothing. Many people drove one person into a corner, and a man

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

with authority pressed Him for an answer, but false testimony does not become the truth just because those voices are loud and those seated in that place are many.

Jesus revealed that He is the Christ even in front of those who sought to kill Him

When faced with the demand to answer the false testimony, Jesus kept silent. That silence was not an admission that He had sin. In that place where they sought to make Jesus a sinner, Jesus did not defend Himself as they demanded, but to the question that followed, He clearly revealed who He is.

Let us read verses 63 and 64. *"But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Matthew 26:63–64)*. The high priest told Jesus to say whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, and Jesus acknowledged those words, saying that it was as he had said. And He said that hereafter they would see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven. He did not try to avoid suffering by hiding who He is, but even in front of the people who sought to kill Him, He revealed that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

This word shows what lies beyond the circumstances seen in that place. Now Jesus has been seized and is being interrogated, but He is the One who will sit at the right hand of the Power and come on the clouds of heaven. So by looking only at how He was dragged in by the hands of people, we cannot know Jesus'

true authority; we must hear the word that Jesus Himself declared.

Hearing that word, the high priest tore his clothes and said that He had spoken blasphemy. He did not accept that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and regarded that word as words blaspheming God. Saying that there was no need to require any more witnesses, he asked the others what they thought, and they answered that He was deserving of death. They made the true word that Jesus spoke into a reason to kill Him. When faced with this scene, we must decide whose words we will accept. The people said that He was deserving of death, but Jesus revealed that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

The sinless Christ received the death sentence for our sins

What is the reason that the Christ suffered such things? Jesus is not One who was dragged to the place of a sinner because He Himself had committed sin, but the One who came to save sinners. Because Jesus had already had our sins passed on to Him beforehand when He received baptism from John, He received the sentence that He was deserving of death for the word in which He declared that He is the Christ, and He went the way of suffering. People sought false testimony and tried to kill Jesus, but Jesus gave Himself up in order to remove our real sins.

In the sin of the world that Jesus had transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, the sins we have committed in our hearts and the sins we have committed in our actions are all contained. The death sentence that the sinless One received was the price of our sins, which He had thus had passed

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

on to Him. As the price of those sins, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and accomplished our salvation. So believing the word that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him is not hiding our wrongs, but acknowledging that because our sins truly existed, the sinless Jesus had to have those sins passed on to Him.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit conveys the work of Jesus, who saved us in this way. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John, His death in which He shed His blood on the Cross, and His resurrection. That is why a person who knows the reason Jesus suffered does not read that sight merely as the sad story of a man treated unjustly. He is the Christ, who, because He loved us, saved us from sin and judgment, and even while being insulted for the reason that He had revealed that He is the Son of God, He did not stop the work of saving us.

A person who believes this gospel knows the reason why Jesus suffered. This is because he knows that his own sins are also included in all the sins Jesus had passed on to Him. That is why he comes to believe in Him and serve Him with his heart, and to stand humbly before the word of the Savior who gave him life.

The One whom they told to prophesy is the true Prophet and High Priest

After the words that He was deserving of death, people's violence followed. Let us read verses 67 and 68. *"Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?'" (Matthew 26:67–68)*. People spat in Jesus'

face and struck Him with their fists and the palms of their hands, mocking Him and telling Him to guess who had struck Him if He was the Christ. A little earlier they had told Him to say whether He was the Christ, and now that Jesus had revealed who He is, they insulted Him by that very name.

Christ means the Anointed One, and kings, priests, and prophets received anointing. They sneered at Him, telling Him to prophesy if He was the Christ, but Jesus is the One who, as the true Prophet, taught us precisely how our sins are removed. Also, as the High Priest, He had our sins passed on to His own body and removed them all, and as the King who made all things, He is our Master even now. Just as that name which the people mocked says, Jesus is the Christ, who fulfilled all three of those offices.

Jesus actually suffered that insult. But they did not remove Jesus' authority, so the word He declared in verse 64 is true even after the spitting and the blows of fists. The One who is being insulted by people is the One who will sit at the right hand of the Power and come again. So let us not regard the insult before our eyes as Jesus' final appearance, but let us look to the Lord, who passed through suffering, accomplished salvation, and will come again.

Dear fellow believers, believe the word in which Jesus revealed who He is. Set your heart on the Christ, who had sins passed on to Him for us and endured even insult and death. However people may evaluate Him, the salvation the Lord accomplished and His authority do not change, so do not follow the mocking voices that told Him to prophesy, but follow the true word of the Christ, who saved us. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 12 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord foretold even Peter's denial

< Matthew 26:69–75 >

"Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.' But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying.' And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.' But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!' And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.' Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly."

Contrary to his confident claim, Peter denied the Lord before everyone

Peter was sitting in the outer courtyard of the high priest's house. He was a man who had followed at a distance to see how things would end for Jesus. There, a servant girl came to him and said that he also had been with Jesus of Galilee. That was a fact:

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Peter had lived with Jesus and followed Him. But when that fact was exposed before people, he gave a different answer.

Let us read verses 69 and 70. *"Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.' But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying'" (Matthew 26:69–70)*. Peter denied it before everyone, saying that he did not know what she was saying. On hearing that he had been with Jesus, he did not acknowledge that relationship. The man who had said that even if he had to die with the Lord, he would not deny the Lord, was now hiding his relationship with the Lord before people, so his confident claim and the words that actually came out of his mouth were different.

Jesus had been seized and was being interrogated, and Peter was also in the courtyard of the same house. The text records the words Peter spoke there just as they were, without correcting them. And Peter's first denial, contrary to the confident claims he had made in verses 33 and 35, reveals his weakness. We cannot read that weakness as something that has nothing to do with us, for this scene shows what words we, too, can speak with our lips when we try to protect ourselves in a difficult situation.

Even if an oath is added, a lie does not become the truth

When Peter had gone out to the gateway, another servant girl saw him and said to those who were there that this man had been with Jesus of Nazareth. Peter denied it again. Let us read verse 72. *"But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!'" (Matthew 26:72)*. The first time, he said that he did not know what the other person was saying, and the second time, swearing

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

an oath, he said that he did not know the Man. An oath was added to his words of denial, but adding an oath to words that deny a fact does not make them the truth.

A little later, those who stood by came up and, saying that his speech made him known, said that he truly was one of that group. The third denial became even harsher: this time, cursing and swearing, he said that he did not know the Man. The text records without hiding anything that Peter's denial did not stop at one time but continued into oaths and curses.

So we must not confuse the strength of our words with the sincerity of our faith. It is we ourselves who can speak lies even while swearing oaths and making confident claims. What is needed before God is not speaking more forcefully, but examining, in the light of the word, whether our words are true.

Do not push away again the word of the Lord that has come to your mind

When Peter denied Him the third time, a rooster immediately crowed, and at the same time the word of Jesus came to his mind. Let us read verse 75. *"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75)*. In verse 34, Jesus had said that this night, before the rooster crowed, Peter would deny Him three times. Peter, who heard that word, said that even if he had to die with the Lord, he would not deny Him, but now the three denials had actually taken place, and the rooster had crowed. What came to his mind as the rooster crowed was that very word Jesus had spoken in verse 34.

The text records that when the word of Jesus came to his mind, Peter went out and wept bitterly. His denying Him three times before people was revealed to be exactly as the word the Lord had spoken in advance. Jesus already knew of Peter's denial before it happened and spoke of it.

We, too, after doing wrong, come to want to make the matter look small or to defend ourselves by explaining our circumstances. But when the Lord's word comes to your mind, do not push it away again. The word reveals what we actually are more accurately than the face we try to save, so do not add more lies, but acknowledge before God what you have done.

The Lord also had that sin of Peter's denial passed on to Him

As we read of Peter's weeping, we must make one thing clear. The fact of having grieved deeply does not in itself become the price that removes sin. Realizing one's own sins is necessary, but we cannot resolve even the judgment for those sins through realization and tears, so those who have realized their failure must obtain the assurance of salvation from what Jesus has accomplished.

In verse 34, the Lord spoke in advance of Peter's denying Him three times. And the sin of the world that Jesus had passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John included both the sin Peter committed that night and the sins we commit. As the price of all those sins passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and saved us completely. So the word that Jesus knows our sins makes us know not only the fact that we cannot hide our wrongs, but also that He came to save precisely such sinners.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The gospel of the water and the Spirit conveys this salvation, and we receive the remission of sins by believing that gospel. The basis of salvation is not the amount of our tears or the strength of the words with which we confess our wrongs, but the work of Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him and received the judgment for them. Those who believe this gospel have no need to cover up their wrongs with lies out of fear of admitting them. The salvation the Lord has accomplished does not collapse because we admit our sins; rather, the more we know how weak we are, the more clearly we come to rely on the grace of the Lord, who saved us.

Since this passage ends at the place where Peter weeps, the sorrow of that place is not something to pass over lightly. His saying with his own mouth as many as three times that he did not know the Lord, whom he had said he would not deny even if he had to die with Him, was a real wrong. But in verse 32 of this chapter, Jesus had already said, *"After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."* This is a word He spoke knowing that the disciples would all forsake Him.

Dear fellow believers, when the Lord's word makes you realize your wrongs, accept that word. We have a Savior who had even that sin passed on to Him. Like Peter, who remembered the word of Jesus as the rooster crowed, we, too, keep in our hearts the word of the Lord, who knew in advance even that we would fall and had that sin passed on to Him. ✉

Sermon 13 by Paul C. Jong

What does Jesus Christ become for us?

< Matthew 26:57–68 >

“And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest’s courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, ‘This fellow said, “I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.”’ And the high priest arose and said to Him, ‘Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?’ But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, ‘I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.’ Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, ‘He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?’ They answered and said, ‘He is deserving of death.’ Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?'"

Today we have read Matthew chapter 26, and I would like to share through the word the part about Jesus Christ becoming our Savior and becoming God to us. After Jesus received baptism from John, while He was living together with His disciples and preaching the word to them, He asked His disciples, *"But who do you say that I am?" (Matthew 16:15)*.

Peter answered, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. Having received such a confession, Jesus said, *"On this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it" (Matthew 16:18)*. And after He had spoken all His words, around the time the Passover was beginning, He was arrested because of Judas' betrayal and because of the chief priests and leaders of Israel, and He was led away to Caiaphas the high priest.

Jesus, who stood before Caiaphas

If we look at the word here, it says, *"And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, 'This fellow said, "I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days."'*

And the high priest arose and said to Him, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.' Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?'" (Matthew 26:57–68).

There were two charges against Jesus. It is on two charges that He is nailed to the Cross and dies. As for the charge on which the Jewish religious world of Israel nailed Jesus to the Cross, it was that He had spoken blasphemy. This is because Jesus said that He Himself was the Christ. When these people had seized Jesus and tried to find fault with Him but could not, the high priest himself asked Jesus. *"But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Matthew 26:63–64).*

When the high priest told Him to say whether He was the Christ, He said, "You have said it." That is, Jesus Himself is the Christ. And when He went on to say, *"I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64),* the high

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

priest, who heard these words, tore his clothes and said that they had heard blasphemy. Blasphemy is not merely a matter of being impertinent or arrogant; it means having spoken words that must never be spoken.

It means that He said He Himself was the Christ. So when the high priest said, "Why should we require any more witnesses? It is plain to see. What do you think?" they said that He was deserving of death, and so they passed the judgment that this man must be put to death. Who passed this sentence? The sentence was passed in the court of Caiaphas.

The word says, *"And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled" (Matthew 26:57)*. This means that they went to Caiaphas the high priest. Because the nation of Israel was ruled as a theocracy, the law of religion was itself the law of the nation. So it means that, because Caiaphas was the high priest, they stood Jesus before the high priest in order to find sin in Him. And when the high priest asked, "Are You the Christ who was to come?" and Jesus said, "You have said it," then, without waiting any longer, they declared Him one who had committed a sin deserving of death and sent Him to Pilate's court in order to hand Him over to be crucified.

The charge of being the King of the Jews

Pilate was the governor sent from Rome. Israel was Israel in name only; it was a vassal state of Rome.

Jesus also went before Pilate and was put on trial. Pilate tried hard to release Jesus. He said, "Make Your defense to me. If You say, 'I have committed no crime,' I have the authority to release You." Jesus said, "You could not do so unless authority were

given to you from heaven." Pilate said, "If You want to live, make Your defense to me. Those people have seized You and brought You here, but as I see it, You seem to have no guilt, so I want to set You free. So speak." But Jesus did not speak and remained still.

The Jews cried out, "Crucify Him, crucify Him!" Pilate wanted to release Him but could not release Him. So he said, "Just say one word, quickly. Say, 'I have never committed a crime.'" What became a crime for Jesus under Roman law was this: being the King of the Jews became a crime. Because countless people followed Jesus around, that became a crime.

So the Jews said, "If you do not crucify Jesus, you are not a loyal subject of Caesar." This is because Caesar was the title by which the Roman emperor was called at that time. That Jesus was the King of the Jews was what people said of Him. Jesus is the King of the Jews. He is the King of kings, the High Priest, and the Prophet. That is to say, He is the Christ. It means that He is the Savior.

Therefore the King of the Jews is Jesus. Jesus is the King, the High Priest, and the Prophet. People believed that, with Jesus' power to raise the dead, He would save them from Rome. Judas, too, may have sold Jesus believing in Jesus' power.

He may have done so thinking that, because Jesus had great power, He would sweep Rome away completely and make Israel independent of Rome. And so, because of the charge of being the King of the Jews, Pilate handed Jesus over to be crucified. Pilate said, "As I see it, this man has no guilt, but since you keep telling me to crucify Him, I will hand Him over to be crucified. I am innocent," and he washed his hands and said, "It is you who have done wrong, so if this judgment is wrong and a curse comes upon it, you must receive it." Then the people of Israel answered, *"His blood be on us and on our children" (Matthew 27:25)*.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The Christ, the Anointed One

What we have talked about so far is the background; then what does Jesus Christ become for us? As we saw earlier, the word says of Jesus, *"He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Simon Peter answered and said, 'You are the Christ, the Son of the living God'" (Matthew 16:15–16)*. That such a confession was made by Peter, who was unlearned, is something that cannot be understood by human thinking. So Jesus said, *"Flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17)*. It means, "You have made this confession not by your own knowledge, but because God the Father gave you wisdom and let you know Me."

When it says, "You are the Christ," the word Christ means the anointed one. It means that Jesus came to this earth with three offices. In Israel, when a king is appointed, oil is poured on him. When the high priest takes up his office, too, oil is poured on his head and he is appointed. When a prophet is appointed, too, oil is poured on his head.

It means that He is the One who came to this earth with these three offices to save His people from their sins—that is, the Christ. It means that He is the Anointed One, the One who came to this earth as the Savior as the Son of God. That is why the word Christ is a difficult word. People with the three offices receive anointing, and it means that Jesus, who is the Son of God, was born with these three offices by borrowing the body of a woman and carries out the three offices.

Jesus is the King, and He is the One who, as the High Priest, became the sacrificial offering for His people and came to save His people from their sins. Also, the One who, as the Prophet, teaches us this is Jesus Himself. The Bible is telling us this.

Let us read today's word again. *"Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Matthew 26:64).*

It means that Jesus came as the Christ. When the high priest told Him to say whether He was the Christ, these are the words He spoke: "You have said it. I am the very Son of God who came from the kingdom of heaven, and as the Christ—as the King, as the High Priest, and as the Prophet—I have come with three offices as the Savior of mankind, born by borrowing the body of a woman. I have come as the One who will save My people from their sins."

And He said, *"Hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven" (Matthew 26:64).* In the past, I, too, did not understand well what this meant when I read the passage of the Bible saying that Jesus would come on the clouds.

Dear fellow believers, there are clouds made of water vapor, but here He said that He would come on the clouds of heaven. So this is not speaking only of the kind of clouds that we always see.

It means that the Lord said that you would see Him sitting at the right hand of God and then coming again to this earth on the clouds and taking the righteous away.

The Savior, who came as the Seed of the woman

Who is Jesus? Jesus is the Son of the living God and becomes our Savior. Jesus Christ is the Savior who fights against God's enemy, defeats him, and saves us from sin.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Genesis speaks of this part as follows: *"And I will put enmity Between you and the woman, And between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15)*.

Dear fellow believers, this is the word in which God prophesied about Jesus in Genesis. The words *"I will put enmity Between you and the woman" (Genesis 3:15)* are the word He spoke to Satan the devil. "You" refers to the serpent, that is, the devil.

It means that Jesus comes as the Seed of the woman, crushes the serpent's head, and breaks its power completely. It is written, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. The wages of sin is death. Satan the devil caused Adam and Eve not to believe the word of God and made them eat the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, and so he made them fall into sin and become sinners; and it means that, by eating the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, they came to death.

Since they came to death, it is a curse. But that the Seed of the woman will bruise the serpent's head means that He removes the very sin that the serpent put into man. And He said that the serpent would bruise His heel. Jesus Christ is the One who had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and who was nailed to the Cross and died in our place in order to become the sacrificial offering for our sins.

Satan the devil knew that Jesus Christ was the Son of God and thought that if he killed Him, it would all be over. But it means that, because Jesus had the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He was able to complete the work of salvation that sets us free from sin by offering Himself up as the sacrificial offering on the Cross and paying the price of sin before God.

Satan the devil is not fighting against us human beings, but against God. The fallen angel opposed God and challenged God. Because God made man and loves man, the devil tried to make man fall into sin and thereby make the plan God intends to carry out fail. But God instead made use of it and used it to complete the work of rescuing man from sin and making him one of the people of God, who will never again suffer destruction and who obtain eternal life.

So God is the almighty God. God is the God of wisdom. It means that His wisdom has no limit and no end. Satan the devil thought that if only he got rid of Jesus—if he killed Him on the Cross—it would all be over, but it means that Jesus instead completed the salvation of mankind through that very event.

Jesus is our Savior

What does Jesus become for us? Jesus is our Savior. He becomes the Savior of those who believe. He has become the Savior of you and me. This is the part the word is speaking of. It is truly amazing. Jesus' hanging on the Cross and dying was His becoming the sacrificial offering to pay the price of our sins, because He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

Because He offered His own body as an offering before God the Father, Jesus is the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven. It means that, because He did not offer the animals of this earth as a sacrificial offering, but bore our sins on His own body and became the sacrificial offering in our place, He was able to become the Savior who saves us from sin.

Dear fellow believers, isn't it amazing? It is amazing. That Jesus was nailed to the Cross and died is a precious thing, but in

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

the past I could not testify of this properly. We must not say that Jesus is our Savior with only the conclusion that comes afterward while not knowing what came before. If we only believe that Jesus was nailed to the Cross, became the sacrificial offering, and saved us, are we saved? From Jesus' side, that, too, is true, because He has already borne our sins. But from our side, if we only believe that He hung on the Cross, became our sacrificial offering, and saved us, without knowing the fact that Jesus had first had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Satan the devil comes to us again and accuses us of our sins.

"You have sinned, haven't you? What are you going to do about that sin?" he says. When we say, "Jesus died for me on the Cross," he says, "Fine, then what must you do? You must offer prayers of repentance. You must not do that again from now on," and we end up doing so. This is coming under the attack of Satan the devil.

That is why I keep speaking about the meaning of the baptism Jesus received from John. It is not only I who speak of this in this way; the book of Isaiah also speaks of it again and again.

Let us read the word of Isaiah. *"Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from*

judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth. Yet it pleased the LORD to bruise Him; He has put Him to grief. When You make His soul an offering for sin, He shall see His seed, He shall prolong His days, And the pleasure of the LORD shall prosper in His hand" (Isaiah 53:4–10).

Dear fellow believers, it means that the Old Testament, too, says that because Jesus bore our sins, He becomes the sacrificial offering on the Cross. So Jesus' being nailed to the Cross and sacrificed was in order to pay the price of our sins; to pay the price of our sins, He was nailed to the Cross just once and died, then rose again, and became our Savior.

And He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God in heaven, and He will come again. This speaks of the completion of the salvation the Lord will accomplish.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus becomes our true Savior. What does Jesus become for you and me? He becomes our true Savior. If Jesus had not had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and borne them, and if He had not been nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died to pay the price of our sins, and had not risen again from death, we would not have received the remission of sins even though we had believed in Jesus.

It means that if Jesus had not received baptism from John, we could not have received the remission of sins, and that even with His hanging on the Cross, dying, and paying the price of our sins, if we did not believe it, we could not have been saved.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood

This means that the Lord saved us by water and blood. It means that, because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and paid the price of our sins by being nailed to the Cross, He was able to become our complete Savior.

So, for a person to be born again, he must be born again of water and the Spirit. It means that the Son of God came to this earth, received baptism from John, hung on the Cross and died to pay the price of sin, rose again, and saved us.

So let us read the word of 1 John together. *"Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV). If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son" (1 John 5:5–9).*

The Son of God came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, and had our sins transferred to Him, and that water is spoken of as baptism. 1 Peter says, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).* We commit sin with our bodies and also with our hearts, but that sin is recorded on the tablet of our conscience.

So Jesus is the One who has become our true Savior by having all the sins we have committed transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, receiving the

judgment for those sins on the Cross, and paying the price of sin for us. Jesus Christ is the Savior of you and me.

It asks who it is who overcomes the world, and here the world refers to the devil. Who is it who overcomes the devil? It is Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood. Jesus Christ has overcome Satan the devil. In this world, Satan the devil tried to make people commit sin and to send them to hell, but it means that Jesus came and saved us from sin through the baptism He Himself received from John and through the price of His sacrifice by which He paid the price of our sins on the Cross.

That He came not only by water but by water and blood means that not only did He have our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, but He also shed His blood on the Cross, paid the price of our sins, and rose again; and that it is the Spirit who bears witness means that God becomes the Guarantor of our salvation. This is because He has saved us through His own Son. It says that the Spirit is truth, and that there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, the water, and the blood, and that these three also agree as one.

It means that the Spirit, the water, and the blood—these three—become the certificate of guarantee and the guarantor of our salvation. It means that God stands as guarantor for us. And it says that if we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater, and that the witness of God is what He has testified of His Son.

So this word has told us that we need faith that believes in Jesus' birth, the baptism He received from John, His death on the Cross, by which He paid the price of our sins, His resurrection, and the fact that Jesus, who will come again, is our Savior.

So in Isaiah, too, the word says, *"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth. He was taken from prison and from judgment, And who will declare His generation? For He was cut off from the land of the living; For the transgressions of My people He was stricken. And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7–9).

Jesus is truly our God and our shepherd

Jesus Christ is our true Savior, the true God, and the true shepherd. We believe in Jesus Christ as our God and Savior. Jesus Christ is the Savior who will come to this world again in the future.

Dear fellow believers, if you listen to many sermons today, they speak only of the blood of the Cross. They say that He saved us by the blood. But that is not all.

And they tell people to accept Jesus, and once they have prayed the prayer of acceptance, they tell them to serve the Lord right away. Dear fellow believers, wouldn't we have to have the right faith first in order to serve? When we look into it, there are very many people in this world who do not preach the truth rightly.

The one thing we must know is that Jesus is truly the Savior of you and me. Dear fellow believers, there is something by which God testifies of our salvation. *"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself" (1 John 5:9–10).*

It means that, because Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, came to this earth and was born, received baptism from John,

paid the price of our sins on the Cross, and rose again from death, he who believes in the Son of God has within himself the witness of having been saved, and he has been saved by believing in what Jesus has done.

"He who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son" (1 John 5:10).

Faith is believing the facts. Just unconditionally saying that Jesus is our Savior is religion. Unless we are born again of water and the Spirit through the word, we can never be born again. Those who preach the word must also give the evidence of the word accurately.

Dear fellow believers, I have seen in the word Jesus being dragged to the court of Caiaphas and being sentenced to death. Why did Jesus have to die on the Cross?

It is because He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Jesus carried out the work of the Savior, being nailed to the Cross and dying to pay the price of our sins. He was not nailed to the Cross and did not die because He had no power; He did so to pay the price of our sins.

Like a sheep silent before its shearers, He did not argue His case and did not protest, but accepted everything just as it was; He went through all the suffering and received all the judgment, rose again from death, and became our Savior. So Jesus is the Savior of you and me. Do you believe?

I am opening this Bible and finding the word passage by passage and speaking to you in order to make you abide in the truth. If we have not received the remission of sins, you and I, who are living in this age, will go to hell before long.

The day the Lord will come is not far off. You want to ask when He will come, in what month and on what day He will

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

come, don't you? How would I know that? No one knows that day and hour; only the Father knows. The Lord will come at the time God has set.

He is God. He is the Son of God the Father. He is God, who created the heavens and the earth.

When He was born on this earth, it was said, *"For He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. It means that He, who is the Son of God, was born clothed in human flesh in order to save us from sin.

He is the true Savior and shepherd of you and me. As we live on this earth, we go through many hardships of one kind or another. Dear fellow believers, you think that if we work hard in the world, we will eat well and live well, don't you? It is not achieved by effort alone. There must be God's help and blessing.

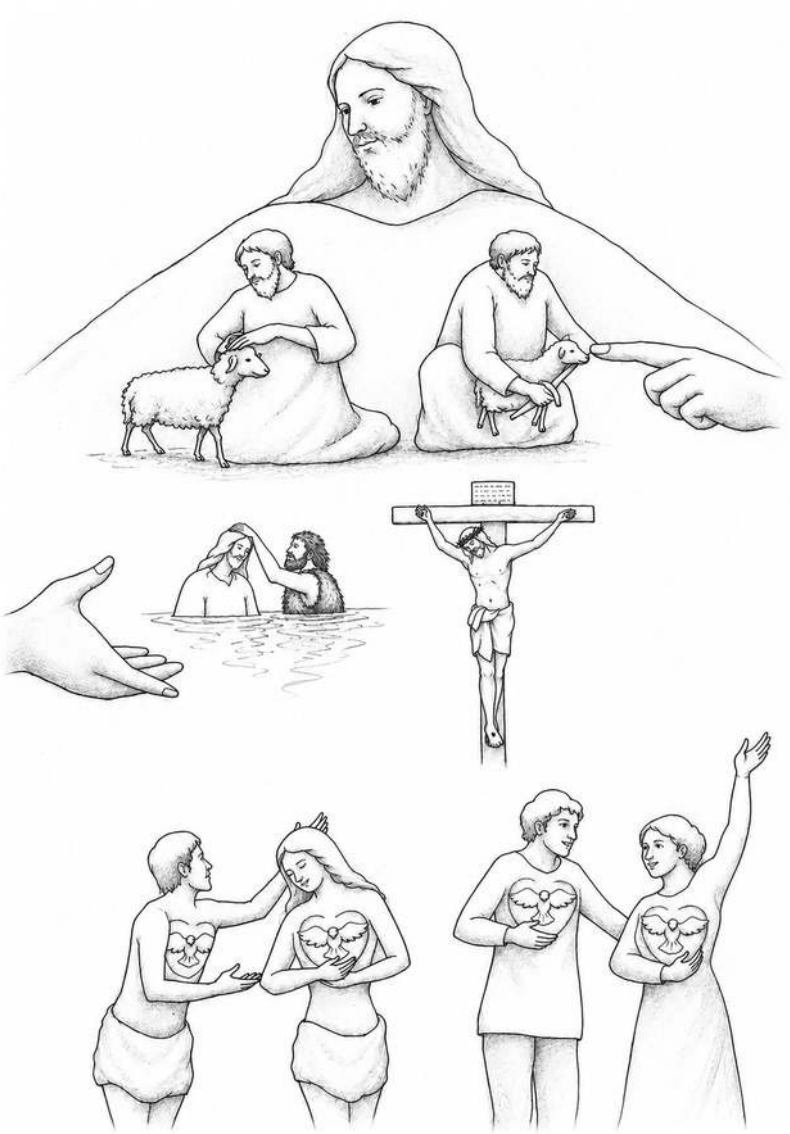
Let us take heart once again. How thankful we are to Jesus! We thank Him that He has become our God and has become our Savior. Dear fellow believers, is there something that makes you deeply grieved and despairing? Look to the Lord. If we look to the Lord, the Lord is the shepherd who helps us, and He is our Savior. I hope that you and I will all seek help from Him and receive it, and live receiving His blessings. ✉

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

CHAPTER

27

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



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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The reason Jesus had to hang on the Cross

< Matthew 27:1–50 >

"When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.' And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me.' Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say.' And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.' But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'Barabbas!' Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let Him be crucified!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, "I am the Son of God."' Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing. Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This Man is calling for Elijah!'

Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit."

Today I intend to share the word with you about why Jesus had to hang on the Cross.

Our Lord hung on the Cross in order to save His people from their sins. Because our Lord had the sins of His people transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had to hang on the Cross, be nailed to it, shed His blood, and die in order to receive in their place the punishment for people's sins. Then why did the Lord have to hang on the Cross? I tell you that in order to save from sin those who believe in God and believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior, He had to hang on the Cross to receive the judgment for our sins on our behalf, because through that baptism He had the sin of mankind, that is, the sins we commit throughout our lives, all transferred to Him once and for all.

Looking at the word, it says, *"When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor" (Matthew 27:1–2)*. I have told you that Jesus had to hang on the Cross because He bore all our sins through the baptism He received to save us. But from a fleshly perspective, why did Jesus at that time have to stand before the judgment seat of Pilate the governor and suffer like this in order to receive the punishment of the cross in the land of Israel? The word explains this part. It is that the chief priests and elders of that time, that is, the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

religious leaders and the politicians of Israel, drove Jesus onto the road of being crucified.

Why was it so? There are two meanings in this. First, spiritually, it is because Jesus had already had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River in order to save from sin all the people who live on this earth. Because He had borne our sins, He had to be nailed to and hang on the Cross in order to pay the price of those sins for us.

That is so spiritually, and physically, it is because He was hated by the chief priests and elders of Israel at that time. At that time, Israel was a colony of Rome. So the people were struggling in poverty and also had to pay many taxes. But a young man named Jesus appeared and healed the sick. Also, many people were gathered in a field—five thousand men alone, and what would have been well over ten thousand if the women and children were added—and when He set out five barley loaves and two fish and blessed them, the food became enormously abundant. So much food came about that all those many people ate their fill and there was still some left over.

People with disabled bodies and people who could not see met Jesus. When Jesus touched their eyes with His hand, they opened their eyes, and people who could not use their legs and the man who had been sick for thirty-eight years were also healed in body. So countless people wished that Jesus would become the king of Israel. “This young man named Jesus is the savior of Israel. He is a man who can deliver us from being a vassal of Rome and who can abundantly share food with our people in the circumstances of this nation, which has nothing to eat.” Thinking this way, countless people followed Him. Then the politicians and religious leaders of Israel became envious and

drove Jesus to the point of being nailed to the Cross. That is why Jesus had to be crucified.

The Creator came as the Savior

But Jesus is the Son of God the Father, and He is the Creator who created heaven, earth, and the universe. Such a One became a man for a while in order to save people from sin. He was born on this earth, borrowing the body of the Virgin Mary. It was not because He had no power. He came as our Savior in order to save us from sin, remove our sins, make us children of God, and let us live forever enjoying riches and glory in the holy kingdom of God. So because the Lord bore our sins through baptism, He had to be crucified. In this way, Jesus was driven to the Cross.

Judaism in Israel at that time hated Jesus. Even now, Judaism does not believe in Jesus as the Savior. They know that only the LORD God is the true God and that God promised to send His Son, the Christ, but they do not believe. They say that if the Son of God were to come to this earth, He should come in splendor, so why was He born so poor in a stable where animals stay? They say that even His birth is already different.

"What can come out of Nazareth? What can come out of a country village? What can country people do?" They thought that for a king to come forth, he would at least have to be born in a royal palace. The deliverer they were waiting for had to be a very attractive person, muscular and strong, and having political eloquence and wisdom, with great ability. But when we look at the word in Isaiah, it says, *"For He shall grow up before Him as a tender plant, And as a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2)*. It is saying that Jesus

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

was like a stem that came out of dry ground and so was unimpressive to look at. So it is saying that, looking at His outward appearance, there was nothing at all to desire, so even if they wanted to believe, they could not believe. But although His outward appearance was like that, the words He spoke and their content, and all the works that were manifested through Him, were worthy of belief. So the leaders of Judaism became shaken, and those who held the office of high priest were tempted by the devil and hated Jesus. They thought, "If that man remains, even our positions will not be secure."

The politicians of Israel, living as a vassal state of Rome, thought that if, by some mistake, a rebellion against Rome broke out, they might be stripped of all the freedom and authority they did have and might even be killed. So they judged that it was right for one man to be sacrificed for the nation rather than for many people to be persecuted and die and the whole nation to perish, and they drove things that way. So, in order to have Jesus crucified, they handed Him over to Pilate the governor, who had been sent from Rome. They said He was a rebel. They said He called Himself the King of the Jews. In fact, because Israel was a vassal state of Rome, the king of that nation was the Roman emperor Caesar. But they said that because there were many among the people who said that Jesus was the King of the Jews and the Savior of the Jews, this was rebellion. Driving Him into the crime of rebellion in this way, they finally nailed Him to the Cross and killed Him. This is the process by which Jesus suffered, in physical terms.

So we must approach this Bible spiritually. Jesus is God, who created the universe. Our ancestors fell into sin, and we, too, fell into sin, so we could only live committing sin throughout our lives and then die, and we could only go to hell; but Jesus is the Savior, the Deliverer, who came to this earth in order to save

such people as us from all sin and from the judgment of God and destruction, and to let us live truly gloriously and honorably, as befits children of God. We must know it that way and believe it that way.

Judas, who did not believe in Jesus

When we approach the word of God, we must think spiritually and believe accordingly. In the passage that follows comes the story of Judas, who sold Jesus, regretted it, and died. It says, *"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself" (Matthew 27:3–5)*. Dear fellow believers, this Judas was a disciple of Jesus.

As I told you a little while ago, if we believe in Jesus, we must believe with our hearts. We must believe with the world of the heart, which is far superior to the world of matter. Just as the air is not visible to our eyes but is certainly there, God, who created all things in the universe, is also not visible to our eyes but is always beside us. He is living. But Judas, who was a disciple of Jesus, sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Though this man usually followed Jesus around and worked, he was a man who did not believe in Jesus. So he informed on Jesus to the chief priests and elders of the Jews, had Him taken away, and received thirty pieces of silver as the price. But when he saw Jesus standing in the place of judgment, he could not find any sin in Him at all. He, too, had followed Him around for three years, but He had never committed a sin. They say that if you

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

dig deep enough, you can find dirt on anyone, but in the case of his teacher Jesus alone, even though they had made Him stand before the court of the Roman governor Pilate, no sin could be found in Him. So Judas, pricked in his conscience, returned to the chief priests the thirty pieces of silver he had received from them and repented of his wrongdoing, saying, "I have truly sold an innocent man. I have done a great wrong."

Then the chief priests said, "What does that have to do with us? Did you not sell Him to us? We will judge Him just as you sold Him to us and will surely put Him to death. You must answer for the sin of your own wrongdoing." So Judas hanged himself and died. What we must consider here is that even Judas, who followed Jesus around, did not believe in Jesus.

Who is Jesus to us?

Put simply, the fact that Jesus is the Son of God and the One who saved us is as follows. Jesus has a Father, and He is God the Father. Who is Jesus to us? He is our Savior. What is His origin? He is God. He created all things in the universe. The word says, *"All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (John 1:3)*. We call Him "Jesus Christ"; the first word, "Jesus," means Savior, and the latter word, "Christ," means the Anointed One, that is, the King of kings. The Almighty Creator came as the Savior in order to save mankind from sin, bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, offered His own body before God as the sacrificial offering for mankind, and was nailed to the Cross and died for us. By being sacrificed in this way, He became the sacrificial offering that saved us from all sin. He is truly our God, our Savior, and the Prophet.

How we human beings can receive the remission of sins can be known through the words that Jesus Christ spoke. How can we know what we ourselves are like? Where our lives come from and where they are going, for what purpose we are born and at what final destination we arrive—we can know such things because Jesus tells us through the word of the Bible.

If Jesus Christ had not taught us, we would not have been able to know. Our Lord said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. He also said, *"For out of the heart proceed evil thoughts, murders, adulteries, fornications, thefts, false witness, blasphemies" (Matthew 15:19)*. Because people have such evil hearts, they commit sin as they live their whole lives. People are born as lumps of sin and are beings who commit sin throughout their lives. Therefore, they must receive the remission of sins. They must receive the remission of sins and become children of God, go to the place where God is, and enjoy riches and glory as children of God. Man is the lord of all creation and a being far superior to all created beings. He is a being who resembles the image of God.

Therefore, because man is an honorable being who resembles the image of God, he must receive the remission of sins and live enjoying riches and glory, enjoying everlasting life forever. To do so, he must receive the remission of sins. We came to commit sin by falling for the enticement of Satan the devil and also because we are weak, but Jesus, who is God and who made us, came to this earth, Himself putting on human flesh, in order to save us from all those sins. And He had our sins transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John, gave that body over to the Cross, was nailed to it, shed His blood, and died, and then rose again from death and fully accomplished our salvation. In this way, the Lord accomplished

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

our salvation. Therefore, we must know and believe in Jesus Christ as our Deliverer, our God, our Savior, the God who saved us from sin, and the God who gave us true salvation and liberation. Then we receive the remission of sins and obtain everlasting life. Our Lord Jesus Christ taught us all these things. Therefore, we must believe in this way.

Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*, but Judas did not believe. In the Bible, Judas called Jesus "Rabbi," that is, "Teacher." The other disciples called Him "Lord." They called Him their Master and their Creator. They believed that although He is the Son of God the Father, He is their Creator and their Savior, the Son of God who came to this earth, putting on human flesh, in order to save them from sin. But Judas did not believe in that way. He thought, "Teacher, You are one of the great men. You are one of the sages of the world. You are a morally very great man, comparable to people such as Socrates, Confucius, or Mencius." It is saying that he did not truly believe in Him as his Savior. So when things turned out that way, Judas came to sell Jesus, and after receiving thirty pieces of silver, he gave up that money because his conscience was tormented, but his sin was not resolved. It is saying that if he had believed, it would have been resolved, but because he did not believe, it was not resolved in the end, and he died.

Even if we today cannot come to church often and faithfully, we must know and believe with our hearts that Jesus is God and our God, that He is the Savior who saved us from sin, that He is the Savior who bore our sins through baptism, and that He is the Savior who was nailed to the Cross, received all the judgment for our sins, and made us live again. We must bow the knees of our hearts before Jesus Christ. And we must believe, saying, "The Lord is my Savior. He is my God. He is the Savior who

saved me from sin, the Savior who gave me everlasting life, the Savior who gave me all life." Those who do not believe in this way will become like Judas.

At root, man is a lump of sin

Dear fellow believers, all people commit sin. There is also a confession in a hymn that likens sin to raging waves. Raging waves keep beating until the day this earth disappears. The high tides and low tides keep coming in. This is precisely the sin we commit. While we live in this world, we keep committing sin like waves of high and low tide. We always commit sin. Our sins always come surging in like raging waves, but our Lord came to this earth, had our sins all transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and because He bore those sins on His own body, He received the righteous judgment on the Cross on our behalf. Having borne our sins in this way and received the judgment, He died, and then He rose again and became our true Savior. Therefore, we must believe in Jesus. If we do not believe with our hearts, if we do not believe by bowing the knees of our hearts, it amounts to nothing.

Dear fellow believers, a religious life led without the remission of sins may seem very good, but it is like a drug that makes us forget pain for a moment. Dear fellow believers, in reality, because we live committing sin, we are distressed because of sin, the eyes of our hearts become spiritually darkened because of sin, and even our skin becomes rough because of sin.

When people do not sleep well, they become very tired, and when they have worries in their hearts, their skin also becomes

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

bad. When there is sin, neither body nor heart is at ease, and when there is sin, there is never any happiness for people. There is absolutely no happiness. Only when all the sins in people's hearts are washed clean as white as snow and their hearts become as light as down is there true happiness and joy. Only after that is everything joyful and good, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do. If there is sin in the heart, then no matter how much people groom their outward appearance and try to become pretty, try to become brave, and try to become good, it does not work. That is sin.

Why do people perish? They perish because of sin. So people must receive the remission of sins. To receive the remission of sins, they must believe in Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. Jesus is the way to the kingdom of heaven and the truth. The Lord truly removed our sins.

How did He remove them? He had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross in our place, received the judgment, shed His blood and died, and then rose again and became our true Savior. Therefore, we must believe in Jesus as our Savior. If we believe, we are saved, and if we do not believe, we are not saved. Anyone who does not believe in Jesus Christ as his own Savior is a failure. No matter how much people try in this world not to do bad things to others, to live kindly and well, and to become happy, it does not work because of sin. Dear fellow believers, why did Adam and Eve make clothes out of fig leaves, put them on, and cover themselves? In the beginning, it says, *"And they were both naked, the man and his wife, and were not ashamed" (Genesis 2:25)*.

Why are people ashamed even though they are wearing clothes? Why are they so embarrassed like this? It is because of sin. Then does one person commit sin and another not? Everyone

commits sin in exactly the same way. Sin is like raging waves, so people commit sin every day as soon as they open their eyes. They always commit sin, in dreams, unconsciously, and in reality. The question is how all those sins can be remitted.

Some people think that if they walk a long road practicing asceticism, their sins will be removed by that much. They say that if they cultivate good deeds and do many good works, their sins will be removed by that much. But as they go along that road, they commit even more sins.

Because it cannot be done that way, the Bible says, *"For there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*. There is no Savior but Jesus Christ. Dear fellow believers, there is truly no one who does not commit sin. People who go to church seem not to commit sin, but that is not so. Even after faithfully attending church on Sundays and Wednesdays, they easily put their Bibles away and go looking again for the pleasures of the world. This is the sin of people.

People are born with sin from the beginning. As the word says, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)*, we were conceived in sin from our mother's body and inherited sin together with the flesh and blood of our parents. Because we were born with sin and evil, the more our bodies grow, the more sins we commit. This is what people are. What is the root of man? It is a lump of sin. Nevertheless, to say, "I do not commit sin," is not to know oneself.

As the old saying goes, "Know yourself," people must know that they themselves are lumps of sin. Why did Jesus come to this earth? He came to this earth to save us from all sins: the sins we commit with our hearts, the sins we commit with our

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

thoughts, and the sins we commit with our actions. We must know this. We must know ourselves.

Sin is blocking the relationship with God

Why is your life so hard? Why are there so many obstacles as you live? Why is your heart so uneasy? In the old days, people lived well with peace of mind even if they ate three meals a day, no, even only two; so why, in this age overflowing with material things, are people so uneasy at heart, struggling, and full of worries? Dear fellow believers, it is because the relationship between God and man is blocked because of man's sin. Even when people pray to God, there is no answer, and their prayers do not reach God. It is saying that even though God wants to help us, He cannot help us because we have sin, because we are dirty.

Suppose you have a very pretty pet dog and want to hold it to your chest and cuddle it, but that dog is covered with filth. Who knows where it has been, but it has come back with its back all covered with filth. You certainly love the little thing, but because it is covered with filth, you can do nothing about it.

Even while walking along the road, people see a fine dog that seems to have lost its owner and say, "Oh, how pretty!" and call it to come over. But suppose the dog coming near smells, is covered with filth, and is holding a rat in its mouth. At that moment, you end up saying, "I didn't mean come here. Goodbye." The Bible says, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)*. God loves people. Then why can God not help us and protect us? It is because there is sin on our side. So God tells us first to have our sins washed away. God the Father sent His own Son to this earth, passed on

our sins to that Son, and brought the judgment for sin upon that Son. And He tells us to be saved from sin and to have our sins washed away. He said, *"So that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19)*.

It is saying that our Lord washes away our sins, makes us children of God, and embraces us in His arms, and then gives peace to our hearts and from that time on helps us with blessings of both spirit and body. We are very honorable people before God and people who have received the love of God. But if there is anyone who has the thought, "I am not receiving God's love and help," we must know the fact that it is because we have sin. So we must receive the remission of sins. To receive the remission of sins, we must hear the words of Jesus Christ. He said, *"And you shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. We need only hear with our ears and believe with our hearts the fact that has been accomplished.

Do not strive to remove your sins by living a good life. The more you try to live a good and cleaner life, the more you come to see your own sins. Then am I saying not to live a good life? Even if you do not make up your mind that way, people commit sin. It is saying that when you try to live a good life, every time you commit sin you feel all the more, "I have committed sin again," so the pain over sin is all the more severe.

Why was Jesus silent?

Jesus was interrogated before the religious leaders and in Pilate's court and was accused by false witnesses, but He did not say a word. Why did He do so? It is because our Lord had come to this earth and had already borne our sins through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Let us look at the word in Matthew. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:13–15)*. And it continues, *"When He had been baptized" (Matthew 3:16)*. If we look at the word here, it says, *"'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15)*. It is recorded that John gave baptism to Jesus. At His trial, Jesus was falsely accused by the religious leaders, the elders, and the politicians. They attacked Him by putting countless charges on Him. They accused Him, saying that He had said He was the King of the Jews, that He had said He was the Son of God, and also that He had tried to oppose Rome. But Jesus remained silent. Then Pilate was very puzzled. The word says, *"The governor marveled greatly" (Matthew 27:14)*.

An ordinary person would have leaped up in rage before those who were accusing him and poured out all kinds of abuse, but Jesus did not say a word and remained silent.

Why was Jesus so silent? It was because of the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, as in the word of Matthew we read earlier. Then one may ask why Jesus needed that baptism. Let us ask ourselves this question: "Jesus, why did You have to receive the baptism that John the Baptist gave?" The answer to this question is here.

Looking again at the word in Matthew, it says, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The baptism that Jesus received from John the Baptist was in order to fulfill all righteousness. People of old sometimes interpreted the Chinese character for "righteousness"

(義), which is made up of the character for "lamb" (羊) above the character for "I" (我), as meaning that I become righteous only when I am under the lamb. This word explains what we must do in order to become right people before God, that is, people without sin.

How can we become people without sin? John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind, had to give baptism to Jesus, the Son of God, and pass on our sins to Him. Only then would God fulfill all that right work, in which He loved us and sent His own Son Jesus to this earth to remove our sins. That is why Jesus said that it was fitting to do this, and John gave baptism to Jesus. We must know this.

It was not because He had no power that Jesus was crucified. Absolutely not. Isaiah says, *"As a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7)*. Dear fellow believers, if you go to a country that raises many sheep, there are a great many sheep in the fields.

Among those sheep there are sheep whose wool has grown thick. Some sheep are milked and the milk is sold, and some sheep have their wool shorn and so give profit to their owner. The sheep that give profit to their owner by having their wool shorn eat well and only grow wool. Their bodies are small, but only their wool grows thick. Then they are shorn.

The sheep are shut up in a pen and made to come out one at a time. One is caught and held firmly, and a machine like an electric hair clipper is brought and run along it in long strokes. Then the wool is shaved off swiftly. Even so, the sheep stays still. When its belly is shaved, it keeps its belly still, and when its muzzle is shaved, it keeps its muzzle still. If it were us, we would make a fuss, saying it tickles, but the sheep before its shearer stays still. When all its wool has been shorn that day, only a scrawny bare body is left. Jesus, too, was silent in that way. It

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

was because He had fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Fulfilling all righteousness means precisely that Jesus had all sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. This is precisely the baptism.

What was the baptism that Jesus received from John the Baptist after coming to this earth for? It was in order to have our sins, that is, all the sin of all mankind, transferred to Him. That is why Jesus remained silent in Pilate's court even though people were clamoring and accusing Him. It was because He had already had all our sins transferred to Him through John the Baptist. Because He had had our sins transferred to Him, He had to receive the judgment for that sin according to the righteous law of God, which says *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. It means that because we are saved from the judgment of sin and from destruction only if He receives the judgment for sin in our place, He had all our sins transferred to Him through baptism and remained silent in order to be crucified. That is why Jesus is our Savior.

So later the Lord hangs on the Cross. If we read a little further, the scene of Jesus being crucified appears. Before that, let us first come to know that Jesus remained silent when He was put on trial before He hung on the Cross, because He had already had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and then I will move on to the next passage.

"Hail, King of the Jews!"

Let us look at the word. *"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison*

around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified" (Matthew 27:27–31). Dear fellow believers, here, what did people say as they looked at Jesus and mocked Him? It says that they mocked Him, saying, *"Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matthew 27:29),* took the scarlet robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to crucify Him.

They mocked Him, saying, *"Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matthew 27:29).* What was the charge they put on Him as they did so? It was "King of the Jews." If Jesus became the King of the Jews, it would amount to rebellion against Rome. So because He was one who had committed the crime of rebellion, it became the reason they could nail Him to the Cross, on which the most heinous criminals were executed, and kill Him.

Among the punishments of Rome, there was a punishment in which a person who had committed the greatest crime in this world, that is, one who had most greatly opposed Rome, was nailed to a cross and made to shed his blood. Because Jesus had said He was the King of the Jews, they could drive Him into being one who opposed Rome and do that to Him. That is how it is physically. But spiritually speaking, Jesus was truly the King of the Jews. Spiritually, the King of the Jews means the King of those who truly believe in God, just as the Jews are the descendants of Abraham. Countless people live on this earth, and there are some who believe in God and some who do not. Some people believe that God exists even though He is not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

visible to their eyes, and they rely on Him with their hearts. Some people say outright that there is no God.

God exists. And Jesus is truly the King of those who believe in God. He is the King of kings. Why did Jesus suffer hardship? Jesus Christ is the Creator and the Maker who created all things in the universe. When our ancestors were tempted by the devil and fell into sin, we were born as their descendants, were born on this earth having inherited sin from our parents, and could only live committing sin and then die, and could only go to hell. The One who came to save such people as us, that is, the people who resemble His own image, from sin is none other than Jesus. He is the Savior, Jesus the Son of God. Who is this One? He is none other than our King. Truly, the King of this universe is Jesus Christ. He is the King of those who believe in God.

Spiritually, in our hearts, who is our King? It is Jesus. Jesus is our King, but people nailed Him to the Cross and put up the accusation over His head. They wrote *"the King of the Jews"* in Hebrew, in the language of Rome, and in Greek. What does it mean that it was written in several languages? At that time, Greek was the language in common use throughout the whole world. Writing it in Hebrew, the language of Rome, and Greek means that both to the people of Israel in the flesh and to all the people of the whole world, the true King is Jesus. Why is it Jesus? It is because He created this universe. He is our Maker. When His people fell into sin and were about to perish, the Maker came to this earth, putting on human flesh, in order to save us from sin. Therefore, it means that although people mocked Jesus as *"the King of the Jews,"* He is in fact our true King and Savior.

Therefore, we must think about this in our hearts. Why did Jesus hang on the Cross, and why was He so silent even as He was going to be crucified? Why did He have to be crucified? Why did He have to receive baptism from John the Baptist? Why

did He have to rise again three days after He died? Why did He have to come to this earth? Why did He have to be born in a lowly stable? There is meaning in all of this. We are truly lowly, lacking, weak, and worthless people, but even so, at root we are glorious people. We are honorable people. Man is originally an honorable being. But because of sin, we became very worthless people. In order to save such people as us from sin, Jesus put on the very same flesh as ours and came to this earth in a lowly manner, just as we are lowly. And He came to this earth in order to have our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, receive the judgment for sin in our place, save us from sin, and restore us again to an honorable state.

"It is finished!"

When Jesus Christ died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn. Lastly, let us look at the word. It is the scene in which Jesus was crucified; let us read two verses. *"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split" (Matthew 27:50–51)*. When Jesus was nailed to the Cross and was dying while shedding His blood, He was in such agony that He cried out, *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" (Matthew 27:46)*. He breathed His last while crying out loudly, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* and it is saying that at that moment the veil of the temple in the temple of Israel was torn right through from top to bottom. Jesus was nailed to the Cross on the hill of Calvary, where executions were carried out, and died crying out, *"Why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)*, and it is saying

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

that at the very moment He breathed His last, the veil was torn right through from top to bottom.

The Bible records this. Why was the veil torn? It is because the Lord came to this earth and had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Just as it is said, *"The wages of sin is death,"* because He had had our sins transferred to Him, He gave His own body over to the Cross in order to receive judgment from God the Father, who is righteous. He had to be nailed to the Cross, shed all the blood of His heart, and then die. As He was dying, crying out *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* and crying out why God had forsaken Him, it is saying that at the very moment He breathed His last, the veil was torn. It means that Jesus Christ became our Savior.

The Lord said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. That is, it is this word: "I came to this earth for you, bore your sins through the baptism I received from John, and was crucified for you. I have restored you again to people who are honorable, to people without sin, to people who are holy. It is finished. I have removed all your sins. You are the people of God. You are righteous people. You have no sin." The Lord thus said on the Cross, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and died, and in fact, when He died, the veil of the temple was torn right through from top to bottom. This means that He has opened the way of salvation so that anyone who simply believes with his heart the fact that Jesus Christ received baptism from John on this earth for us, hung on the Cross and died, and rose again and became our Savior, can receive the remission of sins and enter by faith into the kingdom of heaven, where there is no sin. It is a word saying that He has completed our salvation.

Dear fellow believers, therefore, you must know and believe in Jesus as your Savior. Jesus came to this earth and lived a life of thirty-three years, and for three years He did the work for our

salvation. First, through the baptism He received from John, He had all the sins we commit until we die transferred to Him. Sins committed knowingly, sins committed unknowingly—all sins are included in the words *"the sin of the world."* It refers to all the sins we commit until we die. He bore all those sins once and for all two thousand years ago. It is saying that He bore all the sins of your parents, your sins, the sins of your children, and the sins of all people until the day this earth ends, although we do not know how much longer this earth will last. Because He bore all the sin of the world in this way, He fully removed the sin of the world. He bore our sins on His own body and received all the judgment for that sin on our behalf. Therefore, Jesus Christ became our Savior.

Jesus Christ is our Savior. Therefore, no matter how lacking and weak you are, if you believe in Jesus as your Savior, you are saved from all sin, and all the sin in your heart disappears. Because we have been saved from all sin, even though we are lacking, when we either go before the Lord after living on this earth or the Lord comes again to this earth, we will go to the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, we must believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior.

Why do we live our lives on this earth? This earth is like a station where we rest for a while in order to receive the remission of sins and then move on. Man is a being who lives forever. Because he is a being who lives forever, he passes through this earth for a while; what must he do while passing through this earth? He must know the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that our Lord bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross and received all the judgment for our sins on our behalf, died and then rose again, and fully accomplished for us the remission of sins by which we can enter the kingdom of heaven. We can be saved from sin by

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

faith. Dear fellow believers, I hope that this truth will be believed in your hearts. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

If you have realized your sin, go to the Savior

< Matthew 27:1–20 >

“When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What is that to us? You see to it!’ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.’ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the LORD directed me.’ Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you say.’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

testify against You?’ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, ‘Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?’ For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, ‘Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.’ But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus.”

Those who handed Him over to trial reveal their own sin

A trial is a place where it is examined and judged whether there is sin, but the plotting of the chief priests and elders who gathered early that morning begins from the purpose of putting Jesus to death. Let us read verses 1–2. *“When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor” (Matthew 27:1–2).* They first settled on their intent to kill Him, and then bound Jesus and handed Him over to Pilate. Their judgment does not become right just because they plotted together; even if many leaders held the same intent, if that intent came together in killing an innocent One, then that plotting itself

is sin. The Bible does not put forward their position and their number, but first reveals what they had gathered to do.

Judas appearing next also reveals the reality of this trial. The very man who handed Jesus over does not say that Jesus has sin, but on the contrary says that he himself has betrayed innocent blood, so the plotting to put Jesus to death and the testimony that Jesus is innocent are placed side by side. It is not that the One who was bound did evil, but that the people who handed Him over are revealing their own sin.

Even after realizing his sin, Judas could not go to the Savior

Let us read verses 3–5. *"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself" (Matthew 27:3–5).* Judas, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, was remorseful by himself and brought back the thirty pieces of silver, acknowledging what he had done as sin. But bringing back the silver did not make the deed of betraying Jesus disappear, and in the face of the sin he had already committed, he still could do nothing.

The answer of the chief priests and elders is even more cold-hearted. Although they had been together with Judas when Jesus was handed over to them, when he spoke of his sin they said, *"You see to it!"* and turned the responsibility onto him alone. There were people to deal with the silver Judas had brought, but there was no one to remove his sin; herein lies the reason we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

cannot entrust our salvation to the people who committed sin together.

Judas threw down the silver in the temple, departed, and hanged himself. This miserable end shows that realizing sin and being saved from sin are different things. Judas knew with his head who Jesus was, but because he did not believe with his heart, even after realizing his sin he could not go to the Savior who would bear that sin. Neither a heart that deeply feels its wrongdoing nor harming oneself removes the price of sin. So we, too, must not stop at acknowledging our wrongdoing, but must find the basis of the remission of sins in the salvation that Jesus Christ has accomplished.

Even amid an evil plot, the word of God is fulfilled

Let us read verses 6–7. *"But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.' And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in" (Matthew 27:6–7).* The chief priests said that it was not right to put that silver into the treasury, calling it the price of blood, yet they carried on with their own plotting to shed innocent blood just as it was. While they carefully weighed where to put the money, in how they would deal with Jesus they pushed ahead with their evil intent just as it was; so handling religious matters meticulously does not mean that one's heart is right before God.

Even though they bought the potter's field and made it a burial place for strangers, their earlier sin was not erased. That field has been called the Field of Blood to this day; though they changed where the money was spent, where that money had come from remained in the name. Before God, what we have

actually done is revealed together with the results we have outwardly put in order.

Verses 9–10 reveal that this event was the fulfillment of the word spoken by Jeremiah the prophet. Even such specific matters as the thirty pieces of silver and the price of the potter's field lay under the word; people thought they were dealing with Jesus according to their own plotting, but God had already spoken of this event through the prophet. The fulfillment of the prophecy does not make their evil righteous, but even while that evil deed is taking place, the salvation God has spoken of does not collapse.

The innocent Jesus received our judgment in our place

Let us read verse 11. *"Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say'" (Matthew 27:11)*. Jesus did not deny who He was. To the question of whether He was a king, He answered, *"It is as you say,"* but to the accusations of the chief priests and elders He did not answer even one word, and Pilate marveled greatly at this. An ordinary person, when accused, would make excuses and fight back, but Jesus made no excuse and put up no resistance at all.

That silence cannot be taken as evidence that Jesus has sin. Just before this, Judas acknowledged that he had betrayed innocent blood; verse 18 reveals that Pilate, too, knew that they had handed Jesus over because of envy; and in verse 19 even Pilate's wife sends word to have nothing to do with that just Man. As the words of accusation increased, what was revealed was not Jesus' sin but the envy of those who handed Him over.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

If Jesus had defended Himself before Pilate, He would not have been hung on the Cross. But because Jesus had already had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, He went forward quietly on the path of judgment in the face of those accusations. It was not that He committed sin Himself and became a sinner, but that, in order to save sinners, He had their sins passed on to His own body, and among all those sins are also my sins and yours. Because the One who is without sin bore our sins, He could take our place.

As the price of that sin which had been passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and died in our place, and He rose again from death and fully accomplished our salvation. So those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit do not remove their sins by their own remorse or repayment, but receive the remission of all sins through the salvation that Jesus has accomplished. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believe in this gospel and makes them His own children.

Come before the gospel bringing the sin that has been revealed

Pilate asked the crowd whom they wanted him to release, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ. Following the custom of releasing one prisoner at the feast according to the crowd's wish, the case of the innocent Jesus was placed before the crowd's choice. Because people followed Jesus more than the teachers of the law, the envy of the leaders was deep, and in the meantime they persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to destroy Jesus. Verse 20 shows the plotting of that first early morning now spreading even to the mouths of the crowd.

Before this word, we must examine the hearts with which we used to judge by following only the number and the voices of people. Jesus, who is innocent, does not come to have sin just because many people agree, and the truth we must believe and follow does not disappear just because people shift the responsibility onto one another. What is important is to accept with our hearts the facts God has made known to us through the word.

In particular, when our sins are revealed, do not turn those sins onto other people or try to wash them away by the size of your remorse, but with that very heart that has acknowledged your sins, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus is that very Savior whom Judas never found in the end, the only One who can resolve our sins; so do not hide your own sins, but accept the remission of sins that Jesus has accomplished, and obtain true peace before God. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Pilate, who washed his hands, and Barabbas, who was released

< Matthew 27:21–26 >

“The governor answered and said to them, ‘Which of the two do you want me to release to you?’ They said, ‘Barabbas!’ Pilate said to them, ‘What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?’ They all said to him, ‘Let Him be crucified!’ Then the governor said, ‘Why, what evil has He done?’ But they cried out all the more, saying, ‘Let Him be crucified!’ When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, ‘I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.’ And all the people answered and said, ‘His blood be on us and on our children.’ Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified.”

Accept God’s testimony concerning Jesus

When Pilate asked which of the two they wanted him to release, the crowd chose Barabbas, and when he asked again what then he should do with Jesus who is called Christ, they answered that He must be crucified. At this moment of deciding

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

how to treat Jesus, they did not examine the truth of what Jesus had done, but demanded of the judge the outcome they themselves wanted.

Let us read verse 23. *"Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!'" (Matthew 27:23)*. The question of what evil He had done called for the grounds of a crime to come forth, but the crowd cried out all the more. The loudness of their words filled the empty place of the question, so Pilate's question remained unresolved, and only the voices demanding the death penalty grew louder. It was far from the picture of making a crime clear and passing a verdict; the demand to kill Jesus was pushing aside the question that asked for the truth.

Believing in Jesus is not choosing the side that the people around us like, but hearing and accepting the word in which God has testified of Jesus. If we miss that word, we can be swept along by people's voices and reject even the Savior.

Even if people pass responsibility back and forth, sin remains as it is before God

When Pilate saw that a tumult was rising, he washed his hands with water before the multitude and said that he was innocent. Let us read verse 24. *"When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it'" (Matthew 27:24)*. We must also look at what Pilate did after these words. He did not release Jesus, but scourged Him and handed Him over to be crucified; so although with his mouth he said that he had no responsibility for that blood, in reality he

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

made the decision to execute Jesus. More than the act of pouring water on his hands, what he decided with those hands reveals his responsibility.

Sin does not disappear through words declaring that one has no responsibility, nor can one make one's own deeds into something that never happened for the reason that another person demanded it first or that the circumstances were difficult. The sign of a tumult that Pilate saw was real pressure, but that pressure could not become evidence that Jesus was guilty of sin.

In verse 25, the people answer that the blood should be on themselves and on their children. The crowd said that the blood Pilate had tried to push away should be on themselves, but neither side's words could change Jesus' innocence, and even if people pass responsibility back and forth among themselves, the sin committed before God remains as it is. We must not stretch the words of this crowd into grounds for laying sin on one people of every age, but must hear them as the words of the people who rejected Jesus in this very trial. And let us examine whether we ourselves are trying to cover up our wrongs by obtaining people's agreement.

We are the very ones who have been released like Barabbas

Let us read verse 26. *"Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified" (Matthew 27:26)*. This verse shows side by side the different ends of two people. Barabbas was released, and Jesus was scourged and handed over to the Cross. There is no account that Barabbas was released because he himself had become

righteous, so here we see the scene in which a sinner is released and the One who is innocent suffers.

Our salvation, too, is not that we escaped judgment by proving our innocence. We were people who went against God and committed sin, so we could not resolve the judgment for sin with a righteousness of our own to put forward. Because the sinless Jesus took our sins upon Himself and received the judgment in our place, we have obtained salvation; so, as we watch the scene of Barabbas being released, let us remember that the ones who have been released in that place are none other than us.

How did Jesus take our sins upon Himself? Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him. This is not our moving our sins to Jesus little by little every day, but the event in which He had the sin of mankind passed on to Him all at once, so our sins, too, are all contained in it. John, who had given the baptism, testified of Jesus the next day as follows: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)*.

The Lamb of God, who goes bearing the sin of the world, was scourged in place of Barabbas and handed over to the Cross. As the price of that sin which had been passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and received in our place the punishment that should have come down upon us; so His death was not the tragedy of one righteous man unrelated to sinners, but a death for us, and the blood He shed and our remission of sins cannot be separated from each other. And He overcame death and rose again.

He who received our judgment in our place is the Savior who is living even now, and it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that conveys this salvation Jesus has accomplished. Those who

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

believe this gospel obtain the remission of all sins not by their own righteousness but by the righteousness of Jesus Christ, so they have no reason to hide their own sins or to declare themselves innocent.

Let us confess with our mouths the grace of Jesus, who was handed over in our place

Pilate washed his hands, saying that he was innocent of that blood, and the crowd answered that the blood should be on themselves. But the One who actually gives life to sinners was Jesus, who was handed over to the path of suffering; so let us, too, not make our own words the grounds of salvation when faced with sin. More important than how plausibly we explain or how firmly we resolve is what Jesus has accomplished for our sins.

Those who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit can acknowledge their own wrongs without hiding them. This is because acknowledging sin does not make salvation collapse; rather, the grace of Jesus, who took even that sin upon Himself, becomes clearer.

We cannot lightly pass over this short word in which Barabbas was released and Jesus was handed over. Behind the freedom given to us lies the real suffering of Jesus, who was scourged in our place and handed over to the Cross. It is easy to think only of the fact that we have received the remission of sins and to forget how great a love that suffering is; so, as people who have been released, let us give thanks to Jesus, who was handed over for us, and confess that grace with our mouths as well. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Do not attach conditions to faith

< Matthew 27:32–44 >

"Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, "I am the Son of God."' Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing."

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Standing before the Cross, first see who the Savior is

The people who were leading Jesus out to crucify Him met Simon, a man of Cyrene, forced him to go along with them, and made him bear the Cross of Jesus. And right after that, the event of Jesus being nailed to the Cross at Golgotha follows. Although another person carried the wooden cross, the One who died for our sins was Jesus; only when we clearly see this difference do we not miss the One who accomplished salvation.

Golgotha means "the Place of a Skull." There, people offered Jesus wine mingled with gall, but Jesus tasted it and would not drink it, and then the soldiers nailed Jesus to the Cross. The text does not show Jesus seeking a way to avoid the suffering, but conveys that Jesus actually went all the way to that place and was actually hung on the Cross. Our salvation is based not on a comfort that people have made up, but on this work that Jesus endured with His body.

Let us read verses 35 and 36. *"Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there" (Matthew 27:35–36).* After Jesus was nailed to the Cross, the soldiers divided His garments by casting lots and sat there keeping watch. This short record shows how, beside Jesus, who was giving His own body for sinners, people divided His garments and sat keeping watch. We are not people who should look at that suffering and pity Jesus, but people who must receive grace; so what we need first of all as we stand before the Cross is to know who this Savior is and what He accomplishes.

The King who hung beneath the accusation saved us

Let us read verses 37 and 38. *"And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left" (Matthew 27:37–38).* Above Jesus' head was put the accusation reading "Jesus the King of the Jews," and on His left and right two robbers were crucified with Him. Since the One recorded as King was executed between robbers, it would have looked like defeat and shame in people's eyes, but the text does not tell us to accept just as it is the judgment of the people who put up that accusation. We must see what He who hung beneath the accusation was accomplishing.

That King, who hung among sinners, had earlier spoken as follows when He received baptism from John: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15).* Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus fulfilled the righteousness of God and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and our sins are also included among them. So when we look at Jesus hanging between the robbers, we look at what happened at the Jordan River and at this Cross together. It is because the sinless One took our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John that He hung among sinners.

As the price of that sin which was passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and received in our place the judgment we were to receive, so the Cross was the place where the work of the King who gives life to sinners was accomplished. And He rose again from death and became the living Savior who

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

accomplished that salvation. Those who believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit do not stand before the King by putting forward their own righteousness, but become children of God through the remission of sins that Jesus has given; the authority and love of the King who saves us were revealed in this very work.

Let us accept just as it is what Jesus has accomplished

Those who passed by wagged their heads and insulted Jesus, saying that if He was the Son of God, He should save Himself and come down from the Cross. The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders also joined in the same mockery. Let us read verses 41 and 42. *"Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him'" (Matthew 27:41–42)*.

Even while they mentioned that Jesus had saved others, they spoke of His hanging on the Cross now as if it were evidence that He had no power to save. Their claim was that He would be the true King only if He rescued Himself from the Cross, but on that very Cross Jesus was carrying out the work of saving others, that is, us sinners. The demand that He save Himself was a word rejecting the will of the judgment He was receiving for sinners.

Let us also examine their words that they would believe if He came down now. They held out their own conditions to Jesus, the object of faith, and instead of accepting what Jesus does, demanded that He first do what they wanted. By those conditions, the Jesus whom they would acknowledge would have been someone different from the Savior who receives the judgment

for sin vicariously; and if He had left the Cross to meet people's conditions, our sins would not have been washed away.

Faith is not teaching God the way of salvation, but hearing what Jesus has accomplished for us and accepting it just as it is. If, even while hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we attach the condition that we will believe only if there is a sign we want, we cannot see the salvation He has already accomplished; so let us lay down the judgment by which we regarded only one who first grants our demands as the Savior, and incline our hearts to the word that makes known to us how Jesus removed our sins.

That suffering was the judgment for our sins

In verse 43 they mocked Him, saying that since Jesus trusted in God, God would now save Him if He was pleased with Him, and verse 44 records that the robbers who were crucified with Him also reviled Him in the same way. From those who passed by to the leaders and the robbers, the mockery went on, but no one could stop Jesus' work of salvation with that mockery.

The people beneath the Cross saw Jesus' suffering and judged that God was not pleased with Him, and therefore that He was not the Son of God. But that suffering was not because of Jesus' own sin; it was the judgment for our sins that were passed on to Jesus, and Jesus was on the Cross to fulfill the will of God to save us. Because He received all that judgment, we have received grace, and even when our circumstances are shaken, the basis of salvation lies in what Jesus accomplished.

Jesus did not leave the Cross to be acknowledged by those who mocked Him, but carried out to the end the work of giving us life. Even in us who have received the remission of sins, the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

desires of the flesh still rise up; each time that happens, look to Jesus, who remained on the Cross for our sins. Before Him our desires lose their power, and we follow the Lord again. Our salvation is complete not because Jesus granted people's demands, but because He fulfilled to the end the Father's will to save us. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

God, who has given us life

< Matthew 27:1–54 >

“When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What is that to us? You see to it!’ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.’ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the LORD directed me.’ Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you say.’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.' But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'Barabbas!' Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let Him be crucified!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took

the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, "I am the Son of God."' Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing. Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This Man is calling for Elijah!' Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The rest said, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'"

Today's word contains the scene in which Jesus is crucified on the Cross. On the Mount of Olives, Jesus prayed before God three times, until His sweat became like drops of blood: *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39)*. The Lord, who prayed in this way, laid down all His own will there and followed the will of God. And He gave His body to the Roman soldiers. The Lord's giving Himself to them so that He would be nailed to the Cross was His giving His body as the sacrificial offering of atonement in order to save God's people and remove all the sins of this world. We have just read that word.

Judas, a disciple of Jesus, received thirty pieces of silver and sold his own teacher. He made known where Jesus was and handed his teacher over to the chief priests for thirty pieces of silver. But Judas, who came to know that his teacher Jesus was a righteous One without any sin at all, brought those thirty pieces of silver back to the chief priests. All these things happened in order to fulfill the word of God. The Lord's being sold for thirty

pieces of silver was to fulfill the word of the Old Testament that He would save us with the price of the blood of His own life.

Pilate asked Jesus, who had been brought to him, *"Are You the King of the Jews?" (Matthew 27:11)*, and Jesus answered, *"It is as you say" (Matthew 27:11)*. However much Pilate examined Him, there was no sin in Jesus. So Pilate thought of releasing Jesus. He tried to release Him, thinking, "The chief priests and the elders have seized a man who has no sin at all and are needlessly making me commit a sin." Also, Pilate's wife sent someone to convey to him that she had suffered many things in a dream because of that Man, and that he should have nothing to do with that just Man.

But the chief priests accused Him, saying that Jesus had called Himself the Son of God and had also called Himself a king. When Pilate said that, in that case, they should take Him and either crucify Him or kill Him, they said that according to their law this man ought to die. The Jews had a custom of releasing one prisoner when the feast came. It was a custom like that of releasing prisoners by a special amnesty on a national holiday. At that time there was a very wicked prisoner called Barabbas, and one of the two, Barabbas or Jesus, had to be released. The crowd shouted to release Barabbas and to crucify Jesus. Even when Pilate said that this man had no sin and asked how he could crucify Him, they said to crucify Him, saying that they and their children would take responsibility. So Pilate, fearing that a tumult would break out, had no choice but to hand Jesus over.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

"The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom"

When Jesus was crucified and died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn. The Lord came to this earth and shed His blood on the Cross, and His body hung on the Cross and died miserably. The word records what happened when Jesus Christ died as follows: *"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split" (Matthew 27:50–51).*

These things happened at the very moment when Jesus breathed His last on the Cross. The people of Israel had a temple, and it had the same structure as the Tabernacle of the Old Testament. When one goes in through the gate, there is the altar of burnt offering and there is the laver; next there is the Holy Place, inside it a veil is hung, and behind it there is the Most Holy Place. In the Holy Place there are the table of showbread, the lampstand, and the altar of incense, and in the Most Holy Place there is the ark of the Testimony. And this veil leading into the Most Holy Place was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died on the Cross. It was not torn by human hands; it was torn when Jesus died. What kind of death is the death of Jesus Christ? What kind of blood is the precious blood of Jesus Christ? We must know what all these things—Jesus Christ's being crucified and dying on the Cross and rising again in three days—have to do with us.

Jesus, who became the sacrificial offering of atonement

Let us look at the word of Leviticus. *"Then the sons of Aaron brought the blood to him. And he dipped his finger in the blood, put it on the horns of the altar, and poured the blood at the base of the altar. But the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe from the liver of the sin offering he burned on the altar, as the LORD had commanded Moses. The flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp" (Leviticus 9:9–11).*

God told Moses and Aaron to offer a sacrifice that removes sin for the high priest, his sons, and the people of Israel. So Aaron offered the sacrifice: when he killed the calf of the sin offering for himself, his sons brought the blood to him, and Aaron dipped his finger in the blood, put it on the horns of the altar, and poured the rest of the blood at the base of the altar. And it says, *"The flesh and the hide he burned with fire outside the camp" (Leviticus 9:11).* The flesh of Jesus Christ was put to death on the Cross outside the camp, just as unclean things were burned up outside the camp. The blood of the sacrificial offering was put on the horns of the altar and poured at the base of the altar, and the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe of the liver of the sin offering were burned on the altar. All of this was just as the LORD had commanded Moses.

The death of Jesus Christ was the sacrificial offering of atonement offered before God the Father, in which He died in our place the death we should have died. The sin offering is a sacrifice for removing sin, and in this sacrifice, before the offering dies, it must without fail receive the laying on of hands so that sin is passed on to it. Even when the sin offering was offered to remove the sins of the high priest, his sons, and the whole people of Israel, if we look at the word of Leviticus that

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

records the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, sin is first passed on to the offering through the laying on of hands. The offering that had borne sin in this way died, and its blood was put on the horns of the altar. Jesus, too, had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and bearing those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross.

Where was that blood put? It says that he dipped his finger in the blood and put it on the horns of the altar, and the *"horns"* refer to the four horns of the altar of burnt offering. If we look at Leviticus chapter 4, the blood of the sin offering was put on the horns of the altar of incense and also on the horns of the altar of burnt offering. The Bible says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, and we must confess in both of these places—both when we pray before God and when we stand before God—that the Lord paid that price of sin in our place, that is, that He shed His blood and laid down His life in our place in order to save us. We must say that God sent Jesus as the Savior into the place where we should have died and had Him lay down His life in our place. We are always lacking, but only when we go forward with the faith that believes that Jesus laid down His life for us, even when we pray, can we boldly go into God's sanctuary, before the throne of grace. In this way, the blood was put in two places. We must know that the death of Jesus Christ was the death of the sacrificial offering of atonement, who laid down His own blood and life for us in order to remove our sins.

The Lord's hanging on the Cross and shedding His blood was Jesus, who is God, Himself coming to this earth and laying down His own life in our place, in the place where we should have died. He gave His own life to us. He gave His own blood to save us. By giving that life to us, He made it possible for us to obtain salvation before God. Because Jesus, who is God, laid down His

own life before God, we are saved by believing in that blood. Because Jesus Christ became our sacrificial offering of atonement, bore all our sins, and laid down His own life and blood in our place and gave them to us, we have come to be saved.

Atonement is the work that God Himself did

The Lord's becoming the sacrificial offering of atonement—that is, the Lord, who is without sin, coming to this earth, being crucified and dying on the Cross, and rising again in three days—is what God did. It says, *"The fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe from the liver of the sin offering" (Leviticus 9:10)*, and here the fat (the oil) refers to the Holy Spirit. Jesus' coming to this earth and being crucified on the Cross was God's giving His own Son, giving the life of that Son to us, and causing us to be saved. It was His causing us to receive the remission of sins. It was His causing our sins to be removed. What the Lord came to this earth and did was not something some person did, but what God did to make us live.

When the sin offering was offered, God had all sins passed on to the offering, and had the blood of that offering, to which sins had been passed on, received and put on the horns of the altar. It was put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and in other sin offerings it was also put on the horns of the altar of incense, where prayer is offered. Then the animal was killed, and these three things—the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe covering the liver—were placed on the altar of burnt offering and burned as an offering before God. The blood was put on the horns and poured at the base of the altar. Also, once a year, on the Day of Atonement, the high priest sprinkled the blood of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

sin offering on the mercy seat on top of the ark of the Testimony inside the Most Holy Place. And the flesh was carried outside the camp, and all the rest was burned up. Dear fellow believers, what kind of death is Jesus' death? It was the sacrificial offering of atonement that God offered in order to remove our sins. It was His giving His own life for us in order to save us. His giving His life for us and removing our sins was the work of the true God, it was God's saving us, and it was God's giving life to us. And the kidneys and the fatty lobe of the liver show that God saved us with true love and true life.

This is not something hypocritical or temporary. The kidneys are the organs that filter out bad things and send them out of the body, and because God truly loved us, He sent His own Son to us and Himself saved us by giving us the life of that Son. The word is telling us that God saved us by giving life, that is, that the Lord became the sacrificial offering of atonement for us.

Blood is life itself

Dear fellow believers, why did He say to strip off the fatty lobe of the liver and burn it on the altar, and to carry the rest of the flesh outside the camp and burn it up with fire? It means that God has given His own life to us. Jesus Christ's being crucified on the Cross was His giving life to us. God had His own Son crucified on the Cross in order to give His own life to us. What does the death of Jesus Christ have to do with us? God had Jesus shed His blood in order to give us life, and the death of Jesus Christ took place in order to save us from all sins and give us life. Dear fellow believers, you must know Jesus, who became the sacrificial offering of atonement. What does God have to do with us, and what benefit do the death of Jesus Christ and the

faith that believes in Him have for us—we neglect such matters far too often.

Dear fellow believers, if Jesus Christ had not laid down His life in our place on the Cross, we could not be saved. The law, which is the law of God, says, *"Life for life, eye for eye, tooth for tooth" (Exodus 21:23–24)*. For us to be saved from sin, One who is without sin must give His life for us. That is why Jesus Christ had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and shed His own blood on the Cross. To give us life, to make us live, and to save us from sin, He saved us by giving His own life. If Jesus Christ had not died on the Cross for us, if He had not laid down His own life for us, we could not have been saved. Jesus Christ's dying on the Cross was the true love of God. It was the merciful love of God, who wanted to save us and give us life.

Dear fellow believers, what do you think of Jesus? What do you think of the God we believe in, Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross? Jesus, who is God, gave us life on the Cross. He became the sacrificial offering of atonement for us. He put on flesh, came to this earth, and gave us the blood of His life, that is, His own life. If God had not given His own life to us, we could not be saved. However much Jesus Christ had died on the Cross, if He had not shed His blood, we could not be saved. Blood is life itself, and He gave that life to us. He gave us His blood.

Jesus had to come to this earth, bear all our sins, and die, but why did He have to receive the punishment of shedding His blood on the Cross? He did so in order to give us life. He could also have died by another method that did not shed blood. But if Jesus' flesh had only died and He had not shed His blood on the ground and given it to us, He could not be our Savior, nor could He give us life. How do we understand the death of Jesus, who

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

became the sacrificial offering of atonement? We must know the fact that Jesus Christ shed His blood and died on the Cross in order to give us life, and the fact that He rose again three days after He died. We must know Jesus well and believe in Him. We must know well Jesus, who bore all our sins and died on the Cross, Jesus, who gave us life, and Jesus, who gave His own blood to us.

Jesus is the Lord of our life

The reason God sent His own Son and had Him crucified on the Cross was to give us life. We were dead because of sin and were lost. To give life to us, who were in that state, God sent His own Son to this earth. And He caused Him to have all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and caused Him to receive the sentence of death and shed His blood on the Cross. He shed His blood on the Cross in order to give us life. Jesus is the Lord of our life. Jesus Christ gave us life by dying on the Cross. And He rose again three days after He died and gave life to whoever believes in Him.

"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5). Just as this word says, because Jesus was bruised, we were healed, and because He was struck, we were cured. We have been saved from sin, and having received God's new life, we have come to be able to live before God in this way with that new life. Because Jesus, who is God, gave His own blood and flesh to us as the sacrificial offering of atonement, we could be saved. We have been saved through faith. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

For many years we have said that we believe in Jesus within Christian culture. But the blood of Jesus Christ was blood to give us life. Blood is life itself, and we must know the fact that the Lord died on the Cross in order to give us life. We must know that Jesus was the sacrificial offering of atonement, that He gave His own blood to us in order to remove our sins, and that that blood was blood to give us life. Because blood itself is life, we must not ignore the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross. We must not ignore that Jesus, who is God, came to this earth and bore our sins, nor must we ignore that He gave us life by shedding His blood on the Cross.

When the Lord shed all His blood on the Cross, gave His own life to us, and died, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. He opened the way so that whoever believes that God has given His life for them can enter the kingdom of heaven. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Do you believe the fact that Jesus shed His blood for you in order to give you life? This is faith. Jesus became our sacrificial offering of atonement. As He died on the Cross, He shed His blood for us. His death was a death He died because He truly loved us. It was a death He died in order to save us. What was manifested through Jesus Christ was not something a person did, but what God did because He loved mankind, in order to give us life.

That is why God told them to place the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe of the liver of the sacrificial offering of atonement on the altar of burnt offering and burn them as an offering, and to carry all the rest of the flesh outside the camp and burn it up. Dear fellow believers, God's giving life to us did not come about by human effort. To make us live and to give His true love and true life, God sent His own Son Jesus Christ to this earth and made Him the sacrificial offering of atonement in order to remove our sins. We must believe this with thanksgiving and not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

forget it. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will never forget that Jesus Christ has saved us and that we believe it.

Do not forget the grace by which He gave you life

I will say this word again and again. It is because we forget. It is because we like other things and our hearts are soaked in other things. Dear fellow believers, how can we live? We live because God has given us His own life. Our hearts live, and our souls live. It is by His shedding His blood on the Cross for us and by His giving us the life of His own Son that we live by believing in Him. Dear fellow believers, you must not become people who ignore the grace of God. You must not think that you know everything just because you have believed in Jesus Christ once. The people of Israel offered a sin offering for the sins of all the people once every year, on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement. In this way, we must not forget, even after we have been saved, that God has given us life.

We must not know only as a formality that Jesus took away our sins through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. We must believe in our hearts and ponder again that God has given us life, and remember that we have truly obtained life before God. And we must give thanks. We must always hold in our hearts that we have obtained life because He gave His own life, and, giving thanks for the true love of God, we must spread it. Jesus Christ came to this earth and laid down His own life on the Cross in order to give us life. Therefore, it is by faith that we have obtained salvation. What Jesus Christ came to this earth and did was to become the sacrificial offering of atonement for us.

Why was Jesus, who is without sin, tried in Pilate's court? Why did He, who is without sin, have to hang and die on the tree of execution, on which only those who were to be cursed were hung? The Bible says, *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Galatians 3:13)*. In Old Testament times, those who had committed a sin worthy of death were killed, and then their bodies were hung on a tree. But Jesus was nailed to a tree alive and hung up high.

Why was Jesus crucified on the Cross? It is because we are people who were to be cursed. The Lord received in our place the curse we were to receive. And He gave His own life to us. So that we would not be cursed and would obtain new life, He Himself received our curse. Dear beloved saints, do not lose the life God has given us. What Jesus came to this earth and did was to remove our sins and give us life exactly according to the method of the sin offering of the Old Testament.

We give thanks to God. Dear fellow believers, do you truly give thanks to God? Do you believe that you have obtained life from God, that God has given us life and so we have been saved? Do you perhaps know this only in theory? We must not forget this. The Lord's dying and shedding His blood on the Cross was His giving His own life in order to give us life, and the death of His flesh was His receiving the judgment for the price of our sins. That is why Jesus hung on the Cross and died. And as He gave His own life to us and received the price of our sins in His own flesh, the gate of heaven was opened.

Through the sacrifice of atonement, God made it so that whoever believes in Jesus, who became the sacrificial offering of atonement in order to give us life, can obtain new life and enter the kingdom of heaven that God has prepared. I hope that we will give thanks for this and engrave it on our hearts, that we will not set our hearts on the world, and that, even though we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

live in the world, we will live with God, giving thanks that God has given us life and giving Him glory.

A faith that has lost life is left with only a shell

If we are not careful, it is easy for us to forget that God has given us life and for our faith to become a formality. There is no life, and only a shell is left. Then do you know what happens? In the end, it dies. Do you know what the corruption of faith is? Forgetting that God has given us life and merely knowing it as doctrine—that is the corruption of faith. Dear fellow believers, believe that you have received life from God, and give thanks. And spread this. When we are buried in many sins, we forget this, and faith becomes a ritual and turns into a doctrine. The Lord bore all our sins and received the judgment in our place, and He gave His own life to us. He shed His blood and gave it to us. We must believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ has given us life, and live by faith. We must give thanks by faith and spread the gospel by faith.

Dear fellow believers, do you know why the gospel became distorted after the early church? While Jesus was alive, the disciples followed Jesus around. After Jesus died, the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and preached the gospel. Those who received the faith handed down under the apostles while the apostles were living are the Church Fathers. The apostles died and there were the Church Fathers, and I see that the gospel had already begun to become distorted in the era of the Church Fathers. Rather than giving thanks that they had received life from God, they merely organized it into doctrine, and came to replace faith with reciting confessions of faith. From that time

on, the many saints who learned from the Church Fathers came to know this only as doctrine.

Of course, there were also people who had true faith. But it is said that among the Roman nobles at that time there were some who took Christian sisters as their daughters-in-law. This was because they lived by faith and were ethically clean. Christians who had received life from God began to marry Gentiles. Then the fathers-in-law, too, began to go to church, and the mothers-in-law, too, began to go to church. "I, too, believe in the Jesus you believe in." "How do you believe?" "I believe this way," they said, and while reciting the Apostles' Creed, they said, "If I believe this way, that is enough, right?" Then the era of persecution also ended. The faith that gave thanks for having received life from God also came to an end in that way. In the comfort of having abundant material things and no persecution, they lived forgetting that God had given them life. From that time on, faith became corrupt, and in the end it became a faith in which there was no life and only a shell remained.

Dear fellow believers, we have a clear gospel. God has given us life. God has removed all our sins. Jesus, who is God, has given His own blood to us. We believe this. But where are our hearts? Thinking about how we can live well in this world and how we can live comfortably, are our hearts not set more on living at ease in this world than on giving thanks for the love with which God has given us life? That is exactly the corruption of faith. If we live in that way, we sell off entirely the fact that God has given us life, and in the end nothing remains.

Dear fellow believers, do you know why many churches today have come to be the way they are? Those people, too, spoke of these things at first. They knew this. Yet why did their faith become a formality, and why did they come to not know how to give thanks or how to preach the gospel? Where will the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

end of such a faith be? If anyone ignores it even though God has given His own life, he deserves to go to hell. If anyone ignores that He became the sacrificial offering of atonement and gave His blood in order to give us life, that person will go to hell.

Keep the life that God has given and spread it

We must not forget that God has given us life. Jesus Christ's shedding His blood on the Cross was to give us life. God had His own Son shed His blood, which is life, in order to give us life. His death was what God permitted in order to give us life. His being pierced, ignored, and despised was the punishment for the price of our sins being brought down upon Him. He received the punishment we should have received. Jesus Christ received the punishment on the Cross, and God the Father permitted that punishment.

We must not forget the love of God, that is, that God has given us life. However much the world changes, we must not forget it. Keeping the fact that God has given us life and spreading this gospel, we must enjoy the blessing of the fatness of the earth and the dew of heaven that God gives, and always live giving thanks to God and rejoicing. Do not rejoice in the things of the earth. The things of the earth are given as something extra. Dear fellow believers, to how many people do you preach the gospel in a year? If you have not preached the gospel to even one person in a year, if there is no one who has received the remission of sins through you, there is a problem. In a certain sense, you may have become, without realizing it yourself, a person who forgets, ignores, and opposes God's giving of life. You may have thrown away God's giving of His own life.

In the sin offering, God accepted only what was inside. What was that? God accepted these three things: the fat, the kidneys, and the fatty lobe of the liver. What must we believe? We must believe that God has given us true life, that He has saved us by His mercy, and that He put that blood on the horns of the altar of burnt offering and gave His own life to us. And we must go before that God. The death of Jesus Christ was His receiving the punishment for our sins. But we must not look at His death only as physical suffering; we must see that He shed His blood on the Cross and gave us life. Jesus' shedding His blood on the Cross was the true love and true mercy of God, by which He saves us. We must go before God by believing that heart with which God has given us life. Then God works through us and receives glory.

How much pain Jesus Christ must have suffered—this alone is not what is important. His pain was the true love of God. We must believe the heart of God, believe that God has given us life, and go before God. We must keep this. We must believe in our hearts and keep God's giving of life and love, God's true mercy and great love, and go before God. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Do not stop only at thinking how much pain Jesus must have suffered when He died. In the sin offering, too, God accepted only what was inside and told them to take the rest outside the camp and burn it. What did God want to give us by sending Jesus? We must believe in the true kernel. We must believe that He has given us life. What God has done for us is what God Himself has done. The fat (the oil) tells us that. God has given us life, that was the true love of God, and we have been saved by the true mercy of God. We must know that we have been saved by believing what God has given.

Dear beloved saints, we must spread this. And we must not forget this. We must not make God's giving us life into mere

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

doctrine. God has given us life. He has saved us. I hope you will always believe this fact with thanksgiving. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord raised us from death and gave us new life

< Matthew 27:45–54 >

“Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, ‘Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?’ that is, ‘My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?’ Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, ‘This Man is calling for Elijah!’ Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, ‘Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.’ And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, ‘Truly this was the Son of God!’”

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Today let us share the word about the resurrection of Jesus. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and He was hung on the Cross, was nailed, and shed His blood. The word says, *"Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" (Matthew 27:45–46)*. People also put sour wine to Jesus' mouth to make Him drink, and the word says, *"And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:50–51)*. On the Cross the Lord was in such great pain that He cried out, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46)*. It says that at that time darkness came over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour.

This means that God the Father turned His eyes away from His own Son, who was dying hung on the Cross; that is, that He judged Him. And it says that when the Lord died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This means that our Lord came to this earth, removed all the sin of this world, removed all the destruction, death, and curse that come from sin, and opened a new world for us. So it means that He has made it possible for anyone who believes to enter the kingdom of God. The word is telling of this part, and I believe that the Lord actually did so. That the veil of the temple was torn in this way when the Lord died on the Cross suggests a great many things to us.

The door of the kingdom of heaven was opened

How did such a thing happen when the Lord died on the Cross? It says that when the Lord died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn. The Most Holy Place inside that veil was the place where, once a year, the high priest went in with the blood of the sacrificial offering and burned incense, and it was originally the place where the ark of God was kept. But now, when Jesus Christ came to this earth, had sin transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and died, that door, which could be entered only once a year, was opened forever.

The Lord has saved us completely. And I believe He has told us that He has let anyone enter who believes the fact that the Lord removed all our sins by the water and the Spirit and became our Savior. It is truly good. Even before I was born again, it was good to read the word that the veil of the temple was torn in two. But a person who has sin in his heart can never enter.

In order to let us into the kingdom of heaven, our Lord came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and received the judgment for sin for us. So by the water and the blood He cleanly removed all our sins. It means that He lets those who believe enter and does not let those who do not believe enter.

That the veil of the temple was torn means that the door of the kingdom of heaven was opened. The door of the kingdom of heaven has been opened. It means that He has made it possible for anyone to have all sins washed away and enter, if only he believes the fact that Jesus Christ became our Savior, if only he believes that He removed our sins by the water and the Spirit. How thankful this is! He has shown us the fact that the opening

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

of the door of the kingdom of heaven was accomplished when Jesus Christ received baptism from John and died on the Cross.

The door of the kingdom of heaven was opened because our Lord came to this earth, bore our sins, died for us on the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore, anyone must believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is, that our Lord came to this earth and removed your sins. If only you believe, you can be saved and can go to the kingdom of heaven.

It says that when the Lord died on the Cross, the veil was torn from the top, and *"the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised" (Matthew 27:51–52)*. These things happened after the Lord died on the Cross. And it says that after Jesus rose again, they came out of the graves, went into the holy city, and appeared to many. There truly is a part here that is hard to understand with the head.

How great an uproar there must truly have been at that time! It says that when the Lord died, the graves were opened, and after He rose again, the people who had truly believed in the Lord came out of the graves and came into the city; in today's terms, it is the same as dead people walking into a town. How astonished people must have been! Some may think that if those people had risen again, they should have stayed alive, and that if they died again, it would be of no use at all. At that time, after the Lord died on the Cross and the veil of the temple was torn, He showed this beforehand as a foretaste. He showed that such a thing actually happens.

Resurrection is raising up again

What does resurrection mean? We must first know this. The word resurrection carries the meaning of being restored to life. It refers to waking a sleeping person, making someone open his eyes, raising someone up from sickness, raising someone up from death, getting up and springing out of bed, and rising again. Being born again means being born once more, but resurrection carries the meaning of making alive again, of restoring to life. It means that when we had sin and so were to receive the judgment for sin and had come to death, the Lord came, bore our sins, died for us on the Cross, rose again from death, and restores us to life again. It means that He makes us alive again. It is saying that He opened the eyes of the soul that had died because of sin, of the one who had been blind, and that He woke up again, raised up, and set on their feet those who had come to death because of sin.

That the Lord rose again means that God the Father raised the Lord up again. It means that God raised up His own Son Jesus Christ, who had come to death. This is resurrection. He raised Him up again. It is saying that He delivered Him from death, raised Him up again, and gave Him new life. Dear fellow believers, when Easter comes, people often think of this in a different sense. Just as people use the expression of being born again to mean recharging the heart and renewing it, they often speak of resurrection, too, in the sense of making all things new.

But resurrection is in fact something that takes place when we have come to death. Before the death of our flesh, our souls have already come alive. Our souls awoke and rose from the state of sleeping, and rose from where they had been lying. The Lord raised them all up. He truly raised them up and set them on their feet, and we sprang up from where we lay. The Lord raised up our souls and made them alive again. And when our flesh dies

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

and lies sleeping, at that time our Lord will raise us up again and set us on our feet. It means that He will make us spring up again from where we lie, revive us again, and restore us to life. That the Lord rose again carries the meaning that He will make us alive again, we who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, what does it tell us that the Lord rose again from death, lived again, and awoke again from sleep? God the Father raised up His own Son again, and that those who were in the graves rose again and came into the city when the Lord rose again carries the meaning that when we, who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit today, come to death, God the Father will make even this flesh alive again, raise it up, and let us live forever. This is something He showed beforehand, that He will actually do this for us.

That the Lord rose again means that He will make us alive again and raise us up again. It means that when we die and go into the grave, the Lord will gather together again everything of a person, just as the word describes that to the dry bones in the valley that Ezekiel saw, bone came together with bone, sinews were attached, flesh came upon them, and they took on the form of men and came alive again. It means that just as our Lord rose again, we, too, will rise again from death just like the Lord. It means that we will live again. It means that just like the Lord, we will obtain new life and put on bodies that will never die forever. I believe that this is a word He speaks applying it to us.

The power of God, who raises the dead

As we greet Resurrection Sunday, let us think about this resurrection, that is, our resurrection. The Lord said the word *"I*

am the way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), and He also said that He Himself is the resurrection. Truly, the Lord is the Lord of power, who gives us life, raises us up again when we were dead, and makes us alive again.

We believe that, and we feel that the Lord's power is great. The Lord's power is truly great. How can anyone make the dead live? How can anyone raise the dead up again? Dear fellow believers, leave ourselves aside and look at it objectively. It means that He will raise up again the servants of God who died before us, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and also those who were martyred and died, like the apostles of the New Testament. It means that just as Jesus Christ rose up, Jesus Christ will in the same way give them new life and raise them up. Therefore, the Lord's power is great.

When we think of this word resurrection, we come to think of the power of God, just as the Lord created the heavens and the earth and just as He saved us completely. God is so powerful that He raised the dead. The One who raised the dead is none other than God the Father and Jesus Christ, in whom we believe. Our God has such power. How great this is! Jesus rose again. The Lord will resurrect us. It means that the Lord will raise us up.

When our flesh has died, only when the Lord comes on the last day and raises us up will we live again together with the Lord. If we think of this in a fleshly way, it cannot be understood. Just as it has been said that if one thinks in the flesh about a person being born again of water and the Spirit, one cannot know it, can it be understood that the Lord died and then lived again? If we think with reason, it is something that cannot be understood at all. The God of power, on a different level, removed our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. On that level, it is possible for the God of power to raise us up

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

from death. It is not because I lack faith that I say these words to you. I truly believe with my heart. In the old days I could not believe. Before I was born again, before I received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it was out of the question.

Dear fellow believers, if you think about it with your head, the idea that you die and then rise again cannot be understood at all. Not only can it not be understood, but it is something that can never be understood. Why is that? It is because, apart from faith that believes God's word of truth, the idea that the dead rise does not fit any formula. Dear fellow believers, a theory, too, must fit a formula and must fit some framework. Something is believed only when it is calculated with human intelligence and understood, but when we think with human intelligence, how could it be possible for a dead person to rise? It is not possible. It happened because He is Jesus, because God the Father raised up His own Son Jesus Christ, because He has power, because He created the universe and all things. He did such a thing because He has power; otherwise, how could it be possible? It is something only God can do, and something only the God of power has made possible.

Yet we come to believe it in our hearts. It is because God actually removed the sins of our hearts. It is also because Jesus Christ was in the tomb and then lived again in three days, and because when He died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was actually torn right through into two. It means that all these things were the power of God. It means that because the works by which God removed our sins are things God actually did, we also believe this resurrection.

The apostles preached the doctrine of the resurrection

In the early church, what did the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ preach? They preached this resurrection. Let us first look at the word of Acts. *"Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:1–4).* What did the apostles preach? It says that they preached the doctrine of the resurrection. Why did the religious people of that time hate the disciples of Jesus, that is, the apostles? It says that they hated them because they disliked their preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection. The disciples of Jesus, that is, the apostles, preached the doctrine of the resurrection. "Jesus rose again from death. He lived again. And He ascended to the kingdom of heaven and will come again. If you believe in that Jesus, you will live again from death, have all your sins remitted, and live forever with God." It means that they preached this. When we look at how this gospel was preached in the age of the apostles, they, too, preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit as we do, but what stood out more in the hearts of the apostles was the resurrection. That Jesus rose from death—they saw this with their eyes.

Therefore, it means that if we, too, believe in the Lord, who said that He is the resurrection, then not only has that Lord removed all our sins, but even if we should die once on this earth, we will live again. The twelve disciples of Jesus believed that. They believed that just as the Lord lives forever, they themselves

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

would also live again and live forever. The apostles preached this. “Jesus rose again. He lived again. And He went up and will come again. Whoever believes in that Jesus, whoever believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins, will rise again from death. And so he will live together with the Lord forever.” It means that they preached this. However, on the point of whether one saw the resurrection of Jesus with one’s eyes, there is a great difference between the disciples of Jesus and us.

Strictly speaking, that is so, but we, too, can have the same faith and the same hope by the Spirit, by the faith of the heart. It is only that the disciples of Jesus saw with their eyes, and we did not see with our eyes. Dear fellow believers, think about it for a moment. A truly amazing thing happened. When Jesus died on the Cross, saying that it was finished, the veil of the temple was torn right through.

This veil was a cloth woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread and fine woven linen. In the old days it was all woven by hand, and it has been handed down that it was thicker than today’s carpets and so strong that it would not tear even if horses were tied on both sides and pulled. It also means that darkness came over all the land for three hours, and that when Jesus died on the Cross, the earth shook, the rocks were split, and the graves were opened. And it means that people came out of them. Dear fellow believers, if we had been at that scene, we would have received a tremendous shock.

So the centurion who was in charge of the execution said with his own mouth, *“Truly this was the Son of God!” (Matthew 27:54)*. He did not believe in Jesus as the Savior, but the centurion of the Roman soldiers said that this Man was truly not an ordinary person, not just a created being, truly a great One, the Son of God. It means that he received that great a shock.

The disciples who saw the risen Lord with their eyes

Dear fellow believers, when the Lord was hung on the Cross, the whole world became dark, and when He died, saying that it was finished, an earthquake took place, and people came out of the graves. The disciples of Jesus fled in fear, but when they went to the tomb on the third day, the stone that had blocked the door of the tomb had been rolled aside. And the body of Jesus was not there; only the linen cloths were lying there, and the handkerchief that had been around His head was lying in another place, still wrapped as it had been. Also, the soldiers who had been guarding the tomb of Jesus were scared out of their wits and had all disappeared. Originally, at that place where the body of Jesus had been, soldiers had been standing sentry and keeping guard.

But when the earthquake took place, they all ran away. When an angel came down from heaven, they all fled. Mary Magdalene and the other women went to the tomb first, and did not Peter and John also run to the tomb and see? The disciples saw it with their eyes. And Jesus appeared to the disciples many times. He appeared when the disciples were inside a house, He appeared at the tomb, and He appeared when they were in other places.

When Peter was discouraged and had gone fishing, the Lord came to the seashore and said, *"Cast the net on the right side of the boat" (John 21:6)*. When they cast the net, they caught many fish, and the disciples said that it was the Lord and came out onto the land. It was daybreak, and the Lord had grilled fish on a fire of coals for the disciples to eat and was waiting for them. When the disciples came out, He told them to eat and asked, *"Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" (John 21:15)*. Peter answered, *"Yes, Lord; You know that I love You."* The

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Lord asked three times in a row, gave them something to eat, and also spoke with them person to person. It was not one or two people who saw Him; He appeared when many were together.

Also, when the disciples were trembling inside a house, He appeared and said, *"Peace to you!" (John 20:21)*, and then He said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:22–23)*. After that, He said to Thomas, who did not believe, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side" (John 20:27)*, and He said, *"Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed" (John 20:29)*. The Lord actually lived again in that very form, just as He was.

So He appeared and told him to put his hand into the nail marks, and to put his hand into this side that bore the spear mark. Among the disciples of Jesus, would only Thomas have been like that? Even though they did not actually do so, how wide the eyes of Peter, John, and James, too, must have grown! Dear fellow believers, if someone died, lived again, and appeared before us, we would be scared out of our wits, and the people who heard that story would not be able to believe it. How great the shock we would receive would be!

So the disciples of Jesus preached that the Lord had risen again, had risen up again, and had lived again. For forty days the Lord testified, showed, and proved it. He also showed them His ascension into heaven before the eyes of the disciples, and He said that He would come again. When He lived again, the nail marks were still there as they had been, and it means that it was all fact. So, although they also preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit as we do, they preached the doctrine of the resurrection, that the Lord had lived again. They preached that if

one believes in Jesus, he will live again in a good resurrection, and that, having died, he will rise again and live happily forever.

How amazing this is! It means that the disciples of Jesus preached the doctrine of the resurrection. It means that they preached the doctrine of eternal life: that if one believes in the Lord, he obtains salvation, receives the remission of sins, and lives again, and that the flesh, too, lives again and lives forever. Dear fellow believers, is this my word, or is it the word of God? Frankly speaking, a person who does not believe with his heart cannot even preach a sermon like this. One can preach only if one understands it; if one cannot understand it at all, one cannot preach it.

"I am the resurrection and the life"

When we look at the word of Acts, the disciples testify of the resurrection of Jesus. They testify because they saw it with their eyes. They both saw with their physical eyes and believed with their hearts. Let us read the word. *"But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:14–15)*. It says, *"Whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:15)*. It means that God the Father raised up His own Son from death.

Jesus said that He is the resurrection and the life. It means that even when our flesh dies, the Lord will raise us up again. The disciples of Jesus testified because they saw this with their eyes. That Jesus died on the Cross, went into the tomb, and lived again in three days is saying that whether we die in the future from growing old, or die from becoming sick, or the Lord comes and takes us, it does not end with the death of this flesh, but this

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

flesh that has died, too, will rise again and live again. The Lord spoke of this, saying that they will *"come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29)*. It means that they will live again and be raised up again. So the person who has received the remission of sins, the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, will be raised up again from among death to the resurrection of life, and rather than coming to an end, he will live very well with God, will never die again or suffer, and will live happily forever. But it says that the wicked will be raised up again to the resurrection of condemnation. It means that He will make that wicked person alive again, raise him up, and make him suffer. It says that this is eternal punishment, that is, punishment that lasts forever. Dear fellow believers, you must know that there is such a resurrection.

I believe that there is a resurrection. Do you also believe it? Resurrection means that our Lord will raise us up again and make us alive again.

Death is not the end

Dear fellow believers, it is not the end when we die. The word says, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*. Dear fellow believers, if it ended with being born once and dying once, what need would there be to live this paltry life like this? Even if it were to end with dying after being born once, we could never live without meaning.

If everything ended with being born once and dying once, people might live just letting things go however they may. Dear fellow believers, man is the lord of all creation. Even people who do not believe in God say that man is the foremost among all

created beings. Man is the highest created being. It is because, among created beings, he resembles the image of God. God made us with this purpose, because He wanted to cause us to be born again as children of God, make us alive again, and let us live forever with Him. That is why man is called the lord of all creation. Therefore, resurrection is a tremendous blessing to us. We will rise again. It means that when we come to death and fall asleep, whether we are in the water or have been cremated, the Lord will gather together again everything of a person and make him alive again.

The Lord told the prophet Ezekiel to prophesy to the dry bones in the valley. When Ezekiel preached the word of God in His place, bone joined to bone, sinews formed, everything fit together perfectly, and they became men and became a great army. On the day this earth ends, on the day our Lord comes to this earth again, God will, before the Millennial Kingdom, raise up us righteous people again and let us enjoy the Millennial Kingdom. And I believe that after the Millennial Kingdom has passed, He will make all people alive again, raise them up, and judge them, and He will let some people enter the fire that is never quenched and some people enter eternal life. It means that God does that work. He does that work for us. Truly, God is the God of power.

Just as the Lord said that He Himself is the resurrection, He truly is the resurrection. The Lord says as follows: *"Jesus said to her, 'I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?'" (John 11:25–26).* The Lord said that He is the resurrection and the life, and that he who believes in Him, though he may die, shall live and shall never die. It means that the Lord is the resurrection and is the One who has such power. It says that the Lord is the One

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

who gave us life and the One who has the power to raise us up from death when we have come to death. That is truly so. Dear fellow believers, apart from this word, too, if we were to talk about the resurrection, there would be endlessly much to say. There is endlessly much, but what I want to share with you and with the saints of the whole world is that the Lord will raise up all people. So there is a resurrection, and people do not come to an end by dying, but will live again. It means that among them, there are those who obtain the resurrection of eternal life, and there are also those who do not.

What is certain is that God will raise up all people again. We must keep that in mind. It is not the end when we die. There are things in which the spirits of people who died on this earth are said to come back and speak, but those are all the work of evil spirits. The Lord will make us alive again on the last day. A person who has once departed is sleeping, not now alive and wandering about. People say that the spirits of the dead wander about, but that is not so. The stories that the souls of the dead wander this earth harboring grudges are the work of the evil Satan the devil, who makes his minions use the names of the dead, pretend to be those people, and deceive people. It is not so; rather, on the last day our Lord will make us alive again. Whoever lives and believes will never die. We will never die. It means that when our flesh dies, our Lord will raise it up again. This is what this word is.

I believe this word, and I believe that you also believe it. This resurrection is something very hard to understand, but if one believes, it is possible. Resurrection is raising up, waking one who is sleeping, setting up on one's feet, and truly restoring to life. The Lord will raise us up again and let us live with Him forever. Let us think about this. I hope that you will live knowing the fact that even if we fall asleep in the future, we will rise again,

and the fact that we will not sleep forever, and holding the hope of the resurrection that we will rise again and live forever with the Lord. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

With what you have, serve Jesus with honor

< Matthew 27:57–61 >

"Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb."

A heart that believes in Jesus leads to service

When evening had come on the day Jesus died on the Cross, Joseph, a rich man from Arimathea, came. In introducing him, Matthew makes known that he was one *"who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus"*; rather than explaining his action by his wealth, Matthew first makes known his relationship with Jesus. Even after Jesus had died, the disciple's service toward Him continued.

Let us read verses 57 and 58. *"Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to*

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him" (Matthew 27:57–58). Joseph went directly to that very governor who had handed Jesus over to be executed and asked for the body of Jesus, and so he carried out a concrete service that he was able to do. When Pilate commanded it to be given, Joseph took the body, and the text shows in order that request, the permission, and the work of laying the body to rest.

The statement that Joseph was a disciple of Jesus is revealed together with his actions. Because he believed in Jesus as the Christ, he asked for His body to be given to him and laid it in his own tomb, and his heart of following Jesus was manifested that evening in the work of taking His body and burying it. The faith of the heart leads to actions that hold Him in honor, so rather than first weighing who will recognize it, let us see what the service given before us is.

Joseph gave up his own new tomb

Let us read verses 59 and 60. *"When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed" (Matthew 27:59–60)*. Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock. The words *"his new tomb"* make known that he gave up what belonged to him, so the new tomb he had hewn in the rock for himself was used for Jesus' burial.

This scene does not say that only rich people can serve Jesus. Joseph simply actually used what he had, so the same heart is needed when we, too, use our time, our strength, and what we

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

possess according to the grace we have received. Do not put off serving until you come to have more, but do what you can do now.

Concerning His being buried in Joseph's new tomb, we come to recall the word of Isaiah 53:9. *"And they made His grave with the wicked—But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was any deceit in His mouth" (Isaiah 53:9)*. Jesus' death was a death in which the sinless One took the place of sinners. People executed Him between robbers, but it was not because there was violence and deceit in Him that this happened to Him, so people's evil judgment could not become the final truth about Jesus.

Jesus, who was buried, is the Savior who rose again

What Joseph laid in the tomb was the actual body of Jesus. Jesus actually died and was buried in a tomb, so the salvation we believe in does not skip over this death and speak vaguely of only a living Jesus. We must clearly know why Jesus died and what relationship that death has with our sins.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and because He died on the Cross with those sins passed on to Him, He entered the tomb. As the price of those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, so the One whom Joseph laid in the tomb is the Savior who gave His own life for our sins, and the burial shows that His death was real. But Jesus' life did not end in that tomb; Jesus rose again from death and became the eternal Savior.

We receive the remission of all sins by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus actually died and rose again, the hope of us who believe in Him does not end as a vague wish either, for Jesus is the Christ, who delivers us from sin and gives us eternal life.

Therefore, let us not regard Joseph's service as a price paid to obtain salvation. It is not the merit of giving up the tomb that removes our sins; the One who washed away sins is Jesus, so we serve as people who have believed and received that grace. Disciples of Jesus, rather than boasting of what they have offered, hold precious Jesus, who gave His life for them.

Let us offer both our hearts and our hands to the service given to us

Joseph rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb and departed, but two women remained there. Let us read verse 61. *"And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb" (Matthew 27:61)*. They were sitting facing the tomb in which Jesus had been buried. Earlier they had looked on at the Cross from afar, and now they were in front of the tomb where Jesus had been laid, so there were people who knew where Jesus had been buried. The record from the Cross to the tomb is not broken, and later the news of the empty tomb also comes to follow upon this actual death and burial.

As we see Joseph's service and the women's staying, we learn the faith that holds Jesus precious even after people's mockery has ended. Even when there is no visible glory, who Jesus is does not change. Gratitude toward Jesus is revealed in honoring Him with what we have, so, remembering Him, who

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

has given us the remission of sins and life, let us offer both our hearts and our hands to the service given to us today. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The people who guarded the tomb in the face of the word they remembered

< Matthew 27:62–66 >

“On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, ‘Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, “After three days I will rise.” Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, “He has risen from the dead.” So the last deception will be worse than the first.’ Pilate said to them, ‘You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.’ So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard.”

Faith is truly accepting the word we remember

On the day after Jesus’ body was laid in the tomb, the chief priests and Pharisees came together to Pilate. They remembered the word Jesus had spoken while He was alive, that He would rise again after three days, and so their concern did not end with Jesus’ death; they sought to guard even the tomb of Jesus, who had died.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Let us read verses 62 and 63. *"On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, "After three days I will rise."'" (Matthew 27:62–63)*. Jesus' foretelling of His resurrection came out of their mouths again, but remembering the word and believing that word were not the same. They called Jesus *"that deceiver,"* and although they knew the words He had spoken, they judged Him to be a false person. So instead of laying down their own judgment before that word, they looked for a way to stop what would happen according to that word.

We, too, cannot regard our faith as complete merely because we remember much of the content of the Bible. Knowing the word is precious, but what matters is what we do when the word we remember collides with our own thoughts. We cannot believe in Jesus' resurrection by reasoning it out in our heads, but we come to believe when we hold on to the written word; so believing in Jesus is truly accepting His word.

Unbelief in the heart leads to action

Let us read verse 64. *"Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first" (Matthew 27:64)*. They worried that the disciples would come, steal the body, and say that He had risen. The text does not record that the disciples made such a plan, so this is a claim that the chief priests and Pharisees put forward before Pilate. They branded in advance the spreading of the news of the resurrection as *"the last deception"* and asked that the tomb be made secure.

In their words about something that had not yet happened, we can see how hardened their judgment toward Jesus was. Rather than believing the word that Jesus could rise again, they assumed that the disciples would lie, and following that judgment, they sought the governor's authority; so the unbelief in their hearts led to actual action. If we settle on our conclusion before we hear the word God has spoken, then even when we hear the word, we cannot receive its meaning.

Let us not judge the Lord's word by the situation before our eyes

Pilate told them that they had a guard, so they should go and make it as secure as they could, and they went, sealed the stone, and made the tomb secure. Let us read verses 65 and 66. *"Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard" (Matthew 27:65–66)*. The large stone placed at the door of the tomb was now sealed, and even a guard stood there with it, so every measure people could take had been added to the tomb where Jesus' body lay. Matthew chapter 27 ends with this picture of the tomb guarded so securely. But although they guarded the tomb securely, Jesus rose again from that tomb on the third day, just as He had said.

Jesus spoke beforehand of His own death and resurrection. The fact that His enemies remembered that word and guarded the tomb did not mean that they had even gained the authority to decide whether the word would be fulfilled or not. The stone, the seal, and the guard were what people had done to the tomb, but the resurrection was the work of God raising His Son from the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

dead, and the One who rose again in this way is the very Lord who has saved us.

Therefore, let us not judge the Lord's word only by the situation before our eyes. Seeing the tightly closed tomb did not mean that Jesus' promise had also been closed, and even in that place where people thought they had blocked every way by human strength, the Lord's word did not change. Faith is not a conviction that arises after we have confirmed everything with our own eyes, but knowing who Jesus, who has spoken, is and relying on Him.

The One who was in the tomb is our Savior

Jesus, who was buried in this tomb, is not One who died with no connection to our sins. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him, and among them were also the sins we have committed since we were born. Because He, who is without sin, took our sins upon Himself, He shed His blood on the Cross as the price of those sins, received the judgment in our place, and died. And from that very tomb which they had made to be guarded securely until the third day, Jesus rose again from death on the third day after He was buried.

People guarded the tomb firmly, but our Savior did not remain in death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is what conveys this fact of salvation, that Jesus received our sins through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment in our place through the blood of the Cross, and rose again; and we receive the remission of sins by believing this gospel. The certainty of salvation does not lie in how strong a

resolve we make in the face of the tomb, but in what Jesus has accomplished for us.

Not all the people who remembered the word went the same way. They guarded the tomb because of the word they remembered, but we believe in Jesus, who spoke that word, and live within the salvation we have received from Him. Do not diminish what the Lord has accomplished by your own judgment, but entrust your heart to His word. Jesus, who causes us not to regard the sealed tomb as the end, is our eternal hope. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

CHAPTER

28

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

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus rose again just as He had said

< Matthew 28:1–10 >

“Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.’ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘Rejoice!’ So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.’”

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

The resurrection reveals that Jesus' promise was true

As the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. To them, who had come looking for the place where Jesus' body had been laid, the news is now conveyed that Jesus is no longer in the tomb, and the one who made known the meaning of that news was an angel of the Lord.

There was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow, so the guards shook for fear and became like dead men. But the angel told the women not to be afraid, and, saying that he knew they were seeking Jesus, who was crucified, he conveyed the news of the resurrection.

Let us read verses 5 and 6. *"But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay'" (Matthew 28:5–6).* The angel conveyed that Jesus had risen just as He had said, and so the fact that the tomb was empty and the words that Jesus had spoken are given together. It is not a story that the body disappeared and no one knows what became of it, but that the very Jesus who was crucified on the Cross has risen. Jesus had told His disciples beforehand many times that He would be killed and would rise again on the third day, and on this morning those words were fulfilled exactly as He had said.

So here we obtain a clear basis for believing Jesus' promise. Jesus was not One who could not fulfill the words He had spoken just because He had suffered death; Jesus' death could not

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

overturn the promise, and the resurrection revealed that the promise was true.

The risen Jesus gives us the hope of life

The news of the resurrection is not separate from the death on the Cross. The angel refers to the One whom the women were seeking as Jesus who was crucified, and so the One who suffered for us and the One who rose again are the same Jesus. Therefore, if we are to rejoice in the resurrection, we must also know why He died on the Cross.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and among them are also the sins we have committed. And as the price of those sins that had been passed on to Him, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for sin in our place, so the *"Jesus who was crucified"* whom the women were seeking is the Savior who paid the price of our sins in our place. That Jesus rose again from death in three days. The baptism Jesus received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection are all events connected with us, and so His resurrection becomes our hope that we, too, will live again.

Because the One who died in our place has risen again, we are not people who live only remembering the will of One who has died; rather, we believe in the Savior, who is living even now, and live within the life He has given. That which conveys this salvation, which Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and by believing this gospel we receive the remission of all sins.

Death is something we cannot overcome by ourselves, but our Savior rose again from death. So our hope, as those who have received the remission of sins, does not end with the time we live on this earth either; Jesus is the One who causes us who believe to live forever. His resurrection goes beyond the admiration of having heard about something amazing that happened to someone else, and gives us the hope and joy of life.

The news we are to preach is the salvation that Jesus actually accomplished

After telling them to see the place where Jesus had lain, the angel told them to go and make it known to the disciples. Let us read verse 7. *"And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you" (Matthew 28:7)*. In the news that the women heard, what they were to convey and the place they were to go to were clear. It was that Jesus had risen from the dead and was going before the disciples into Galilee, and that they would see Him there; so it was not a word given to tell them to keep remaining in front of the tomb.

Verse 8 records that they left the tomb quickly with fear and great joy. It was not that they moved only after not a single bit of fear remained; rather, even in the midst of fear, they ran, holding in their hearts the great joy that Jesus had risen. Death is a sorrowful thing, but living again is joy, and so the news of the resurrection turned their steps from the tomb toward the place where the disciples were.

It is not that we, too, can follow the word only after our hearts have been completely put in order. Even after we have heard and

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

believed the word, there may still be a trembling heart; at such times, rather than examining only how bold you are, remember what the Lord has made known to you. The gospel we are to preach is not news made according to our feelings but the salvation that Jesus actually accomplished, and so even we who are lacking can rely on that fact and preach it.

Let us come to the risen Jesus and worship Him

Jesus came to meet the women who were running to make it known to the disciples. Let us read verses 9 and 10. *"And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me'" (Matthew 28:9–10)*. After hearing the angel's testimony, the women met the risen Jesus directly, held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him. They did not stop at hearing the news that He was not in the tomb, but came to Him, who is alive, and worshiped Him; the One they worshiped was not a memory or a wish in their hearts, but their Savior and God, who had risen from death.

Jesus, too, told them not to be afraid, and, calling the disciples His brothers, He had the women convey the news that they were to go to Galilee. He made known the place where they would meet again to the disciples, who had forsaken Jesus and scattered; the risen Jesus did not end His relationship with the disciples, but called them again and said that He would have them see Him.

Because we believe in the risen Jesus, we come to Him and worship Him. Do not look only at your own weakness and search for reasons to draw away from the Lord, but believe the word of

the Savior, who has washed away sins and given life. The One who died in our place and rose again just as He had said is our Savior, who is living even today; so, like those women, let us come to Him with great joy even in the midst of fear and worship Him. ✉

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Even money cannot change the resurrection

< Matthew 28:11–15 >

“Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day.”

Do not push away the truth you have heard

While the women were going to the disciples, some of the guards who had been watching the tomb went into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. So on the same morning news went out to two places: the women went to convey what the risen Jesus had commanded, and the guards reported what they themselves had seen.

Let us read verse 11. *“Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened” (Matthew 28:11)*. That report was what the people who had been guarding the tomb had

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

seen with their own eyes, so it was a very powerful testimony making the resurrection known. But the chief priests, who heard this report, assembled with the elders and consulted together, and then they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers and taught them what to say. It was not a consultation to make known what they had heard just as it was, but a meeting to decide on a different story to put out to people.

Hearing a fact and accepting that fact can be different things. Even after hearing the report, the chief priests did not change their own attitude, but instead tried to change the words that would come out of the soldiers' mouths. So let us also examine whether, when we hear the word, we push away the truth we have heard in order to protect our familiar thoughts or our own situation. Faith is not keeping only the content we want to hear.

We preach the salvation He has accomplished just as it is

Let us read verses 12–13. *"When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, "His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept."'" (Matthew 28:12–13)*. What the chief priests taught them to say was that they should say the disciples came at night and stole Jesus away while the soldiers were asleep. The Bible records these words as a lie that the chief priests ordered by giving money, so the question of who instructed them to say what reveals the nature of those words.

Money could be given to the soldiers, but it could not change what had already happened. Even at the time when those words were spreading, the Lord was actually alive. A lie can deny a

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

true event, but it cannot make that event something that never happened. However plausible people's words may be, our faith stands on the fact of what Jesus has accomplished.

We, too, have the temptation to alter our words for the sake of profit. When it seems that speaking according to the facts will make things uncomfortable and speaking as people want will make things comfortable, look first at what is true rather than at what profit you will receive. In particular, those who preach the gospel must not, while choosing only the words their listeners like, leave out or change what Jesus did. What has been entrusted to us is not the work of making up a new salvation, but the work of preaching the salvation Jesus has accomplished just as it is.

True peace comes from knowing that sin has been washed away

Let us read verses 14–15. *"And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure. So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:14–15).* The chief priests said that even if those words came to the governor's ears, they would persuade him and keep the soldiers from being troubled. So along with the money, even a promise to shield them from any trouble afterward was attached. The soldiers took the money and did as they were taught, and Matthew records that those words have spread widely among the Jews to this day.

Being spread widely does not make a saying true. The text shows from what consultation and what deal a widely known rumor came, so all the more when it is a saying about Jesus, we must discern it according to what He did and the testimony of

the Bible. What we must examine before this word is our own heart, which tries to choose profit and safety over the truth.

The chief priests' promise was that they would keep the soldiers from being troubled for the moment, but such a promise could not give true peace before God. Words promising to cover up a person's responsibility and the Lord's work of actually saving sinners are different. The peace we need does not come from a favorable explanation that would cover up our wrongs, but from knowing how our sins have been washed away.

Preach the news of the risen Savior without changing it

Jesus is not One who merely said in words that our sins are gone. Unlike the words people made up, this is a reality without the slightest falsehood: through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body. And as the price of the sins that had been passed on to Him, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for sin in our place, and after actually paying the price of sin that we had to pay before God, He rose again from death.

Therefore, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach, Jesus' taking our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, the judgment of the Cross that He received in our place, and the Savior who overcame death and rose again are all testified together. We receive the remission of all sins by believing this gospel, and this is the peace of salvation obtained before God, which is different from feeling relieved for a while because someone has hidden a wrong for us.

We who have received this grace have no reason to dress ourselves up as perfect people in order to keep the truth, so rather

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

than looking for words to hide our weaknesses, let us rely on the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Even when we preach the gospel against lies, words that clearly make known what Jesus did are needed more than words that attack other people.

The soldiers who received the money said what they were taught, but their words could not shut the risen Jesus up in the tomb again. Believe in the Jesus to whom the Bible testifies rather than in what people widely say, turn away from a life of changing your words according to the profit you receive, and preach the true news of the Savior who has given us life just as it is, without changing it in the slightest. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Those who live carrying out the Lord's will

< Matthew 28:1–20 >

"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.' So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.' Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, "His disciples

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

came at night and stole Him away while we slept." And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.' So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

Make disciples

Our Lord said, *"Make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)*. When our Lord gives us salvation and we believe in the Lord, that faith is shown through baptism.

Our Lord said to the disciples, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)*. To make disciples of all the nations was our Lord's last request.

Upholding the Lord's command to make disciples of all the nations, we must baptize people of any country in the name of Jesus Christ and make them disciples. And we must raise them up as workers and teach them, nurture them, pray for them, and guide them so that they follow the Lord.

Also, near us as well, we must do the work of preaching the gospel to those who do not yet know the Lord's love and have not received salvation, and of having them, who have received the remission of sins, become disciples of Jesus Christ.

Whether at home or abroad, anywhere in the world, we must establish churches and make disciples of Jesus Christ. Overseas mission and domestic mission are both work that carries out our Lord's command.

Our Lord came to this earth, had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead on the third day. And after testifying for forty days, before He ascended to heaven, He called His disciples together and gave them His last will as follows.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20). This is what He promised. Therefore, the work of going to all the nations, making disciples, nurturing them, and raising up workers is extremely biblical and is the work of upholding the Lord's will. That is, preaching the gospel to many people is precious, but the work of making disciples is also precious.

It was our Lord's will to make a person of that country a disciple and, through that person, to have the gospel preached to the people of his own country.

Our Lord wanted the gospel to be spread to any country through the disciples from Israel, and He wanted the gospel to be preached to all peoples so that it would be spread far and wide through the people of each country who believed first.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

We must believe that all the work done in this way is upholding the Lord's will.

The risen Jesus Christ

Our Lord died on the Cross and rose again in three days. At that time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see Jesus' tomb. Since they came in the early dawn, it was the time when the day was about to break, the blackest and darkest time. In Israel at that time there were very many people who had the name Mary.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary, thinking of Jesus, went there at dawn on the third day after He had been laid in the tomb. But as they were going toward the tomb, the ground shook and there was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone of the tomb in which Jesus had been laid, and sat on that stone; his countenance was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards saw this scene and became like dead men. They trembled with fear and turned deathly pale.

Then the angel said to the women, *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him" (Matthew 28:5–7).*

This is what happened to the two Marys who had gone to the tomb. We can take it this way only because it is the written word; if we had been in that situation, how frightened we would have been! Before He died on the Cross, Jesus said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19)*. Because

our Lord said such words many times, the chief priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees of Israel were afraid of those words.

When Jesus was on this earth, He even raised the dead, and the sick were all healed if only they met Jesus; that is why they were afraid of the words that Jesus Himself had spoken. So when Jesus died on the Cross, the chief priests petitioned Pilate as follows: "Guard the tomb of Jesus thoroughly. He said that He would come back to life in three days, and if by chance His disciples take the body out and the tomb becomes empty, a greater uproar will arise than when He was alive, and more rebels will rise up. So surround the tomb in many layers so that the disciples can never steal the body."

Because Rome wanted Israel to remain a subject state that obeyed its words well and paid its taxes well, guarding Jesus' tomb was in fact also work done for the Roman emperor. So they sealed the tomb, set guards, and guarded it firmly, and there are also people who say that they surrounded it in many layers and guarded it.

They made it so that no one could come in. It was because they were afraid of our Lord's word that He would raise it up again in three days. The religious leaders of the Jewish people did so because they were afraid that the word would come true.

But what happened is that while the guards were fearsomely keeping watch, holding swords and spears, an angel came down from heaven, an earthquake took place on the earth, and the angel rolled back the great stone that had blocked the entrance of Jesus' tomb and was sitting on that stone.

Dear fellow believers, in the dark night an earthquake took place, and an angel wearing clothing as white as snow appeared. A scene that would appear only in a frightening old tale took place. So the guards became like dead men. But that angel showed favor to the two Marys.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

"Do not be afraid. Have you come to look for Jesus? Jesus is not here. He has come back to life and is going before you to Galilee. Go quickly and let the disciples know." So as the two Marys were running breathlessly, they met Jesus on the road.

"Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me'" (Matthew 28:9–10).

The lie of the guards

As the women were going, some of the guards reported to the chief priests what they had seen with their eyes. "We saw it with our eyes. An angel actually came and rolled back the stone of the tomb, and the tomb is empty. Something serious has happened." This is how they reported the news.

When the chief priests heard that news, they gave the guards a large sum of money and bribed them, saying, *"Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept'" (Matthew 28:13)*. And they said that even if this saying reached the governor, they would make sure that the guards would not be troubled. The soldiers took the money and did as the chief priests had instructed. The Bible records, *"This saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:15)*.

Jesus rose again. That is, He came back to life. Having come back to life, He went to Galilee and came to the mountain He had appointed. Among the disciples there were those who saw Jesus on that mountain and worshiped Him, and there were also those who doubted.

The point is that we must know the fact that Jesus came back to life and must have faith that believes it. Some of the guards took money and said that Jesus' disciples had stolen the body while they were sleeping.

But, dear fellow believers, that is nonsense. If a report went in that Jesus' disciples had stolen the body while they were sleeping, the Roman soldiers could receive severe punishment and even be put to death.

Dear fellow believers, could they so easily say something for which they themselves would die? But the chief priests had a relationship with the governor so close that they could make sure that the soldiers would never suffer harm because of that saying. Politicians and religious leaders, too, had a very close relationship. So they could lie perfectly, they could keep spreading that lie, and many people heard that story and believed it.

The Ruler of heaven and earth

Dear fellow believers, the truth is that Jesus rose again and appeared in Galilee. He came to His disciples and met them all, gathered them in one place, and spoke to them. *"Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (Matthew 28:18)*. It means that the Father has given Him everything. It means that Jesus has now become the Judge. All authority has come back to our Lord.

Our Lord came to this earth, had all the sins of this earth transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and received in full the judgment for those sins. Because Jesus received the judgment, Satan the devil can no longer rule over all the souls of this world, that is, over people.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Now who rules over them? Jesus rules over people. It is because Jesus Himself bore the death spoken of in the word *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)* and paid its price. Because He paid His own life as the price and bought all of us, that is, the souls of people, and because He saved us, Satan the devil can no longer rule over people. Rather, our Lord rules over people.

So the Lord said to His disciples, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18–20)*. Our Lord has all authority in heaven and on earth. And He said, "Make disciples of all the nations, and teach them to observe all the things that I taught you to observe when I was on this earth."

Dear fellow believers, overseas mission, domestic mission, and all the work of planting churches are the Great Commission that our Lord last gave on this earth and are our Lord's last will. Knowing that it is our Lord's last will, we must uphold this command well.

Our Lord will come to this world in the future as the Judge. He will come to this earth as the Judge and judge people. All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to Jesus. Therefore, in the name of Jesus there is the authority to drive away Satan the devil.

We must live a life of faith believing the fact that our Lord rose again and is now alive and seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father.

Our Lord is not One whose work ended with coming to this earth, bearing our sins, and dying for us. Not only did He remove all our sins, but He also rose again from the dead. What our Lord did is something that actually took place in history and was

proven to many people. Our Lord rose again. He came back to life. And He is still alive even now and rules over all authority in heaven and on earth.

I am with you always

"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20). We must believe that our Lord, who said these words, is God who is still alive even now, walks with God's servants and saints, protects them, and works in them. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this word, that our Lord is with us to the end of the age?

God keeps His word, and when we carry out God's commands, He accomplishes the Lord's will, has us make disciples of all the nations so that we preach the gospel, and has us accomplish His own will. We believe in that Lord.

Therefore, you must know that overseas mission and domestic mission are not work that expands the strength of our church. It is not increasing the strength of our denomination but upholding our Lord's will. We must know that the work of making disciples of all the nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe all things, which is our Lord's Great Commission—that is, the work of preaching all of God's commands to them and having them keep God's commands—is doing the work of God.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe that our Lord rose again? Do you believe that the Lord is alive? And do you believe that our Lord is with us to the end of the age and protects us? Our Lord is the Lord who hears our prayers. He is the living Lord. Our Lord is always with us, helps us, bestows grace on us, and holds us up. He is the living God who, through us, accomplishes

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

God's will, accomplishes God's salvation, and accomplishes the work of making disciples.

We must believe in the Lord and do the work of preaching the gospel overseas by faith. We must raise up people of each country as disciples so that, through them, the gospel is preached to the people of their countries.

I hope that all of you will become saints who, knowing that the gospel being preached everywhere is the work of saving the souls of our families, pray by faith, serve the Lord by faith, join in that work with all your hearts, and carry out our Lord's command.

And churches must also be established in many places overseas. There, too, there are very many souls to whom the gospel must be preached. There are countless countries to which the gospel must be preached. In fact, they are waiting for the gospel of the water and the blood that we preach.

What the work of God is

We must make disciples of all the nations. Of all the nations, I mean. We must clearly engrave this word on our hearts, know the fact that this is not our work but God's work, truly take up such work as a challenge by faith, pray, and serve in God's work. Knowing this, I hope you will do everything by faith, whatever you do. Do not do it vainly, but truly do it by faith. I hope you will keep in mind the fact that, even if you offer one small material thing, you offer it for God, and even if you do one small task, you are working for the gospel and for the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, working in the church is in fact not working for some person. As you also know well, all the work the church does is work done for God. Just as it is said, *"Whether*

you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31), for whom is all our work—preaching the gospel, establishing the church, caring for brothers and sisters and praying for them, and preaching the gospel to souls and overseas? It is for our Lord.

Our Lord said, "*Whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward" (Matthew 10:42)*. Likewise, although it seems that we are doing it for our brothers and sisters and for souls, we must know that, in fact, what we do for them is what we do for our Lord. And we must believe so. I, too, in doing my work, am doing it for the Lord, not for you.

You, too, in doing your work, are not doing it for me. You are doing it for the Lord. All of us are for the Lord. The body, too, is for the Lord. Knowing this, I hope you will live truly powerfully by faith.

I hope that you will unite your hearts in the work of preaching the gospel and pray. Do not act on your own, but pray together, and you must actually offer your hearts, your thoughts, and your time. It should not be in words only. You must not try to do something only after finishing all your own work.

I hope you will not do it only for our church. While you do it for our church as well, I hope you will do everything for the spread of the gospel. I hope you will do all things for the work of preaching the gospel to souls.

With the thought of doing mission with what is left over after doing everything to adorn our church, we can never carry out the Lord's command. Our not upholding the Lord's command is leaving people to die.

Dear fellow believers, if we do not preach the gospel, people are put to death. They go to hell. That is a tremendous evil and a tremendously wrong thing.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Dear fellow believers, I hope you will not pour your hearts and strength only into adorning yourselves. Dear fellow believers, you must preach the gospel. Only then will your families, relatives, friends, and all the other souls receive the remission of sins. If instead you go in the direction of enlarging your own church, then, dear fellow believers, evangelism and mission are finished. Once you have satisfied all your own greed, it is over.

If we, too, do not care about the work of planting churches, we will strive only for enlarging ourselves. Dear fellow believers, we must not pour our strength into enlarging ourselves.

Right ministry

The souls overseas are also our very family. They are family.

Dear fellow believers, we must do our utmost in overseas mission. We must preach the gospel at home, and we must also preach the gospel overseas. We must make disciples of all the nations of the whole world. And so we must raise them up as workers and have them preach the gospel to the people of their own countries.

If, in every country of the whole world, we make even one person of that country a sure disciple and raise him up as a worker, the gospel will be preached through him to the people of that country.

Rather than thinking of ourselves, we must focus our hearts on how we can preach the gospel and how we can preach the gospel to all the nations, look ahead to what is to come, and live our present life of faith. In fact, if we try to do everything we have to do, there is no end. Even if we try only to adorn our church, there is no end. Hearts and material things easily gather

for work that is for ourselves. It is because it is work for ourselves.

When it comes to preparing things that belong to our church, once it is begun, your hearts quickly follow along. Because it is work for ourselves, it goes very well. But, dear fellow believers, if we keep doing it that way, we use up all our material things among ourselves, and nothing is left to use for the gospel. What we use for souls must be more than what we use for ourselves. That is what is desirable, and that is right ministry.

Dear fellow believers, our Lord said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35)*. If we can, we must have something to share with souls. Whatever we give, we must have something to give. Rather than trying to receive something from them, we must have something to give. Both saints and God's servants must have the thought of trying to give something rather than receiving themselves. Only then do our hearts become broad, and our actual lives also become rich. Dear fellow believers, they become rich.

The word says, *"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24)*. There are those who, because God blesses them, are rich even after giving out much, and there are those who become poor even though they hold back excessively. That is how it turns out.

Dear fellow believers, saints and servants who truly serve for the gospel actually become rich. We must listen carefully to this command that our Lord has spoken to us. This is not a doctrine. These are the words that our Lord spoke to His disciples before He ascended from this earth to heaven.

We must become God's servants and saints who uphold the will and command by which He said to make disciples of all the nations and to baptize them. Truly holding a great purpose,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

rather than making a name for ourselves, we must think about how the gospel can be spread, how the church can benefit, and how the kingdom of God can benefit, and we must focus on that and live.

We must seek the benefit of the kingdom of God. We must seek benefit for the spread of the gospel. Dear fellow believers, we must not think only of ourselves, but must think about in what part it would be beneficial to offer ourselves to the Lord's gospel, and if it is beneficial to the gospel, boldly offer it to the Lord and carry out the Lord's command.

Dear fellow believers, never live a merely private life or a life only for yourselves. Live a life for the Lord. Only then will the Lord help you and bless you. Our church, too, must become a church for the Lord. Only then will the Lord make this church blessed and bless it. Knowing this, let us know how we must act and how we must live before God, and let us live carrying out the word. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Become a disciple of Jesus Christ

< Matthew 28:11–20 >

“Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, “His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.” And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’ So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

Today we have looked at the word of Matthew chapter 28. The content of the whole of chapter 28 is that Jesus Christ rose again on the first day of the week, that is, on the morning of the

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Lord's Day. On that morning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb of Jesus Christ. But when they came, it is written, *"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:2–4).*

And then, *"But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.' So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me'" (Matthew 28:5–10).*

Jesus Christ rose again as He had said. Dear fellow believers, that Jesus Christ rose again from death is exceedingly good news for us. Jesus Christ rose from the dead. He rose again on the third day. He rose again just as He had always told His disciples.

Satan's lie

While the women were going, some of the guards who had been guarding the tomb went into the city and reported all the things to the chief priests. *"When they had assembled with the*

elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, "His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept." And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.' So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:12–15).

Dear fellow believers, this word has a tremendously important meaning. Jesus Christ rose again. But it says that the chief priests gave money to the soldiers and made this lie spread widely among the Jews and made them believe it. Dear fellow believers, there are people who still believe this lie that was told at that time. They say that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is a lie, and that He died and His body was stolen. "Ah, I knew it." Dear fellow believers, there are people who still believe this lie. That is why they cannot believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, nor can they believe the fact that Jesus is the Son of God.

Dear fellow believers, Satan is still deceiving us even now. Just as Satan deceived the Jews by bribing the soldiers with money, even now he teaches only that Jesus Christ did not rise again but died on the Cross. He says only that He died on the Cross for you. Satan is still deceiving even now. Dear fellow believers, Jesus Christ promised that He would rise again on the third day. He said, *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19),* and that was a word He spoke concerning His own body. Satan the devil killed the body of Jesus Christ through people. But Jesus promised that He would rise again on the third day, and He did rise again. Satan the devil was utterly astonished. "Oh no, I have failed." Because Jesus Christ rose from the dead, Satan the devil has in fact failed.

The word says, *"He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15).* So Jesus crushed the power of

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Satan the devil, his head. Where did He crush it? He crushed it by rising again on the third day after He died, by coming back to life. Dear fellow believers, who was it that won in the war between Satan and Jesus Christ? It was Jesus. He won because He rose again. Dear fellow believers, because Jesus Christ rose again, we can now have faith, and because He rose again, the Holy Spirit can come upon our hearts.

The reason Jesus Christ can be our Savior is that, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had our sins transferred onto His own body, died to sin in that flesh for us, and rose again on the third day. Dear fellow believers, that is why Jesus becomes our Savior. It is because He is alive.

Dear fellow believers, Satan the devil still keeps deceiving us even now. When we look at how Satan the devil deceives us, he makes us fall into certain circumstances. He makes us fall into dark circumstances or into situations that people call fate. People call the situations that come upon them fate. Dear fellow believers, Satan the devil makes us fall into fate. It means that he makes us fall into a state in which we think we have no choice but to live this way, as though that fate were fixed and could not be changed.

Dear fellow believers, we can change ourselves. By believing in our Lord, we can bring change into our lives. Dear fellow believers, there are truly many things that we cannot do in the flesh. Even so, there are truly many things that we can rule over and resolve in the name of Jesus Christ.

Dear fellow believers, there are times when our bodies are sick, and times when we fall into certain situations. There are times when Satan the devil discourages us and makes us fall into circumstances, so that it seems as if Jesus Christ is not working. Dear fellow believers, when something we do not want happens to us, born-again people must not just stand there blankly and

simply suffer it. Dear fellow believers, Satan the devil works on us. Satan the devil can enter a person's body and put sickness into it, and he also entered a herd of swine. At such times, what must we do?

Dear fellow believers, there are times when we become extremely weak. Being a born-again person does not mean that Satan the devil cannot do such things. When God is about to work, Satan the devil blocks our way, sometimes weakens our bodies, and sometimes makes us fall into despair in our circumstances. It was also Satan the devil who deceived people right after the Lord rose again. He deceived them by saying that Jesus had died and had not risen again. But Jesus Christ met His disciples in Galilee. He met them and spoke to them.

"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth"

Let us read the word together. *"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (Matthew 28:18).*

Jesus said that the Father had given all authority in heaven and on earth to Him. What does it mean that He gave that authority to Jesus? It means that we can overcome all things in the name of Jesus Christ. Satan the devil had seized the authority of this world, but as it turns out, Jesus has now seized the authority. When Adam and Eve sinned in the Garden of Eden, who seized the authority? Satan the devil seized the authority. Then who has seized the authority now? After Jesus Christ died on the Cross and rose again, Jesus seized the authority.

Dear fellow believers, in the name of Jesus Christ we cast out demons, and in the name of Jesus Christ we also pronounce

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

blessings. Dear fellow believers, when the Apostle Paul went to a certain region to preach the gospel, a person possessed by a demon followed him and kept clamoring, *"These men are the servants of the Most High God, who proclaim to us the way of salvation" (Acts 16:17)*. The demon-possessed person clamored so much that Paul could not preach the gospel. So Paul said, *"I command you in the name of Jesus Christ to come out of her" (Acts 16:18)*, and the demon came out immediately. There is power in the name of Jesus Christ. Dear fellow believers, there is power in that name itself, so much so that demons sometimes go out even when a person who is not born again calls on the name of Jesus Christ. But that does not mean that such a person has received salvation. Dear fellow believers, we must open our spiritual eyes to this matter that Jesus Christ rose again.

Dear fellow believers, born-again people must know this. After being born again, we must not just helplessly suffer. Satan the devil surely works on born-again people. Sometimes he keeps them from living a life of faith, and sometimes he brings diseases upon their bodies. Dear fellow believers, there are times when you are sick for no reason at all, aren't there? At such times, whether there is a cause or not, you need to pray for yourself and command in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Dear fellow believers, there have been many times when Satan the devil has breathed wrong thoughts into our minds. Dear fellow believers, we must drive out such things in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Satan, be gone. You evil thought, be gone." We can drive out sickness. We can drive out Satan in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. We can drive out negative thoughts, and we can drive out, in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, every curse that Satan the devil has brought. Dear fellow believers, we must know this. Since He said that all authority in

heaven and on earth has been given to Him, we have the authority to rule.

Resist Satan

Dear fellow believers, when a born-again person resists Satan, Satan goes away. But if we do not resist him, he does not go away. Dear fellow believers, we must drive Satan out. Even after being born again, there are times when various circumstances come upon us. When you go back home and meet various situations, there will also be times when you face conditions in which you cannot follow the Lord. At such times, we must not be defeated by those situations. If it is not the will of God, we must command and drive it out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. And we must rule over that matter. Jesus Christ has the authority, and that Jesus Christ is within us. If we rule over Satan the devil working in people, that force is ruled. But if we do not rule over it, that force rushes at us to rule over us. We must surely rule over it. When resisted, Satan the devil cannot move an inch, but if we do not resist him, he will still rush at us to make us fall and to make us his servants.

Dear fellow believers, right after Satan the devil deceived people, our Lord immediately said that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him. The authority on earth and the authority in heaven—all that authority—is now with Jesus Christ. It is not with any other force, and it is not with Satan the devil. Now the authority is with Jesus Christ. Dear fellow believers, when you are in certain circumstances, when a thought that is not the will of God comes in, you must not just tolerate it and accept it as it is. Dear fellow believers, it means that when a thought or word that has nothing to do with the will of God

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

comes in, you must not tolerate it. You must remember the word of God and drive it out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. “Satan, be gone.” Dear fellow believers, it does not work just because you shout. If you quietly command by relying on the name of the Lord, demons and Satan are ruled. If we tell them to go away, they will go away, and if we draw near to them, they will cling to our side.

Born-again people are above Satan. The one thing we must know is that Satan the devil deceives us. We must never be deceived. Dear fellow believers, we must know how much Satan the devil deceives us and how much he torments us, how he drains our vital energy and makes us have negative thoughts. Even though Jesus Christ clearly rose again and the guards saw it happen, Satan the devil gave money and deceived people into thinking that Jesus Christ had died. The point is that Satan the devil says only that Jesus Christ did not rise again. He says that He died, that He has no power at all, and that even if you believe in Jesus Christ, there is no power at all. But if we believe in Jesus Christ, there is power. Dear fellow believers, only believing in Jesus has power. There can be nothing greater than that. Dear fellow believers, if we believe in Jesus Christ, Satan cannot move an inch.

Dear fellow believers, there is so much power in that name that even if a person who does not truly believe in Jesus commands in the name of Jesus, Satan cannot move an inch. It has power because Jesus is alive. It is because He is alive. Jesus is the King of kings. He is the One who is alive. That is why it has power. Dear fellow believers, we have been born again. Now the Holy Spirit is within us. Our Lord is within us. The Lord within us is the One who rose again. He caused us to be born again by the word and the Spirit. He is now the One who is alive. But what are we doing with that living One? Aren’t there many

times when we leave Him quietly put to sleep and do not use the name of the Lord?

Command in the name of the Lord

Dear fellow believers, when we meet certain people and just deal with them as we are, those people try to hold us down. At such times, if in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ we say, "Satan the devil, be gone," and drive out and command Satan the devil working in that person, and then talk with that person, we will feel that conversation going smoothly. But if we talk according to the circumstances without even praying in our hearts or commanding, that person will instead rush at us to hold us down. You will feel that. Dear fellow believers, we must command. Dear fellow believers, we must know not that that person is the devil, but the fact that Satan the devil is working in that person. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? We must resist such things. We must resist the forces of evil spirits.

Dear fellow believers, we sometimes drive them out by commanding and sometimes drive them out by faith. We must drive them out by surely knowing the fact that the Lord is alive. Then we can conquer this world. As children of God, we need only to command, rule, and take. We need only to take, by faith and in the name of the Lord, what God has given us. Dear fellow believers, we must open our spiritual eyes to such matters. Should a born-again person always be ruled and beaten by Ishmael? No matter how much older Ishmael may be, Isaac is the son born of the lawful wife. "He is my father. She is my mother. I am the heir of this house. What does it matter to me that you are older? Go away." Dear fellow believers, when we command Satan to go away in that way, he goes away.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Dear fellow believers, we must make use of this authority in our circumstances or in any matter. Do you understand? We must make use of it. Dear fellow believers, many bad things have also come into our thoughts. Even while we know that they must not work within us, we fail to drive them out, but we must drive them out in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ.

"Make disciples of all the nations"

Let us read the word that follows His saying that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him. *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen" (Matthew 28:19–20).*

Amen. Because the Lord is alive, because He rose again, He tells us to go and make disciples of all the nations. Dear fellow believers, we must make all people disciples. Why do we make disciples? We must lead all people to the gospel, make them disciples, and have them obey Jesus Christ. We must teach and guide them and have them kneel before Jesus Christ. Making disciples means making them disciples of Jesus Christ. A disciple is a person who is becoming like Jesus Christ. One who becomes like his own teacher is a disciple. One who follows, obeys, and believes just as his own teacher does—who walks this way if the teacher walks this way, and walks that way if the teacher walks that way—is a disciple. Dear fellow believers, that is a true disciple.

Dear fellow believers, He says to make disciples of all the nations, but in our hearts there is much that does not believe one

hundred percent in the heart and the faith of Jesus Christ and the words He spoke, and that follows our old thoughts more readily. Dear fellow believers, there are things we had learned up until we received the remission of sins, aren't there? Such things often keep us from becoming disciples of Jesus Christ. What do we do? We just do as we please.

Dear fellow believers, if we are true disciples, we submit to the word of the Lord. And the Lord said to make disciples of all the nations. Dear fellow believers, after our Lord rose again, He said to make disciples. It means to produce disciples. That is what "make" means, isn't it? Accepting them all, whose disciples do we make them? We make them disciples of Jesus Christ. For that purpose, our Lord said, *"If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23)*. Denying oneself means casting away everything one knows, everything one has learned, everything one says is right, and one's own goodness, and accepting what belongs to Jesus Christ, that is, to one's own teacher. That is a disciple. Dear fellow believers, after our Lord rose again, He told His disciples to make disciples of all the nations, to produce disciples.

Dear fellow believers, have we become disciples? I hope that you follow as disciples. And we are now following as disciples. Then, isn't there some standard in our thoughts that we regard as right, unrelated to the word of Jesus Christ? If one is a disciple, one follows everything the teacher does, all of it. If a disciple thinks, "My teacher is good only at that part, and I am better at this part," that disciple cannot become a true disciple. Dear fellow believers, he is merely a person who works alongside his teacher, and he cannot become a disciple. A disciple is a person who learns one hundred percent, entirely, and a person who receives what is handed down one hundred percent. A disciple

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

is one who casts away what is his own one hundred percent and takes as his premise the fact that what belongs to the teacher is one hundred percent better.

One becomes a disciple only by casting away one's own standard

These days there are truly many clever disciples. They listen to some parts but do not listen to other parts. There are people who learn a trick or two and try to mix it with what they already have and use it. Dear fellow believers, then they are not disciples, and the power that the teacher taught them is not manifested either. What is the very first command our Lord gave His disciples after He rose again? It is that because authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him, they are not to fear and tremble but are now to command and rule, and that they are to make disciples, to produce them. It is that they are to rule over the things on earth and to produce disciples. And it is that then it will surely be accomplished. Dear fellow believers, we are now walking the path of disciples, but there is a part in which we have not yet become disciples before the Lord. It is the thought that one's own thinking is right—one's own standard. Dear fellow believers, don't you have a standard? It is because of one's own standard that one does not become a disciple of Jesus Christ. When we cast away our own standard, the Lord will teach and guide us. When we rely on Him entirely, the Lord will guide us. Dear fellow believers, do you want to live by your own wits without being led by the Lord? Or do you want to live by the strength of the Lord and the wisdom of the Lord? If we live by our own wits, there are limits to our own ability. A

disciple is one who does just as the Lord tells him. It is following and doing just as the Lord does. That is a disciple.

Dear fellow believers, I hope that we all become disciples of the Lord. You must become disciples. If you do not become disciples, it is of no use at all. Do you know how important a disciple is? Jesus Christ, too, took His disciples with Him for three years. And as He did so, He taught them everything. For three years the disciples did not know why Jesus did things that way. Only after Jesus had gone did they realize, "Ah, He did this for this reason and did that for that reason." Jesus took His disciples with Him and taught them faith. He taught them what faith is, what power is, what the truth is, and who Jesus Christ is.

Dear fellow believers, in order to make disciples of all the nations, first of all, you yourself must become a disciple first. You must become disciples of the Lord. Do not become disciples of men. You have learned a lot from people until now, haven't you? Stop being disciples of people. Dear fellow believers, that is nothing.

Baptism is the burial of the old self

Next, He said to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Why did He say to baptize after making disciples? Do people receive the remission of sins just because they go through the ceremony of baptism? That is not so, is it? Dear fellow believers, the Lord wanted to teach the denial of oneself. Baptism speaks of death itself. Baptism teaches the fact that one's old self has completely died. He said to baptize so that, whatever one meets, one would now live in the name of Jesus Christ, by faith in Jesus Christ. It is not telling you to live in this world by your own strength as before. It is

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

telling you not to live that way. It is saying that your old self has died, has now been buried, was completely submerged under water and buried, and was crucified with Christ.

Galatians says, *"I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20)*, and it also says, *"As many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ" (Galatians 3:27)*. Dear fellow believers, His saying to baptize means that our old self has already died. Dear fellow believers, your flesh may be alive now, but when seen by faith, your thoughts and your soul have already died with Jesus Christ, and your flesh has died as well. Now we live as a new creation. We are a new creation. Now our Lord is within us, becomes our Master, and wants to govern and rule our flesh, hearts, and thoughts. One who obeys that is a disciple, and one who does not obey is not a disciple.

He said to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Dear fellow believers, have you truly been baptized? Dear fellow believers, baptism is denying oneself. Dear fellow believers, do you know how important baptism is? If, after becoming a Christian, one does not know how to deny oneself, there is no power. A person who knows how to deny himself is a disciple of Jesus Christ and has power. Because that person believes in the Lord entirely, the power of the Lord is manifested through him. Dear fellow believers, to whom is power manifested? Power is manifested to the person who has truly been baptized. Then, is power manifested just because one has been baptized as a formality? No, it is not.

What we believe when we are baptized is this: when Jesus Christ received baptism from John in the Jordan River, John laid his hands on His head and our sins were passed on to Him; when Jesus Christ died on the Cross in that body, we too died with Him and were buried; and now we have risen again with Jesus Christ. *"Old things have passed away; behold, all things have*

become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17). It is believing this fact, and now relying entirely on the Lord and living anew by faith in the Lord. Since I was buried and crucified with Christ, now I am no more, and my own power is no more. "Lord, I believe in You. Lord, please lead me. I believe in You. Please work." The faith that relies entirely on the Lord alone in this way is what it is to have been baptized.

Dear fellow believers, people say that baptism is a washing, that it is a burial, yet even scholars do not really know what those words mean. Dear fellow believers, why did Jesus Christ say to baptize? If it is spoken of only literally, it cannot even be understood. In reality, baptism is acknowledging that one's old self has died. Dear fellow believers, that is why, when we make disciples, we surely baptize them. We surely do. "Have you died with Jesus Christ? Can you truly deny yourself?" Dear fellow believers, how can we deny when thoughts come to mind? Denying even though thoughts come to mind—that is denial.

"It is no longer I who live"

Dear fellow believers, have we ourselves died? Have our old thoughts and old standards died with Christ? They have died. Dear fellow believers, what is our standard now? It is Jesus Christ and the word of God, that is, the law. The law refers to the whole of the word of God altogether. Dear fellow believers, is that truly so? Do you believe what the guides who have gone ahead of us say? Do you believe the words of the servants who follow the Lord and obey Him? Do you believe that the Holy Spirit works together within them? You are people whose selves have been denied. Now, in the life of faith, knowing that oneself has died, accepting with "Amen" just as the word points,

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

believing, and going forward by faith—that is the way for power to be manifested. That is the very strength of Christians. That is the faith of the resurrection.

Dear fellow believers, if you hold on to the old things, the things of your own, if you do not let go of what you learned in the past and try to learn a little of this as well and mix them together to use, then far from power, nothing at all is manifested. Even if something seems to be manifested, not a single fruit is borne. Our old self has died. It is written, *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*. Our Lord is alive. In whom is He? He is in us. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? We are alive because the Lord is alive. We are alive because the Lord rose again. Through the baptism He received from John, our sins were passed on to the body of Jesus Christ. Those sins were the sins of us all. If Jesus Christ had died and not been able to rise again, we too would be dead, and even now we would be unable to do anything and could have no power at all. The work of redemption of Jesus Christ would not have been completed. But the Lord rose again. He came back to life. Now the old self, the person of sin, has died, and only the person of righteousness, the person of faith, is alive. That is why we live anew. In the past we could not command Satan the devil, but now we command him. We rule over him. In the past we were not disciples of Christ, but now we have become disciples of Jesus Christ. It is a life lived as disciples; we are no longer the old self. We must know this and keep it in mind.

Boldly cast away what must be cast away

Dear fellow believers, do not think of doing something by learning a little more on top of what you learned in the past. Dear

fellow believers, for a house to be clean, there must always be a wastebasket in the house. A house without a wastebasket is so dirty that no one can live in it. No matter how many new things are brought in, if nothing is thrown away, that house becomes a trash heap. But a house that surely has a trash can is clean. Dear fellow believers, a person who throws away what must be thrown away right away, each time, is always clean. If what must be thrown away is not thrown away in time, that house becomes a complete mess. Dear fellow believers, no matter how good a new wardrobe may be that comes in, there is debris that comes along with it. If there is no bin to throw that debris away in, no matter how new the wardrobe is, that house is a trash heap. It is a useless house, and no matter how new the things are, they are of no use. We must quickly cast away our old habits, our old thoughts, and our old standards—that is, when something new comes in. Do you understand? Only then are we made new. What must be cast away is not just one or two things. There are many. We must cast them away right away, each time. We must begin by casting away the small things one by one. Dear fellow believers, do you know how many things must be cast away?

Dear fellow believers, I cannot tell you how many useless things people who do not know how to throw things away pile up. Some pile up many useless books, books that do harm when read, and say that they are good. Dear fellow believers, such things are things that must be thrown away. Dear fellow believers, we must take what must be taken and boldly cast away what must be cast away. We must boldly cast it away. That is a disciple. Dear fellow believers, that is what it means to be baptized and to deny oneself.

Dear fellow believers, you were baptized when you believed in Jesus Christ, weren't you? When you were baptized, you thought you were receiving it simply as a ceremony, didn't you?

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Dear fellow believers, burying the old self is the purpose of baptism. Dear fellow believers, burying the old self does not end with a ceremony. Dear fellow believers, the ceremony is only a process. Dear fellow believers, there are people who have been baptized several times. There are also people who have moved from this church to that church and been baptized many times. No matter how many times they are baptized, if they have not buried the old self, it is of no use.

Dear fellow believers, concerning what comes after baptizing, our Lord said, *"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20)*. This is important. This is our Lord's last request. It is that they should make disciples of all the nations, baptize them and have them deny themselves, and then teach them to observe all things that He has commanded His disciples. Dear fellow believers, He did not say only to teach. He asked them to have people observe. It is having them observe. Dear fellow believers, what is called a life of faith, what is called faith, and what is called the truth is observing. Dear fellow believers, it is putting it into action. If this is truly the word of God, it is hearing it immediately and, even without great power of one's own, obeying it in that matter and putting it into action. Then power is manifested. It does not work just by receiving teaching a hundred days over. Only when there is obedience together with receiving teaching does a work take place, and only then can one be changed.

Dear fellow believers, we receive teaching every day. Each time, what must we do? We must observe it. It means that we must obey in action. We must obey. Then we can become disciples of Christ. Then the Lord can use us. Concerning the person who only receives teaching and only knows that it is right but does not obey, the Lord said, *"Everyone who hears these sayings of Mine, and does not do them, will be like a foolish man*

who built his house on the sand" (Matthew 7:26). This word says that the power of God is manifested to the person who obeys, and that God can accomplish His will through that person. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? We must obey. We must obey.

"I am with you always, even to the end of the age"

Finally, He said, *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)*.

Our Lord promises that when we follow the Lord and live as disciples of the Lord, He will always be with us. God is always with those who hear and obey His will and His word, even if we are somewhat lacking. Dear fellow believers, you must believe that fact. If we are disciples, we must believe the fact that the Lord is with us in any situation. And our Master is God, and the One who will teach us is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ teaches us, and His servants who follow the word of Jesus Christ will teach us. There is nothing else that will teach us. Our Lord says that He is with us. Dear fellow believers, do you believe that fact? In any situation, our Lord is with us.

After the Lord rose again, He wants us to become disciples, wants us to be baptized, and wants us to observe the commands the Lord has taught us. And He wants us to believe in the Lord, who is always with us even to the end of the age. He wants us to live with that faith. He wants us to command, and to live the life of a disciple, a life of power. It is not a life of staggering without strength. Dear fellow believers, in every matter, as disciples of our Lord, we must remember whose disciples we are and have pride in it. Even if we have no grounds of our own at all, we must live boldly by faith in the name of Jesus Christ.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

What is important is not that we have learned the word, but how we actually apply it and live in our lives. Dear fellow believers, what is important is how we apply it and live in our lives. Dear fellow believers, when some people are given one thing, they make use of it in ten ways, and some people, even when given something, cannot make use of it in even one way. Dear fellow believers, since the power is truly not in us but in the word of the Lord, I hope that you will obey what the leaders who are ahead of you in faith say in that matter.

Dear fellow believers, a teacher earnestly wishes that his disciples, wherever they go, will not bring shame on their teacher. If we are disciples of Jesus Christ, I hope that those who are called disciples will not become servile. I hope that they will minister boldly and with power on this earth, and that they will lead people to the Lord. And I hope that they will live according to the very word the Teacher taught. If we try to do something while not living that way ourselves and not obeying, Satan the devil will block our way and make us fall. Dear fellow believers, we have one secret to not falling. As I have told you, it is to live holding on to both the law, which is the word of God, and grace. It is always to regard the law as important within the word of God, to hold on to the righteousness of Jesus Christ, and to live by faith in the Lord. If you are disciples of Christ, I hope that you will deny yourselves. I hope that you will obey. I hope that you will command and rule by faith, and lead many people into Christ and make them disciples. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The command and covenant of Jesus Christ toward us

< Matthew 28:18–20 >

“And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, ‘All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.’ Amen.”

Jesus said, *“All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth” (Matthew 28:18)*. This word, which Jesus Himself spoke, is the last exhortation and promise that our Lord gave when He met the disciples whom He had promised to meet in Galilee, after He, having had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again from death. In Galilee, the very first word our Lord spoke to the disciples—that is, to us—was that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him. Now He has risen again from death and has had His coronation as King. To our eyes, it seems that the Lord is only our Savior, but in fact, ever since Jesus Christ bore our sins, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, He has received from God the Father the authority to judge, govern, and rule over all things in heaven and on earth.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

Because Jesus Christ received such authority before God the Father, the very first word He spoke when He met the disciples in Galilee after He rose again was that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him. Who gave it? God the Father gave it to Jesus. Therefore, from now on, it is the world of Jesus Christ. Since Jesus Christ, who came as the son of Abraham and of David, has received all authority in heaven and on earth, it has now become a world that He rules. Until Jesus Christ accomplished the work of saving mankind from sin, the world was under the rule of God the Father—of course, it is still under the rule of God the Father even now—but now Jesus Christ has received the authority to rule over and judge everything that is in heaven and everything that is on earth. Dear fellow believers, do you understand?

If we look at the word of Revelation, a scene of the King's coronation appears, and our Lord receives that praise through the angels, the elders, and the four living creatures. Now He governs, rules over, and judges all things in place of God the Father. Jesus Christ Himself does the work of granting salvation to those to whom He will grant salvation, judging those whom He will judge, giving eternal life to those to whom He will give eternal life, and giving the eternal kingdom of heaven to those to whom He will give the kingdom of heaven. Please keep in mind this word saying that all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Him.

"Make disciples of all the nations"

And the Lord said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)*. He is saying,

"Because the Father has given Me all authority, I command you: Go and make disciples of all peoples, and baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit." He told them to do the work of making disciples and the work of baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Making disciples is the work of following Jesus Christ. It is the work of resembling Him. Following and resembling Jesus Christ is not accomplished by words. It is not accomplished by knowledge. A disciple is one who sees how those who have gone ahead serve the Lord, and learns and follows that conduct just as it is. Disciples are those who follow of their own accord. Following means following after seeing that person's deeds and seeing that faith. It is not following words.

And the reason He told them to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit is that our salvation has been accomplished through God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit. The Lord told us to keep the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, in which the bread and the wine are shared, until the day He comes again. Then, if we ask what the second ordinance of the Lord is that He told us to keep, it is to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Everyone who believes—that is, everyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—must receive baptism in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Why must they receive baptism? It is because God the Father planned our salvation in His own Son; Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, came to this earth, fulfilled that plan with the water and the blood, and saved us Himself; and when we believe it, the Holy Spirit becomes a guarantor in our hearts. That is why He said to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

If we have received salvation, we must receive baptism. What kind of baptism? "Through the baptism He received from John by the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, Jesus bore my sins, received the judgment for sin on the Cross for me, died, rose again, and gave me salvation. He removed my sins and made me a child of God." It means that we must receive baptism as a sign of believing this, as the evidence of faith.

And our Lord said, *"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20)*. What would that be? What our Lord has commanded us is not to follow the world. It means that, without following the world, we should know what is truly right, what the righteousness of God is, what pleases God, what it is to follow the will of life, and what it is to follow the will that pleases our Lord, and practice it ourselves first and then teach. He said to teach all things and to have people observe them. It means not only to teach, but also to have people observe them. He said that we ourselves must first keep the faith, keep our lives, and keep the life of faith, and then have those who come after us keep these things as well. Therefore, we must do as He has said. Because this is the Lord's command, we cannot raise any objection to it.

"I am with you always, even to the end of the age"

Finally, our Lord speaks. Let us read it together. *"And lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)*. When He said *"lo,"* it means to look carefully. It means that He will always be with you until the end of the age. Put individually, He promised, "Look, I will be with you until the end of the age," and put collectively, He promised, "Look, I will be with you all until the end of the age." With whom does He say He will be? It

means that He will be with us who have been born again and with the Church of God, whatever we do. So we pray by faith to the Lord, who governs all things and is with us, and ask for the things we need. This is the word and the command that the Lord gave to Jesus' disciples—that is, to us—after He rose again.

Therefore, after being born again, we must keep all the commands and follow. Even though we have been born again, we must not go after the world, and we must truly guard our hearts well. If our thoughts or our flesh are weak, we must not try to live a life of faith individually, but must unite with the church and take part, through the church, in the work of fulfilling the will of God. When we do so, we can follow the will of the Lord and do all things. We must understand it this way and live a life of faith. Above all, there must be the glory of God in whatever we do, just as the word says, *"Whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. And there is one thing that the born-again people on this earth must do, and that is the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world. It is the work of making it known to all people. Whether they believe or not depends on them, and because we have been commanded to do the work of making it known accurately, we must do that work.

Preach the gospel to the whole world

We are preaching the gospel throughout the world through literature and through coworkers. You are doing the work of helping from behind, but in fact you, too, are going and doing the very same work. And the Lord is with us in the work we do. Because our Lord is with us, we gather and pray whenever there is a need. We pray, asking Him to help us, to bless us, and to fill

Download eBooks and audiobooks www.bjnewlife.org

our needs. Our prayers are never in vain. The One who hears our prayers is our Lord. This is because the Lord is with us to the end of the age, and He is our God, our Ruler, our shepherd, and our Judge. Above all, the Lord is the shepherd of love. He is the King of love. Our true shepherd is the King of love. Therefore, we must believe this and work.

We have obtained many things by praying to God, and we have served the Lord. Just as the seeds of the gospel that have been sown bear fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold, we must pray that even more fruit will be borne in the future. Then the Lord hears our prayers and answers them. Because this power is in the Lord, we work by receiving the Lord's power and blessing. It is not our power. We simply act, and it comes about because God blesses us.

Now let us pray earnestly for the time ahead. Let us ask that the Lord, who has blessed us until now, will be with us in the future as well and bless us so that we can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all people throughout the world. Let us pray that the Lord will be with us over all the work we do and over our faith. ✉

◇ About the Next Series

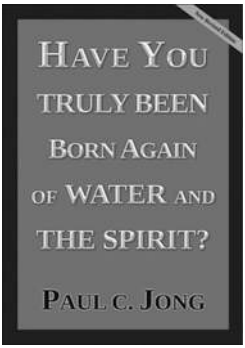
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

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.**

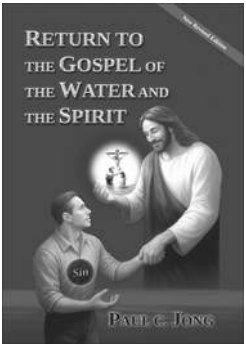
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

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.

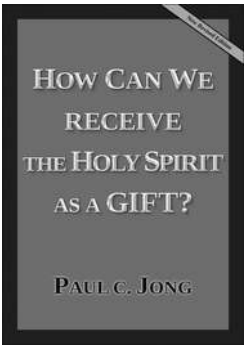
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



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.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

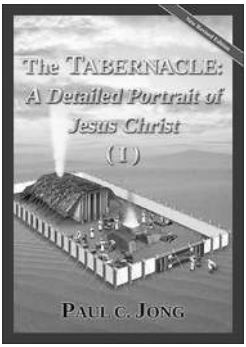
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



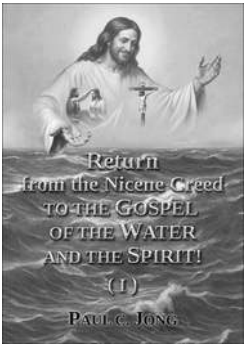
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

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.

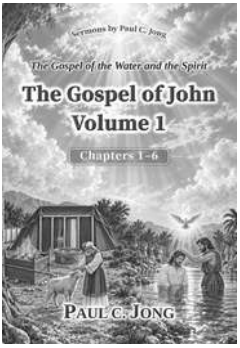
The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

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.

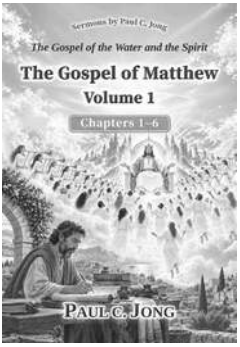
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of John (3-Volume Series)



"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

John chapters 1–6 reveal who Jesus is. He is the Savior—the God who created all things, who Himself came in the flesh, received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the sin of the world, received its judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead, thereby saving us perfectly once and for all. The testimony of John the Baptist, the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again, the Samaritan woman, the sick man at Bethesda, and the bread of life all point to the same One, and the Word is unfolded in light of the salvation accomplished by Christ Jesus. Those who believe in the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus, who is God, are born again of water and the Spirit and receive eternal life.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Matthew (4-Volume Series)

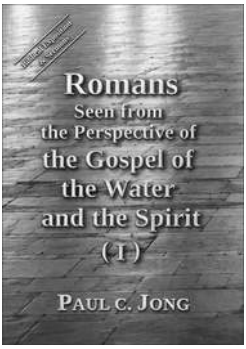


The very first thing Jesus did as He began His public ministry was to receive baptism from John at the Jordan River. Through that baptism He had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and after He was judged through the blood of the Cross, He rose again and fulfilled all righteousness. This book proclaims, in order, the baptism of Jesus, by which He fulfilled all righteousness; the promised salvation and the assurance of the remission of sins; Jesus, who called His disciples and gave the Sermon on the Mount; and a life lived by believing in the righteousness of God. Through the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong, which expound the genealogy and the birth, the worship of the wise men from the East, the temptation in the wilderness, the calling of the disciples, the Beatitudes, and the Lord's Prayer, it proclaims the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the basis of the remission of sins, and the way of living by believing in that righteousness and praying to the Father.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

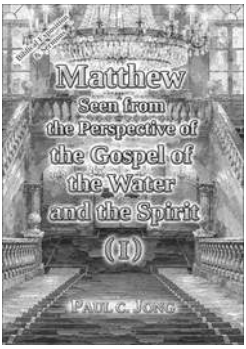
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



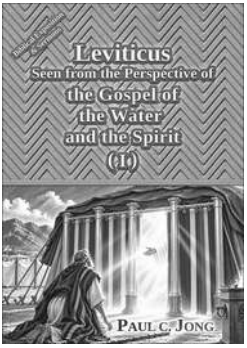
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

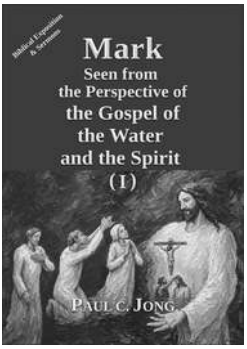


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the consecration ceremony of the priests, Aaron's first sacrifice, and the incident of Nadab and Abihu.

The author, Pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in this book, he also explains the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, connecting it to the sacrifices of Leviticus.

How can a sinner be made sinless? This book gives a clear answer to that question through the Bible.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



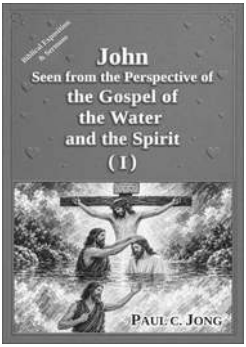
Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)

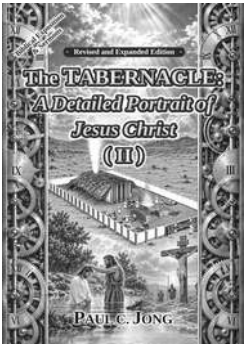


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

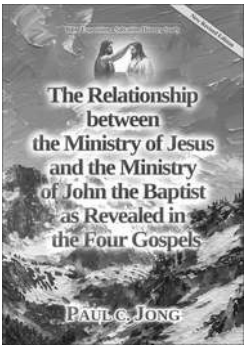
The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (3-Volume Series)



God had the tabernacle set up in the wilderness in order to dwell among the people He had delivered out of Egypt.

Through the Biblical Exposition of Exodus chapters 25–31 and the sermons on the tabernacle, this book conveys the heart of God, who wants to make His sinful people holy and keep them near. The promise of salvation contained in the tabernacle was fulfilled when Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again. Looking into the utensils and sacrifices of the tabernacle and the office of the high priest, we come to know the meaning of the remission of sins received by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and of the eternal atonement. Through the tabernacle, we seek to know God's love for us and to share the joy of living together as His people.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels [New Revised Edition]



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

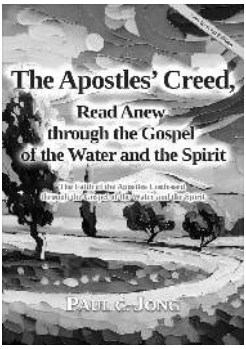
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]



As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)



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.

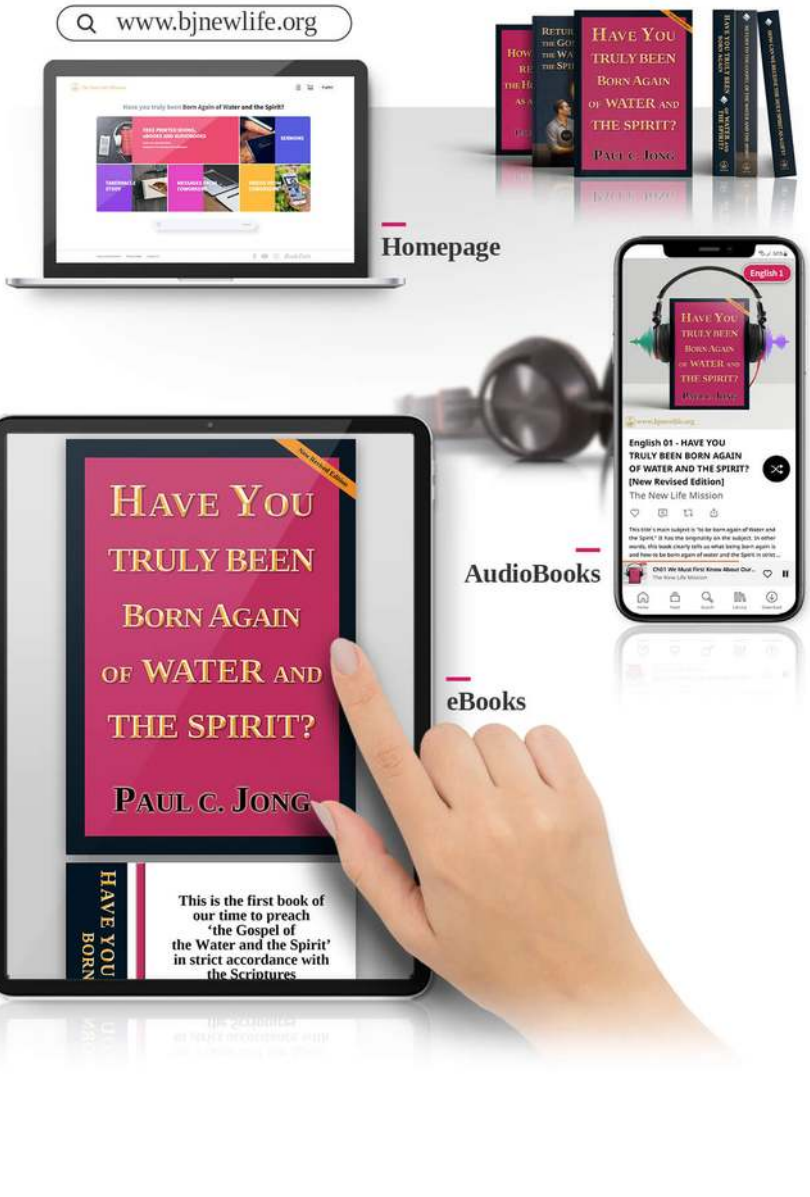
This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

Visit our website to discover this and other Christian books, available as e-books (PDF/EPUB) and audiobooks.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

DOWNLOAD

Rev. Paul C. Jong's Christian ebooks and audiobooks
on your smartphone, tablet or PC at our website.
After downloading, You can read and listen to them anywhere, even when you don't have an internet connection.



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.

If you wish to possess printed books to build up spiritual nourishment, or if you sincerely wish to participate in our gospel spreading ministry, please apply by writing your reason, name, contact information, and address to the email address below.

If there is a coworker officially certified by our mission in your area, we will deliver the free books you have requested.

Would you like to join us in our mission of bringing the word of truth to more people around the world? If so, we would greatly appreciate it if you could link to our website on your blog, social media, website, etc.

►www.bjnewlife.org

Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



Recommendation for E-book and Audiobook Storage and Downloads

In preparation for rapidly advancing AI, rapidly changing world affairs, and environmental changes, we strongly recommend downloading and storing God's true sermon messages to your personal storage devices.

Please prepare in advance by saving e-books and audiobooks to your external hard drives, USB drives, CDs, mobile phones, or MP3 players, so you can read and listen to them from your personal storage during the last days.

We pray that you will live a victorious life through God's blessings in these last days within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"The New Life Mission's sermon series and audiobooks are available worldwide in multiple languages, offering both paid books and free e-books."

www.bjnewlife.org

Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For about 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the Cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing, and publishing sermon collections and Biblical Exposition Series that expound the Bible chapter by chapter, based solely on the Word of God.

His works continue to be published and have been translated into more than 110 languages, reaching readers in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available free of charge at www.bjnewlife.org, while paperback editions can be purchased on Amazon.

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

Jesus, who opened the way to come to God

"The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom" (Matthew 27:51) When Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn. That veil showed that a person who has sin cannot come before the holy God. The veil being torn from top to bottom means that God Himself removed the barrier of sin that had stood in our way.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all. Because He bore those sins, He received the judgment for sin in our place on the Cross, shedding His blood and dying, and He rose again from death. In this way, the way to come to God was opened by Jesus' removing our sins. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins and comes before the holy God. Now a person who used to avoid and fear God because of sin becomes a child who calls God Father. What is needed to go forward on this way that God has opened is the faith that Jesus bore all our sins and the judgment for them.

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