Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Epistle to the Romans Volume 2

Chapters 7–9



PAUL C. JONG



“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit” (Romans 8:1)

Paul reveals the reason condemnation has disappeared in the work of God, who condemned sin in the flesh of Jesus. The salvation that the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaims is that very work. All the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, were passed on once and for all to the body of Jesus, who received baptism from John. The Lord paid the full price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, receiving the judgment in our place, and He rose again from death. In this way God did not leave sin in place but finished even its judgment.

The person who believes in this salvation is assured that, even when his own faults are revealed, there is no condemnation in Christ, who has remitted even those sins.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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

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Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Epistle to the Romans

Volume 2

Chapters 7–9

PAUL C. JONG



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

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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Epistle to the Romans Volume 2

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

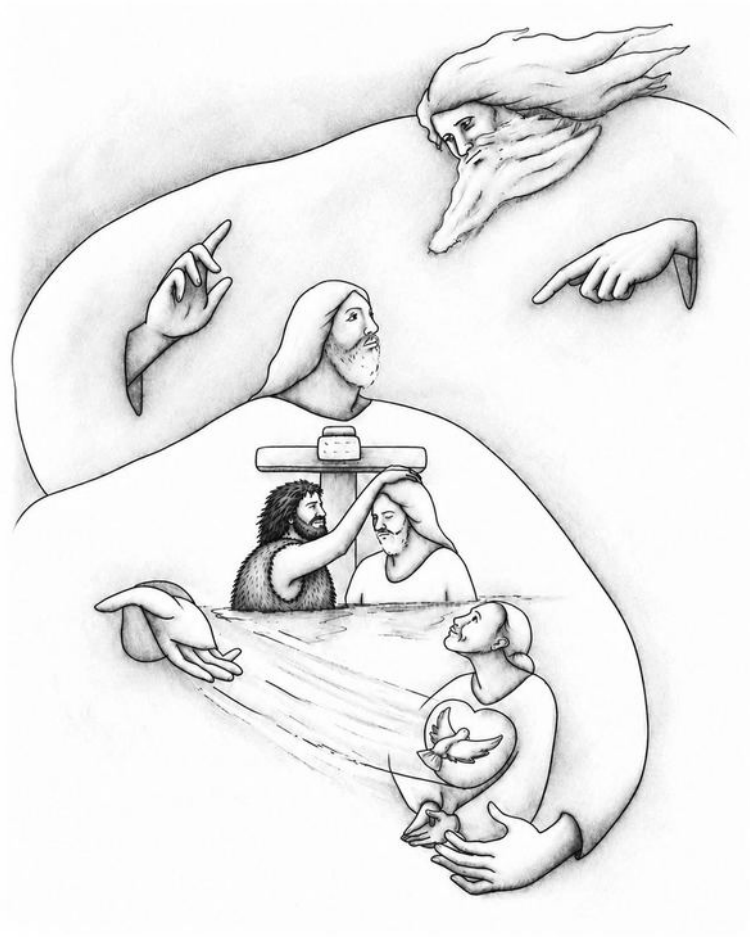
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

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

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

PAUL C. JONG

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Preface

Jesus, who delivered us from sin and death

Jesus Christ, who is God, came to this earth to save us, who were under sin and death. The baptism of water that Jesus received from John was the work by which He had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all. Because all our sins were passed on to Jesus, the Lord received in our place the judgment we were to receive by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and became our eternal Savior.

The person who believes with his heart in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has delivered us from sin, has received the remission of all sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift, has become a child of God, and has been set free from the power of sin and death. Therefore, we must no longer look for the way to escape from sin in correcting our own flesh, but must look to the work Jesus has already accomplished and accept it purely with our hearts.

When a person sees that a desire different from the heart that wants to do good is also present within him, he begins to think about what more he must correct to be able to stand before God. Romans chapter 7 reveals in this way the reality of a person who cannot escape from sin by his own strength, and in that lament it makes him turn his eyes to the Savior.

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).

Here Paul does not ask what he could do to deliver himself, but asks who will deliver him. This is because, though the law is

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good and holy, the sins already committed do not disappear by knowing that word, and the weak flesh cannot make itself righteous either. So Paul immediately goes on to confess that he thanks God through Jesus Christ. The reason one can give thanks even while knowing his own weakness is that Jesus has already delivered us from that sin and judgment through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection.

The passage at the beginning of chapter 7, in which Paul explains by using the relationship of marriage, must also be read in light of this salvation. Just as a wife is bound by the law while her husband is alive but is released from that relationship when he dies, we have become dead to the law through the body of Christ. This does not mean that we have become free because the law was done away with. Because the Lord, who received baptism from John and thereby had our sins passed on to Him, received that judgment in our place and died, we who believe in this salvation have also already received in Christ the death for sin that the law demanded.

Now we belong to the risen Lord and bear fruit to God. To serve in the newness of the Spirit is for us, who have been set free from the judgment for sin, to live relying on Jesus Christ, who has made us alive, and being led by Him.

The judgment for our sins was finished in the body of Jesus

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1).

There are people who, when they look back on their own faults, think as if they must be condemned again as sinners. Paul

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does not vaguely tell such a heart to be at ease, but makes clear that the law of the Spirit of life has made us free from the law of sin and death. The work of God that accomplished that liberation is the basis on which condemnation has disappeared.

"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3).

The word that God condemned sin in the flesh of His Son reveals the work by which He passed our sins on to Jesus, who had no sin, and brought their judgment down upon His body. Because the sin of the world was passed on to the body of Jesus through the baptism He received from John, the blood the Lord shed on the Cross is the very blood that paid once and for all the price of the sins of all of us, all mankind. God did not leave sin in place and treat it as unseen; rather, He fulfilled the requirement of the law once and for all through Jesus. From this word we can know why the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross are joined together as one work of salvation.

The word that there is no condemnation for those who believe in this salvation does not mean that we no longer do wrong in the flesh. It means that the Lord has already received on the Cross all the judgment for all those sins and has risen from death. Even when the faults of the flesh are revealed, there is no need to hide those faults or to say that they are not sin. We should acknowledge a wrong as a wrong and turn from it, but we must believe in the salvation of Jesus, who has already remitted even those sins. The assurance that there is no condemnation is based on the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God made the servant who was afraid His child

God has given the Holy Spirit as a gift to us, whom He delivered from sin and judgment. The person in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells is one who belongs to Christ and is a child who calls God Father.

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15).

A servant stands before his master counting how much work he has done, but a child comes before his father as one who belongs to him. The basis that lets us come to the Father, too, does not lie in religious faith or deeds. Because we believe that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, finished their judgment with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose from death, we have received the remission of sins in our hearts, and the Holy Spirit Himself bears witness that we are children of God. We should not wait for a special voice or sensation to obtain that witness, but must believe with our hearts the word of salvation by which He made us His children.

If we are children, we are also heirs. God has let us enjoy the glory of the kingdom of God together with Christ. Yet even after we have received that promise, the body grows weary and weak, and suffering accompanies the path of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When Paul says that we, too, who have received the Holy Spirit, groan within ourselves, waiting for the redemption of our body, he does not mean that the remission of sins is insufficient. He means that because we, who have already become children, live in a body that has not yet put on glory, we wait for the day when the Lord will also give life to that body and transform it.

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The Holy Spirit helps our weakness, in which we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, and makes intercession according to the will of God. Because He leads us through the word to rely on the Father, do not think that you can come to God only after you have overcome all your weaknesses. The Lord, who saved us and rose from death, is still alive now and makes intercession for us, and His love is not cut off by tribulation or death. Within that love we can carry out the work entrusted to us today and look toward the glory we will receive in the future.

The basis for being children is the mercy of God who calls us

After speaking of the glory of the children, Paul reveals his great sorrow for his own countrymen. This is because even the privilege of having received the covenants, the law, and the service of God cannot take the place of believing in the righteousness the Savior has accomplished. If one looks for the basis of having become a child in lineage or in a long religious life, one misses how God has removed sin. Paul distinguishes between the children of the flesh and the children of the promise and proclaims the will of God, who calls.

"So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16).

Just as Jacob was not loved because his deeds were more perfect than Esau's, we, too, had no righteousness with which to demand salvation. God had compassion on such sinners and sent His Son. The mercy of God does not end with a heart that looks upon the plight of sinners; it was revealed in the salvation by which He passed the sin of the world on to Jesus, had Him

receive its judgment in our place, and gave us life. The person who believes in Jesus, who received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, obtains this mercy without any qualification of his own and becomes a child of God.

This is also the reason the Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, obtained the righteousness of faith, while Israel, who pursued the law of righteousness, did not attain to it. If people rely not on faith but on their own works, they end up putting forward what they themselves have achieved even before Jesus, who came to save them. Faith is not adding more of one's own righteousness, but receiving the righteousness the Lord has accomplished. That we have become righteous and that we call God Father today are both based on the mercy He has shown us.

A person who knows that he had no qualification to be saved cannot judge another soul to be inferior to himself. Just as Paul earnestly desired the salvation of his countrymen, we, too, can proclaim the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished to those who are still in sin and condemnation. That service is not a labor to become children, but a life offered in gratitude for the love that made us His children though we had no qualification.

I hope that you will read the word in this volume with the heart that, looking at your own weakness, asked who would deliver you. The answer lies in Jesus Christ, who had all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, who shed His blood on the Cross to receive that judgment in our place, and who rose from death. Since it is God who has justified us and made us His children, do not make your own shortcomings the standard of salvation, but believe in the righteousness He has accomplished. The life of a child who comes to the Father with

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the help of the Holy Spirit begins and continues on this very salvation. ✉

Contents

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

Sermons on Romans Chapter 7

• Sermons by Paul C. Jong

1. There is no good in the flesh, and salvation is in the Lord
(Romans 7:1–25) ---------- 21

2. We who have been saved through Jesus Christ
and live by that faith
(Romans 7:1–6) ---------- 32

3. We can do all things by faith in the righteousness of God
(Romans 7:1–6) ---------- 44

4. What faith is needed to escape from legalistic faith?
(Romans 7:1–6) ---------- 59

5. The life of those who have the Holy Spirit
(Romans 7:1–6) ---------- 73

6. The error one falls into when interpreting Romans chapter 7
only as theological scholarship
(Romans 7:1–25) ---------- 89

7. We who have been delivered from the law
(Romans 7:5–25) ---------- 108

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8. Live a life of faith by being united in your heart
(Romans 7:7–25) ---------- 135
9. The law of the flesh and the law of the Holy Spirit
(Romans 7:7–25) ---------- 154
10. What being born again is
(Romans 7:14–25) ---------- 175

Sermons on Romans Chapter 8

• Sermons by Paul C. Jong
1. The law of the Spirit of life has saved us
from the law of sin and death
(Romans 8:1–2) ---------- 191
2. The turning point of the gospel, where the lament
of Romans chapter 7 changes into the assurance of chapter 8
(Romans 8:1–4) ---------- 198
3. Faith in which there is no condemnation
(Romans 8:1–4) ---------- 221
4. Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit
in the present tense
(Romans 8:1–10) ---------- 232
5. Let us receive circumcision of the heart
(Romans 8:1–11) ---------- 245

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6. While we live on this earth, let us live carrying out
the duty of righteousness by faith
(Romans 8:1–18) ---------- 274
7. There is never any condemnation
for those who are in Christ Jesus
(Romans 8:1–6) ---------- 291
8. On the work of the Holy Spirit
(Romans 8:1–11) ---------- 313
9. There is no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ
(Romans 8:1–39) ---------- 333
10. What is being taught to us about the realm of the flesh
and the realm of the Holy Spirit?
(Romans 8:5–8) ---------- 346
11. Let us give glory to the Lord, who has given us the Holy Spirit
(Romans 8:9–17) ---------- 356
12. As debtors to the gospel of the water and the Spirit,
we are not those who should live as slaves of sin
(Romans 8:12–25) ---------- 372
13. Those who will inherit the kingdom of God
(Romans 8:16–27) ---------- 382
14. The day of glory for which the righteous wait while groaning
(Romans 8:18–25) ---------- 401
15. Weak children live by the help of the Holy Spirit
(Romans 8:26–30) ---------- 408

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Tablet or Smartphone.

16. Our salvation, which He predestined
(Romans 8:28–39) ---------- 415
17. No one shall be able to separate us from the love
which is in Jesus Christ
(Romans 8:30–39) ---------- 436
18. The love of God, from which no one can separate us
(Romans 8:35–39) ---------- 450

Sermons on Romans Chapter 9

• Sermons by Paul C. Jong

1. The reason Israel, which possessed privileges,
drifted away from the gospel
(Romans 9:1–5) ---------- 461
2. Paul's great sorrow—the fate
of his kinsmen who rejected the gospel
(Romans 9:1–5) ---------- 469
3. The Lord, who loves those who believe
in the righteousness of God
(Romans 9:1–13) ---------- 484
4. We have been saved from sin
by receiving the mercy of God through faith
(Romans 9:1–13) ---------- 500
5. Do not look for the basis of salvation in yourself
(Romans 9:14–18) ---------- 512

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6. Of God who shows mercy
(Romans 9:14–18) ---------- 519
7. We have been saved by the great mercy and power of God
(Romans 9:14–24) ---------- 528
8. God saved sinners bound for hell through His mercy
(Romans 9:14–26) ---------- 542
9. The Lord called those like Jacob and blessed them
(Romans 9:14–33) ---------- 558
10. The grace of salvation that has left us as a remnant
(Romans 9:19–29) ---------- 574
11. A life that relies not on works but on faith
(Romans 9:23–33) ---------- 585
12. We who have been saved not by works
but by the righteousness of God
(Romans 9:30–33) ---------- 607

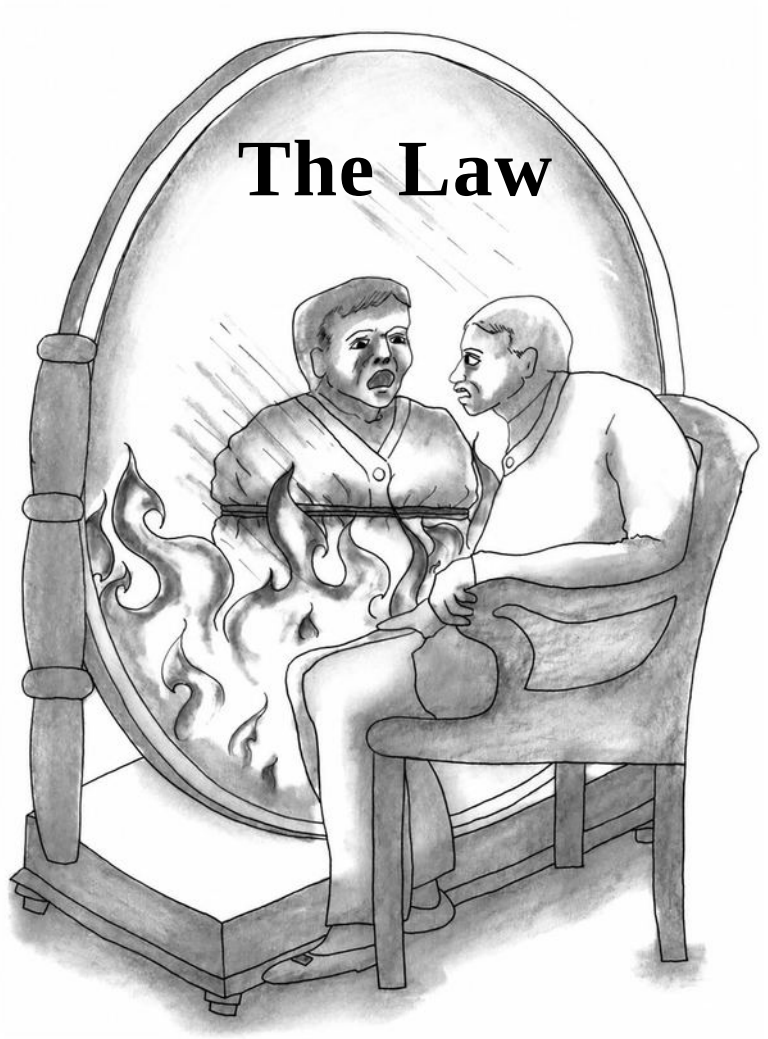
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CHAPTER

7

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The Law



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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

There is no good in the flesh, and salvation is in the Lord

< Romans 7:1–25 >

"Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin

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revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

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The body of Christ, which received the judgment in our place

There are times when, having made up our minds to live according to the word of God, we find ourselves before long drawn by desires we did not want. At such times we easily think that, since our resolve was weak, we need only resolve more firmly. However, in Romans chapter 7, after examining to the end what kind of being our flesh is, Paul asks who the One is who will deliver him. Therefore, before we lean on our own strength again, we must first know what the law reveals to us and how Christ has delivered us.

Paul says this to those who know the law, that is, to the brethren who have received the remission of sins and know the law of God. The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives, and here the man over whom the law has dominion is our old man, who was under sin. Paul explains this by taking the case of a woman who has a husband. While her husband is alive, she is bound to him, so if she goes to another man it is a sin; but if her husband dies, she becomes free from that law. The reason Paul brings up this analogy is not to stop at a story about marriage, but to explain that we, who were bound to the law, have entered into a different relationship through Christ.

"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Romans 7:4). Here, what has released us is not the merit of having kept the law well, but the body of Christ. We who were under the law had to receive judgment because of sin, but Jesus bore our sins and received that judgment in our place. This does not mean that we should die by ourselves to resolve sin, nor does it mean that the flesh has already

disappeared. It means accepting by faith what Christ, who died in our place, has accomplished.

Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John. Because all the sins we commit from birth until death were passed on to Jesus in this way, the Lord shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the judgment we should have received. And He rose again from death and gave us the remission of sins and new life. Because the Lord received the judgment for sin that the law demanded, we who believe in that salvation have been delivered from the wrath of the law.

However, the explanation does not end with our having been released from our former bondage. Paul says that we have gone to Him who was raised from the dead and have come to bear fruit to God. We have not been abandoned, after escaping the judgment for sin, to live as we please; rather, we have become people whom God uses as we rely on the living Christ. Therefore, we must not look for the power that leads our lives in our own flesh, but must receive it from the Lord, who has placed us in new life.

Serve not according to the letter of the law but according to the Spirit

Paul sets side by side the time when we were in the flesh and the present. Before we were born again, even when the law pointed out sin, we had no power within us to resolve it; rather, sinful passions were at work in our members and bore fruit to death. Though we knew what we had to do, we could not do it, and our hearts were drawn to what we should not do.

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"But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6). Now, because Christ had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for those sins in our place on the Cross, we have been delivered from the way of piling up deeds to escape judgment. To serve in the oldness of the letter is to strive to show that we keep the word of God according to the letter, and to serve in the newness of the Spirit is to believe in the Lord, who has given us the remission of sins, and to serve God by following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, who dwells within us. The labor of trying to obtain salvation and the service that comes from gratitude for having received salvation differ in their starting point.

This does not mean, however, that the law of God has disappeared or has been changed into something wrong. What has been resolved through Christ is the price of sin for which we had to be judged; the right and wrong that God spoke of have not vanished. Covetousness and hatred are still evil, and loving one's neighbor is still right. It is only that we, who used to stand before the right word and set out to accomplish righteousness by the power of our own flesh, have now come to do what is right by following the Holy Spirit while believing in the righteousness of the Lord.

Therefore, even though we discover our weaknesses, we need not define ourselves as people who cannot serve God. If the ground on which we have been appointed as workers were the perfection of the flesh, no one could stand in that place; but the Lord has remitted all our sins and given us the Holy Spirit. Relying on that grace, we can look after our neighbors and devote ourselves to the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Instead of hiding our shortcomings and exalting

ourselves, we must walk by faith, looking to the work in which the Lord delights.

The good commandment brings to light the sin within me

Since it is said that sinful passions were revealed through the law, the question may arise whether the law itself is not sin. Paul says clearly that it cannot be so, and looks back on how he regarded the law before he was born again. It is his confession that, had it not been for the commandment not to covet, he would not have known the covetousness within himself. A person who had thought himself fine, looking only at his outward behavior, came to see even the desires in his heart before the word of God.

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead" (Romans 7:7–8). This does not mean that the commandment newly created sin and put it into a heart without sin. Sin was already in man, but that sin used the commandment as an opportunity to reveal all manner of evil desire. When we hear the word not to covet what belongs to others, we consider that we certainly ought to do so, yet we discover that our own hearts actually move in longing for what belongs to others. The word of God does not cover up that desire as justified but exposes it as sin.

We must not read the statement that apart from the law sin was dead as meaning that there was no sin at all in the world before the law was given. Earlier Paul said, *"Until the law sin*

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was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law" (Romans 5:13). Sin already existed from the time of Adam, but people could not regard it as sin. Paul, too, thought he was alive while he did not understand the commandment, but when the commandment came, sin was revealed and he knew that he was one who deserved death. The peace one has while not knowing sin is not the same as the peace one enjoys after Jesus has actually removed that sin through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Paul says that the commandment, which was to bring life, turned out instead to bring death to him. This is because, although he had expected that he could become righteous if he lived according to the commandment, what came out of himself, on which the commandment shone, was sin rather than obedience. Sin used that expectation to deceive him and made it impossible for him to escape the death that comes upon one who has committed sin. He held on to the law with the confidence that he would be all right if he tried harder, but what was revealed before the law was the image of a sinner who had no power to give himself life.

Therefore, Paul concludes that the law and the commandment are holy, just, and good. It is not that, since the good word killed me, the word must be put away; rather, it is that I must know that I am one who must die because of the sin revealed by that word. This is because the law was not given so that we would keep all of it and become righteous, but was given so that we would realize and know our sins. God's revealing sin as exceedingly sinful is His work of not leaving us in the illusion that we can live by our own righteousness. The more we know what sin is, the less we try to cover it with our own resolve and the more we seek the Savior who will remove sin; and that Savior is none other than Jesus, who had the sin of the world,

which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and then rose again from death.

Desiring good does not produce good in the flesh

Paul confesses that the law is spiritual, but that he himself is carnal, sold under sin. He is speaking of the difference between the good law and the flesh that cannot fulfill it. In this confession there is Paul before he was born again, who had grown weary from striving to live according to the law, but there is also Paul after he was born again, who honestly speaks of his own flesh that still loves sin. This is because, whether a person is born again or not, the flesh follows sin all the same. By exposing his own flesh, which does what he does not want to do, Paul keeps us from trusting that flesh as the power for a righteous life.

What is the reason one does not do what one wants but does what one hates? It is because having a desire for good does not mean that even the tendency of the flesh to follow sin has changed. Paul says that the very fact that he does what he does not want to do is itself an acknowledgment of the goodness of the law. Knowing that one has done wrong is acknowledging that what God has forbidden is not right, and that acknowledgment shows that there is a difference between the flesh, which loves sin, and the word of God.

"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in

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me" (Romans 7:18–20). After saying "in me," Paul makes clear that this means "in my flesh." He is not declaring that even the heart that has received the remission of sins and in which the Holy Spirit dwells is entirely evil; rather, he knows that the flesh itself has no power to accomplish good. There is no sin in the heart of a righteous person. This is because the Lord received baptism from John and had all those sins passed on to Him, and shed His blood on the Cross to pay their price. Therefore, the phrase "sin that dwells in me" should not be read as meaning that sin remains in the heart of the righteous; it should be read as meaning that, even though a born-again person has the desires the Holy Spirit gives, the flesh still tries to follow its own lusts. Therefore, we must cast away the thought that we can serve God well if we only make our own will strong while ignoring the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The statement that the one who does sin is not I but sin that dwells in me is also not an excuse for shifting the blame onto others. While acknowledging the evil he does, Paul is revealing the reality of the flesh from which that evil comes. This does not mean that we should become people who do not acknowledge our wrongdoing; it means that we should not rely on the flesh, which is drawn to sin, but rely on the salvation Christ has given and on the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

We, too, easily think, whenever we make mistakes, that we could live good lives if only our circumstances were different. But when there are desires within us that follow sin, will that problem disappear just by changing our circumstances? On the other hand, giving up everything that is right because the flesh is that way is not Paul's intent either. Because the Lord who saved us leads us by the Holy Spirit, we can present the bodies that used to follow the will of the flesh to the work in which God

delights. Faith that does not trust the flesh leads to leaning on the Lord, who gives us the power to serve God.

Through whom does the wretched man give thanks?

Paul came to realize a law: that evil is present with him, who wants to do good. With the inward man he delights in the law of God, but in his members there was another law that warred against the law of the mind and brought him into captivity to the law of sin. Here lies the reason a born-again person, while rejoicing in the word of God, is still drawn to the lusts of the flesh. If we expect the body to follow automatically as the heart wishes, we will fail to understand ourselves and will even come to doubt the fact that we have been saved.

However, we must know both the fact that the flesh is still weak and the fact that the Lord has remitted all our sins. Just because the flesh pursues sin does not mean that the remission of sins Jesus accomplished is canceled or that the Holy Spirit departs. The sins the Lord bore include even the sins we will commit with the flesh in the future. Therefore, there is no reason to hide our wrongdoing, and no reason to add deeds every day trying to obtain salvation again. We must acknowledge our sins, believe in the salvation the Lord has already accomplished, and follow the will of the Holy Spirit.

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:24–25). To the question of who will deliver him, Paul does not put forward his own name or his own resolve. The reason for his thanksgiving lies in Jesus Christ

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our Lord. This is because, looking at one's own flesh, one is wretched, but looking at the Lord, who had even the sins one will commit with that flesh passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment, and rose again, salvation is certain. Paul's lament is not a declaration that he has lost the remission of sins; it is a confession that he cannot live without the Savior who delivered him, and it leads to thanksgiving.

At the end, too, Paul says that with the flesh he serves the law of sin. Having come to give thanks does not mean that the flesh has been changed into a body that does not love sin at all, nor does it mean that it is all right to follow sin as it is. Because the Lord has delivered us from the judgment for sin, we can now rely on that grace, refuse the lusts of the flesh, and follow the will of God. When we discern between the flesh, which cannot give me life, and the Savior, who has given me life, we come to serve God with the gratitude of salvation even while fighting against sin.

At the beginning, we asked whether, on discovering desires we did not want, we must firm up our resolve again. Now we must leave behind the expectation that we can remove those desires by our own strength, and look to the Lord, who bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, paid their price with the blood of the Cross, and then rose again. Our weakness is not something to hide, and our salvation is not something to entrust to the flesh. Withdraw the heart that relied on the flesh, and believe in the Savior who has remitted all our sins. The reason Paul's thanksgiving is ours as well is not that we have kept our resolve well, but that Jesus Christ has delivered us. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

We who have been saved through Jesus Christ and live by that faith

< Romans 7:1–6 >

“Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”

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We who have died by faith and have been raised by faith in Christ

The apostle Paul says that we have become dead to the law. This is a word saying that we became dead to the law in this way so that we might go to Him who was raised from the dead and bear fruit to God. In the course of our life of faith, following the word *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*, we often say that we have died in Jesus Christ. We often say that we are those who have died and also those who have been raised.

Then how can we say that we have died and have the faith that we have died? In fact, we did not actually die. The statement that we have died is a statement that must be made in God, in Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ came to this earth, bore the sin of us mankind by receiving baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross once and for all, shed His blood, and died, and then rose again from death and saved us. That is why we can have the faith that we have died in Jesus Christ. When we say that we have died, it does not mean that we ourselves died, but that we are those who have died by faith in Jesus Christ and also those who have been raised by faith.

Paul explained this matter by means of the law and gave an example. Asking whether we do not know that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives, he said, *"The woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren,*

you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Romans 7:2–4).

It is an example saying that if a woman who has a husband goes to another man, it becomes a problem, but once her husband has died, it is no problem at all even if she marries someone else. In the same way, we were once under the dominion of the law. Because there was sin in our souls, our flesh was under the dominion of the law, and we could not help but be put to death and could not help but be cursed.

That we have died in Christ means that Jesus Christ came to this earth and received in our place the judgment that the law pronounces on our sins. Jesus Christ received baptism from John and bore our sins, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death and saved us. Therefore, we have died in Christ by faith and have become those who have been raised by faith in Christ.

Just as it is not unlawful at all for a woman to marry someone else once her husband has died, it is not that we must die by ourselves. By believing that Jesus Christ bore your sins and mine through baptism and shed His blood and died on the Cross, that is, that He received the judgment for sin, we have died once in Christ. And by believing that Jesus Christ was raised, we can live again. In fact, all those who believed have been raised. So it is that we died in faith and live in faith; it is not that we ourselves simply died and came back to life.

The reason I am telling you this word is as follows: if you and I are to become people of complete faith, we must first know the fact that before we met Jesus Christ we were under the dominion of the law. We were under the dominion of the law because we had sin and were also people who commit sin. If we do not believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ received in our place all our sins that the law speaks of and their judgment, we

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cannot become complete believers. If we do not know that we died through Jesus Christ and were raised through Jesus Christ, we cannot become complete Christians.

The apostle Paul often uses the phrase “in Christ.” These are statements that our having been made was also in Christ, that we received salvation in His power, in His love and in His salvation, and that we have all come to be entirely in Christ, in what He planned and purposed. If our faith is to become complete, we must have this faith that we died in Christ and were raised again in Christ. When we have the faith that we died in Christ, we can also have the faith that we were raised in Christ. Then we can become complete Christians, truly mature Christians.

A person who does not have the faith that he has died completely in Christ cannot have the faith that Jesus Christ removed all our sins and became our Savior. A person who does not acknowledge the fact that Jesus Christ bore our sins once and for all by receiving baptism from John, and was nailed to the Cross and died, is not a complete believer and cannot become a person of complete faith. That is why we must become people of complete faith. What kind of faith is complete faith? It is the person whose old husband has died who becomes a complete believer and a complete Christian.

Our old husband was the law

Our old husband was the law. Because we originally had sin, we were under the dominion of the law, and by the law we were people who could not help but die. That is why our Savior, our Deliverer, Jesus Christ, came to this earth, had all our sins that the law speaks of passed on to Him, and paid in our place the judgment for sin that the law speaks of, the price of that sin. It

means that Jesus Christ bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so bore all our sins and paid the price of sin. Therefore, by believing in that Jesus Christ, we become those who have died once, and by believing in the fact that Jesus Christ has become our Savior, we become those who live again. When we have such faith, we can truly be called complete Christians.

Why is that so? It is because, as we live in this world, when we look at ourselves in various areas, such as our own selves or our own circumstances, we come to know that we are a seed of sin who can never follow the Lord. When we look at our own flesh and at the desires of the flesh, we come to know that we are people who can never follow the Lord. Yet the reason we can follow the Lord is that Christ bore the whole price of all our sins against the law and paid it all off. Because we have died in Christ, because we believe in Christ, because we have died once in Him and have been raised once in Him, we have become people who can follow the Lord by believing in Jesus Christ, regardless of our own weaknesses. That is why it is said that our salvation was predestined in Christ, that our salvation was accomplished according to His plan, that our old man died, and that we have received a new bridegroom and have come to be able to live a new life.

If we are to become mature Christians, we must have the faith that we died once in Christ, were raised again in Christ, and that our old husband has died. It means that the Lord bore all the sins that the law, our old husband, points to, and all the sins we commit because we are weak, by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death. This faith is in the hearts of you and me. This is what the apostle Paul is speaking about now.

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Because the apostle Paul had such faith, he could say, *"When I am weak, then I am strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10)*. He said that even though he had shortcomings, Christ was now magnified in him. The reason Paul could love Christ unchangingly and follow Him unchangingly was that he had died once to the law through Jesus and had received salvation through Jesus, and that he had been born again and had been reborn. That is why he could follow the Lord so valiantly and could truly have the victory of faith.

Live by the faith that is united with Christ

When you and I are evil and weak, we must truly turn our eyes to the Lord. Did the Lord put you and me to death, or did He not? Did not our Lord come to this earth, receive baptism from John for all our sins that the law speaks of and the judgment for sin, shed His blood and die on the Cross, and rise again from death, receiving the whole judgment for all our sins and saving us? We must look to Jesus Christ once again, and we must also believe. Only then can we become people of complete faith. Only then can we, without being bound by anything, though lacking, deny ourselves one step at a time every day and follow the Lord by faith. This is so for everyone, from adults and young people all the way to little children.

The apostle Paul says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)*. He has gone beyond himself. He has become one with Christ and has been united with Christ. Now, if Christ has done something, he has done it; if Christ says no, he says no too; if Christ goes, he goes too; and if Christ says it is all right, it is all right. He has become one in Him. We must live by such faith that has become one with Christ.

What is your faith and mine like? Is it not remaining in some will or some state of your own? Remaining in your own will or in such a state is not true faith.

"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20). The Lord bore in our place our sins and all the judgment for sin. Because the Lord Himself received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins, and received the judgment for our sins by being nailed to the Cross, suffering humiliation, and shedding the blood of His life, and so saved us, we could receive salvation through Jesus Christ, by believing in Him. This is faith. It is not believing in oneself, but the faith that believes in Jesus Christ. The faith that believes in Jesus Christ is indeed true faith and a very mature, complete faith.

The apostle Paul says that even though he himself is weak, the Lord is not. He said that the Lord works all the more powerfully. I hope that all of you will have this faith. I want you to have this faith: that our having died is that we died in Jesus Christ, that our living is that we live in Christ, that by believing in Christ we have received the judgment for sin, and that we have been released from our old husband and live having met a new husband, a spiritual husband. Then you can be freed from your weaknesses, and, though lacking, you can follow the Lord by faith and be victorious.

The law has not disappeared, but its wrath has vanished

Just as Christ rose again from the tomb on the third day and was victorious, we too can be victorious in every area by believing in Jesus Christ. The apostle Paul is now speaking about

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this, and God has already given us such faith. Are you and I people who have already died to the law, or not? We are people who have died. That we have died to the law does not mean that the law itself has disappeared; it means that the wrath, the condemnation, the accusation "You have sinned" that the law pronounces has lost its effect.

It means that we have died to the law because Jesus Christ bore our sins by receiving baptism from John and died, because He received the judgment for sin. Some people misunderstand and misinterpret this word and say that the law itself is useless. But the law is still, unchangingly, the word of God and the truth. The law speaks even to you and me, who have been saved, concerning our flesh now. When the flesh does wrong, the law points out that it is sin. The law is alive, but it means that the wrath the law brings down has vanished through Jesus Christ. That is why we say that we have died to the law.

It is not that the law has disappeared. We say that we have died to the law because Jesus Christ came to this earth, bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, suffered severely on the Cross, and shed His blood, and so received all our sins and the judgment for our sins.

Today some people say that the Old Testament is unnecessary. However, the statement that we have died to the law does not mean that the words of the law themselves and their function have disappeared. The law is the word of God. The statement that we have died to the law means that you and I believe that Christ bore our sins and received the judgment for our sins. Because Jesus Christ received in our place all our sins against the law, the sins we commit because we are weak, and the judgment for those sins, if we believe in Jesus Christ, you and I have truly died. We have died in Jesus Christ. And if we believe that Jesus Christ rose again from death and lives forever,

we have been raised again together with Jesus Christ. That is why we are saved from sin by faith and obtain eternal life by faith. This is called justification by faith, salvation obtained by faith. Salvation obtained by faith is salvation obtained not by our own strength but by the strength of Jesus Christ, by the faith that believes in the salvation Jesus Christ has given us. That is why those who truly believe do not boast of their own flesh. They do not boast in the flesh.

Those who live by faith do not boast of the flesh

Those who truly believe in Jesus Christ, that is, those who believe that, because Jesus Christ bore all our sins and received the judgment for sin, the law will never again judge us for our sins and has nothing left to judge, do not boast of their own flesh. They have nothing in the flesh to boast of. In fact, even if one boasts of the flesh, is there anything special in it? That is why they do not boast of the flesh, but by faith understand one another, by faith exalt the righteousness of God, by faith love one another within the salvation Christ has given us, share joy, love, gentleness, and peace with one another in it and rejoice, and exalt, thank, and praise the Lord. Even if one has much strength of the flesh, one comes to know, by doing even a little of the work of God, how quickly that strength runs out. The strength of the flesh is nothing. That is why we boast of the Lord, exalt the Lord, are thankful because of the Lord, are glad and joyful because of the Lord, and live by believing in the Lord. This is what is called complete faith.

Dear fellow believers, those who do not know that they have died with Christ, that is, those who do not believe in their hearts that it was because of themselves that Jesus Christ came to this

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earth, bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross, underwent severe suffering and humiliation, and died, are not people who have died in Christ. Such people have no right to say that they believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. You and I could not help but die because of sin. Because we had the sin the law speaks of, we had to go to hell and could not help but receive this condemnation and judgment. A person who does not acknowledge this, and so does not have the faith that Jesus Christ came as our Savior, bore our sins once and for all through baptism, and died on the Cross, receiving the whole judgment for our sins, does not believe in Jesus Christ. Because there is the former, there is the latter.

If we truly believe in Jesus Christ, if we say that we have died to the law, it means that we believe in our own sinfulness, in our having come to the point where we could not help but die, and in Jesus Christ's having been born on this earth to bear our sins. He is the King of kings, the Creator, and the Savior, yet in order to save us He came to this earth in human form, received baptism from John the Baptist once and for all and bore our sins, and, bearing the sin of the world, went to the Cross, where He was nailed, shed His blood, and died. It is believing and acknowledging that all of this was because of you and me. It is acknowledging that Jesus Christ did so precisely because of me. This is not a theory. It is not a doctrine. A life of faith is not a theory or a doctrine but a reality. The word of God is living and powerful. *"So shall My word be that goes forth from My mouth; It shall not return to Me void, But it shall accomplish what I please, And it shall prosper in the thing for which I sent it" (Isaiah 55:11)*. Just as rain comes down on the earth and does not return in vain but gives life to all things and makes them bear fruit, the word of God also is preached to people and does not return to God in vain. It completely accomplishes our salvation

and returns to God. Those who believe obtain salvation. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

Live by believing in Jesus Christ

The word of God is all fulfilled. Therefore, our faith must be complete, and our faith must be real. As Paul said, we are truly people who have become just as the word says: *"To Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Romans 7:4)*. In order that we might bear the fruit of righteousness, the fruit of preaching the gospel, and the fruit of saving souls, we died with Jesus Christ and obtained new life with Jesus Christ. In order that we might bear fruit in what is right, and that we might obtain eternal life and also cause other people to obtain eternal life, we must go to Him, and we must have the faith that those who have gone to Him have become so.

The apostle Paul says, *"But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6)*. It is not by the law. It is not by deeds. It is by believing in Jesus Christ that we serve God and follow God, and by believing in Jesus Christ that we obtain new strength and live. You and I live by believing in Jesus Christ, and by believing in Jesus Christ we are comforted and prosper. If we do not believe in Jesus, there is nothing. Because the apostle Paul had such faith, he was able to live by faith, even though he too had many shortcomings.

You and I are lacking. Our bodies, thoughts, and hearts are lacking in many ways. We have little in possessions and little strength of the flesh, but by believing in whom can we live well? We can live well and be victorious by believing in Jesus Christ.

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Even our living now is because of Jesus Christ, because of the power of Jesus Christ. Our living righteously, our living and breathing like this, our living while serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit—we live all of it because of Jesus Christ.

Even when you and I die, it is Jesus Christ who takes us; if Jesus Christ does not permit it, who can kill us? Jesus Christ is the Master. By believing in Jesus Christ, we can live. This is precisely faith. The faith that Christians have is precisely this kind of faith, and it is a great faith. Looking at the flesh, it seems that there is nothing, yet see how we live by faith. We live by faith where there is nothing. Because the main figure of faith is Jesus, because that Jesus is mighty in power, we are now living by believing in that Jesus, through His working in us. Jesus died, but He is alive. He is the One who hears and answers our prayers. Truly, it is something to be very thankful for. I hope that you will have complete faith and live well, being victorious by believing in Christ. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

We can do all things by faith in the righteousness of God

< Romans 7:1–6 >

“Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”

Dear fellow believers, today we have looked at the word of Romans chapter 7 up to verse 6. Let us all read verses 1 and 2 together.

“Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as

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he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband" (Romans 7:1–2).

The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives

The apostle Paul is speaking to the people who have become children of God and who do the work of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What the apostle Paul wants to say to God's people is this: since you have already been delivered from the law of God, you must now live by faith in Jesus Christ. And so he is saying that you must bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit and bear the fruit of righteousness that saves souls.

Here the word says, *"Do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?" (Romans 7:1)*. When a person is born into this world, that is, when a person who is a descendant of Adam is born into this world, anyone comes under the rule of the law of God. Why is this so? It is because, before we are born again, we are all shut up under the law of God.

The first human beings, Adam and Eve, did what God had forbidden and broke His command. God had said not to eat the fruit of the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil, but sin came because people ate that fruit. And God gave a command to the people upon whom that sin had come, and that is the law. God gave the law and shut people up with the law so that they would come under the rule of that law and live under that law. He shut people up within the law of God by the law.

Why did He do so? He did so because people are sinners and a seed of evildoers.

Therefore the word says, *"Do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?" (Romans 7:1)*. In this world, before we are born again, the people of the flesh are people of sin and evildoers who are able to do evil, and so God shut them up under the law and made them come under its rule. It was because only then could this society be maintained and mankind be preserved.

Without the law, this world could not be maintained

If the law of God did not rule over the people who have evil in their hearts, that is, the people who do not have the Holy Spirit, this world would end up becoming a scene of utter chaos. If that happened, people could not live, no community could be formed, and no society could be built. Therefore, first of all, God shut people up with the law and kept them under sin so that they could not move an inch.

Those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have been delivered from the law

Then what about the people who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? We who have received the remission of sins have been delivered from the law. Before we were born again, that is, when we ourselves had not received the remission of sins, we lived under

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the rule of the law of God, but now we have been delivered from that law.

When we are under the rule of the law, we cannot help but be put to death. By the law God established, which says that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, all people came under the rule of the law of God and had to be put to death and go to hell. They are actually put to death, and they are all cursed. It could only have turned out that way, but our Lord came to this earth, gave us salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, removed all our sins, and made us follow the truth of God.

Because the Lord has poured into our hearts the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God, our old man was under the rule of the law, but now we have become people of the Holy Spirit. Our old man had to be put to death by the law of God and deserved to be cursed, but through Jesus Christ we have already received all that death and curse. And through Jesus Christ we have come to life again and have come to live a new life by faith in Jesus Christ. That is, we have become people of the Holy Spirit, and we have become people who bear the fruit of righteousness by faith in God.

We have become dead to the law through the body of Christ

To explain this truth simply, the apostle Paul gave an illustration. If a married person goes to another person before one of the two dies, that is adultery and wrongdoing, but if a woman marries another man after her husband has died, that does not become a sin. The apostle Paul, explaining with this illustration, says that the relationship between the law and us is just like that.

Jesus bore the sin of mankind through John the Baptist, and He was nailed on the Cross in our place, shed His blood, and died, and by this we have been put to death. We have been put to death with respect to the law, and our old man has died. Because our old man has died, that is, because we ourselves, who had the law as our bridegroom, have died within the curse of the law, we are now no longer under the rule of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ we have gone to Jesus Christ and have come to bear the fruit of righteousness. Therefore, by faith in God we have become able to do righteous works at any time, we have come to live a new life, we have come to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit, and we have come under the rule of the Holy Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, because we are now no longer under the rule of the law but under the rule of God, we have become able to do righteous works at any time by faith in God. By faith in God, you and I have actually become such people. Therefore, verse 4 says as follows.

"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Romans 7:4).

Our old bridegroom was the law. The law of God was our old bridegroom. Why was the law our bridegroom when we were the old man? It was because at that time we were sinners, and because we had sin. Just as there is always wrath where there is sin, the law of God had to exist in order to carry out that wrath, and that law was the law of God. Therefore, our old man has become dead to the law through the body of Christ.

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The death of Jesus Christ is your death and mine

Our own death is a vain death. But because Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism through John the Baptist, and because Jesus Christ was cursed while having your sins and mine passed on to Him, and also because He was put to death, that death of Jesus Christ is your death and mine.

Because our old man has been put to death in this way, we have now been made to go to the One who was raised from the dead, that is, to Jesus Christ, and to bear fruit to God. Before we are born again, if we are not under the rule of the law, we end up becoming like beasts, but after we have received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, our old man has died with Christ, and we have now become a new man.

Therefore, we have gone to Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John, died on the Cross while bearing our sins, and rose again from death, and we have become people who can bear the fruit of righteousness that God wants from us by faith in Him. This is not so only in sermons; it is actually so. How can you and I do righteous works? We can do righteous works by faith in God.

The reason we can do the works of righteousness

Why can we do the righteous works of God? We can do righteous works because we are not bound by sin. The reason you and I can do the righteous works of God even though we are lacking is that God has saved you and me, and that Jesus Christ has borne all the curse of the law.

You and I are now living by faith, and what we must know is the fact that the reason we can keep living by this faith is our

faith in God and in the righteousness of God. Because God sent His own Son and that Jesus Christ removed our sins with the water and the blood, we died with Jesus Christ and have come to life with Christ.

From then on, even though we are lacking, we have become people who at any time bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit that pleases God, by faith in Jesus Christ. We have become able to be instruments of righteousness by faith in the righteousness of Jesus. Even after receiving the remission of sins, we still have shortcomings, but we come to keep living the life of workers of righteousness.

Let us read verses 5 and 6.

"For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:5–6).

The word says that when we were in the flesh, that is, before we received the remission of sins, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members and made us bear fruit to death.

The law exposes our sins and stirs them up

Dear fellow believers, you must know that the law is not a law that makes us able to live good lives. People who acknowledge the law and try to follow the law well, people who try to live a life of faith by keeping the law, may think that if they live that way, they will be able to live kindly and well and to live good lives, but that is not so.

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The law points out our sins and digs up sin. And it stirs it up. The law says, *"You shall not murder" (Romans 13:9)*, and on seeing that word, people come to know that there is a murderous heart within them, that they want to commit murder. God tells us not to do it, but we already have it. Therefore, what role does the law play? Just as all the worms, larvae, and filthy things inside a dung heap are exposed when it is dug up with a stick, the law plays the role of digging up the sin within us.

What happens if a person knows only the law of God and does not know the righteousness of God? Such a person can make an effort to live a good life and can put on an outward appearance, but in the end he becomes a hypocrite. In reality, he cannot live a good life. When the law says, *"You shall not commit adultery" (Romans 13:9)*, he instead sees his own heart full of the desire to commit adultery. And so he tries not to commit adultery, not to commit it in deed, and not to commit it even in his heart, but in reality he finds that he is already committing adultery. Therefore, to live a life of faith properly, one must know the righteousness of God.

Live a life of faith by believing in the righteousness of God

It is written, *"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 sent His own Son to this earth, made that Son receive the baptism John gave so that He would bear our sins, and made Him die on the Cross to save us, and that work is the right work of God. That is the love with which God loved us.

We must know and believe that right work of God. We must live a life of faith by faith in the righteousness of God. If a person does not have faith in the righteousness of God, his life of faith becomes hypocrisy and a show of pretense. He becomes a person who falsely pretends to do good. Such a person ends up becoming an anti-Christian in the end. He pretends to be good inside the church building, but outside the church building he turns into a swindler.

Even after we are born again, if we fall into the things of the flesh, we come to follow the sinful passions, that is, the lusts of the flesh. But because all the sins that bound us have actually died through Jesus Christ, we can follow the Lord again at any time. Because Jesus Christ received baptism from John and bore our sins, and was nailed on the Cross and received the judgment for our sins, we have been delivered from the curse and from sin.

Therefore, we who believe in the righteousness of God have become people who can at any time look to God, fight the good fight by faith, and do good works. Through faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have become people who can live a right life at any time. It is through our Lord Jesus Christ that we have become such people.

Therefore, you and I, who have received the remission of sins, are weak and lacking in the flesh, but we can do the righteous works of God at any time. We have become people who can do the righteous works of God at any time if only we set our minds to it. The One who made us so is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ bore all your shortcomings and mine and received all the judgment for them. Therefore, by faith in the work Jesus Christ accomplished, and also because we too want what pleases Jesus Christ, we have become people who can do good works at any time.

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God has made you and me so. God has enabled you and me to keep following God and running forward. God has made us so that we are not bound by our weaknesses but can keep running. This is God's love and blessing toward you and me. This is not the past but the present, and it continues to apply to us in the future as well. Therefore the word says that *"we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6).*

A life of faith that serves in the newness of the Spirit

Dear fellow believers, a legalistic life of faith is like this: if you greet someone by saying, "Hello," you will not become enemies with that person. It is enough if I just do not hate the other person in deed. That is a legalistic life of faith. But the life of faith of the Holy Spirit is not like that. Not truly hating in one's heart, truly caring for others in one's heart, and being tolerant in one's heart—that is exactly the life of faith that lives by faith in God, being led by the Holy Spirit.

What the apostle Paul is saying in Romans chapter 7 is exactly that we should live a life of faith in the newness of the Spirit. Therefore, this word in Romans chapter 8 verse 1, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1),* applies to us. This word has been fulfilled in us.

Verse 2 says, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2).* It is so because the law of the Spirit of life has set us free from the law, which is the law of sin and death. We did not die because

of our own sins; rather, Jesus Christ received baptism from John and bore all our sins, and while having our sins passed on to Him, He bore and received the judgment for our sins on the Cross through death, and He died and rose again and became our Savior. Because of this, through faith in that Jesus Christ, we have been set free from sin, from the curse, and from the law.

Therefore, we never receive condemnation and so never become people who have sin. We have become perfect people without sin before God, people who can do perfect works that please God at any time. You and I have received such a blessing.

Verse 3 says, *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. This means that He set our sins upon Jesus. God the Father made Jesus Christ the sacrificial offering for mankind and made Him receive the baptism John the Baptist gave, so that all the sin of mankind would be passed on to Jesus. And He made Him die on the Cross, raised Him again, and made Him the Savior of you and me. Because Jesus paid in full, with the blood He shed on the Cross, the price of all the sins He had passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, all our sins have been remitted.

Therefore, we know that the law of God is good, but we cannot keep the law. Because our flesh is weak, we cannot keep the law. But the way for us to be delivered from the curse of that law is made possible by faith in the word of God, in the righteousness of God, and in the work Jesus Christ accomplished. We can be delivered from the curse of sin by faith in the righteousness of God. We can receive the remission of sins by faith in the righteousness of God. We can keep following the work of God by faith in the righteousness of God.

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The law is the tutor that brings us to Christ

Even so, we must not become like the antinomians. The law is alive even now. Whenever we do wrong, the law teaches us, saying, “This is not right; this is what is right.” That is the function of the law, and that is why the law is called a tutor.

In the days when people of old learned to read and write, there was a village schoolmaster in every village who taught reading and writing. And there were children who went to that schoolmaster to learn. In those days, the children of the lowborn were not allowed to learn to read and write, and it was mainly the children of noble families who were taught. To have the children of those noble families taught, the servants or household slaves of that family would hold the hand of their master’s child or carry the child on their backs and take the child to the village school. These servants only played the role of taking their master’s child to the village school and then went back home. And when the lessons at the village school were over, a servant would come again, carry the child on his back or hold the child’s hand, and take the child home. That is why the law is called the tutor that leads us. The law played the role of taking us to the righteousness of God.

Even though we are lacking, we can work by faith in the righteousness of God

Therefore, what I want to tell you is that you and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, are lacking, but we can do the work of God by faith in the righteousness of God. We can do the work of God as much as we want.

Dear fellow believers, is there anyone who thinks, “I am so lacking that following the Lord just does not seem to suit my nature at all”? Even such a person can follow the Lord. He can do the righteous works of God. He can spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and he can preach the gospel. Dear fellow believers, if only a perfect person could preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who could preach the gospel?

You and I also have shortcomings, just like the people who will hear the gospel, but because the Lord has saved you and me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, because He has saved us through the righteousness of God, and because we have obtained salvation by faith, we can follow God and preach the gospel. Therefore, we can preach to other people, saying, “You too can obtain salvation by faith, just as I did,” and those who hear also come to obtain salvation by faith. Those who believe have received salvation. Therefore, we are used for the good work of God.

It is the same with our doing the work of God. We can do what pleases God. In the past I did what pleased my own heart, but now that is not so. Even though there are many difficulties, the reason we can do the righteous works of God is that God saved me through the righteousness of God. And because God wants to save other souls as well, we do the flower-calyx work of supporting this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If God wants to save other souls, you and I can also do that work. We can do it by faith. We are qualified to do that work. We are qualified to take part in this work. We have become people who can work by faith and bear the fruit of righteousness. All of this is possible through God.

Dear fellow believers, is it because a person who has received the remission of sins is weak that he cannot follow the Lord? When he knows that he is truly weak, he can rather follow

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the Lord. He can do righteous works. Dear fellow believers, is it because you are lacking that you cannot follow the Lord? It is precisely because you are lacking that you can follow the Lord by faith in the Lord.

We can do all things in Him who gives us strength

Dear fellow believers, is it because you have no strength that you cannot do the work of God? It is precisely because you have no strength that you can do the work of God by faith in God. Just as the word says, *"I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me" (Philippians 4:13)*, we are fully able to work.

Dear fellow believers, all things are possible by faith in the Lord. Because the Lord has made us children of God, because the Lord has made us workers of God, because the Lord has made us so that we can do the work of God at any time if only we want to, and because the Lord has given us such strength and such blessings, we can work.

Therefore, you and I must work by faith and follow the Lord by faith. As we follow the Lord, we will also have shortcomings, but because the Lord has borne all those shortcomings, we must now renew our hearts and follow the Lord. We only need to look to what pleases the Lord, asking, "What would please the Lord?" and follow it. Then we overcome; we are victorious.

Dear fellow believers, I too sometimes find harsh words coming out of my mouth when, while driving, I encounter a car that recklessly cuts in beside me or threatens me. After going through such a thing, I feel ashamed of myself. In this way, we still have shortcomings in the flesh. But because the Lord has borne even those shortcomings, we can, just as we are with those shortcomings, look to the Lord once again and walk the

righteous way. That is exactly what a person who lives by faith in the righteousness of God looks like, and it is the blessing given to us. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

What faith is needed to escape from legalistic faith?

< Romans 7:1–6 >

“Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter.”

The relationship with the law ends not by divorce but by death

Romans chapter 7 is the word of God that makes clear why we must no longer live a legalistic life of faith. Through the

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analogy of marriage, Paul says that a person is bound by the law only as long as he lives. That is, he presents the principle that if the husband dies, one becomes free from that law. And he testifies that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and has now become our Savior. This word clearly shows the truth that we *"have become dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4)*. It means that this word counsels us that, if we are to become those who are dead to our sins, we must have the faith that we were united with Jesus Christ, died with Him, and rose again with Him. That is, it is saying that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and so fulfilled the judgment for sin that the law demands. It means that we must now be saved from our sins, not by keeping the law, but by the faith that believes in the Lord as our Savior, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death.

The function of the law is to reveal man's sin, but it cannot remove it

"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died.

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And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (Romans 7:7–13).

Paul says that the word of the law reveals man's sin. We can see that the law, as a holy law given by God, reveals what our sins are before God, and demands that we be saved and live by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. The law shows that the judgment for sin comes upon sinners. The law also reveals and shows how righteous God is. However, because the law only reveals man's sin and cannot remove that sin, it makes us realize the fact that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*.

Therefore, by making man realize his own sin, the law shows that we can go to Jesus and be saved and live by the faith that believes in the work of Jesus, who Himself 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. Therefore, it shows that those who believe in this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit become those who are saved by faith and can live giving thanks to God.

God gives the word of the law to us, the descendants of Adam, and at the same time shows that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and was nailed to the Cross, receiving the judgment for all those sins in our place, and that by believing in Jesus

Christ, who rose again from death, we can be saved from the judgment for all sins.

The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit shows the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who saved us once and for all from all our sins and judgment. God makes us realize that it is all the more urgent, because this very age is the last age, in which the gospel of the water and the Spirit is absolutely necessary.

The nature of sin and the judgment of the law cannot be resolved by human effort

"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:14–20).

This word shows how hard those who are now practicing religion within Christianity are striving, under legalistic faith, to resolve their own sins. It means that it starkly shows the inability of man, who tries to accomplish salvation by his own efforts under the wrath of the law. This word tells us that they are living a life of faith in which, while earnestly desiring good, they instead commit the sin they themselves hate. It shows those who are living a legalistic life of faith today that their problem of sin can never be resolved by such faith, and it says that the word of

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit is absolutely necessary for them. They will come to know that this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the word of God needed by those who are now living a legalistic life of faith. This word of God says that they must return from the legalistic faith they teach to the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Some people, because they live a legalistic life of faith, turn away from the word of truth that the Lord has given, which causes people to be born again of water and the Spirit, and wander in a tiny world of religion. This word sheds light on such people. They do not believe in the work of Jesus' baptism, by which the Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Therefore, because they do not wash away the sins they commit every day, they come before God wearing rags and live a legalistic life of faith. These people believe absolutely in Christian doctrines made by man. These people have fallen into the trap of religion, from which they cannot escape even though they want to escape from their own sins. If these people are to be saved from their legalistic religious life, they must believe in the Lord, Jesus, who was nailed to the Cross and rose again from death, as their Savior. This word lets them know the fact that, when they come to know rightly the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given, they can be born again by the faith that believes. Through this, while confessing, *"I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells" (Romans 7:18)*, Paul tells us that we become those who are saved from all sins only by believing in the death and resurrection of our Lord, who Himself had all the sins of the world, which include ours, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for those sins on the Cross in our place. This word tells us that all our sins can be washed away only by the work of Jesus

Christ, who received baptism from John. It teaches us that only the work of the Cross of Jesus can deliver us from all sins and judgment.

The two laws that fight within me: the law of the Spirit and the law of sin

"I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:21–23).

Paul is saying that two laws are clashing within our hearts. We, too, can know that, although with our inward man we delight in the law of God, yet another law in our members wars against the law of our mind and is taking us captive under the law of sin. This word says that this law of sin, through the sinful nature that man has in his fleshly thoughts, makes us live as slaves of sin. The law teaches through its words how right the word of the law is to the heart of a person who has sin. Accordingly, it strongly shows that the solution to our sin is the fact that Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and delivered us from sin through His death on the Cross and His resurrection, becomes our Savior. We must be saved from all our sins by believing in Jesus Christ, who came into our hearts through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as our Savior.

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Those who cannot save themselves from their own sins by their own strength come to long for the righteousness of Jesus, who became the Savior of sinners

"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24).

This desperate cry is the desperate confession of sinners who seek to be delivered from their own sins. When you pray, "Lord, deliver me from all these sins. Save me no longer by my own way, but by the way in which You saved me from all the sins of the world!" you must know that the Lord says that He wants to save you from sin through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and cause you to be born again. Now the Lord wants you to listen to the way in which He came to this earth and removed your sins. What the Lord wants from you is not simply prayers of repentance in which you regret your own sins; rather, He is telling you that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and has now saved you through His death on the Cross and His resurrection. The faith of the law goes bankrupt because of one's own sins. It means that when one cries out, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24),* the Lord is telling us that He had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and saved sinners through His death on the Cross and His resurrection.

We must realize and believe that we were people who absolutely needed the work of salvation of Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. Sinners have become those who need

the faith that believes absolutely in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. We must realize that we cannot have our sins resolved by the law of God, and we must receive salvation by the faith that believes in the Lord, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. In this way, we must receive the remission of sins by believing in the work of salvation that Jesus accomplished on the Cross, having had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. When we take hold of the righteous work of Jesus Christ by faith, we come to know that He is One who will never turn away from us. This truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the only way that can put an end to our sins and becomes the truth of salvation. The way of our salvation is open in running forward with the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which the Lord Himself has prepared for us. We can experience that the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes the word of the gospel of salvation, which is like life, saving us from the sin of the world.

The complete victory and salvation accomplished through Jesus Christ

"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:25).

At the end of despair, Paul declares, *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25)*. He is saying that the structure of our faith consists of two structures. One, he says, is the structure in which Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John,

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moving your sins and mine onto the body of Jesus through baptism and washing away our sins. The other structure, he says, is that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and saved you and me from all sins and from the judgment for all sins. It means that the Lord has spoken through the apostle Paul, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*.

The Lord is saying that our salvation lies in the work of baptism, in which Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and, as the other part, He is saying that Jesus put an end to the judgment for sin with the blood He shed on the Cross. Therefore, He is saying that Jesus Christ rose again from death, is now alive, and has become your Savior and mine. The structure of faith that has such belief tells us that it brings you and me out of a legalistic life of faith, and that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment and curse for that sin by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood, and rose again from death, and so has now become the Savior of those who believe. It testifies to us that our Savior, Jesus, had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, washed away our sins, rose again from death, and became the Savior. It shows that, by the faith that believes in the Lord as Savior, we have received the blessing that He has saved us from all the sins of the world. It says that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death, and has now become the Savior of those who believe.

From now on, all of us have become those who let the whole world know the fact that we could become children of God by

having the faith that believes that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and washed it away, and received the judgment for sin on the Cross. We who live in the twenty-first century must have become those who accept the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts as the truth of salvation, and who confess that we have now become those who give thanks to Jesus Christ, who has become our Savior. Hallelujah! I pray that you will have become people who can give thanks, glory, and testimonies of salvation to the Lord, who, for us who were sinners, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of our sins with the blood He shed hanging on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. Amen.

We give thanks and praise to the Lord that the law reveals man's sin, and that salvation has been completed by the Lord, Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and rose again from death

Romans chapter 7 has said that the question of why inner conflict still exists in the saints who have received the remission of sins can be resolved within the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in Jesus Christ. If we do not have the word of Romans chapter 7 resolved within the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can become believers who fall into a great error. When we have our sins resolved by the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit recorded in the Scriptures, we must give thanks to the Lord, who has made us

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those who can come before God as people born again from our sins.

Using marriage as an analogy to explain our relationship with the law, Paul says, *"Do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?" (Romans 7:1)*. Here, the problem lies not in man's sin itself but in his relationship with the law. It tells us that the word of the law is a law that brings our sins to light, and that if we try to live a life of faith under that law, we cannot help but always live as sinners. Paul was one who said that we must go beyond legalistic faith and become those who can give thanks to God and praise Him by the faith that believes that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. From now on, we have come to be able to live giving thanks that we have become those who can live being saved from all our sins by the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, the sacrifice of the Cross, and the Savior who rose again from death. The application of this analogy is clear. *"You also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4)*. It means that from now on we can become those who are saved from all sins by the faith that believes in the grace of salvation Jesus has given, and who live in the Lord's embrace. From now on, those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit will be shown to be not only dead to their own sins but also already dead to the law. Therefore, we must have become those who believe in the work of Jesus' baptism, by which He, who has become our Lord, had all your sins and mine transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and so pass our sins on to the body of Jesus, and who now give thanks by

faith to our Savior, Jesus Christ, who hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and paid the price of our sins.

Paul then firmly shuts out the misunderstanding about whether the law is sin. The law is holy, just, and good, but it is not the Savior of sinners. The function of the law lies not in removing sin but in revealing sin. This is because, as the word *"I would not have known sin except through the law" (Romans 7:7)* says, one could not have realized one's own sin without the law. The law does not have the power to drive out darkness; rather, it is like a light that shines on the darkness and reveals sin. The problem was not the law, but the faith of sinners today who hold on to that law and try to put forward their own righteousness. These people are still those who have not accepted in their hearts the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, paid the price of the sins of all sinners, and saved them once and for all.

In the middle part of Romans chapter 7, Paul reveals his most desperate inner confession. He says, *"To will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find" (Romans 7:18)*. Such a confession of faith is not a statement that describes the daily life of a normal saint; it is a confession that shows the inner state of those who have gone back under the faith of the law. He wants good but has no power to carry it out, and as a result he falls into self-loathing and deep frustration. This conflict did not arise merely because he was a sinner; rather, it is a pain that appears only in one who knows the law to the point of wanting to become good before God. This state is not spiritual maturity, but rather the true picture of a believer who has come to the brink of collapse.

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Paul diagnoses that two laws are clashing within him. He confesses that, although with his mind he delights in the law of God, he sees that there is another law in his members that takes him captive. The important point is the fact that this spiritual battle is not a state that the saints must normally maintain throughout their lives. Paul never says that this state is all right; rather, he defines it as a tragedy.

Finally, he cries out, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)*. This cry is neither a vow, "I will try harder," nor a resolution, "I will repent more." It is a declaration of the bankruptcy of legalistic religious faith, and a confession that one cannot escape from this state of sin by human will. Therefore, the solution to sin does not lie in strengthening one's will. It means that the answer lies only in believing as Savior in the Lord, Jesus Christ, who Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death in order to become the Savior of sinners.

Paul immediately presents the answer. He confesses, *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25)*. This answer is that the sin of the world was passed on to the body of Jesus through the baptism He received from John. And Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him, went to the Cross, was nailed, shed His blood, rose again from death, and has now become the Savior of us who believe. Paul raises the question in verse 24 of Romans chapter 7, and in Romans chapter 8 he answers with a declaration instead.

Therefore, it means that Romans chapter 7 is not a chapter that explains the normal state of the saints, but speaks of those who must return to Jesus Christ, the Master of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and give glory to God by faith. It means

that we have now come to the point where we must leave legalistic faith, enter into the faith of the grace of God, and change the structure of our faith to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as those who give thanks and glory to God. It means that we must believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin, and rose again from death, and must live as those who have been saved. From now on, all who believe in Jesus have become those who have already been put to death by the word of the law. We have become those who must, by the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, return to Jesus and, with born-again faith, live praising the grace of the salvation of Jesus Christ, and then stand before the Lord.

Therefore, we must know the fact that legalistic faith cannot remove man's sin. If the saints return to legalistic faith, their inner conflict of faith deepens, and their assurance of salvation from sin collapses. Romans chapter 7 is not a self-definition that says, "I am still a sinner," but God's warning that if we return under the law, we will inevitably collapse. When the saints rightly understand the word of Romans chapter 7, they realize how important the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is and realize that they must give glory to the Lord. Those who have realized the gospel of the water and the Spirit come to praise the righteousness of God forever. And I hope that, because you will soon realize the word of truth declared in Romans chapter 8, that there is no condemnation, you will give thanks to the Lord, become workers who testify of this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and live serving in a supporting role in the spread of the gospel. Hallelujah! We praise the Holy Triune God. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The life of those who have the Holy Spirit

< Romans 7:1–6 >

"Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter."

Are we people who belong to God, or people who belong to the devil? Are we people who have the Holy Spirit in our hearts, or people who do not have the Holy Spirit in our hearts?

The passage we read today deals with exactly this question. Verse 1 of the passage says as follows: *"Or do you not know,*

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brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?" (Romans 7:1). When we had not yet met the Lord, who received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death, the law had dominion over our sins.

We have become those who have become dead to the law through the body of Christ

What kind of person is one who has become dead to the law? Verse 4 of the passage says as follows: *"Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ" (Romans 7:4)*. The apostle Paul speaks clearly about the law. He says that our old man is one who has already become dead to the law through the body of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, he says that those who have been put to death are no longer under the shadow of the law. Verses 2 and 3 of the passage say as follows: *"For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man" (Romans 7:2–3)*.

We are those who have already received the judgment for our sins with respect to the law. Then can we say that we are living with the law? We are those who were once put to death by the law and have come to life again together with the resurrection of the Lord. The apostle Paul says that our old man has been put to death through the body of Jesus Christ. He says that, with respect

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to the sin and death the law speaks of, we were able to die once by faith in Jesus Christ and to rise again from death together with Christ. Our old man has become one who was put to death once together with Jesus Christ.

Here lies the secret of the power of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body, was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for the sin of mankind in our place, and rose again from death and became our Savior. Therefore, we who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit were able to become those who died once with Jesus Christ and also rose once from death. We have become those who received the judgment of the law together in that body of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we are no longer under the curse of the law. Rather, from death, we have become those who have obtained new life by believing in the work of the life of Jesus Christ.

To make this truth easy to understand, the apostle Paul explains it with an illustration. A woman who goes to another man while her husband is alive becomes an adulteress, but a woman whose husband has died is free to go to another man. By believing in Jesus Christ as our Savior, we have already become those who are dead to the law of God. Therefore, we have become those who can come before Jesus Christ and live by faith within His law of new life.

To whom do those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit belong?

Dear fellow believers, we ourselves, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must live knowing clearly

whether we belong to the law or belong to Christ. Are we now sinners placed under the rule of the law? Or are we people who belong to Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of new life? This must be clear.

The latter part of verse 4 of the passage says as follows: *"That you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Romans 7:4)*. It says that we are now not under the law and not under the curse. Because we have become dead to the law by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have now become those who have obtained the new life Jesus Christ gives, and have become people who share the salvation of life. And so you must know that you are people who have become able to bear much fruit of the Holy Spirit.

Those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit are those who have already been delivered from the curse of the law. The law has dominion over a man only as long as he lives. Even if the law tries to have dominion over those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it cannot have dominion over them, because the price of sin has already been paid through the body of Jesus Christ. The reason is that Jesus Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and has already died, and rose again from death and became the Savior of those who believe. Therefore, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are people who are already dead to the law, and so they have become those who have been delivered from the curse of the law. Even though the power of the law is alive, those who believe in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and in the sacrifice of the Cross no longer remain under the curse of the law.

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Jesus Christ had all our sins transferred onto His own body through the baptism John gave, received the judgment for sin in our place, and rose again from death and became our eternal Savior. Therefore, we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have become people who are not under the law but in Jesus Christ. It means that we are no longer those who remain under the curse of the law. It means that we have now become those who have obtained the new life that is in Jesus Christ. By our faith we have become those who are in Jesus Christ, who is the Lord of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now we have become the people of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now we have become those who are not under the wrath of the law.

When we were under the law, we bore the fruit of death

Romans chapter 7 verses 5 and 6 of the passage say as follows: *"For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:5–6).*

The word in verse 5, *"when we were in the flesh" (Romans 7:5)*, refers to the time when we did not believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we lived as people who did not believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we were those in whose members the sinful passions were at work, so that we could not help but bear the fruit of death.

A person who does not believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit lived as one in whose heart there was neither the remission of sins nor the Holy Spirit, and in whom sin reigned. Therefore, the wages of sin is death, and those who are in Christ our Lord are those who have received the Holy Spirit as a gift and live being led by the Holy Spirit. A person who does not have the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart cannot overcome sin no matter how hard he tries. But a person who has the Holy Spirit in his heart can be united with the Church of God and be led by the Holy Spirit within the word of God.

When we did not know the fact that the Lord received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred onto the body of Jesus, we had lived as people who had sin before God. But now, as those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are living as people who have the Spirit of God in their hearts. What we who believe in Jesus must realize is exactly the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The point is whether or not the Holy Spirit is in the hearts of us who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Before we believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we clearly did not have the Holy Spirit. But now Jesus Christ, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world transferred onto the body of Jesus once and for all, was nailed to the Cross and received all the punishment for that sin, and rose again from death, and so He has become the Savior of us who believe; therefore, we have now become people who are not under the rule of sin. By faith in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we were able to receive the remission of sins and become people who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. We must realize the fact that we are no

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longer people without the Holy Spirit, but have become people of the Holy Spirit, who is always with us.

We must know clearly that we are those who have the Holy Spirit

Romans chapter 7 is a somewhat subtle passage. But if we sum it up clearly, it is as follows. When we lived as people without faith in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, even if we ourselves tried not to commit sin, we lived as sinners who could not help but commit sin, and so we could not help but live under the curse of sin. The apostle Paul explains the life of the time when he did not have the Holy Spirit as follows: *"For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death" (Romans 7:5)*. Before we believed in Jesus as our Savior, who received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, went to the Cross and received the punishment for sin in our place, and rose again from death, we could not help but live as sinners; but now, after we have received the remission of sins by faith in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Spirit of God governs our hearts, and so we ourselves were able to become servants of righteousness.

Therefore, because we who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit have died to sin and have been saved by believing in the redemption of Jesus Christ, we have now become those who can live the life of people led by the Holy Spirit through faith in the righteousness of the Lord, as those who have received the remission of sins and as people who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. Now, ever since we became those

who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have become those who can live being led by the Holy Spirit.

We must know clearly that we are people who have the Holy Spirit in our hearts by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And we must also know the fact that if we are people who have the Holy Spirit, we can live the life of those who have the Holy Spirit. It is not that the Holy Spirit seems to be there at some times and seems not to be there at other times. Before we were born again from our sins, we clearly had sin in our hearts, and so we lived the life of sinners. But now, because we believe in Jesus, who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and brought us salvation from the judgment of sin, the Holy Spirit has come to be in our hearts. Therefore, as those who have the Holy Spirit, we must live preaching by faith the word of the gospel that pleases the Holy Spirit.

From now on, we can live the life of those who have the Holy Spirit, that is, a life of serving in order to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only those who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts can live preaching the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must also know the fact that, although we were sinners before we believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, now, as those who have received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift, we can live doing the work of spreading the gospel that pleases God.

A person who knows that the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives him the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit are within his heart lives a life of spreading the gospel. The reason the passage says *"we should serve in the newness of the Spirit" (Romans 7:6)* lay exactly in this word.

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Those who live according to the Spirit set their minds on the things of the Spirit

The Bible says as follows: *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5)*. A person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, has received the remission of sins in his heart, and has the Holy Spirit cannot feel that his life is worthwhile if he fails to spread the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit even for one day.

Let us look together at Romans chapter 8 verses 5 through 9: *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:5–9)*.

The apostle Paul says that those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit have been changed in their hearts and have become people of God. Those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, and those who believe in and follow the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit live looking to the Lord, who received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death. Those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts have received the remission of sins, and so they have become those with whom the Holy Spirit is present in their

hearts. Therefore, the apostle Paul says as follows in Romans chapter 8 verse 9: *"You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Romans 8:9)*. In the past, as people without the Holy Spirit, we followed only the flesh and lived only for the flesh, but now the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. We have become people of the Spirit, people who have the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we have now become people who can do the work of spreading the gospel by following the Spirit of God. We can say that our status has changed. We can say that our whole life has changed.

Who are the people of faith who have taken part in the salvation the Lord has given?

In Romans chapter 7 verses 17 through 20, the apostle Paul says as follows: *"But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:17–20).*

The apostle Paul says that when he did not have the Holy Spirit in his heart, he wanted to do the righteousness of God but could not possibly do it.

After being born again, we have become people of the Spirit

Even after we are born again, we still have the flesh. And the

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Holy Spirit is in our hearts. Even after being born again, it is not that we have no desire at all to serve the flesh. Such desires still arise. But we are no longer people of the flesh without the Holy Spirit; we must become those who preach by faith the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although the desires of the flesh still arise in us, we are not the old man. We who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not the old man, but the new man in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells. Because we have the flesh, it is true that the desires of the flesh and the leading of the Holy Spirit rise up at the same time. But we are by no means the same as before. In the past we had to follow the desires of the flesh, but now, even when the desires of the flesh arise, if we choose not to follow them, we are fully able not to follow them. Now we have a choice. We are no longer slaves of sin, but those who have become servants of the righteousness of God.

Therefore, as those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, we can give ourselves to the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which pleases God. As people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have become people who can come before Jesus Christ and bear the fruit of righteousness. In the past, as people who had not been saved from sin, we bore the fruit of death. But verse 4 of the passage says as follows: *"My brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God" (Romans 7:4).*

From now on, if we believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and want to live a life of righteousness in our hearts, the Holy Spirit who is in our hearts makes us live a life of righteousness and bear fruit. From now on, we have become able to come before God and bear the fruit of

righteousness as much as we want. Because both you and I have become those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have come to have the status of righteous people. From now on, we are not people of the flesh but people of the Spirit. We are people who have the Holy Spirit in our hearts. We are not people who have perished because of sin, but those who have now become righteous people who have received the remission of sins by faith in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Like Noah, we have become people who have received the grace of salvation from God.

A person who has the Holy Spirit in his heart is a person who can do the work of God. Romans 8:9 says clearly as follows: *"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9)*. Anyone who has the Holy Spirit within is a person of Christ and a person of God. Therefore, we are those who can do the work of God.

Offer our bodies to God

As people who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts, we can do the work of God. The work of God is the work of spreading the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. As those who have received the remission of sins in our hearts and have the Holy Spirit, we must be people who do the work of God. And such a life is possible for us. If we have faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that work is possible for us.

In the past, when the Holy Spirit was not in our hearts, we had to use this body only for the work of bearing the fruit of sin. But now, because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, we have

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become people who can do the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which pleases the Holy Spirit. If a person who has received in his heart the remission of sins Jesus Christ has given only offers his body to God, he now comes to bear countless fruits of the righteousness of God. If only we offer our bodies before God, the fruit of righteousness is borne even if we do not want to bear it. Therefore, the apostle Paul exhorts us to offer our bodies before God.

Romans chapter 8 verses 15 through 17 say as follows: *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:15–17).*

Now we must know that our status has been changed. In the past, because we had not received the remission of sins in our hearts, we lived following only the flesh. At that time the Holy Spirit was not in our hearts. But now, by faith in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit is with us within us. Therefore, we have a heart that desires to bear the fruit of righteousness, and we want to live a life of righteousness. Then what must we do? We must do the work of offering our bodies to God. If only we offer our bodies and hearts to God, God does the work of saving souls through us in order to bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit. The One who bears the fruit of the Holy Spirit is Jesus Christ.

What we have to do is merely to offer our bodies and hearts to God. What the Bible exhorts us to do is not to strain ourselves; rather, it says that if we offer our faith and our hearts before God, God works through our faith so that the fruit of God is borne. Even though we are lacking both in the flesh and spiritually, if

we offer our bodies only to the work that pleases God, God accomplishes countless works of righteousness through our bodies. He makes us bear the fruit of the Holy Spirit, saves souls, gives souls the remission of sins, nurtures souls, and leads us to spread the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord has given. When those who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts offer their bodies before God, God accomplishes His work in the way He wants.

We must first know the fact that our status has been changed, and second, we must do the work of offering our own bodies to God. If we obey God, offer ourselves before God, and follow Him, He works. Not only does He save souls, but He also changes us spiritually, makes us people of faith, and pours more power upon us so that we may bear more fruit.

What we have to do is to receive the remission of sins by believing in the truth that Jesus Christ bore all sins once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and through the blood of the Cross, and saved us. A person who has the Holy Spirit must know that his status has been changed. And if a person whose status has been changed, that is, a person who has the Holy Spirit, only offers his body before God, God bears the fruit of righteousness for him.

The glory prepared for us

We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not people of the flesh. We are people of the Spirit. We are not people without the Holy Spirit but people who have the Holy Spirit; we are people of Christ and children of God. God is our Father. In Aramaic, “Abba” is a word that means father. God is

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the Father of people who have the Holy Spirit, that is, the Father of you and me.

When a person who has the Holy Spirit offers his body before God, God wants to bear much fruit through us. The word also says that because we are children of God, we have become heirs, that is, heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, and so we must also suffer with Him in order to be glorified with Him. The apostle Paul also says, *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*.

You also know that Jesus Christ ascended into the kingdom of heaven. We cannot fully know how glorious that kingdom of heaven is. But we can guess. Look at this universe. Scientists say that it takes billions of years at the speed of light to reach the star farthest from the earth. It takes that long even if one travels at the speed of light, which is known to be the fastest. How much more splendid must that glorious kingdom be, which God, who made this vast universe, has prepared for us!

We must know what a great blessing it is that we have become people who have the Holy Spirit, that is, His children. In the past, even if we wanted to do righteousness, we could not possibly do it, and we were those who could not help but do only sin. But now the Holy Spirit has come into our hearts. By believing in Jesus Christ we have received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and we have become children of God.

We cannot even imagine how great a glory, that is, how glorious a kingdom, God will give to His children. We can only guess. In order to make us obtain glory together with Christ, God wants us, while we live on this earth, to offer our bodies before God so that we are used as instruments of His righteousness. It

means that He wants to use us as instruments that accomplish holy works.

God, who has justified the ungodly

Our Lord saves the ungodly and makes them godly. We have become the people of God. In the flesh, that is by no means so. It is so in the Spirit. Dear beloved saints, has our status changed, or has it not changed? It has changed. Are we people who can do righteousness, or not? We are people who can do righteousness. If only we offer our bodies before the Lord, we can do righteousness. We can bear fruit. If only we offer ourselves before the Lord and obey, God saves souls through you and me. He uses us as instruments of His righteousness.

Finally, there is one thing we must clearly point out. We are not godly by nature. We are ungodly. Even though we have received the remission of sins, it is only that the Holy Spirit dwells within us; it is not that our flesh has actually become godly. We are ungodly. But God has saved us through Jesus Christ. That is, by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, Jesus bore all our sins, and by receiving all the punishment for those sins on the Cross, He saved us from the curse of the law. And so He poured the Holy Spirit into us. Because we have the Holy Spirit, we have become children of God and have become the people of God.

Therefore, even though we are not godly and are lacking, if only we offer our bodies before the Lord, the Lord bears much fruit of righteousness through us. I hope that you will know this clearly and live that life. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The error one falls into when interpreting Romans chapter 7 only as theological scholarship

< Romans 7:1–25 >

"Or do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives? For the woman who has a husband is bound by the law to her husband as long as he lives. But if the husband dies, she is released from the law of her husband. So then if, while her husband lives, she marries another man, she will be called an adulteress; but if her husband dies, she is free from that law, so that she is no adulteress, though she has married another man. Therefore, my brethren, you also have become dead to the law through the body of Christ, that you may be married to another—to Him who was raised from the dead, that we should bear fruit to God. For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the

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law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

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The error one falls into when interpreting Romans chapter 7 only as theological scholarship—this issue is not a question raised in order to criticize denominations, but a matter of examining, by the logic of the word of the Bible, what the text of Romans chapter 7 says and how theological scholarship has spoken of it.

Theological scholarship that pursues holiness has traditionally explained salvation as a stage-by-stage structure. It holds that although one has received the remission of sins through regeneration and justification, an inner sinful nature, that is, deep-rooted sin, still remains, and it says that this sinful nature is brought under control through holiness as the grace of God. It also explains that a gradual process of holiness continues even after that. Within this structure, Romans chapter 7 has been used as a description of the normal inner state of a Christian who has been regenerated but has not yet attained holiness. It defines the confession that there is the will to do good but not the ability to do it, and the cry *"O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24)*, as the general and continual inner experience of saved saints.

But this interpretation of religious believers collides with the flow of the text of Romans at several points. Romans chapter 6 declares that we have died to sin and that sin no longer has dominion over us. Romans chapter 7 reveals the collapse of faith when a person goes back under the law, and Romans chapter 8 begins with the declaration *"there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. However, holiness theology fixes Romans chapter 7 as an independent normal state, turns the death to sin in Romans chapter 6 into a theoretical proclamation, and postpones the declaration of Romans chapter 8 as a future goal. As a result,

instead of the logical progression of Romans, stage-by-stage theological doctrines come to be laid over the text.

Within this kind of structure, several key errors arise. The text of Romans deals with human sin as an event dealt with once and for all in the work of Christ. But in theological scholarship that pursues holiness, sin is understood as an inner nature that remains even after regeneration, and it turns into a task to be solved through a second grace of the Holy Spirit. As a result, the standard of the remission of sins is no longer the certainty of the salvation in which Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death, but is moved to a matter of present theology. Then the assurance of salvation cannot help but become unstable at all times.

Therefore, in theology that pursues holiness, the cry of Romans chapter 7 is treated as normal. Paul's crying out, *"O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24)*, expressed his thirst for Jesus Christ. But theological scholarship that pursues holiness fixes this cry as a natural struggle that saints must experience all their lives. The reason is that they have not had the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and in Jesus, who rose again from death, as the Savior. As a result, for religious people who pursue holiness, being saved from their own sins becomes, not something for which the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and His shedding of blood are needed, but a matter of managing sin, and grace functions not as joy but as a device for maintaining tension.

Furthermore, the answer to Romans chapter 7 moves away from the righteous work of Christ toward the idea that one must receive additional grace. This is so even though Paul clearly presents the answer to that problem: *"I thank God—through*

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Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25). This shows that the answer by which our problem of sin is solved is found in Christ, who, by Himself having the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death, became the One who completed our salvation.

But religious people who pursue holiness do not believe the fact that salvation from sin lies in the salvation completed by the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the work of the Cross. Therefore, in the way holiness theology actually works, deeper devotion, deeper prayers of repentance, the experience of holiness, and a grace that comes a second time move into the place of the answer. As a result, the grace of salvation that God gives is distorted from a gift given freely into a reward that must be earned by religious deeds.

Along with this, the present blessing of having received the remission of sins in Romans chapter 8 is pushed away into an ideal of the future instead of being an assurance of faith. This is so even though the Bible declares, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. But within the structure of theology that pursues holiness, this declaration is often understood as if it were possible only for those who have attained holiness. So many believers stay in Romans chapter 7 all their lives, live a life that ends in religious life, and pass away. And Romans chapter 8 remains only as a goal to be reached.

When we summarize again the biblical position of Romans chapter 7, it becomes clear. Romans chapter 7 shows the collapse of the faith of the law, a faith that must come out of the wrong flow of theology. In the Lord, the human problem of sin is a salvation already dealt with in the word of the gospel of the

water and the Spirit, and its answer is contained in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and in the Cross. Faith is not something that rises step by step; it becomes the truth that is completed by moving into the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed by receiving baptism from John, being put to death on the Cross, and rising again. Romans chapter 8 is not a future goal, but the declaration of the faith that has now been completed, out of sin, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In the end, all theology that pursues holiness, by fixing the word of Romans chapter 7 as the normal state after regeneration, has made it, not a salvation by which one is saved from the sin of the world, but a problem of sin that must be managed all one's life. As a result, it has fallen into the error in which the assurance of salvation that Jesus gave disappears and only the faith and theological doctrines of religious people struggling in sin remain. This was the result that came because Christianity today, by believing the Nicene Creed, has left out the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the salvation that Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John, washing away the sin of the world, and finishing all on the Cross. For my faith and yours to have the assurance of salvation according to the word of the Bible, it could be resolved only by returning to Jesus, who received the baptism John gave at the Jordan River, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death. You must know that Christians today have fallen into this kind of error because they believe in their hearts that only the Cross of Jesus is salvation. The true word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not believing only in the Cross. We must know and believe that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross, and solved our problem of sin.

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Romans chapter 7 lets us know the fact that the faith of those who try to accomplish salvation by human effort collapses because of sin that has not been resolved until now. Therefore, Romans chapter 7 becomes a powerful invitation to salvation that makes those in theology who pursue sanctification realize that they need the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given.

Romans chapter 7 says that we must return from the curse of the law into the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ gives

The apostle Paul's confession of faith shows that all problems are solved when one receives salvation by the faith that believes that Jesus, who received baptism from John, is the Savior who shed His blood on the Cross and rose again from death.

Paul begins Romans chapter 7 with the declaration that we have died to the law. He says, *"Do you not know, brethren (for I speak to those who know the law), that the law has dominion over a man as long as he lives?" (Romans 7:1)*, and gives the analogy of married life. The key point of this analogy is that, in order to be delivered from the sin that brings death, all problems are solved by having the faith that believes in Jesus Christ as the Savior, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again from death.

This word speaks of the following: now we must return, not to the law, but to another, that is, to Christ, who was raised from the dead, and only when we believe that He Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received

from John, hung on the Cross and received the judgment for the sin of mankind in our place, and is the Savior of those who believe, is our problem of sin solved. We receive the remission of sins by the faith that believes this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts, and so we are released from the curse of the law.

We can receive and enjoy complete salvation when we come out of the curse of the law spoken of in Romans chapter 7, return into the work of Jesus Christ, who gave us new life, and believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The question I put to you here is when your sins were transferred to the body of Jesus. And the question is also when you died with Christ on the Cross. Paul's answer is clear within the flow of the whole Book of Romans. When Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist, the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and Jesus, who had all those sins transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, received the judgment for sin, and rose again from death; therefore He became One who is more than sufficient to be our Savior.

Therefore, all our sins come to an end at the very time when we put legalistic faith behind us and believe that the Lord, Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death, has become the Savior of us who believe. Now those who have returned into Jesus Christ by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are no longer those who are under the curse of the law, but have become those who are born again by the faith that believes before Jesus Christ. The death to the law that Paul speaks of is not an ethical resolution, but our salvation obtained as the result of the faith that believes in the price of redemption Jesus Christ paid.

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The apostle Paul says that those who have put their faith in the word of salvation Jesus Christ spoke when, in order to give us salvation, He received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and shed His blood on the Cross, saying, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30),* have become those who have been delivered from all sins. He confesses, *"The law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good" (Romans 7:12)*. But at the same time he confesses that although the law brought about wrath for us, the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection brought new life to us. He confesses that the law cannot make man righteous but only reveals his sin, but that the baptism Jesus received from John, the death of the Cross, and the resurrection brought new life to those who believe.

The turning point of Romans chapter 7 is the truth of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit of salvation, which can be found as the cry *"who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)* moves to the confession *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25)*. We can know the fact that we are saved from all sin and curse by the faith that believes that the Lord's having the sin of the world transferred onto the body of Jesus through the baptism He received from John washed away our sins, and that He hung on the Cross, shed His blood, rose again from death, and became our Savior.

Here Paul does not look for another way. He does not speak of more thorough observance of the law, deeper self-cultivation, or stronger resolution. He says that only the faith that looks to and believes in the Lord—Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death—is salvation from sin. We believe the fact that we are saved by the faith that believes in the Lord, Jesus Christ our Savior, who

had the sin of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, paid the price of the sin of us human beings on the Cross, and by rising again from death became the Savior of mankind.

The Lord is the Savior who bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death. And He is the One who has become the Lord of life, who gave us new life. Paul's thanksgiving is not an abstract statement of faith, but a true confession offered by a servant of God through the faith that believes the gospel word of the eternal remission of sins accomplished in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What is the structure of faith that Paul speaks of?

It is the structure of being moved from under the jurisdiction of the law to under the salvation of the grace of Jesus Christ, now given through the water and the Spirit. And it is the structure of faith in which one is moved from the position of the faith of the law, which reveals man's sin, to the position of salvation in which the sin of the world has come to an end. It is a move from a life in which condemnation is repeated because of the law into the structure of faith in which the salvation by which one never again becomes a sinner has been confirmed within the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished in Jesus Christ.

This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the structure of faith in which we are moved from the position of the demand, within the faith of the law, that "we must do it," to the position of the declaration of salvation that "Jesus Christ has accomplished our salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit." This

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structure is not established by our effort; it is a salvation that occurs only when the structure of faith is changed into faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is, it is that within the faith that held on to the law, when the structure of faith changes into the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and in Jesus, who died on the Cross and rose again from death, and one believes in the heart the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth of salvation, one becomes a person upon whom the blessing of salvation and the Holy Spirit come.

Romans chapter 7 does not glorify the faith of the law; it is a process of crossing over into the blessing of salvation that the great word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives. That blessing of salvation is clearly revealed in Romans chapter 8 by the word of the declaration *"there is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. This declaration of salvation shows us the process by which we can be saved from the curse of the law by the faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, Romans chapter 7 was not proof that "I am still lacking," but the place of moving forward to the confession, "I am no longer under the faith of the law, but have returned to Jesus Christ and have received the remission of all my sins by the faith that believes that He had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and believes in the blood He shed on the Cross."

The faith the apostle Paul confesses in Romans chapter 7 is clear. It is that, though he could not be saved from his own sins by the faith of the law, Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from

John, ended the judgment for all our sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death to become our Savior.

We need the faith that confesses the saved faith that we have come out of the curse of the law and been moved to Christ. Therefore, the word of Romans chapter 7 becomes the apostle's word of exhortation to abandon legalistic faith and to come into the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the salvation already accomplished by the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross. This is the blessed word of salvation that is revealed when we read Romans chapter 7 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

I hope that those who today believe that only the Cross of Jesus is the truth of salvation will not try to resolve through prayers of repentance all the sins they commit with their hearts and flesh, but will have the faith that believes in the Lord as the Savior, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was put to death on the Cross, and rose again.

When we examine the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of according to the flow of the Book of Romans and the Book of Hebrews, the difference is clearly revealed.

Today many believers, while making only the Cross of Jesus the basis of salvation, are living a life of faith in which they try to deal each time, through prayers of repentance, with the limits of sin and the many sins that show up in their present lives. The premise of this structure is built as a structure in which the Cross provides a basic salvation, and the sins after that must be continually resolved through prayers of repentance. Such people may appear godly on the outside, but this is far removed from the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of.

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The result is that the remission of sins is not in their hearts, but has become the management of sin. The Bible clearly says that Christ *"entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12)*. But in faith centered on prayers of repentance, the remission of sins is understood not as an already completed event, but as something that must be applied repeatedly according to one's present state, and so such people are living a religious life far from the Lord.

Then is the guide who teaches you one who has a faith different from yours? No. He has exactly the same faith as you. What is different from you is that such guides are leaders of legalistic faith and you are worldly religious people who belong to them. The question is whether you are now living a life of faith by the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given. Jesus said that one who is not born again of water and the Spirit cannot enter the kingdom of God (John 3:5). Your faith now is not a faith that can enter the kingdom of heaven, but has degenerated into a faith that manages your sins.

This structure of faith naturally makes people subject to worldly religion, which leaves them unable to have the assurance of salvation. In the faith of worldly religion, whether one's repentance was sufficient, whether there were tears and contrition, or whether one's emotions have calmed down becomes the standard of faith.

As a result, the state of heart in Romans chapter 7 becomes the state of heart of worldly religious people. A life in which there is the will but no doing, and in which self-condemnation and frustration are repeated, comes to be regarded as the standard of worldly religious life. But in the Bible, Romans chapter 7 is not saying that we must remain in the law. Rather, it is that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John, was

nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and became the Savior of sinners. We must be saved by the faith that believes in the baptism received from John by Jesus Christ, who became our Savior, in the sacrifice of the Cross, and in the Lord, who rose again from death, as our Savior.

The problem with the life of faith of worldly religion is that one's own sins are not resolved even though one believes in Jesus. Prayers of repentance can make one acknowledge one's own sins, but they cannot remove sin. The removal of sin does not depend on man's confession of repentance, but on the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and in the Lord, who was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again from death, as the Savior. The Bible clearly points to Jesus, saying of Him, *"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. The word says that all the sins of the world were transferred to the body of Jesus when He received baptism from John, and that He was nailed to the Cross, shed His precious blood, received the judgment for sin, rose again from death, and became the Savior of those who believe. Now all of us become those who are saved by believing in our hearts in the baptism He received from John and in Jesus Christ, who rose again from the death of the Cross. Now we become those who receive the grace of salvation by the faith that believes in the righteous love of Jesus Christ.

When we put this whole flow together, ignoring the work of the baptism Jesus received from John, holding on only to the Cross as salvation, and trying to deal with one's own sins through prayers of repentance is not God's way. It is not the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which one receives the remission of sins once and for all. Such worldly religious faith is causing people to drift away from Jesus Christ. Such religious faith does not place the assurance of salvation in

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the work of Christ, but binds people to their own hearts and weakness. As a result, the frustration seen in Romans chapter 7 is sometimes even mistaken for normal faith.

But the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit delivers us from our guilt, confusion, and the judgment of sin. If you believe in the baptism the Lord received from John, the death of the Cross, and Jesus Christ, who rose again from death, as the Savior, you will be delivered from your sins and judgment, and you will obtain salvation in your heart. The reason Christians cannot enter the place of freedom that Romans chapter 8 declares is that they believe only the Cross, without the word of the baptism Jesus received from John, to be the gospel of salvation. In other words, it arose from the faith of the law.

Therefore, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the alternative that the word of the Bible presents, is clear. The sin of the world did not disappear through repentance; rather, because Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body once and for all through the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment for that sin on the Cross, those who believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given receive the assurance of salvation from their own sins. We become those who are saved from sin by believing the word of truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and who become the people of God. We must have become those who are saved from all our sins by believing the gospel word of being born again, to which the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies.

If we seek to obtain the remission of sins in our hearts by the faith that believes only in the Cross of Jesus, without the work of the baptism Jesus received from John, we become those who cannot be saved from sin, give thanks to God, and live a life of faith in joy. The gospel we believe is the gospel of the water and

the Spirit. We must acknowledge the fact that we are people who must return to the Lord by believing this gospel word and be saved by believing the gospel of blessing He has given. If one lives in such a way that, in the end, one becomes a sinner again because of one's own shortcomings and becomes a person of repeated repentance and a worldly religious person who cannot escape from sin, the Lord is not pleased. Even now, we must surely have the faith that believes in Jesus Christ as our Savior, who Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross in our place, rose again from death, and became our Savior.

Those of us who confess that we believe in the Cross and yet live without reaching the assurance of the remission of sins must know the fact that such people are religious people of this world who have nothing to do with the Lord. In the end, we must not become those who go back to the conclusion, "I am a sinner again," and are bound to repeated repentance and religious life. The reasons it turns out this way mostly come down to one thing. It is because people have not settled their hearts by faith on the work of the Lord that is the basis of the remission of sins: Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and ended the punishment for that sin by being nailed to the Cross. It is because we have not firmly believed in Jesus as the Savior, who Himself bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and became our Savior, that we always live as sinners. We had been sinners because we did not believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and washed it away. We must return to the Lord by the faith that believes the word of the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit and have the faith that believes in the salvation in which He washed away our sins and gave us resurrection from death.

We must believe that Jesus is our Savior. Those who have not yet been delivered from their own sins must examine their own faith: "Have I ever truly believed the truth of salvation in which Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and accomplished all of the judgment for that sin on the Cross?" We must think again about whether we have in our hearts the faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given, and we must have the assurance of faith.

True faith begins with self-examination

Those who believe the true word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit change the structure of faith that has been maintained until now. The word of the Bible speaks of the atonement—the price of sin that Jesus paid for the salvation of sinners by receiving baptism from John, having the sin of the world transferred to Him, and being nailed to the Cross—as an event accomplished *"once for all"* (Hebrews 9:12; 10:10). But in the structure of repentance spoken of in holiness theology, the remission of sins is not maintained. By worldly religious faith, my sins have not come to an end; rather, because I must settle accounts again each time with the sins I have committed, I become a sinner again. As a result, people must return again to the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the truth that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and washed it away once and for all. This is because only the word of the gospel of

the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given is the word of the truth of true salvation.

Such faith degenerates into the faith of worldly religious people centered on repentance. Repentance itself is biblically necessary, but within a structure of repeated repentance, it causes people to drift away from the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which makes them receive the true remission of sins. Those who receive the remission of sins by the faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given receive the remission of sins once and for all when they believe that gospel word. They have received the remission of sins once and for all by believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but in their lives they need to ruminate on this gospel word again; it is not that they become sinners again.

The way of escape the Bible presents is not more thorough repentance, but fixing the basis of the remission of sins once again on the faith that believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is, my salvation is completed not by the intensity of the repentance one is now doing, the speed of change, or the depth of emotion, but by whether Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross, shed His blood, rose again from death, and removed my sins once and for all. This is because Jesus Christ is now living, seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and is the One who will come again to this earth as the Lord of the second coming. As for our salvation from sin, it is because the redemption in which the price of sin was paid through the baptism Jesus received from John and the precious blood He shed on the Cross becomes the evidence that has saved me from sin. Faith puts down its roots in how the event of redemption ended my sins. We must have the assurance of salvation by the

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faith that believes the fact that the sin of the world was transferred to the body of Jesus through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and that the judgment for that sin ended on the Cross. The Lord, being One who does not lie, according to the word of the covenant in which He said in the Old Testament that He would come to this earth as our Savior and save us from all the sins of the world, received baptism from John in the New Testament age, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, poured out His blood, rose again from death, and became our Savior. Hallelujah! ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

We who have been delivered from the law

< Romans 7:5–25 >

“For when we were in the flesh, the sinful passions which were aroused by the law were at work in our members to bear fruit to death. But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter. What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I

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will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

The meaning of the words that we have been delivered from the law

Now I will speak about the part concerning our having been delivered from the law. *"But now we have been delivered from the law, having died to what we were held by, so that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6)*.

When the apostle Paul says that we have been delivered from the law, he does not mean that there is no law for us who believe or that the law of God is unnecessary. It is written, *"The law brings about wrath" (Romans 4:15)*. The commandments of God bring about wrath, and all people who cannot live according to those commandments have received wrath. But when the

apostle Paul says that we have come out of the law as one takes off a garment, he means that because the flesh of those who believe in Jesus has died through the body of Jesus Christ, the law of God has no effect on the dead.

After a person dies, no matter how many debts he had, the people to whom he owed money cannot say anything to the dead person. They may speak to his living family, but they cannot tell the dead person to hand over the money or ask him why he died without paying his debts. In the same way, those who believe in Jesus have died with Jesus Christ on the Cross. Jesus bore our sins and died on the Cross in place of us who believe. When Jesus was nailed to the Cross, the flesh of those who believe in Jesus was also nailed to the Cross. Because they died together in this way, the law of God cannot bring down wrath on those who believe that their flesh was put to death together with Jesus Christ. Because our flesh has died, the strict commandments of God cannot reach that flesh.

So it is very good when those who believe in Jesus know this and believe rightly. Those who have received the remission of sins in their hearts by believing in Jesus Christ and have become righteous have been delivered from the wrath of the law, from the law of God. The law of God can never again say to our flesh, "You are one to be judged," or, "I will put you to death." The Ten Commandments of God and the six hundred and thirteen commandments—all those commandments to do and not to do, and the punishments that go with them—can no longer do anything to us who believe. For those who are born again, there is one more, new law. The new Lord rules over us, has dominion over us, and blesses us. In the old days, when the law had dominion over us, no matter how well we did, we could not even break even. Why is that? It is because there is no one who has lived fully according to the law of God. Because there is no one

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who can keep the law of God perfectly with this flesh, it is foolish, however much one says one believes in Jesus Christ, to try to keep the law of God and to think that one is keeping it without being born again. The basis of our deliverance from the wrath of the law is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place, rose again from death, and delivered us.

Born-again people who truly believe in Jesus Christ as their own Savior have been delivered from the law of the wrath of God. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this? The law of God can never again have dominion over born-again people. Because we have been delivered from the law of the wrath of God, and because our flesh has already died, the law cannot judge us. Therefore, the servants of God and the saints must have clear and true knowledge of this part, and with a clear gospel of the water and the Spirit and clear faith, they must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls who have not yet been born again. And in our lives, too, we must live by faith in that way.

Serve not with fear but with thanksgiving

The apostle Paul says, *"So that we should serve in the newness of the Spirit and not in the oldness of the letter" (Romans 7:6)*. It is not out of fear and trembling because the commandments of God are stern and frightening; rather, because our Lord has saved us, we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and because the Lord rejoices in the work of saving souls, and because He loved us and saved us, we give thanks to the

Lord and do the work in which the Lord rejoices. To serve in the newness of the Spirit means to serve by faith. What is it to believe? The apostle Paul says that by believing in the Lord who saved us from destruction, the Lord who removed all our sins, the Lord of love who loved us, gave us eternal life, and made us the people of God, the Lord of salvation, the Lord of blessing, the Lord of love who never again brings judgment on those who believe, we serve in the work in which He rejoices.

Even after being born again, because of our own weakness, we may sometimes have a worried heart, wondering, "Won't God deal harshly with me?" But we have clearly now been delivered from the wrath of God. We have become children of God. Now we do not serve God by force; rather, there is a willing heart in us, and we serve the Lord because we like to and because it gives us joy. We ask the Lord to let us do this kind of work, we rejoice in the work of saving souls, and because the Holy Spirit gives us this kind of heart, we think that we ought to do so, and we obey the will in which God rejoices and do the work. For born-again people, the age of doing things because they are God's commandments—for fear of being punished if we do not do what He has told us to do—has come to an end. Now we have been delivered from the terrible wrath of God. We have been delivered from the law. But some people speak of the uselessness of the law. It is wrong to take what the apostle Paul said and say that the law is unnecessary or that there is no law. That is not what the apostle Paul meant. The law is alive even for born-again people. But there is no wrath. That is what it means.

The Lord said, *"Till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled" (Matthew 5:18)*. So the apostle Paul goes on after that and speaks more deeply. Because we have been delivered from the law and

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from the wrath of God, the wrath of destruction, we do the work of God willingly out of thanksgiving. If there were wrath even for those who believe, why would we make any effort when we would receive wrath anyway? To say that we have been saved means that we have been saved from the wrath of God, from judgment. That is why we who are born again serve God. We truly give thanks to our Lord, who has delivered us from the law. Those who believe in Jesus must know this part clearly. If even some born-again people serve God because they are weighed down and afraid, thinking, "My faith is miserable these days; won't God punish me?" that is not right, and it is misunderstanding God through the flesh. On the other hand, when their flesh does a little well, some put forward their own righteousness, put on airs, and puff themselves up, saying, "You can't do it, but I do it well." That is not what God wants, and it is not a right attitude before God. If someone puffs himself up before God because he has done well by his own actions, God will surely break that righteousness. The reason we serve not out of fear of punishment but out of thanksgiving also lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and then rose again from death and caused us to live as His children.

God does not want a people who serve God because of the wrath of the law, because the law is frightening and the wrath is frightening. He wants a people who serve the Lord out of thanksgiving because they have received grace and salvation before God, because God has removed all our sins, made us the people of God, given us blessings, given us eternal life, and made us workers of God. God wants a people of faith. We too, when we are served by someone, find it burdensome and

unpleasant if the other person serves us trembling and not knowing what to do because he is afraid of us. Not like that, but if he serves because he likes to, because he wants to do this and wants to do that, we come to tell him to go ahead and do so, and there is no burden in the heart of the one being served, and it is a joy. How good it is for both sides when one is not only served in this way but also serves!

The relationship among the Lord, the servants of God, and the people of God is a relationship of love. We have borne fruit through a relationship of love and have been joined through a relationship of love; we have not been joined in a legal relationship because we are afraid of the law of God. That is why our Lord said to the born-again saints, *"I have called you friends" (John 15:15)*, and He says that He Himself is the bridegroom. Friends and the bridegroom are a relationship of love. Before anything legal, it is a relationship of love. That is why we have been delivered from the law. I truly give thanks. Dear fellow believers, have you ever feared and trembled before the law of God? Even after being born again, you must often have been afraid that you would be punished. In fact, among believers in this present age, there are a great many people who faithfully offer tithes because they fear and tremble before God, people who offer tithes because they fear that trouble will come upon their household if they do not, and people who keep the Lord's Day because they are afraid that an accident will happen if they do not attend worship and keep the Lord's Day. But the apostle Paul did not believe that way. We do not believe that way either.

I, too, lived a life of faith that way before I was born again. At that time, out of fear and trembling that calamity would come upon me if I did not preach the gospel, when I sat in a train seat I would sometimes preach the gospel to the person sitting next to me, but I preached the gospel with my heart weighed down

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by something. Also, because I was told that I would be blessed if I served my parents well, I served my parents well. I think many believers have come along that way. But now it is not so. I preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit because I am so grateful to God, and I serve the Lord because I am so thankful to God. I offer myself because I love God so much and want to offer myself. God made it so for me. After I met the Lord, I was changed in that way. Born-again people are delivered from the law. We follow and serve the Lord because the Lord has saved us; why else would we do so?

The function of the law is to make us realize sin

Then what is the law? *"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'" (Romans 7:7)*. The apostle Paul is explaining the function of the law. What is the function of the law? He says that the law is what makes us realize and know sin. Through what does a person realize sin before God? We realize sin when we look at ourselves in the light of the law God gave, the Ten Commandments, the commandments God spoke. It is that because we have not done what the word of God told us to do, and have done what it told us not to do, that itself becomes sin. So the word says that the law of God makes us realize and know sin, points out sin, and exposes sin. The One who solves the sin revealed by the law is Jesus. Since Jesus bore all the sins of the world, including revealed sins and hidden sins, once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and then shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and rose again from

death, we receive the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The apostle Paul, having come to realize rightly only after being born again what he had wrongly thought and wrongly understood about the function of the law before he was born again, says this to the saints in Rome: *"But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (Romans 7:8–13).*

Paul, who had misunderstood the law

Before he was born again, the apostle Paul, too, tried to carry out the law by himself. He tried to keep it perfectly. He thought, "The commandments of God must be kept perfectly, and since God gave me the law to keep and observe, I must keep this law with all my life and all my strength," and he kept it with all his strength. Until he met the Lord on the road to Damascus, he lived observing the law with tremendous effort.

Paul took the lead in killing Stephen the deacon. When Stephen the deacon testified that Jesus is the Son of God and is the very Messiah, the Messiah prophesied in the Old Testament to come, the Savior of mankind, and that this is the very One

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who saved mankind from all sins, Paul said that such a man deserved to die. He said, "The Son of God? A man who speaks such ungrateful and blasphemous words deserves to be put to death by the law." When people took off their clothes, laid them at Paul's feet, and stoned Stephen to death, it is written, *"Saul was consenting to his death" (Acts 8:1)*. After that, too, he carried letters he had received from the high priest and went about seizing the born-again saints of the early church and putting them in prison.

So until he met the Lord on the road to Damascus, the apostle Paul was a man who had completely misunderstood the law, a man who had believed single-mindedly, and one of those who had misunderstood the law of God. In Romans chapter 3, God says, *"By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)* and *"now the righteousness of God apart from the law is revealed" (Romans 3:21)*. Apart from the law, the righteousness of God, that is, the salvation of God, has been revealed; the one right way and the one right love by which God loves us and saves us have been revealed, and that is that by the love of God He saved us through the body of Jesus Christ. It is that, not through the law, Jesus Christ received baptism from John, bore our sins, and by the death of the Cross saved us from the curse of the law. In this way, the apostle Paul testifies after he met the Lord on the road to Damascus.

In the old days, the apostle Paul had been mistaken about the law. He said that he would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, "You shall not covet," but in the old days Paul thought, "I will not act out covetousness," and when a covetous heart rose up, he suppressed it, and when it tried to turn into action, he kept it from doing so; in this way he tried to keep the law by deeds. But now, having come to know, he realized that when the law says, "You shall not covet, you shall not murder,

you shall not commit adultery, you shall not bear false witness, honor your parents," God did so in order to teach me, "Such a covetous heart is in you, so you are a sinner."

In the old days, the apostle Paul understood the function of the law to be something God gave to be kept, but when he came to realize it, he knew that it was not so, but that God first gave the law, before sending Jesus Christ, in order to point out and expose people's sins, my sins. So the apostle Paul says, *"But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead" (Romans 7:8)*. What does this mean? It means that when we hear the law of God, the sinful heart within us rises up. If here I were to lecture on the law point by point without distinguishing between those of you who have not yet been born again and those who have been born again, what kind of heart would rise up in your hearts as you listened to the law? A heart wanting to commit adultery would rise up. In the law there are the words, "You shall not commit adultery." Adultery is a very bad thing and must never be done. You must guard your eyes when you look at another man's wife, and you must never be tempted by it. When I say, "Do not do so," a heart of adultery already arises in your heart and slowly begins to rise up like a balloon.

This is exactly what the apostle Paul spoke of when he said that sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in him all manner of covetousness. The Ten Commandments are recited one after another: "You shall have no other gods besides Me, do not bow down to anything, whether in heaven or on earth or anywhere, do not take the name of God in vain, remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy, honor your father and mother, do not murder, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not covet." It is that the moment one hears them, all sin rises up. One must not serve any other god besides God.

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One must not serve material things as God. One must regard gold as stone. When I say this, a covetous heart arises within one's heart. A heart wanting to serve idols and serve material things bubbles up, thinking, "Perhaps someone, some company, will call me to be an executive. Even if I cannot keep the Lord's Day very well, if they just let me go to church on Wednesdays, I can bow down and work for just three years and then serve the Lord well after that." It is that when we hear the commandments of God, when we hear the Ten Commandments, when we hear the law, greed rises up within our hearts. When greed rises up, what does the law do? It makes us realize and know sin. The law that makes us realize covetousness leads us to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even our covetousness, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in our place. We believe in Jesus, who rose again from death and saved us.

The function of the law is to expose our sins and to teach us that there is sin. It is to prove and expose the sin that is in people. The law was by no means given for us to keep. Those who rush in to keep the whole law in order to be saved are proud sinners before God, and by that way they go to hell. Who were the people who tried to keep the whole law? Were they not the people of Israel and those today who believe in Jesus without being born again? Romans chapters 2 and 3 talk about that proud part of the people of Israel. *"Therefore you are inexcusable, O man, whoever you are who judge, for in whatever you judge another you condemn yourself; for you who judge practice the same things" (Romans 2:1)*. It means: "You who are not even born again, who call yourselves Jews, who claim to believe in God well, who call yourselves experts in the law and teachers of

the law and the people God has chosen, and yet oppose Jesus Christ and oppose the love and salvation of Jesus while trying to receive blessings before God by keeping the law well—do you not know that you will receive condemnation?"

In fact, because they misunderstood the function of the law, many of the people of Israel still do not accept Jesus even now and try to be saved by keeping the law. But what is sad is that even within Christianity there are many people who, while believing for ten or twenty years, or thirty or fifty years, are still trying to carry out the law, keep it well, live upright lives, and so receive salvation and also rewards before God. It is because they do not know the function of the law. To be saved by the law, one has to score a hundred points. Ninety-nine points will not do.

The function of the law is to expose our sins; the law cannot save us. One cannot be saved by keeping the law. One cannot keep it, and there is not a single person who can keep it. Even Moses could not keep it. Even Moses, the meekest man on the face of the earth, could not keep it. God told him to command the rock to bring forth water, but when the people of Israel complained against Moses, asking whether he had brought them out into the wilderness to kill them, Moses became angry and struck the rock twice with his rod. Then God said, *"Because you did not believe Me, to hallow Me in the eyes of the children of Israel, therefore you shall not bring this assembly into the land which I have given them" (Numbers 20:12)*. Moses could not cross the Jordan River; he only went up on a mountain and looked out over the land of Canaan.

Of course, Moses must not enter the land of Canaan. Since Moses is the representative of the law, if Moses were to enter the land of Canaan, it would mean that one enters the kingdom of heaven by keeping the whole law, and so Jesus Christ would become unnecessary. The land of Canaan would become a land

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one can enter by keeping the whole law of God, and if Moses had entered, it would mean that all of us can enter too. It would mean that we only have to do what Moses did, risking our lives. But even Moses could not do it. Joshua succeeds him and enters. Who is Joshua? The name Joshua means 'Savior.' It is the name of Jesus the Savior. So we must know the function of the law rightly and know that it is wrong to strive to enter the kingdom of God by keeping the law. We must know this and live a life of faith. The way for us to enter the kingdom of God lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Since Jesus, who had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place, and rose again from death, we believe in this salvation, not in the merit of having kept the law.

The apostle Paul says, *"I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death" (Romans 7:9–10)*. It means that for those who try to keep the law, the law, far from giving life, has instead become something that makes them go to hell. It is that in the old days Paul had wrongly understood the function of the law, the word of the Lord. When a computer has some function, it works well and does what you want only if you know that function rightly and operate it; if you say, "I paid money for you, so from now on listen to me well," and press anywhere you like as you please, it ends up breaking down. When we come to know the function of the law well, we come to know that God gave this commandment in order to teach people their sin because there is a murderous heart in them, that He said, "You shall not commit adultery," because there is a lustful heart, and that He said, "You shall not steal," because there is a thieving heart; that is, we come to know that He gave

the law to point out and expose sin and to make us sinners. The law of God is a factory that makes sinners. Anyone who looks rightly only at the law of God becomes a sinner.

The law is holy, but we are lumps of sin

Was the law, by which the apostle Paul had been so greatly deceived in the old days, wrong? Is the law sin? No, it is not. The law is spiritual; it is the ordinance of God and is very holy. If we look at the law only in itself, without connecting it with us human beings, the first through the fourth commandments are commandments we must carry out before God, and they are truly fitting. God is our Creator and our God, and there is no other god besides the LORD. We must bow down only to God, serve only God, and hold only God in our hearts. It is fitting not to bow down to other things, not to dishonor God, and to keep well the day God has appointed. There is not a single thing wrong with them. The fifth through the tenth commandments are commandments people must carry out toward people. It is entirely proper for children to serve and honor their parents well. If we are truly human, it is proper to take good care of our parents. You shall not murder. Would it be all right to commit murder? Absolutely not. You shall not commit adultery. One must never commit adultery. You shall not steal. Whether something is small or large, one must never steal. One must not quietly take even a speck of dust from another person's house. You shall not covet. Would it be right to covet what is not one's own?

The law is spiritual. Just because it is said that the law only makes us realize and know sin, we must not think that the law is nothing much. The law is spiritual, and the commandments of

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God are all right and fitting. But when we connect it with ourselves, are we ourselves that spiritual? Are our hearts clean? Are our actions clean? Our hearts have a heart that does everything we are told not to do, and a heart that goes against everything that is God's. The law says to honor our parents, but far from honoring them, we have a heart that wants to give our parents grief. When our parents do not pay attention to me, we sometimes say we are sick and make our parents flustered. Be honest before God. Did you not do so as you were growing up? Yes, you did.

"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (Romans 7:12–13). It is no exaggeration to say that if only one understands Romans chapter 7 rightly, one understands the whole Bible. People get confused in this Romans chapter 7. Those who are not born again think it seems like this when they look at it this way and seems like that when they look at it that way, and even born-again people get confused while reading it and wonder how it can be. We were ugly and filthy lumps of sin. We ourselves, from Adam on, were all entirely lumps of sin. If the law is spiritual, we are all lumps of sin. Yet it is that this spiritual law was given to us human beings. When the spiritual and holy law came upon us, our sins were revealed and we came to die. That is how it is. Jesus accomplished salvation for us, sinners who were to die before the holy law. Since Jesus bore all the sins of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death, we who believe

the gospel of the water and the Spirit have been delivered from wrath.

Even the flesh of born-again people still likes sin

The apostle Paul speaks about the function of the law and then speaks of the relationship between the law and our flesh. Then is the law unnecessary for born-again people, and does it end there? Do born-again people keep the law well with their flesh? When one believes in Jesus and is born again, does one take responsibility for the law and serve it? The apostle Paul says that it is not so.

The apostle Paul says that even in born-again people, the flesh does not serve the law of God and does not live according to the law, but follows sin because it likes sin. But he says that the spirit in a person, the spirit that is holy, believes, loves, and follows God's law of love. The flesh of born-again people, even though they are born again, serves the law of sin, likes sin, and strives to do what the law says not to do. In fact, it says that the human flesh cannot keep the law of God even if it strives to keep the law. The human flesh simply likes sin so much that it cannot bear it. From long ago they have been so well matched that they are like magnets that cannot be pulled apart even if one tries; if you separate the two, they stick together again. This human flesh, whether in born-again people or in people who are not born again, likes sin that much. The heart likes the law of God, likes the love of God, and likes righteousness, but the flesh likes sin until death. This does not change. Does the flesh of born-again people become spiritual and like sin less? It does not.

Whether in born-again people or in people who are not born again, the flesh likes sin until it goes into the grave. When told

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not to do something, it does it even more. Suppose that in front of you I put money between the pages of a Bible, fold it shut as if it were something precious, ask you, "I have put something important in here, so please never look at it," and say that I am going somewhere for a while. If I tell you not to look, someone among you will surely come and look. He might even steal it. When we are told not to look, not to sin, our flesh goes wild all the more. It sins even more and deliberately goes for it desperately. Born-again people and people who are not born again are exactly the same.

The apostle Paul said that the law makes us realize and know sin and that it is holy and spiritual. But what is the apostle Paul's own flesh? The apostle Paul did not even marry. So people think that Paul was a person completely different from us and do not even bring up the sinful nature of the apostle Paul's flesh. But because the apostle Paul is honest, he says this, lest people look at him as some otherworldly sage: *"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:14–20).*

Just as Paul's flesh was weak, we too are weak, so we rely on the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus had not only the sins of Paul and our sins but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and then He shed His blood on

the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place, rose again from death, and gave us the complete remission of sins.

The apostle Paul is not speaking only of what happened before he was born again; he is saying this in reference to his own flesh after he was born again. Even though he was born again and became a servant of God, he does not do what God wants, but instead does what He does not want. He says that if he does what he will not to do, it is no longer he who does it, but sin that dwells in him. He says that this is exactly his own flesh, that his own flesh is like that.

Whether for the apostle Paul or for people living in this present age, whether for born-again people or for people who are not born again, this flesh is flesh. Flesh is flesh. People say that since they are born again, they have now been changed, but what change have they received? In the things of the flesh they become even more skillful. The apostle Paul was like that too. Spirit is spirit. The Holy Spirit, who is in our hearts, within us, desires and rejoices to follow the will in which God rejoices. But how this flesh of ours so likes sin, both before being born again and after being born again—flesh is flesh.

That is why, when he looks at himself by the law, he cries out that he is a wretched man. The apostle Paul came to realize one law, and it is this: *"I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:21–23)*. That is how it is. When the apostle Paul looked at his reality, his own flesh liked sin and liked committing sin, while his own heart liked to follow God. So the apostle Paul makes his overall confession: *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ*

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our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:24–25).

What the apostle Paul ultimately says is that he thanks God. Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God through our Lord. He is confessing that the Lord saved him and delivered him from wrath, from the wrath of the law. This is the overall confession that the apostle Paul made after comparing the function of the law, the law, and himself. I thank God through Jesus Christ our Lord. We give thanks for all these things through Jesus. Through Jesus Christ we cannot help but give thanks. There is nothing but that. We thank Jesus for having saved us. Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even the sins of our flesh and hearts, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and He received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. Therefore, we who believe in Jesus, who rose again from death, give thanks that we have been saved from the wrath of the law even though our flesh is weak.

The salvation of the soul accomplished through the baptism He received from John

Ultimately, we give thanks to Jesus. Why is that? It is because our Lord has saved us, because He has remitted my sins and yours and saved our spirits. I will speak about this part.

Does a person have a spirit or not? He does. God gave man a spirit that is holy. Let us take a straight look at a sinner before he has received the remission of sins. Does a sinner also have a spirit or not? He has a spirit. Because he has a spirit, he longs and yearns to live forever. Therefore he pursues eternal life and blessedness. Unlike animals, people are not satisfied with a life

seen with the eyes, but pursue the eternal world that is not seen with the eyes, living forever. It is because they have this spirit. Then how is this spirit saved? This flesh commits sin, and because of the sin of that flesh, sin comes even into one's spirit and heart. And fundamentally, because this spirit itself was born before God as a descendant of Adam, it is born from birth with sin, in a state stained with sin. Therefore, we are sinners and people who have a spirit of sin.

How is that spirit saved? When we say that the soul is saved, what does that salvation refer to? If we divide a person into three parts, they are spirit, soul, and body. To explain specifically, the spirit is the invisible spirit, and the soul refers to our thoughts. And next, the flesh is the body, which is called an earthen vessel. If this earthen vessel breaks, the soul also breaks. It dies and disappears. But the spirit still remains.

So today, to save souls while preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to save two things, the spirit and the soul. The spirit is the living being that God breathed into our flesh, which never dies—that spirit. The human spirit never dies. How is this spirit saved from sin? When Jesus came to this earth clothed in flesh, and, just as sin was passed on when hands were laid on the sacrificial offering in the Old Testament, appointed one representative of all people, the high priest John the Baptist, and bore all our sins on His own flesh at the Jordan River, our spirits received the remission of sins. Because all sin was passed on to Jesus, our spirits receive the remission of sins. Our Lord came to this earth clothed in flesh. *"The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)*. He came. But it is written, *"The world did not know Him" (John 1:10)*. Jesus came to the humble place of a stable in Bethlehem in order to save us. The work by which He saved our souls is clearly revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world,

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including the sins of our spirits, hearts, and flesh, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and by rising again from death He gave eternal life to our souls.

Why did our Lord come to a stable? It is because all people are sinners, humble and lowly beings, and are in a state of having fallen short of the love of God and the glory of God, that God had the baby Jesus born in a stable. He could have been born in a king's palace, but He was born in a stable in order to save lowly human beings, sinners. Second, our Lord lived under the rule of the law, and when He turned thirty, as we see from Matthew chapter 3, verse 13 on, He received baptism from a man called John, who baptized.

Why did Jesus receive baptism? He received baptism in order to bear all of it: the sin of man's spirit, all the sins the human flesh commits until it dies, all inherited sins, the sin of the world. Baptism is also called immersion. It means to be immersed and to be buried, and it means to be submerged in water, to pass on, to transfer, to be washed. The term the laying on of hands also means that sin is passed on. When a ceremony of the laying on of hands or an installation is held to ordain a pastor, a senior pastor lays his hands on him. It is done as a ceremony of transmission by which God pours out the authority and anointing of God through this person. When a person receives the laying on of hands from a demon-possessed person, the demon sometimes even comes over to him. It is also so when a person who did not know how to speak in tongues receives the laying on of hands from someone and then begins to speak in exactly the same tongues as that person. Because hands were placed on the forehead, one comes to do exactly the same. The

laying on of hands is indeed a medium and a way of receiving something passed on.

In the New Testament, when Jesus was to receive baptism, John the Baptist at first declined, asking how he could baptize Him. Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. It means: "Since it is fitting for us to make all people sinless in this way, baptize Me." Jesus received baptism from John in order to wash away all the sins of our hearts and our flesh, in order to have all our sins passed on to Him, and in order to remove our sins. So how did our spirits receive the remission of sins? Jesus bore all our sins, had them all passed on to His own body, and saved us. So when we say that we believe in Jesus, we must acknowledge all of this: that Jesus is the Son of God, is God, is the Creator, and is our Savior; that Jesus bore all our sins when He received baptism from John; and that we were fundamentally sinners bound for hell and people who were to be judged. We must acknowledge all of this that is revealed in the Bible. Only then can we be saved.

By Jesus' receiving baptism from John, all the sins of all the people in the world, all the sin of mankind, were passed on to Jesus. Because our sins were passed on to Jesus, He came to this earth two thousand years ago and, by coming to this earth once and receiving baptism once, had all of it passed on to Him—the sin of the whole world, all sins until the end of the world, all the sin of mankind from Adam until the day the earth ends—and so saved our spirits. Our souls must be saved too, and it is that we believe only when it makes sense to our thinking. No matter how much our Lord has saved us, we believe only if it makes sense when we think about it; if it does not make sense, we do not believe. It is that when we think about it with our souls, we believe only if it makes sense.

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Then how must it make sense? Suppose Jesus had simply said on the Cross only, “I die for your sins,” and, “It is finished.” Think about it logically. There was no event in which the sin of all mankind was passed on to Jesus, and Jesus is One who has no sin; so how could the sin of our souls disappear? Because He received baptism through John the Baptist at the Jordan River, had all our sins passed on to Him, and died on the Cross, there is no sin in our souls; and because Jesus took away all sin and received judgment in our place, our flesh, too, has nothing to be judged for, and we have been saved from the wrath of the law and saved from all sins. Even when we think about it with our souls, we cannot be saved by leaving out the baptism of Jesus and believing only in the Cross, believing only in the blood of the Cross. In our hearts we strive, saying, “I believe, I believe,” but in our thoughts, confusion comes into our souls: “Did He really save me? Did He choose me or not?” We are anxious, thinking, “It is said that there is God’s election, and that He chose some and did not choose others; so have I been chosen? Have I been mistaken all along? Am I not clinging one-sidedly, saying I believe, when God has not chosen me? If the Lord shakes me off, won’t I be finished?”

That is what it means that the soul is saved. We believe only when it makes sense to our thinking; we do not simply believe. Because man is the lord of all creation and a complete being made in the image of God, if something is not complete, he will never believe it, nor can he come to believe it.

There is no one to thank but Jesus

This is exactly what the apostle Paul meant when he said that he thanks God through Jesus Christ our Lord. It is that his own

flesh, even though it had received the remission of sins, was still flesh that followed after sin; that when he looked at the law, it was so spiritual; that when he looked at the function of the law, the law was what makes us realize and know sin; and that he himself had been so badly mistaken so many times. So the apostle Paul says that because we have been delivered from the wrath of the law, because we have been delivered from the law, we therefore serve in the newness of the Spirit, by faith. When our Lord received baptism from John, He bore all the sins of our souls, all the sins of our flesh and our hearts. Not only my sins, but the sins of my ancestors, the sins of my children, the sins of my grandchildren, and the sins of all the people of the world from generation to generation until the day this earth ends—Jesus came once and for all, bore them all once and for all, and saved our souls. And by dying on the Cross, our Lord bore all the sins we have committed with our flesh and their judgment. In order to receive the judgment for the sins committed with the flesh and with the heart, He laid down His own life by being nailed to the Cross, and by paying that life as the price, He saved us from eternal wrath, from the wrath of the law of God. That is why it is salvation. This is the salvation of the soul, the salvation of the spirit and the soul.

That is why the apostle Paul says that he thanks God through Jesus Christ our Lord. There is only one place to give thanks. It is only to Jesus. There is no one but Jesus. To whom else is there to give thanks? Will one give thanks for having lived well according to the law, for having good circumstances, for having parents who are elders or pastors, or for belonging to some denomination? In fact, the apostle Paul was brought up at the feet of Gamaliel. Since he learned the law from a master of the law, if he wanted to boast, he should have given thanks to the people who had taught him, but he gives thanks to Jesus. It is

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because Jesus alone is his Savior and Jesus alone has saved his soul. Paul was not perfect in the flesh. Though he was not perfect in the flesh, the reason he was saved is that Jesus saved him from all sins; it is because Jesus washed away all his sins, bore them all, and received all the judgment for him that he was saved. He was saved by faith. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this?

Because we have hearts, we can believe. Because we have souls, we can understand what makes sense. “Ah, so that is how it is. So that is what believing in Jesus is. So that is what it means for the soul to be saved.” This is how we come to realize it.

At least we who are born again do not speak of absurd things that cannot be understood with the heart or the head. If we know it with our hearts and think about it logically and it fits exactly, we only need to believe it and accept it, and this is salvation. The apostle Paul was saved in this way. So the apostle Paul says that he has been delivered from the law. Being delivered from the law does not mean that the law itself has disappeared. Just as clothes are still there even when one takes them off, the law, the commandments of God, remain in this world forever. It still remains, but it is only that we have been delivered from the law, from the judgment that is the wrath of the law of God, by believing in Jesus. It is that we have been saved before God by believing in our hearts that the Lord washed away all the sins of our souls, bore them all, and received the judgment for us. We have been saved by faith. The reason we give thanks to Jesus is that no price for the remission of sins remains. We believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place, rose again from death, and has made us live forever.

That is why the apostle Paul spoke that way in Romans chapter 7. If my flesh and yours do not do spiritual things, they become even more evil than before being born again. As for the salvation in which the soul is saved—no matter how long one has believed in Jesus, if one's soul has not been saved, if one has not been saved either in spirit or in soul, that is not salvation. But this does not mean that you should believe in Jesus unconditionally. It is that you open the Bible, and I open the Bible, and as we read the word, let us believe it just as it is in the word. Although the word is in these sixty-six books of the Bible, there are very many things we do not see even though we have eyes. We must come to understand the word. We give thanks that our Lord has delivered us from the law and has caused us to serve God in the newness of the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

Live a life of faith by being united in your heart

< Romans 7:7–25 >

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the

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evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

The climax of Romans chapter 7, verses 24–25

Among the things the apostle Paul spoke of in Romans chapter 7, the highest climax is verses 24 and 25. *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:24–25).*

In Romans chapter 6, the apostle Paul said that we are united with the baptism Christ received, are baptized together with Christ, are united with the death Christ died on the Cross, and die together and live together with Him. Then in Romans chapter 7, looking back on the state of his spiritual life of faith in the time before he met the Lord and after he met the Lord, he saw how much his own body, that is, his flesh, goes against the law of God, and he said that he was a wretched man. To be wretched means to be extremely weary. Calling his own body a body of death, a body that would die, both before and after he was born again, he asked who could deliver his wretched self from this

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body of death, from this death, curse, and sin, and then said that he gives thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord.

By believing in Christ, by being united with Christ, the apostle Paul was released and set free from all the sins committed with the flesh, the sins committed with the heart, and the sins committed with the thoughts. And after that, he finally confessed that with the mind he himself serves the law of God, but with the flesh he serves the law of sin. That was the apostle Paul's conclusion.

So when he comes to Romans chapter 8, he said, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2).* There are two laws God has given, namely the law of sin and death and the law of the Spirit of life, and he is saying that the law of the Spirit of life saved him from the law of sin and death. The apostle Paul ultimately received this salvation by uniting his heart with the work by which the Lord saved him, with the baptism by which the Lord bore his sins, and with the death on the Cross. That is what he is speaking of. You and I also must have the faith that is united with the Lord and with all the work the Lord did. The content of the salvation with which we are to be united is clear. Because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had not only my sins and yours but all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving that judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and delivered us from sin and death.

In Romans chapter 7, the apostle Paul says that in the past he was under the law and could not go to Christ, but that now, through Jesus Christ, he has been released from the law and released from the law of sin and death, and so now he has come

to serve God through the Holy Spirit. And as he says this, he goes on to speak of the outline of this truth.

The law exposes the sin in the heart

"Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'" (Romans 7:7). The apostle Paul is a person truly well versed in the Scriptures. Concerning sin and the commandment, in verse 8 he said, *"But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire" (Romans 7:8)*. What does it mean that sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced all manner of evil desire in him? As it is said, *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)*, people are conceived in iniquity and brought forth in sin from their mother's womb, and so they are born with twelve kinds of sinful hearts from birth. They are born into this world with these twelve kinds of sinful hearts spoken of in the words, *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness" (Mark 7:21–22)*.

But when a person born with sin hears the six hundred thirteen commandments God has spoken, the words of these commandments that say "Do this" and "Do not do that," that sin rather takes opportunity by the commandment and produces covetousness within him. When he did not know the commandment, when he had not heard the word in which God said, "You shall not murder," and "You shall not steal," the sin within him stayed quiet; but because he was told not to do it, that

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very thing became the cause that stirred up the sin within him, and so he came to commit sin. That is what he is saying.

The apostle Paul is now speaking of his state before he was born again. If people have not been born again, if they have not known and believed this truth of the water and the Spirit, anyone has sin in the heart. If there is sin in the heart, then when people are told not to do something, they do it all the more, whatever it is. Of course, they do more even when they are told to do it, but when they are told not to do it, they do it all the more. There are twelve kinds of sin in the human heart, and because God says, "You shall have no other gods before Me," people come to have other gods all the more. The way to be released from the sin in the heart also lies in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sin of our hearts but all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and because of that sin, He paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us.

Let us suppose that I have tucked something very important between the pages of this book. Suppose it is so important that I have tucked it between the pages; and because I have to go out briefly to meet someone, but it is too risky to take it with me, I tuck it away for the time being and say to you, "I will be back in just thirty minutes, so you must never look at this; you must keep watch over it," and then I go out. Then among those here, someone will appear who cannot bear wanting to look, wondering, "What on earth has he tucked away there, that he says we must not look at it?" He wants to look, but because there are so many eyes watching, he cannot bring himself to look; so he comes up front and smells the flowers and so on, and in the end someone comes and looks after all. The reason the Lord said in the Ten Commandments, "You shall not covet," is that the

law is what makes people realize and know sin. He said, "You shall not covet," in order to expose the sin in our hearts. He said, "You shall not covet," because there is a coveting heart here. Since there is a coveting heart in the heart, what happens when we are told not to covet? Because it is there, it comes out. Because it is there, it comes out, and people end up looking without fail, and they want to have good things.

That is the kind of story the apostle Paul is telling. He is saying that sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced all manner of evil desire within him. He is saying that because there is iniquity fundamentally within him, because there is a sinful heart, however much the commandments of God tell him to do what is good and not to do what is bad, he ends up doing it after all because there is sin. He is saying that he does not do what he was told to do, and he ends up doing without fail what he was told not to do. This is the heart of a sinner, the sinful heart that is within the heart.

That is why, when we listen to what the apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 7, we can see that this man is truly spiritually discerning, and that he is not a theoretical person but someone who has actually experienced the Scriptures a great deal and is very well versed in the word.

People who were deceived, thinking the law was given to be kept

All manner of evil desire was produced in his heart, and because there is the law of God, he came to know that there was covetousness in his heart; and also his sin was exposed, and so he rather came to die. He says that the commandment that was to give him life did not give him life, but rather sin revived, and

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he became one who dies because of that sin. *"And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me" (Romans 7:10–11)*. He is saying that sin deceived him through the commandment. He is saying that because the commandments of God are truly good and right, he thought he had to live just as they say and that everyone had to live that way, but because there was sin in his heart, and because he did not know the commandments and the law well, he was deceived. He is saying that he was deceived because he thought the law was given to be kept.

Ordinary people are all deceived in this way too. They think the law was given to be kept, and they strive to keep it. Then, when they fail to keep it and commit sin, they repent again for having broken the commandment and try to have their sins removed. That is being deceived. The law was given in order to draw out and expose the sin that is in the human heart. God said, "You shall not murder," because there is a heart that would murder. And it says that by the commandment sin killed me. It says that the commandments of God are right, but because there is sin in me, sin is exposed through the law, and through sin he rather became a dead man after believing in God. So, instead of clinging to one's own deeds to remove the sin that has been exposed, one must believe in the work Jesus did. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only our sins exposed by the law but all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and accomplished the remission of sins by rising again from death.

So the apostle Paul said, *"Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear*

sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful" (Romans 7:12–13). Is what the apostle Paul says the same as what we say, or not? It is the same. Paul is a man who is very clear about this truth.

With the mind the law of God, with the flesh the law of sin

This time, the apostle Paul speaks about his own flesh. *"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:14–17)*. He is saying that the law itself is spiritual, but because there is sin within him, he sees himself failing to live according to the law, failing to live according to the law of God, and committing sin. So he says that he agrees with the law that it is good. And he says that he has the heart that wants to do good, but he does not have the ability to do good; rather, he says that he is one who does not do the good he wants to do but does the evil he does not want to do.

Speaking in this way about his state before he was born again, Paul also goes on to speak of his flesh, which remains that way even after he was born again. *"I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:21–24)*. He

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goes on in this way to tell what happened after he was born again. Evil is present with him who wants to do good, but what is that evil? He is speaking of his outer man, which is the flesh, and his inner man, which is the heart. With the inner man he delights in all of these: the law of God, the law of faith in God, and the law of the Spirit. He is saying that although he delights in them, he sees another law in his members warring against the law of his mind and bringing him into captivity to the law of sin which is in his members. He is saying that there is yet another law in the flesh, and he sees that the lust that the flesh desires and his heart that wants to live according to the will of God are at war, and that the flesh rather seizes him and brings him into captivity under the law of sin. He is saying that he sees himself brought back again under the law, so that, seeing himself committing sin, he has no choice but to go under the law again and to acknowledge that he is one who cannot avoid being judged once more. Even while seeing such flesh, the One on whom we must rely is Jesus. Because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, bore not only our sins committed with the flesh but all the sins of the world once and for all, He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and gave us new life.

So the apostle Paul laments that he is a wretched man. But in the end, he said that he gives thanks to God through Jesus Christ our Lord. That is precisely because he was united with Him.

Do not stop at knowing, but be united in your heart

The reason I have listed all this out like this is that you and I know this Scripture well. We know well that our sins were

passed on when Jesus received baptism from John. We also know well that when He died on the Cross, we also died. We know all of the Scriptures. But the question is whether our hearts are united. The question is whether we unite our hearts with this word, with our Lord, and whether we unite our hearts with the work the Lord did. So you and I must have a heart that is united. We must be united. Being united is tremendously important.

It is written, *"Or do you not know that as many of us as were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into His death?" (Romans 6:3)*. It says that we were baptized into Christ Jesus, that is, united with Him, and that by being baptized into His death, we were united with His death and died as well. We must have faith that is united. However much we know the Scriptures and however well versed we are in them, we must unite our hearts with these things the Lord revealed to us, spoke to us, and recorded in the Scriptures. If we are not united, it becomes just a piece of knowledge and becomes a theory. A theory is like saying that the family over there is tremendously rich and lives tremendously well. What does that have to do with you? It has nothing to do with you. But what is real is what has to do with you. For the blessing the Lord gives us, the actual remission of sins, to become ours, by our believing in the Lord in our hearts so that it becomes real and by our being united, and for every blessing the Lord gives to become yours and mine, we must be united. Without the union of the heart, it is nothing. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in our hearts is the salvation Jesus actually accomplished. It is to accept into our hearts the word that because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had not only all the sins of your lifetime and mine but all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and that He rose again from death and gave us life.

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In fact, I believe that when the apostle Paul lamented that he was a wretched man and asked who would deliver him from this body of death, it is not only the apostle Paul's groaning but also becomes your groaning and mine, and the groaning of all people who are still outside Christ, of all mankind. But truly the apostle Paul said that he would give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. This means that the apostle Paul was united. It means that he was united with the work by which the Lord saved him.

When one is united with the baptism Jesus received from John, sin is passed on

Being united is tremendously important. It means that we who were baptized into Christ Jesus, that is, those who unite their hearts with the baptism Jesus received, have their sins passed on to Jesus Christ. When Jesus came to this earth to save us from sin and first began His public ministry at the age of thirty, what was the very first thing He did to remove your sins and mine? It was receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Then why did He receive baptism? He received baptism in order to have all your sins and mine passed on to Him and to go to the Cross and die for us; He received baptism in order first to have them passed on to Him and then to remove your sins and mine and wash them away.

So if we know this word the Lord has spoken and unite our hearts with it, all our sins were actually passed on there, and our sins were actually washed away. Our Lord actually came to this earth, received baptism from John, and bore all your sins and mine. So He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. All righteousness means that, while all people could not but go to

hell because of sin, God did what was right for us in order to remove all those sins. That is precisely the work in which Jesus came to this earth in a human body and received baptism in order to save us from sin. Why did Jesus receive baptism from John? He received baptism in order to bear the sins of all people of all mankind, not only yours and mine. So it says that we who believed by being united with the baptism are united with His death, so that we also die and obtain new life. Jesus, who in this way bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and gave us new life. Our receiving the remission of sins by believing is to accept into our hearts this gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has already been accomplished.

So being united is tremendously important. When Jesus received baptism from John, He bore your sins and mine. And after that, even after we have received the remission of sins, it is tremendously important that we be united. The union of the heart is a part of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but after we have received the remission of sins, as time goes on, it very easily becomes just a theory. People say, "I already know all that; why do it again?" But if we are actually united, in your heart and mine, our hearts become completely and firmly attached to the Lord. When we are united, our hearts become attached; when we are not united, our hearts fall away, and in truth we just look on at the Lord as if looking at the house next door, each going our separate ways. Therefore, we must live a life of faith by being united. We must believe by being united with the Lord, and you and I must live with a united faith.

If people are not united, what happens even if they say they have received the remission of sins? If they are not united, they just go out into the world. If they are united, they become

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workers of God; if they are united, they receive the blessings of God; and if they are united, because everything the Lord can do is all something related to them, all His power and everything He has truly become theirs. But if they are not united, they are separate. It means that the Lord and my heart are separate. If we are united, we are one; but if we are not united, then even after receiving the remission of sins, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is separate, and the removal of our sins is separate, each going its own way.

Even though our flesh is lacking and weak like the apostle Paul's, our hearts must be united. We must unite our hearts with the fact that our Lord saved us from sin, we must unite our hearts with what the Lord has spoken to us, and we must also unite our hearts with the word of prophecy the Lord has given us, with all the things that are to take place in this world from now on. What happens if we are not united? A person says, "If everything I have runs out, I will die, so this absolutely must not happen. Everything else may go, but not this," and grabs hold of his own way to live by himself. Material things become his lifeline. If he is not united, he becomes that kind of person, and if he does not even have that, he thinks he will simply die. But in truth, I hope you know that it is not material things that keep a person alive, but that if he has a heart united with the Lord, he will live. The reason we can rely on the Lord rather than on material things is that the work by which He saved us is clear. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sins that show up in our worries but all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death to become the Savior who is still alive even now.

I will give thanks through Jesus Christ our Lord. We must be united. Our Lord tells us that we must live by faith united with

Christ, that we must live united. What the apostle Paul finally says in Romans chapter 7 is that we must live united. Has a person whose heart is not united with the Lord ever become a worker? No one has. Has a person whose heart is not united with the Lord ever believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been born again? No one has. However much it is set right in front of them, if they are not united, it is of no use at all. In the old days, when a drought was severe, owners would lead their cows to the stream. When they take them to the stream and set them there to drink, some cows drink the water well on their own. But some cows, even when they are led to the stream, will not drink, for some reason or other being out of sorts. Even if the owner forcibly drags them to the water and beats them, they will not drink. If they will not drink, there is nothing to be done. That is what not being united is. However much people have received the remission of sins and however much they are in the church, if they are not united, in the end all they have is "The Lord saved me," and they are literally not united. They are separate. Even while being children of God, even while God is their God, they live separately. If we are united, we live together with Christ. We consult Him, receive help and receive counsel, and live together. But if we are not united, then even while living in the same house, because we do not unite our hearts, because we do not unite our hearts with what is right, we live separately. It is the same with becoming a worker. However much someone is taught, if he is not united, he does not become a worker.

You and I have now received the remission of sins too, but what are we like? We have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have no sin in our hearts, but what are we like? As you and I live day by day, like the apostle Paul, with the mind we serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin. Is that not so? And even now, what

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happens if we do not unite our hearts with the Lord? We may go to the kingdom of heaven, but living on this earth by uniting our hearts with the Church and uniting our hearts with the work of God, sharing joys and sorrows together with Christ, in Christ, and in God, will disappear. It means that nothing works if we are not united. It does not end just because we believe or because we know.

Be united by ruminating every day

We must be united every day. We must chew it over again and ruminate on it every day. The Bible says that clean animals chew the cud. The cow is a clean animal, and it chews the cud. When you put grass or straw in front of it, it chomps on it a few times and gulps it down; but one day you will see it folding its knees, sitting down, and chewing again as if chewing gum. It is not doing so because it feels nauseous; it is chewing again with relish. People who do not know say that since it is an animal, it takes out what it has eaten and eats it again, but when you come to know, that is chewing the cud.

We also must now be united and ruminate every day. We must ruminate every day and be united every day. Even at this very hour today, we must ruminate on the fact that the Lord received baptism from John for me, and the fact that because the Lord received baptism, your sins and mine were passed on, and we must be united with it. When we have such a united faith, you and I can have peace in our hearts, our hearts are clean, a new heart arises, and new strength arises. Just try being united. See whether new strength arises or not. We have been united with the work in which Jesus received baptism from John. Do we have sin, or not? Jesus Christ died on the Cross. We have

been united with that. Did we die, or not? And Christ rose again. Did we rise again, or not? If we are united, we can die for good and rise again for good. But what happens if we are not united? People just say, "Why did He receive baptism? There is no baptism in the Old Testament, but there is baptism in the New Testament; right, right," and leave it at that. What kind of union is this? It is theory. Even when we ruminate, it is to believe in our hearts the fact that because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had not only all our sins but all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, He shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death. It is not removing sins anew every day, but uniting our hearts with the salvation Jesus has already accomplished.

When you go to school, there are students who truly respect their teacher and learn from him, students who learn the teacher's character, and students who learn everything, the teacher's high leadership and his every move. There are also students who are not like that. There are students who in their hearts look down on their own teacher, think that he teaches even worse than the cram-school teacher in their neighborhood, and go around speaking ill of the teacher. They call their own teacher "that kid" behind his back and say he is ridiculous. What is this? It is not being united. For the sake of those students, the teacher teaches, "You must do this. You must become great people in the future. To become great people, you must do this." If they unite their hearts, they actually do as the teacher leads and become just that; but if they are not united, the teacher becomes something they speak ill of behind his back whenever they are bored. I hope that we who are born again are not like that. At the very least, do not call your teacher "that kid." You may say, "There are some things about our teacher that I do not quite like,"

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but is a teacher your friend? That happens because they are not united. Because they are not united with his heart, his character, his personality, and every word he says, they go their separate ways. What happens if they are united? Would a teacher teach what is bad? He speaks of what is good. Even if he himself walks sideways like a crab, he teaches, "You walk straight." He truly teaches that way. But because they are not united, they become people even worse than the teacher. With a teacher, if they do not like him, they may act that way, but at the very least, with the Lord we must live with a united faith. We must be united. Our hearts must be united.

A united faith like deep water

Our true life of faith does not end with knowing; it comes about by being united. We must be united. A shallow faith does not unite. A hymn also sings that the wide and great grace of God is deeper than the great sea, so loosen the anchor rope and go out into the deep. But a shallow faith that does not unite is like very shallow water. Even seawater, when it is shallow, begins to foam. Where the seawater is deep, when a wave rises, the deep blue water just swells up once and then sweeps back down. But what happens in shallow places? When a wave comes, it rises noisily, crashes, tangles with itself, breaks apart, dashes against the rocks, and makes a great commotion.

People are the same way. A person whose heart is firmly united with the word of the Lord, a person who is united every day, has a deep heart, so he is always united, and the center of his heart is in that depth, in deep fellowship with the Lord. So his heart is already settled, and whatever situation arises, though he may be shaken a little, he is always unchanging and returns

to his place. But shallow water turns away at once if you shift the water gate even a little. What about deep water? It does not matter how you open the water gate. We must have a united faith. We must have a faith united with the Lord, a united faith that believes the word of the Lord. You must do so, and I must do so too. We must not be stirred up by looking at small deeds or stirred up by looking at circumstances. Even if circumstances shake, the salvation we are to believe in does not change. It is to set our hearts on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had not only our sins in our weakness but all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, He paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us forever.

It means that we must unite our hearts with the fact that the Lord has saved you and me; be united again with the fact that since we have received salvation, since we died with Christ and rose again, we are not people of the world; be united again with the fact that God has made us workers of righteousness; be united with what says, “This is right”; and keep on being united. If you are united, your hearts become good, and the strength of the Lord becomes our strength. The power of the Lord becomes our power, and the blessings of the Lord become our blessings. If we are united, there is no need to live separately. Be united. I am not telling you to be united with me, but to be united with the Lord. Then you will also be united with me. This is because the hearts of people who are united understand one another. But if you are not united, you lose everything. So, though your faith is lacking, though it is a faith that cannot make up its mind, with the faith that has received the remission of sins, unite your hearts every day with the fact that the Lord has removed your sins, and then, every day, though you are lacking, be united with the word

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the Lord speaks to you.

Only a united faith makes us live and makes us give thanks through Christ. We must be united with all the truth and with the Lord. If we are united, strength arises. Our hearts become settled. When our hearts are firmly united with the word of the Lord, our hearts become firmly settled. It does not come about just because we say, "I will decide," or "I will make up my mind." If we are firmly united by faith with what the Lord has spoken, if we are firmly united in our hearts, faith arises; and if we are united by faith, what happens? It comes to be just as that word says. We must be united. Union is our life of faith and our faith. What is not union is not a life of faith. That is why we must be united. We give thanks that He gave us the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross and has given us a faith united with the Lord.

From now on as well, from this very moment until the day we meet our Lord, we must be united in our hearts. Let us live united. Though we are lacking, because we are lacking, we are united. The apostle Paul also was united and received salvation before God, was united and became a servant of righteousness, and was united and became a precious person who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. Be united. If you are united, you live; if you are not united, your life of faith is as good as dead. If you are united, you become a worker; if you are not united, you do not become a worker. Not having become a worker means not having been united. In the end, such people will fly away like mayflies, like dry chaff, and vanish from the church. Be united. Do not do it with shallow human thoughts, but be united. Though you are lacking, be united. The Lord takes responsibility for the rest and blesses you. I believe that the Lord will give you a united faith and work in you. I hope that God will give you a united heart and faith. ✉

Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

The law of the flesh and the law of the Holy Spirit

< Romans 7:7–25 >

“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died. And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me. Therefore the law is holy, and the commandment holy and just and good. Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful. For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the

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evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin."

We must know what actually exists in a person who has been born again, that is, in a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A person who has received the remission of sins has the flesh, and because he has the flesh, he also has the thoughts of the flesh. Also, because the Spirit of God, that is, the Holy Spirit, is in his heart, he also has the thoughts of the Holy Spirit. God has given us the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And before giving us that gospel of the water and the Spirit, He first gave us the law, which is the commandment of God.

In Romans chapter 7, the apostle Paul teaches in detail about the relationship between the law and the flesh, and about the leading of the Holy Spirit. We have died to the law through the body of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ bore all our sins once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross bearing those sins and received the judgment, and rose again from death in three days, and so became our Savior. We who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit have now come to serve the Lord by following the Holy Spirit.

The law is a mirror that reveals our sins

In verse 7, the apostle Paul said, *"What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'" (Romans 7:7).* This is the answer to the question of whether the law is sin, whether the law is something wrong. It means that through the law of God, we have come to know what kind of sins we commit before God.

When the word *"law"* is used here, it refers not merely to the 613 commandments and ordinances but also to the whole word of God. But we usually understand the law on the basis of the Ten Commandments. The law is by no means sin, nor is it a wrong law of God. Rather, it is the statute of God that clearly reveals the sins of the old man and that, even after we have received the remission of sins, precisely points out wrong covetousness and sins. The law is like a mirror that reflects and shows us our own true state.

Therefore, the law is a precious tool that lets us see precisely how much we are sinners before God. We who stand before the law are by no means righteous. That is why God sent His own Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth and, by having Him receive baptism from John the Baptist, had Him bear all our sins on His body, and by having Him receive the punishment for those sins on the Cross, He delivered us from the curse of the law. The law reveals our sins, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished has solved those sins for us.

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"You shall not covet"—the Tenth Commandment reveals covetousness as sin

The apostle Paul particularly says, *"I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet'" (Romans 7:7)*. The Tenth Commandment, the last of the Ten Commandments that God gave in Exodus chapter 20, says as follows: *"You shall not covet your neighbor's house; you shall not covet your neighbor's wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor's" (Exodus 20:17)*. If there had not been this commandment, we would not even have known that coveting is a sin. But because the law of God said not to covet, we have come to know that covetousness is a sin.

When we stand before the law of God, from the very First Commandment, *"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)*, it is already revealed how many things there are in our hearts that we love more than God. Children, wealth, honor, our own desires—when these things take a greater place in our hearts than God, that becomes the very sin of serving other gods. In this way, the law makes us realize concretely for ourselves how much we are sinners before God.

Looking back on the old days, the apostle Paul confesses that the law pointed out to him that there was covetousness in his heart. He means that when he came to know the law of God before he was born again, before he met the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the heart of sin rose up even more from his flesh. But God had Jesus Christ bear even that very sin of covetousness, all of it, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. Since the word says, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*, the sin of covetousness, the sin of

murder, and the sin of adultery were all placed upon the baptism of Jesus and were judged on the Cross.

When the commandment came, sin revived and I died

The following is the word of verses 8 through 9: *"But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead. I was alive once without the law, but when the commandment came, sin revived and I died" (Romans 7:8–9)*. The apostle Paul was born as a seed of sin who inherited the sin of Adam and Eve. So he means that whenever he heard the law of God, which says, "Do this; do not do that," sin rose up within him as covetousness of many kinds.

He means that before the Holy Spirit came into his heart, whenever he, who had been a seed of sin, saw and heard the commandments of God, sin rather boiled up from within him. He confesses that if he had not heard such commands at all, the desires of sin would have stayed quiet, but that, on the contrary, the law and the commandments of God awakened the desires that were within him.

Verses 10 and 11 say, *"And the commandment, which was to bring life, I found to bring death. For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it killed me" (Romans 7:10–11)*. Before Paul was born again, before he knew the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he thought he was a decent person. But when he knew the commands of God and saw sin rising up within himself, he realized that he had become a dead man. Before he knew the law, he did not even know that he was a

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sinner, but after he knew the law, he realized that he had become an exceedingly great sinner.

There is an example in the Bible that shows this well. Cain tried to offer a sacrifice to God by the strength of the flesh. He brought the produce he had cultivated with his own hands and offered it as an offering. But God did not accept Cain's offering. This is because his way of trying to please God with his own flesh and labor was wrong. On the other hand, Abel offered the firstborn of his flock and their fat. He offered an offering that shed blood, that is, a foreshadowing of the remission of sins. God accepted Abel's offering. From the very beginning, the Bible clearly shows how wrong a way it is to try to fulfill the law by the strength of the flesh.

It was we ourselves who deserved to die in just this way under the law. But God sent Jesus Christ to this earth and had Him receive baptism from John the Baptist and have our sins transferred to Him, had Him be cursed and die on the Cross bearing those sins, and then had Him rise again in three days. Jesus Christ received in our place the judgment of death for sin that the law demands. Therefore, by believing in Jesus Christ, we have been made completely free from the condemnation of the law.

The law is a compass that leads us to Jesus Christ

Then what is the purpose of the law? The law makes us know that we are sinners before God and makes us realize that we need the One who will save us from that sin. The law is like a compass that makes us go to Jesus Christ. When the law reveals our sins and makes us know that we deserve to go to hell, we come to

seek the Savior who will remove those sins. That Savior is none other than Jesus Christ.

James chapter 2 verse 10 says as follows: *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10)*. The law makes no allowances. It has no flexibility either. If one breaks one point, he has broken it all. Because the law is perfect and holy in this way, it precisely reveals how completely we are sinners. Its standard is the standard of God, not people's feelings or subjective yardsticks.

Galatians 3:24 says, *"Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith" (Galatians 3:24)*. The teacher called the law brings us to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins on His own body, received the judgment of God for those sins on the Cross, and rose again in three days, and so completed our salvation. By acknowledging the law, we come to believe in this righteousness of Jesus Christ while ruminating on it, and we come to live a life of faith with bold faith at all times.

The law is a tool of God that leads us to faith that believes in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and lets us live boldly in this world. Because they clearly know that they are wrong before the law, people who have had those sins solved through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that is, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, become as bold as lions. Those who acknowledge the statutes of God can live a life of faith with confidence anywhere.

Sin is established because there is the law

When we did not know the law of God, we did not know our sins. But after we came to know the commands of God, we came

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to know how much we had been sinners before God. Romans chapter 5 says, *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)*. It also says that when there was no law, sin was not counted as sin.

Our acknowledging sin also must not be done by our own feelings or subjective standards. We must know that we are sinners by the clear standard called the law of God. If each person sets his own standard, saying, "As for me, this much is not a sin," that standard is different from the standard of God. Only when we stand before the absolute and perfect standard called the law of God can we properly know how thoroughly we are sinners.

God told Adam and Eve not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When there was no such word, it did not matter if Adam and Eve ate anything in the Garden of Eden. But after God spoke that word, eating that fruit became a sin. The law that God gave through Moses is a word given to all mankind. When that law is broken, sin is established. And Jesus Christ had all the sins committed under that law passed on to His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He paid in our place death, the wages of sin. Then He rose again from death in three days and remitted all those sins, including our sins.

People are born as seeds sold to sin

The apostle Paul confesses as follows in verses 14 and 15: *"For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do"*

(Romans 7:14–15). The commands of God are holy and spiritual. There is nothing wrong with them. Yet the apostle Paul says that although he knows the law is spiritual, he himself is carnal and sold under sin. It means that he did not have the Holy Spirit.

Roses have seeds, pumpkins have seeds, and every plant has seeds. Moss roses and cosmos also bloom and flourish according to their own seeds. Likewise, the apostle Paul says that when he was born of his mother, he was born as a seed of sin. His body was born with a heart of sin, he was born as an instrument of sin, and he was born with his thoughts already stained with sin. That is why he says that he was sold under sin and that he was a person who could not help but commit only sin.

If a person's heart is stained with sin, sin is surely revealed in his actions. If the heart is dirty, it brings forth dirty things, and if the heart is clean, it brings forth clean things. For a change to come to the heart of sin, human effort or resolve can never make it possible. Only through the word of truth, only through the water and the Spirit, can change come. This is the very reason our Lord said in John chapter 3 verse 5, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*.

Whether born again or not born again, people all have bodies. Because they have bodies, they have the thoughts of the flesh, and those thoughts of the flesh are already stained with sin. Because they are seeds of sin, they automatically follow sin and delight in heading toward sin. A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has the Holy Spirit and so also has the thoughts of the Holy Spirit, but in the state of not being born again, one has nothing but the thoughts of the flesh. Therefore, such a person serves sin entirely as a slave and becomes a seed that commits sin by instinct even though no one teaches him.

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We must acknowledge that we were these seeds sold to sin. Only then do we come to know how precious a Savior Jesus Christ is to us. The Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and bore all the sins of these seeds sold to sin, received in our place death, the wages of sin, on the Cross, and then rose again, and so set us free from being slaves of sin. By believing this fact, we are no longer seeds sold to sin but have become children of God.

For those who are not born again to try to keep the law is hypocrisy

If a person who has such flesh and thoughts stained with sin tries to keep the commands of God, that becomes hypocrisy. This is the reason that religious people all become hypocrites. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have received the Holy Spirit in their hearts are fortunate, because they follow His leading. Because the Holy Spirit is God, He has power, and He gives us power so that we can live according to His word and can live a life of light worthily. Therefore, we can escape from hypocrisy.

The heart with which people try to keep the law is admirable and commendable. But to attempt to keep what cannot be kept is a foolish thing. For a person who was born as a descendant of sin, whose body is stained with sin and whose thoughts are accustomed to sin, to attempt to keep the law of God, believing that he can, is by no means possible. Then you may say, “Do you mean that people cannot keep the law of God? Do you mean that we have been utterly defeated by the law?” But that is not so.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit become able to fulfill the righteous requirement of the law

through the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist, bore all our sins, and died on the Cross, the punishment for sin that the law demands of us has already been accomplished in Jesus. And Jesus Christ, who died and rose again, has sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts and so has enabled us to live according to the will of God. But for those who do not yet know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is impossible to live according to the law of God.

Unless one is born again, one cannot enter the kingdom of God

What does the human body want? It wants to commit sin. Therefore, our Lord said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. He said that only by being born again can we see the kingdom of God and enter it.

What does it mean to be born again of water and the Spirit? It is to believe in the gospel (the water) in which Jesus Christ bore our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and in the gospel (the Spirit) in which He died on the Cross, rose again, and sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts. When we believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, our sins are remitted, and the Holy Spirit comes into our hearts, and we become new men. This is what being born again is.

To understand being born again easily, we can think of grafting a tree. If you cut down a wild pear tree and graft a branch of a pear tree onto that place, the root is still that of the wild pear tree, but pears grow on that branch. Likewise, if a person born with the nature of sin believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and is grafted into Jesus Christ, the body that

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is seen outwardly is still the body of the old man, but the fruit borne within him becomes the fruit of the Spirit. In this way, God makes us new men. This change is not accomplished by human effort or training, but only by faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

For people who do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have not yet received the remission of sins to try to keep the law of God with those thoughts and hearts of the flesh is a foolish thing and an arrogant thing. The apostle Paul, too, came to know that before the law of God he was rather a lump of sin, and he confessed that he had been sold to sin and become a slave of sin. Then how can anyone think that a person can keep the commands of God without being born again? The very thought that one can do it by making an effort is wrong.

The apostle Paul says as follows in verses 16 and 17: *"If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:16–17)*. Here, the phrase *"sin that dwells in me"* refers to the thoughts of the flesh. He confesses that it is not that the law is wrong, but that the sin dwelling in his flesh makes him break the law.

One cannot do what is good with the flesh

The following is the word of verses 18 through 20: *"For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:18–*

20). The apostle Paul confesses that there is nothing good in his flesh.

Therefore, it is not right for a Christian to have the thought that he can do anything good with his own flesh. Even if one is a born-again person, trying to do good works with the flesh or with the thoughts of the flesh is wrong in itself. Our body is merely an instrument. This body obeys the commands of its master according to who becomes our master.

It is not right for a person who does not have the Holy Spirit to think that he can do good with his own flesh. Doing other people's laundry and carrying firewood for them while not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot be true goodness. The flesh loves to commit sin, and it commits sin by instinct even though no one teaches it. A person who does not have the Holy Spirit in his heart has only the flesh and the thoughts of the flesh, so he cannot do good.

But because Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist and bore all our sins, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and then rose again and sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts, we have become those who can do good works through that Holy Spirit. Not by the strength of our flesh but by the power of the Holy Spirit, through faith that believes in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, we have become able to do the things that please God.

All people are a seed of evildoers

It is just as the apostle Paul wrote in Romans chapter 3: *"As it is written: 'There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There*

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is none who does good, no, not one'" (Romans 3:10–12). This is the true state of people who have the flesh.

It also says as follows: *"'Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit'; 'The poison of asps is under their lips'; 'Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness.' 'Their feet are swift to shed blood; Destruction and misery are in their ways; And the way of peace they have not known.' 'There is no fear of God before their eyes'" (Romans 3:13–18).* It says that our throat is an open tomb, and this means that we eat diligently in order to die. A person who does not have the Holy Spirit does not fear God and is merely an instrument that can expertly commit nothing but sin.

There are people in this world who seem to do good, but that is not goodness but hypocrisy. It is disguising oneself falsely as good and covering one's evil self with falsehood. Therefore, even if one says that he believes in Jesus, in the state of not being born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he cannot do good before God. Without believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus Christ bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, one cannot become righteous before God, nor can he do righteous works.

We need an absolute Savior

Therefore, the apostle Paul says that the law is by no means wrong, but that because the thoughts of people's flesh commit nothing but sin, we must be born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We human beings need an absolute Savior. Our fundamental thoughts of the flesh are stained with evil, yet people still have the thought that they want to live good

lives, want to live holy lives, and want to live upright lives. But because they are a seed of evildoers, they cannot help but commit only sin. That is why we surely need a Savior.

Verse 21 says as follows: *"I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good" (Romans 7:21)*. He means that because he is stained with sin, he commits only sin. Verses 22 and 23 say as follows: *"For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members" (Romans 7:22–23)*.

Here it is speaking of the figure of a born-again person. A born-again person has two cravings. One is the spiritual craving to want to live according to the will of God, and the other is the craving to want to follow what his flesh wants. The inward man of a born-again person, that is, the Holy Spirit, delights in the law of God and rejoices in living according to the will of God. But in our members, in the thoughts of the flesh, there is another law that wants to serve the law of sin. These two hearts fight each other, and usually one ends up following what his flesh wants and sees himself living as a slave of sin.

It is not because of our own strength or righteousness that we win in this fight. We win only because of the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It is not that we win by knowing the statutes of the law and living according to those statutes, but that we can win because Jesus Christ received baptism from John for us, died on the Cross, rose again, and sent the Holy Spirit. Therefore, we can always stand humbly before the righteousness of the Lord.

At just such a time, we need an absolute Savior. Jesus Christ received baptism from John and bore all the sins of us who wander between these two hearts. He washed away those sins with His blood on the Cross, and by rising again and sending the

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Holy Spirit, He gave our inward man the power to follow the law of God. By believing this fact, whenever the law of sin tries to take us captive, we must hold on to the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ and go forward.

I thank God through Jesus Christ

Therefore, both for the apostle Paul and for all people before being born again, Jesus Christ, the Savior, was absolutely necessary. Verses 24 and 25 say as follows: *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:24–25)*. Here, the *"body of death"* refers to his own body and the thoughts of the flesh.

The reason the apostle Paul could give thanks to God was that he acknowledged the fact that it is a rule that his flesh serves the law of sin. Only when we acknowledge that our body is a being that incorrigibly commits sin can we give thanks through Jesus Christ. If we do not know or do not acknowledge the fact that the flesh is under the rule of sin, we fall into condemnation every time our body commits sin, and we cannot live a life of faith properly.

We give thanks to God because Jesus Christ is our Savior. Jesus Christ came to this earth, bore all the sins of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross and received the judgment of God for those sins, and rose again from death in three days, and so saved us completely. He became our Savior through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If the Lord had not removed all our sins, how could we have given thanks to God, obtained peace, and served the Lord? How

can a person who has sin, a person who has fallen into sin, help others and serve God? The Lord removed our sins and so enabled us to follow the Lord and enabled us to do righteous works. He has given us, through Jesus Christ, the qualification to serve before God. How thankful we are for this! Even if we live in thanksgiving all our lives, we cannot fully repay it.

By believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who became our Savior, we have been set free from sin and saved from the wrath of the law. Now we have become able to come to Jesus Christ and serve righteousness by following the Spirit of God, by following the Holy Spirit. Because a person who has not received the remission of sins does not have the Holy Spirit, he fundamentally has only the heart of the flesh and cannot help but serve only sin. But a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can follow the law of the Holy Spirit.

This is because the Holy Spirit has power and makes us submit to the law of God, gives us the power to follow it, and gives us faith. But on the other hand, because the flesh still tries to serve the law of sin, we must hold on to the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ by faith every day and follow the leading of the Lord. This is also why the apostle Paul said that he must strike his own body and bring it into subjection.

Without the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one cannot become the light of the world

Today, for people who are not born again, people who do not accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to say that they do good or that they become the light of the world is impossible. However much they may say that they believe in Jesus, people

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who are not born again and do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot live that way, however much they want to become the light of the world and want to live good lives. This is because they are people who cannot help but follow the cravings of their own flesh by instinct and cannot help but serve sin as slaves.

The moon itself cannot give off light on its own. Because there is the sun, it receives that light and shines on the world. Likewise, we also cannot give off light on our own. Only by receiving the true Light called Jesus Christ can we become the light of the world. When we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus Christ bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and solved those sins on the Cross, the Holy Spirit comes upon us, and we come to shine on the world with the light of that Holy Spirit. This is the true light of the world.

The very reason Christianity throughout the world today rises greatly and then dies down again lies here. It is because they are not born again. It is because they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus Christ bore our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist and received the judgment for those sins on the Cross. It is because they have no power. Even if people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have shortcomings, the Holy Spirit is within them, and He holds us and works, so as long as we only obey, we can do righteous works and can become the light of the world.

That is why the people of the world do not feel interested in Christian believers who are not born again, and why, on the contrary, many people who oppose Christianity arise. It is because, while they do not acknowledge other religions, while they say that their own religion is the best and claim that only they live good lives, in reality they serve the law of sin just like

the people of the world and regard themselves as superior. Offering one's body as an instrument, not in the oldness of the letter, for the work that pleases God, that is, the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, is the life of a true Christian.

We offer our bodies as a holy, living sacrifice and fulfill the law

A person who has received the remission of sins cannot say that the law of God is wrong. We can live keeping the law of God. If we sum up the law of God in two, it is this: love God above, and to the side, love your neighbor as yourself. People who have received the remission of sins love people. They also love souls. That is why they preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. That is exactly what keeping the law of God is.

We born-again people have not abolished the law but, on the contrary, have come to keep the law. This is because Jesus Christ became the One who fulfilled the law. He received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins on His own body, received the judgment of God for sin on the Cross in our place, and rose again from death in three days and sent us the Holy Spirit, and so He completely accomplished what the law demands. Therefore, because our Lord, who became the One who fulfilled the law, is in our hearts through the Holy Spirit, we have become those who love God and, on earth, love our neighbors as ourselves.

Romans 12:1 says, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service" (Romans 12:1)*. Offering our bodies as a holy, living sacrifice is

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exactly the life that fulfills the law of God. For us who have been saved through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus Christ to offer our bodies to God in that thankfulness—that is exactly the life of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We must live by faith between two laws

Therefore, we who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit like the law of God more with our hearts, and like the law of sin with our bodies. Because we live with two laws, we have more suffering. Only when we know which law our own body and the Holy Spirit within us make us serve can we live a life of faith well. We must not have the thought that we can do good with our own body.

We must know well the fact that we are living right lives because the Holy Spirit, who is in our hearts, leads us through the Church of God and through the word of God to follow the will of God. On our own, we can never follow the Lord fully. Because the flesh tries to serve the law of sin and the Holy Spirit in our hearts seeks to serve the law of God, we must be united together and follow the Lord.

As the apostle Paul said in chapter 7, we are actually living in the midst of suffering. Our body never likes the law of God. It is the Holy Spirit in our hearts who likes the law of God, and this body automatically likes to commit nothing but sin. Therefore, in the kingdom of God there is no word called "sanctification." It is not that we gradually change and become righteous; we must simply follow the Lord by faith and follow as the Holy Spirit leads, making that our goal.

Do we know this fact? The Lord says to us, "You are a person who cannot help but commit only sin. But I have borne all your sins. For you, I received baptism from John and bore your sins on My body, suffered, and received the judgment for those sins on the Cross. And I rose again and sent the Holy Spirit." Those who know and believe this grace overflow with thanksgiving anytime and anywhere. Even if they commit sin, they do not fall into condemnation, and through the salvation of Jesus Christ, they can come before the Lord at any time.

We must know well the tendencies of the flesh that we have, and know well the intentions of the Holy Spirit whom we have received in our hearts, and live by faith between them. The Lord who is within us is our Master, and the sin of the old days is no longer our master. This is because we have already died with Christ. *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:24–25)*. We give thanks because Jesus Christ bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and then rose again, and so became our Savior. We must always believe in and follow the Lord, who has become our Master. ✉

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Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

What being born again is

< Romans 7:14–25 >

“For we know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin. For what I am doing, I do not understand. For what I will to do, that I do not practice; but what I hate, that I do. If, then, I do what I will not to do, I agree with the law that it is good. But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. For I know that in me (that is, in my flesh) nothing good dwells; for to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find. For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice. Now if I do what I will not to do, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me. I find then a law, that evil is present with me, the one who wills to do good. For I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.”

Today, through the word of Romans chapter 7, verses 14 through 25, I would like to examine what being born again is, and how a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit can live a life of faith while looking at the reality of his own

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flesh. In this text, the apostle Paul confesses the relationship between the law and the flesh, and that only the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ can deliver us.

"We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14). This confession of the apostle Paul is not mere self-deprecation. It is a confession of faith in which a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit honestly acknowledges the reality of his own flesh. The law is holy and spiritual, but only within the gospel of the water and the Spirit can we at last see rightly that our flesh is a being sold under sin.

Only those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit rightly know the sinful reality of themselves

Let us look at the word of verse 17. *"But now, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:17)*. The apostle Paul says that the evil part he is doing comes from the sin that dwells within him. People have sin in their hearts, and that sin defiles the body and is produced as actions. The eyes to see this reality rightly are given to those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus Christ had all the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, received all the judgment for our sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and saved us from all sins by rising again from death, can acknowledge how sinful they are.

If the heart is a sinful heart, that heart cannot but produce only sin and send it outward. If the heart is not clean, all kinds

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of filthy things arise within a person. Therefore, for people to become clean, they must first have that sinful heart healed. This healing does not come through human effort or resolve, but only by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Our flesh is bound to serve the law of sin all our lives

The apostle Paul honestly confesses how hard he once tried to live according to the law. He says that he did not do the good he wanted to do, but rather did the evil he did not want to do. This describes the state before receiving the remission of sins, and at the same time it is also the confession of a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and rightly understands the principle of his own flesh.

Our flesh serves the law of sin not because our will is weak or our faith is lacking. It is because the nature of the flesh is that way. The apostle Paul said, *"With the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:25)*. Even a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is still under the law of sin in the flesh. Our body is bound to serve the law of sin until we die. This is the principle of the flesh that the Bible speaks of.

If there is sin in a person's heart, all filthy things flow out of that sin. If there is sin in the heart, people come to do what comes out of that sin without even realizing it. This is the word of verse 19. *"For the good that I will to do, I do not do; but the evil I will not to do, that I practice" (Romans 7:19)*. This is the nature of sin and the reality of the flesh sold under sin. Therefore, a person

who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not set any hope on his own flesh, but holds fast only to the gospel by which Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross, and he gives thanks.

The apostle Paul also was a man who knew the law well and feared God. But in Romans chapter 7, verse 8, he confesses as follows. *"But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire. For apart from the law sin was dead" (Romans 7:8)*. The law plays the role of exposing sin, but what removes that sin is only the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus Christ accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

What comes out of a person's heart defiles the person

Our Lord Himself spoke about what kind of sin is in the human heart. Let us look at Mark chapter 7, verses 21 through 23. *"For from within, out of the heart of men, proceed evil thoughts, adulteries, fornications, murders, thefts, covetousness, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, foolishness. All these evil things come from within and defile a man" (Mark 7:21–23)*. What defiles a person is not what comes from outside, but the sin that comes out from within the heart.

"Sin that dwells in me" (Romans 7:17), of which the apostle Paul spoke, is precisely these sins: evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, wickedness, deceit, lewdness, an evil eye, blasphemy, pride, and foolishness. However admirable a person may look, the heart is full of such sins. This is the reality of human beings. By receiving baptism

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from John the Baptist, Jesus had all these sins transferred to Him at one time, and by bearing all the judgment for that sin on the Cross, He saved us completely. A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows that these sins have already been passed on to the Lord.

The law is clean and holy, but our flesh has no ability to keep that law. That is why the confession comes forth, *"We know that the law is spiritual, but I am carnal, sold under sin" (Romans 7:14)*. Acknowledging this reality of oneself is the first step toward accepting the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

People are born in iniquity and commit sin according to their seed

In Psalm 51, verse 5, David confesses as follows. *"Behold, I was brought forth in iniquity, And in sin my mother conceived me" (Psalm 51:5)*. David confesses that he was already a sinner from the time he was conceived in his mother's womb. This is the law of hereditary seed. Since fathers and mothers are sinners before God, people, the descendants of Adam, all inherit that sin.

If you plant rice, rice comes up; where you plant red beans, red beans come up, and where you plant soybeans, soybeans come up. When descendants of Adam who have sin give birth to children, those children are also surely born with sin. That is why even a man of God like David committed the sin of adultery. The sinful heart in his heart caused him to commit sin. This is a problem that can be solved neither by the law nor by any human effort. It is solved only by Jesus Christ having this sin transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, being judged

by dying on the Cross, and leading us into new life by rising again.

Children do just what their fathers did and what their mothers did. It is because they have inherited the seed of sin. The only One who can break this chain of sin is Jesus Christ. All our sins were passed on to the body of Jesus Christ through John the Baptist, and the Lord bore that sin and died on the Cross. A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is free from this chain of sin.

Unless one is born again, one can never be changed

In John chapter 3, our Lord spoke firmly to Nicodemus. *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3)*. We must surely obtain new life through the Lord. It is not by any human effort or resolve that people are born again. We can be born again only by water and the Spirit, that is, only by believing in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus Christ accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

However much you patch up your old self and patch it up again, it is of no use at all. You must be born anew. But people have simply equated this word, *"You must be born again" (John 3:7)*, with believing in Jesus, or have turned it into a doctrine. The Bible clearly says that being born again surely comes about through water and the Spirit. It is completed by accepting into our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

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Just as a monkey cannot become a human being however hard it tries, a person born in sin cannot change himself. The more a person who has not believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit strives to be born again, the more he discovers the fact that he is putting on a show of hypocrisy. The apostle Paul discovered this while trying to live by the law. Where is there a person who does not want to live a holy life and does not want to love his neighbor? But a person who has not believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit can never live that way.

The sin of the heart does not disappear through human effort and fasting prayer

To be "born again" means being born once more, a second time—born twice. It is a word that a person who has been born once in the flesh must surely be born a second time. But people miss this simple and clear word and try to be changed through their own efforts and prayers.

But however much people cry out, "Lord, please remit my sins," human nature does not change. It is because the root of the heart does not change without believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A certain revival preacher, a pastor, could do nothing about lustful thoughts that kept arising in his heart, so he fasted and prayed for forty days. But the moment he came down from the mountain and got into a taxi, a lustful heart arose again. Even with forty days of fasting prayer, the sin of his heart did not disappear.

A person who has not been born again, however hard he tries, cannot but remain in that sin and cannot but commit sin. This is the reality of the flesh sold under sin. That is why we surely need

the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus had our sins transferred to Him, received all the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and gave us new life by rising again. We are saved not by our own efforts but by believing in this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Just as a persimmon tree bears persimmons, everything bears fruit according to its seed

However much a persimmon tree may resolve otherwise, when the season (autumn) comes, persimmons grow on it without fail. The roots draw up water and the leaves take in sunlight, and regardless of its will, it bears fruit according to its seed. It is the same with people. However much a person who has not believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit resolves not to commit sin, that heart which has the seed of sin produces sin without fail.

For a wild pear tree to be changed, it must be cut once and have another branch grafted onto it. If you cut down a wild pear tree and graft a pear tree branch onto it, the root is that of a wild pear tree, but above it pears grow as fruit. We too must be born again in this way. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus Christ had our sins transferred to Him, received all the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and gave us new life by rising again. When this new life is grafted into our hearts by our believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can at last bear changed fruit.

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The wages of sin is death, and its end is the lake of fire

The sinful heart refers to the state in which a person's heart is full of sin, and committing sin refers to the body putting that sin into action. God is not One who sees only a person's outward appearance, but One who searches the center of a person's heart. Our Lord said that if one harbors lust in his heart, he has already committed adultery. Even if one has not committed sin by deeds, if that sin is in the heart, he is a sinner before God.

In Romans chapter 6, verse 23, it says, *"For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. And in Revelation chapter 20, verse 15, it says, *"And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire" (Revelation 20:15)*. A person whose heart has not been changed because he has not believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit can never escape the judgment of God.

But our Lord saved us in the midst of this law. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He had our sins transferred to Him, and on the Cross He received the wages of that sin, namely death, in our place. And by rising again from death, He gave us eternal life. A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not go to the lake of fire but obtains eternal life. This is the reason we spread this gospel.

The change of the heart comes by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Why must people be born again? It is because the human heart, that is, the heart stained with sin, must receive the remission of sins. Everything begins from the heart. If the heart is wrong, all deeds are wrong; and if the heart receives the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, everything becomes new.

In Hebrews chapter 10, verse 16, it says as follows. *"This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, says the LORD: I will put My laws into their hearts, and in their minds I will write them" (Hebrews 10:16)*. A change of heart comes upon a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is not something forced from outside; it is the work of the Holy Spirit, which comes about naturally because Jesus Christ bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, rose again, and sent the Holy Spirit into our hearts. When the change of heart truly comes, that change lasts forever.

We are just like the moon. The moon itself cannot give off light by itself. It gives off light by receiving light because the sun is there. In the same way, we cannot become righteous by ourselves, and we cannot change ourselves. Only because the gospel of our Savior Jesus Christ shines on us does a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive that light and give off light. When we look at ourselves, nothing comes out but the confession, *"O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24)*, but when we look at the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit, thanksgiving and joy overflow.

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Be born again of water and the Spirit

Then how does the change of the sinful heart come? It comes through the word of truth and the Holy Spirit. Our Lord said in John chapter 3, verse 5, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. He said that we must be born again of water and the Spirit.

What does it mean to be born again of water and the Spirit? It is to receive the remission of sins by believing as the Savior in Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, received all the judgment for our sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and saved us from all sins by rising again from death. In John chapter 1, verse 29, it says, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. When Jesus received baptism from John, He had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, and He bore that sin, went to the Cross, was judged for it all, and died. And through His rising again in three days, everything was completed.

In Matthew chapter 3, verse 15, it says, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. All our sins were passed on to the body of Jesus Christ through John the Baptist. If there had not been this event of the baptism Jesus received from John, the death on the Cross would also have had no meaning. Perfect salvation was completed by the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection being accomplished together. A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows that living while testifying of this gospel is the life of one who has the Holy Spirit, and he gives thanks.

To receive the change of the sinful heart, first, the word of God is needed. Second, the work of the Holy Spirit is needed.

Third, one can be born again through a person who has received the Holy Spirit. Being born again through a person who does not have the Holy Spirit is like plucking a star from the sky. The word of God and the work of the Holy Spirit appear only in those who have actually been born again by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Be born again through a born-again person, and live spreading the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Our Lord said in Matthew chapter 7, verses 15 and 16, *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves. You will know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes from thornbushes or figs from thistles?" (Matthew 7:15–16).* A person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and a person who has not are distinguished by their fruits.

However well a person who has not believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit may teach the Bible, however much he may pray and fast, and however good and upright he may be, no one can possibly be born again under that person. Just as sheep give birth to lambs and goats give birth to kids, being born again takes place only through a person who has been born again by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In the sermons and books of a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the word about being born again is clearly contained, and in them there is the work of the Holy Spirit and

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the work of God. But a person who has not been born again always insists only on doctrine. Therefore, dear beloved saints, hear the gospel of being born again through a person who has been born again by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When the Holy Spirit points out our sinful reality through the word, He makes us confess, "Yes, that is right. I am one bound for hell. But because the Lord loved me, He had my sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and saved me by rising again. Thank You, Lord." This is the evidence of being truly born again. The Holy Spirit surely works together with the word. Therefore, we must be born again by the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

With our flesh, we cannot but serve the law of sin all our lives. But a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit serves the law of God with the mind. Just as the apostle Paul confessed, *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25),* we too, even while seeing the weakness of our own flesh, can give thanks within the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is because the Lord bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross in our place, and delivered us from sin forever by rising again. The life of a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a life of spreading this gospel and giving thanks to the Lord.

If all kinds of filthy and impure things still flow out from within the heart, that person has not yet been born again by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Sin must not be glorified as religion or tolerated as something habitual; rather, the root of sin must surely be resolved through

the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus Christ had all the sins of the world transferred to Him, received all the judgment for our sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and saved us from all sins by rising again from death. I earnestly urge you to be born again by believing in this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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CHAPTER

8

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The law of the Spirit of life has saved us from the law of sin and death

< Romans 8:1–2 >

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death."

What is the basis on which it can be declared that there is no condemnation at all, and what does the contrast between the two laws, namely the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death, mean?

Romans 8:1 and 2 can be called the most glorious declaration of victory in the entire Bible. The legal basis on which the very person who cried out in chapter 7 because of his own misery, *"O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24)*, could so boldly declare in the following chapter 8, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*, is revealed far more clearly when we explain it from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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The reason there is no condemnation

In chapter 7, Paul laid bare, just as it was, his own contradictory state of delighting in the law of God with his mind while still serving the law of sin with his flesh. Nevertheless, the reason he can declare, “Therefore there is no condemnation,” is that the basis of salvation has been moved completely from my own state into Christ Jesus.

When we examine this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, its legal effect is revealed much more clearly. Condemnation is by nature a legal verdict that is handed down only when sin remains. But through the baptism Jesus received from John, that is, through the water, all our sins have already been passed on entirely to Jesus, and through the blood of the Cross, that is, the judgment for sin, the price of all those sins has been paid completely. Jesus, who in this way had the sin of the world, which included our sins, passed on to Him and shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from death.

Through this gospel of the water and the Spirit, God has resolved all our sins once and for all, and forever. Therefore, even if there are times when we make mistakes because our flesh is weak, our souls already have the status of righteous people who have been washed by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so the very grounds for handing down a verdict of guilty, that is, of condemnation, in the court of God have disappeared completely. This is exactly the reason Paul could naturally connect chapters 7 and 8 with the single word “therefore.”

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The law of sin and death and the law of the Spirit of life

Paul explains this event of liberation within the framework of "a confrontation between law and law." In other words, it can be said to be an event in which a stronger, higher law itself rendered a lower law powerless.

First, the law of sin and death is the law that has ruled over all human beings since Adam. By means of the law, it makes human beings realize their sins one by one, and it has a powerful coercive force that inevitably brings them to death as the result of those sins. Human resolve or effort can never stop the enforcement of this law, and the very law that took Paul captive and plunged him into wretchedness in Romans chapter 7 was this law.

On the other hand, the law of the Spirit of life is the law of grace established upon the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Instead of inflicting punishment on sinners, this law is the law of power that brings us to life by freely bestowing on us the righteousness that Jesus Christ Himself fulfilled through the water and the Spirit. Within those who believe in this gospel, the Holy Spirit Himself puts His seal, saying, "You are now a righteous person who has nothing to do with sin," and He guarantees this unceasingly.

As a result, just as the law of lift overcomes the law of gravity and raises a huge airplane up into the sky even though the law of gravity clearly exists, the gospel of the water and the Spirit has snatched us completely away from the power of sin and has at last moved us into the kingdom of life.

Those who have been saved from sin

Liberation never means a temporary change of emotion, but a complete change of legal status. We must pay close attention to the fact that Paul declared in the perfect tense that the law of the Spirit of life *"has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2)*. This is because it is by no means something that will be accomplished in the future, but a legal fact that Jesus Himself has already completed through the water and the Spirit. That is, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, then rose again from death, and has already remitted all our sins.

Therefore, if there is anyone who is still condemning himself because of the weakness of his own flesh, he should not remain in the lament of chapter 7, "Why am I like this?" but should rightly and boldly move over to the place of faith, "Therefore." The reason is that, completely regardless of what we ourselves are like, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is "in Christ Jesus," has already set us free forever from the law of sin and death. Now we are by no means sinners who fear condemnation, but free righteous people who enjoy eternal life under the law of the Spirit of life.

Romans 8:5 through 8 is a passage that teaches how important a matter it is which direction of thought a born-again righteous person ought to have. Contrasting the flesh with the Spirit, Paul clearly declares the fact that our very relationship with God is determined by where we set our minds as we live.

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The difference between the fruits borne by the carnal mind and the spiritual mind

Paul says that the root of our thoughts ultimately determines the fruit of our lives. In other words, the question of where I set my mind is by no means a trivial matter.

First, the carnal mind bears the fruit of death. The flesh spoken of here does not simply mean our body itself. Rather, it refers to the entire fallen nature that tries hard to become righteous by itself without God or that lives following its own desires.

When we examine this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it means the state of trying to obtain salvation by relying on one's own deeds or moral efforts, or the state of being trapped, even after receiving the remission of sins, in the carnal mind, that is, in condemnation, greed, and one's own righteousness, and of living while agonizing and worrying in the same way as the people of the world. The end of such thinking ultimately leads to condemnation and spiritual death.

On the other hand, the spiritual mind bears the fruit of life and peace. The spiritual mind is the heart that firmly believes in the promises of God, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When we explain this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, constantly meditating on and firmly relying on the fact of the gospel, "Jesus took away all my sins through the baptism He received from John, that is, through the water, and resolved all those sins through the Cross, that is, the judgment for sin," is exactly the spiritual mind. And believing the fact that Jesus, who shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from death in order to justify us is also the spiritual mind. When we live holding firmly to this thought, our souls are completely delivered from condemnation and gain the vitality of

true life, and we abundantly enjoy the true peace that God freely bestows.

The reason the carnal mind becomes an enemy of God

Paul does not express the carnal mind merely as something "bad," but goes one step further and uses the very shocking expression that it "becomes an enemy of God." The reason can be examined largely in two ways.

First, it is because the carnal mind does not submit to the law of God, that is, to the righteousness of God itself. The law of God never allows human beings to establish righteousness by themselves; it requires only that they accept the righteousness that God Himself has fulfilled through the water and the Spirit. Yet the carnal mind constantly tries to put forward its own righteousness, and while rejecting the grace of God, it attempts to reach God by its own efforts. Since this very attempt is already hostility and arrogance toward God, the carnal mind ends up standing in the place of an enemy.

Second, it is because the carnal mind by its very nature does not have the ability itself to conform to the law of God. Paul states this definitively with the words *"nor indeed can be" (Romans 8:7)*. Any good deeds or religious zeal carried out in a state of not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are, in the sight of God, ultimately nothing more than acts for self-satisfaction, and they can never satisfy the holy standard of God. The only righteousness that satisfies that holy standard is the righteousness that Jesus, who is God, accomplished by having the sin of the world, which included our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, by shedding His

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blood and dying on the Cross to pay the price of that sin in our place, and by rising again from death.

Those who are in the flesh cannot please God

In verse 8, Paul declares in conclusion, *"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8)*. This word makes us realize a very important spiritual principle. That is, the only way to please God is by no means the effort of the flesh, but only the spiritual mind that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

No matter how faithfully we live, if the center of our hearts is set on "my own righteousness" or on the benefit of the flesh, it is ultimately the same as walking the path of enmity with God. Therefore, when we live following the spiritual mind and holding in our hearts the confession of faith, "I am a righteous person who has been washed of sin by the water and the Spirit," God is most pleased and pours out abundant life and peace on us without holding back. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The turning point of the gospel, where the lament of Romans chapter 7 changes into the assurance of chapter 8

< Romans 8:1–4 >

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Dear beloved saints, many people confess that they believe in the Cross of Jesus, yet deep in their hearts they still repeat the words, "I am still a sinner. Therefore I must repent again," or

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"This time I must repent properly." Why is that faith failing to lead us to the peace of heart that Jesus Christ accomplished by having the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and through the Cross, His death, and His resurrection? The apostle Paul answers this question through the clear logical flow from Romans chapter 3 through chapter 8. Following that flow, we now intend to examine clearly how we are moved from guilt to assurance.

In Romans chapter 3, the apostle Paul thoroughly diagnoses the human condition. He proclaims, *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*, and declares, *"All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God" (Romans 3:23)*. The important point here is that the human problem is not a few wrong actions, but the fact that human beings are sinners by nature. This is not a problem that is solved by fixing it a little, nor is it an area that people can resolve by themselves. Therefore Paul says, *"By the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight" (Romans 3:20)*. Romans chapter 3 clearly reveals the fact that there is no way for human beings to reach assurance by their own strength.

Next, in Romans chapter 4, Paul speaks of where the assurance of salvation comes from. Taking Abraham as an example, he makes clear that the reason Abraham was justified did not lie in his resolve, his devotion, or the degree of completeness of his obedience. Through the word *"Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness" (Romans 4:3)*, Paul makes the point that assurance does not come from how sincere I am, but from whether I have believed God and the word of God. From this point on, the center of faith shifts from my own state to the faith that believes in the word of God's promise.

In Romans chapter 5, Paul explains sin and salvation from the perspective of events, as follows. Sin began because of

Adam, as the word says, *"Through one man sin entered the world" (Romans 5:12)*, and this is a fact that began even before any individual's repeated mistakes. Then salvation also comes in the same way. As the word says, *"By one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)*, salvation is given to those who believe, because Jesus Christ obeyed the will of God the Father, received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Paul explains salvation from sin not as a change of emotion or state, but as a transition brought about by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We had to be moved from being in Adam into being in Jesus Christ, and we had to move from the dominion of sin to the faith that believes in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who, after the sin of the world was transferred to His body through the baptism He received from John, rose again from His death on the Cross. Just as sin entered the world through disobedience, the righteousness of God also comes from, and is completed by, the obedience with which Jesus received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and received the judgment for sin.

In Romans chapter 6, Paul speaks of the problem of sin even more clearly. He asks how we, who have become those who died to sin, can live any longer in it. Paul does not simply demand that we not commit sin, nor does he tell us to fight harder. Instead, he declares that the power of sin has already ended. Therefore what the saints need is not a new struggle but a new faith. Paul says that this declaration, *"Reckon yourselves to be dead indeed to sin, but alive to God in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:11)*, becomes the turning point of faith.

But the problem arises here. Even after hearing the declaration of Romans chapter 6, many saints immediately fall into the suffering faith spoken of in Romans chapter 7. The

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lament *"to will is present with me, but how to perform what is good I do not find" (Romans 7:18)* and the cry *"O wretched man that I am!" (Romans 7:24)* are repeated. The reason is clear. It is because they have not been able to lay down legalistic faith from their hearts. In Romans chapter 7, Paul shows what kind of outcome is produced for believers who try to stand under the law again. The more they desire good, the deeper their frustration becomes, and the more they examine themselves, the stronger their sense of condemnation for sin becomes. Romans chapter 7 is not the normal state of faith of the saints, but the suffering that one inevitably goes through because one has legalistic faith. That is why Paul recalls that time when he cried out, *"Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)*.

And then the decisive transition from Romans chapter 7 to chapter 8 takes place. Paul confesses, *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25)*, and immediately goes on to the declaration of faith, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. Here the word "therefore" is the conclusion that speaks of the whole process from Romans chapter 3 through chapter 7. We acknowledged our own incompetence, abandoned the way of salvation that we tried to obtain by our own efforts, and experienced the bankruptcy of faith under the law. Now only one path remains: to return into the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which Jesus Christ accomplished salvation by the baptism He received from John and by His death on the Cross and His resurrection.

In Romans chapter 8, the word of the Bible says that there is no condemnation for those who believe in the righteousness of God. It declares through the word that there is no condemnation at all to those who are in Christ Jesus. It says that the assurance

of salvation is not a matter of emotion, but that it belongs to my faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It says that if the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit abides in me, I can know that there is no judgment for my sin, but that if not, there is no way for us to escape from our sins and the judgment for sin. For those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the role of the Holy Spirit also becomes clear. The Holy Spirit is the One who *"bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16)*. He is not the One who stirs up guilt, but the One who testifies to those who believe in the already completed word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that they have received certain salvation.

Dear beloved saints, the way to be saved from sin is clear. You must come down from that place of trying to fix your own shortcomings, and believe, placing the basis of salvation on the fact that He gives salvation to those who return to Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death. To be saved from sin, you must acknowledge your own sin and believe that your sin was transferred to Him through the work of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John.

Do not remain in Romans chapter 7; in Romans chapter 8 you must enter into the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of salvation that is in Christ. Then the confession of faith must change from the words "I am still a sinner who falls short" into the faith, "I have become a righteous person because all my sins have been remitted through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and through His death on the Cross and His resurrection."

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Lastly, I hope that you will engrave this one sentence in your hearts: "The assurance of salvation does not come from how much I have repented, but from the faith that Jesus Christ bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, rose again from death, became the Savior of sinners, and put an end to that sin." In this way we enter into the life that dwells in the peace and in the guidance of the Holy Spirit of which Romans chapter 8 speaks.

What was your faith like before you encountered the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which you believe in Jesus as your Savior?

When we examine clearly, through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the faith of those among the believers in Jesus who have not received the remission of their sins, the problem can be found in the fact that they know and believe only in the Cross of Jesus. The reason you have not been saved from the sin of the world does not depend on a lack of zeal or on the sincerity of your repentance. Rather, those who passed their sins on to Jesus could be saved from the sin of the world. The assurance of salvation comes to those who believe that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was put to death on the Cross, rose again, and saved sinners. For us, the assurance of faith comes from the fact that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and resolved our sins.

If until today you have believed only in the Cross of Jesus, you must be saved by the faith that believes in the Lord as your

Savior, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. You must believe in your heart that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, rose again from His death on the Cross, and gave salvation to us who believe.

The word of the Bible deals with the problem of our sins and judgment not through our emotions or resolutions, but through the procedure of the sacrificial system of the Old Testament. It says that in the sacrifices of the Old Testament the sinner's sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands (Leviticus 1:4), and that through the shedding of the blood of the sacrificial offering the judgment for sin was ended and those who believed were saved. In the New Testament, this word says that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so declared of our salvation once and for all: *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*.

In this way Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. And we have come to call Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death, the Savior. Therefore your sins have not disappeared through the prayers of repentance you are now offering. Rather, the point is that your sins were transferred to the body of Jesus Christ through the baptism Jesus received from John, and that as a result Jesus was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for sin, rose again from death, and became the Savior of sinners.

Therefore, if you believe that only the Cross is the gospel of salvation, you will remain one who perishes because you do not

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know the truth that your sins were transferred to the body of Jesus and washed away through the baptism Jesus received from John, that is, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You must know when your sins were transferred to the body of Jesus through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John. And then you must believe in your heart in the blood of the Cross and the resurrection from death. Because my sins and yours were transferred to Jesus through the baptism He received from John, Jesus hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and became the One who gives salvation. Because Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He could be nailed to the Cross and shed His precious blood in our place, and He could rise again from death and become the Savior of all the sinners of the whole world.

If one believes in Jesus without knowing why Christ had to have our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, that faith becomes a wrong faith. We must receive the remission of sins by knowing and believing that our Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and became our Savior through the shedding of His blood on the Cross and His resurrection from death. The word the Lord spoke, that we must be born again of water and the Spirit, says that the Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and became our Savior through the blood He shed on the Cross and His resurrection from death. If you do not have the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus speaks of in the Bible, you become one who is not saved from your sins. If we do not have the truth by which we can be born again of water and the Spirit and the faith that believes it, we become those who cannot be born again. It has been about 1,700 years since only the blood of the Cross has been testified

to within Christianity, while the word of truth that the sin of the world was transferred to the body of Jesus through the baptism He received from John and that He washed away all our sins has been deleted. This began with the Nicene Creed, which was adopted when a church council was held in the region of Nicaea in A.D. 325, and from then on, on this earth, the truth that the sin of the world was transferred to the body of Jesus through the baptism He received from John, that is, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, has remained deleted while being handed down along with the Nicene Creed to this day.

Today, both in the Catholic religion and in the Protestant religion, all alike believe that Jesus saved sinners by being nailed to the Cross.

From this time on, it became inevitable that Christianity would drift into monastic life in monasteries, fasting, and asceticism. If people believe only in the blood of the Cross that these people believe in, their own sins clearly remain in their hearts and are felt, and because they believe without knowing the fact that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, they always remain sinners. Therefore such people end up becoming those who have lost the Jesus Christ to whom the word of the Bible testifies, that is, Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and accomplished eternal atonement.

The reason your prayers of repentance for your sins do not end is clear. It is because the truth that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John has been lost. All these phenomena come from only one error. It is because we could not meet Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to His body through the baptism He

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received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore those who believe in Jesus have become people who, unable to pass their sins on to the body of Jesus, cannot have the sin in their hearts transferred to Him, and always live as sinners.

Sin remains in the heart that does not know the truth in the word of the Bible that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. The point is that the moment we know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of salvation that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death, the moment comes when our hearts are saved from all sins. That is, Jesus, who had our sins transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross and shed His blood because He had the sin of the world transferred to Him, rose again from death, and became our Savior. We have come to call Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit." This is because Jesus said to Nicodemus, who came to Him by night, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5).* (Matthew 3:13–17, 1 John 5:4–8, 1 Peter 3:21, Acts 2:38–41, Romans 6:3, Galatians 3:27)

If you know only the Cross of Jesus and do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that sin always remains in your heart, and you live as a sinner. Such a life of faith flows on in a state in which your problem of sin has not been resolved. Therefore, when we know the fact that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to His own body through the baptism He received from John, and come to know the fact that Jesus, who

hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again from death, has become our Savior, our faith becomes complete and we obtain salvation from all sins. When you know and believe in your heart the fact that Jesus Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and that He has made our faith complete through the precious blood He shed on the Cross and through His death and resurrection, the sin you would have had to bear becomes a matter that has already been moved to Christ and finished. This is exactly the power that the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit has. The gospel of truth, which enables a person to be saved from his own sins and to become a child of God, is the gospel that causes him to be saved by the merit of Jesus, who Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, went to the Cross and poured out His precious blood, and rose again from death. Hallelujah!

Truly being born again begins with the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Those who now believe that only the blood of the Cross of Jesus is the gospel of salvation easily come to know only the Cross as the truth of salvation and remain in it. Then your sins remain in your hearts, and you go the way of death. Then, when you commit sin, you become legalistic believers who must fill up the remission of sins with prayers of repentance. Then the faith you practice is filled with legalistic faith decorated with theological doctrines. Therefore, when you come to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which tells that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the

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baptism He received from John and saved us through His death by being nailed to the Cross and His resurrection, your sins come to an end forever. From this time on, the sin of the world is no longer a problem to be resolved within your hearts, but a problem that has already been finished in Christ. This very turning of faith is the truth that leads us onto the path of becoming true believers.

The word of the Bible says that it is not that your sins must be removed repeatedly, but that you are saved by the faith that believes the word that Jesus Christ has already put an end to them once and for all through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The Bible says of Jesus Christ, *"He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12)*. This statement of salvation is the same as the word that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, rose again from death, and put an end to our sins.

The Bible clearly says that the basis of the remission of sins does not lie in the results of prayer, in the state of one's emotions, or in the depth of one's repentance. For a person who believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the remission of sins is the settled truth that Jesus put an end to the sin of the world once and for all through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Therefore the true confession of salvation moves beyond the wish, "I want to receive the remission of sins someday," to the fact, "Jesus Christ has already put an end to all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His death and resurrection." In faith, it is precisely when such assurance of salvation through the word of God has been established that peace at last comes into the heart.

Peace of heart, too, is not the result of human effort, but the result of the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Many believers think that if they pray more, repent more, and exercise more self-control, peace will come into their hearts, but in reality that is not so. The word of the Bible says, *"Having been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 5:1)*. Peace of heart is not something produced by exerting effort, but the blessed peace given to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The fullness of the Holy Spirit must also be understood in the same context. If we understand the work of the Holy Spirit only as a heightening of emotion, a special experience, or intense passion, the role of the Holy Spirit can easily be distorted. The Bible says that the Holy Spirit is the One who is given as the gift of God into the hearts of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit (Acts 2:37–40). It also says that the Holy Spirit is the One who testifies that we are children of God (Romans 8:16). For those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit becomes the gift of God. Therefore receiving the Holy Spirit and the fullness of the Holy Spirit are the grace of God given on the foundation of the assurance of the remission of sins, and they are a phenomenon that appears in peace.

Through this process of believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the life of a Christian with true spiritual faith begins. The center of faith no longer lies in myself, but comes to rest on the work of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and of the Cross. Prayers of repentance and confession are not a struggle to remove the sin of the world, but the process of becoming a worldly religious person. The driving force of the life of faith becomes not fear, but the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and

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thanksgiving, and the direction of life turns away from managing self-condemnation toward living as instruments of righteousness (Romans 6:13). At this point the life of faith is not a life of enduring by force, but becomes the driving force of a living and active spiritual life.

In the end, when one knows only the gospel of the Cross as salvation, faith easily remains in the repetition of guilt and repentance; but those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the truth that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, finished the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death, come to live in the peace of heart that continues through the true remission of sins, and in the fullness of the Holy Spirit. So the spiritual Christian of whom the Bible speaks is not a person who has had many special experiences, but one who has entrusted the problem of his own sin to the work by which Jesus Christ already accomplished the truth of having the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, being nailed to the Cross, and rising again from death, and who lives within that work enjoying peace in his heart by faith. This is the true faith and the spiritual life that Christians who know the gospel of the water and the Spirit confess.

Why did Jesus have to receive the baptism that John gave before He went to the Cross?

Many people believe that Jesus died on the Cross for our sins. But a fatal error remains in this confession. What is missing is exactly when, where, and how your sins were transferred to the body of Jesus. The Cross is the place of the judgment for sin, not

the place where our sins are transferred to the body of Jesus Christ. The biblical structure of atonement is always that sin is first transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, and then the judgment for sin is received, followed by death and the shedding of blood. Only when both of these stages are fulfilled can the statement that all sins were ended once and for all at last hold true.

For this reason, as He began His public ministry, Jesus went to the Jordan River, received the baptism that John the Baptist gave, and Himself had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body. The Lord clearly revealed the reason for this, saying, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The *"all righteousness"* spoken of here is not human moral righteousness. It is one process for fulfilling the work of salvation by which God saves sinners from sin.

This is a word that indicates that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in our place, rose again from death, and became the Savior of sinners, that is, that He became the Savior who bestows the grace of salvation. In the Old Testament, people's sins did not disappear through repentance; rather, the sinner's sin was transferred when he laid his hands on the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands prescribed in the sacrificial law. In the New Testament, the reality of that sacrificial law is exactly the event in which Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to His body.

So the next day John testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. He was John the Baptist, who could testify of the truth of salvation. The reason is that John the Baptist himself laid his own hands on the head of Jesus, gave Him baptism, and transferred the sin of the

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world to Him. By this the entire sin of the world was transferred to the body of Jesus Christ, so that Jesus could go to the Cross, be nailed to it, shed His blood, rise again from death, and give salvation to those who believe.

Now the meaning of the Cross becomes clear. The Cross was not a vague symbol of love, but the result of the fact that Jesus Himself had already had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and it was the work of the Savior, who was nailed to the Cross, received the judgment for that sin, and so dealt with the sins of all sinners. Because Jesus Himself had those sins of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism John gave, the punishment of the Cross could be the judgment for that sin, and Jesus could rise again from death and become the Savior of all sinners. Therefore, since the punishment of the Cross alone, without the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, could not be the basis of the true remission of sins, these two works, the baptism and the Cross, become the very important evidence of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of salvation.

Only when you know and believe in your heart this gospel of salvation, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, do you remain truly born again. Meeting the Lord does not occur when one feels some emotion or has religious zeal. Meeting the Lord through the word of the Bible is what reveals the truth of when, where, and how my sin was transferred through the baptism Jesus received from John, and that He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, rose again from death, and saved those who believe from all the sins of the world. Only when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts do we at last receive proper salvation. What the apostle Paul spoke of as *"the righteousness of God" (Romans 1:17)* is the truth of salvation bestowed on those who believe that Jesus Christ Himself had the

sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross in their place, and rose again from death. If one does not know this truth of salvation, the sin of the world still remains in one's heart, and one's faith degenerates into repeated repentance and a worldly religious life, so that one ends up entering the path of receiving judgment for one's own sins.

The reason this truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of salvation, can never be optional is also clear. If this truth were something that one may or may not know, the assurance of the remission of sins would differ from person to person, and salvation from sin would depend on emotions and experiences, so that the eternal atonement made once and for all of which the Bible speaks would have collapsed. But the Bible clearly says of Jesus Christ, *"He entered the Most Holy Place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption" (Hebrews 9:12)*. For this atonement to be made "once and for all," Jesus had to have the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John, receive the judgment for that sin on the Cross by being nailed to it and shedding His blood, and rise again from death.

Faith that believes only in the Cross of Jesus easily remains a faith that merely hopes for the remission of sins. But we have become those who believe the fact that, because Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for that sin on the Cross once and for all in our place and has now become our Savior. Those who know and believe in their hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is all this truth of salvation, no longer need to wrestle with their own sins. Such people come to meet by faith, within the salvation that has already been completed, the Savior who received baptism from John.

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Therefore it is certain that this truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth that all people must know and by which they can be saved by believing it in their hearts. Meeting the Lord is received not through the perception that my sin is still being processed, but through the faith that clearly knows before God, and believes in the heart, the fact that my sin has already been ended through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the punishment of the Cross. This is the very event in which Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and saved us human beings from sin with the blood of the Cross, and it is also the love of righteousness that God has bestowed.

Why did Jesus have to have the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and shed His precious blood on the Cross?

The core of this question lies not simply in adding to the knowledge of salvation, but in understanding how salvation from sin was actually completed. The Bible does not leave this matter as an option. This is because the basis of the assurance that sin was ended once and for all is contained precisely within the work of the baptism Jesus received from John and of the Cross.

The Cross is clearly the center of salvation. But the structure of atonement of which the Bible speaks always includes two stages together. First, a person’s sin is transferred to the sacrificial offering, and next, the judgment for that transferred sin is carried out. Only when these two stages are present together is the atonement made “once and for all” established.

The Cross is the place of the judgment for sin, but the Bible clearly reveals that before that, the sin of the world was transferred to the body of Jesus Christ. At the beginning of His public ministry, Jesus went to John the Baptist, received baptism, and Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and He received the judgment for that sin on the Cross in our place. Concerning all this work, Jesus Himself said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Then John immediately testifies, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. In this way, when the baptism Jesus received from John, which is the transfer of the sin of the world, and the Cross, which is the judgment for the transferred sin, are connected as one event of redemption, the remission of sins becomes not a vague expectation but a settled fact.

Therefore you must certainly know and believe this truth of salvation. The faith of which the Bible speaks is not mere agreement, but trust in an event. What Paul spoke of as *"the righteousness of God" (Romans 1:17)* is revealed not in the depth of inner repentance or the intensity of emotion, but in the objective events of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the Cross. If one does not know this fact, the basis of the remission of sins ends up drifting away from the completed work of Christ.

Conversely, when one knows and believes this truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the fruit of salvation that is borne becomes clear. The remission of sins takes its place as the settled confession that it has already been finished, and it appears as lasting peace with God. The Holy Spirit testifies of a stable assurance about one's status, and life flows into a life of righteousness offered not with fear but with thankfulness. This is not a matter of how much knowledge one has, but a matter of

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whether one accurately knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the basis of salvation.

In the end, faith that believes only in the Cross of Jesus easily remains in the state of a person who looks only at his own sins. But those who believe the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and that by receiving the judgment for that sin on the Cross in our place He rose again from death, receive the eternal remission of sins. Such people meet the Lord by faith within the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which the remission of sins has already been completed, and become saved people. Therefore this truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something one may or may not know.

Many people say that they believe in Jesus and confess that they believe in the Cross. But the question the Bible asks is much more specific. It is the question, "When were your sins passed on to the body of Jesus?" If one cannot answer this question, faith may remain at the level of emotional agreement or religious resolution. The faith of which the Bible speaks is not vague; it is always anchored in an event that actually happened.

The Bible clearly testifies of the point in time when my sin was passed on to the body of Jesus. The declaration *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)* is not a word that came forth at the Cross, but one proclaimed right after Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River. The Cross is the place of the judgment for sin, and the baptism Jesus received from John is the place where the sin of the world was transferred to Jesus Christ. That is why Jesus received baptism from John, saying, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. The time when my sin was passed on to the body of Jesus is exactly when He received baptism from John, and the victory or defeat of faith is decided

according to whether one knows and believes this fact, or looks at the Cross and vaguely thinks that one must have received the remission of sins.

Then the question follows, "When did I die with Jesus Christ?" Paul says that we were baptized into His death (Romans 6:3). This is not a metaphor or an expression of emotion. It is not that I died because I made a resolution one day, nor that I put my self to death through asceticism or self-denial. When Jesus received baptism from John, Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and died on the Cross, I also died with Christ. That is why Paul confessed, *"I have been crucified with Christ" (Galatians 2:20)*. This is not a matter of feeling but a matter of faith, the faith that accepts as fact the event of salvation that has already taken place.

Therefore the question, "Have you had the experience of dying with Jesus Christ?" is not asking whether you have had a mystical experience or felt some special emotion. Its biblical meaning is to ask whether I have accepted as the verdict of God the fact that I, as a sinner under the law, have already come to an end. Without this faith, a person keeps trying to fix his old man and to manage sin, and remains in the place of Romans chapter 7. But when this faith becomes clear, one now goes forward into the confession, *"It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*.

This is the faith that believes in the core truth of being born again. Being born again is not one's character having improved a little, nor is it having come to have religious zeal. In the Bible, being born again is the event of being moved from death into new life, the transition in which the old status ends and a new status begins. That is why Paul declares, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit"*

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(Romans 8:1). This declaration that there is no condemnation is possible not because I have done well, but because I am already one who has died.

Therefore, when you say that you believe in Jesus, the Bible is asking you the questions, "When were your sins passed on to the body of Jesus? When did you die with Christ?" When one can answer these questions not with emotion but with the work of the Lord and with the testimony of the Bible, that person is no longer a believer who wrestles with his own sins, but a person who dwells in Christ as one who has already died and already come to life. This is exactly the reality of the born-again Christian of which the gospel of the water and the Spirit speaks.

In the end, for those who now believe in Jesus as their Savior to actually pass their sins on to Jesus, they must take part by faith in that event in which Jesus received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and put an end to that sin once and for all on the Cross. Without this participation, the confession of believing in Jesus cannot but remain not the salvation to which the Bible testifies, but a confession of one's own thoughts and religious feelings. But those who know and believe this event no longer wrestle with their own sins, and they become people who meet the Lord with true freedom and assurance within the salvation that has already been finished. This is exactly the reason we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In the end, if many people today, while saying that they believe in the Cross of Jesus, do not make a confession of faith in His entire work, namely that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin once and for all on the Cross, and that salvation was confirmed by His resurrection, then it is not merely a lack of understanding, but becomes a form of

unbelief that acknowledges the redemptive work of Jesus only partially. Even if they did not intentionally oppose it, as a result they drift onto a path of revising the testimony of God, diminishing the work of Jesus, and replacing the gospel of the water and the Spirit with their own thoughts.

The faith the Bible requires is not complicated. It is the faith that accepts all the work of Jesus just as God testifies of it. Only within this faith do we actually meet Jesus not as a partial Savior, but as the complete Savior. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Faith in which there is no condemnation

< Romans 8:1–4 >

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

People want to be delivered from their own sins

In Romans 8:1, the apostle Paul says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. When we look deeply into this one verse, we can see how much all those who believe in Jesus long for this word. Everyone strives not to be condemned before God. To try to escape the judgment for their own sins, people try living a religious life and try doing good works, and they make efforts all their lives to build up a righteousness of their own. But the

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more they strive in this way, the deeper their hearts only sink into sin.

What could the reason be? It is because the human flesh is so very weak. Our flesh does not follow as we want. Though we know what is right, we act wrongly, and though we know what we should not do, we go down that path again. Like the apostle Paul, those who believe in Jesus can also look at the thoughts of their own flesh and lament, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?" (Romans 7:24)*. Even a born-again person sees his own shortcomings every day because of the evil thoughts of his flesh. Therefore, as long as a person keeps looking into the thoughts of his own flesh, there is never any way to escape the condemnation of Satan.

Yet at that very place of wretchedness, the apostle Paul makes the great declaration of chapter 8: *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. A shout of joy rings out as the lament of chapter 7 passes over into the assurance of salvation in chapter 8. We must know and believe the fact that this assurance, "There is no condemnation at all," has come from the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The basis of this assurance is the word that Jesus had the sin of the world, which included our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and remitted all our sins.

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The assurance of salvation that there is no condemnation at all

Here, the word that there is no condemnation was the voice full of assurance of those who were saved by believing as their Savior in Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, and rose again from death. This word means that sin no longer remains in the hearts of those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so that they are no longer under the judgment of God. It is not a word that God pretends not to see sin and lets it pass even though the sin is there. It is a word that because sin itself has disappeared cleanly through the work of the baptism Jesus received from John, no sin remains to be condemned. Then how did so many sins disappear? It is because Jesus had the sin of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, went to the Cross, received the punishment for that sin, and rose again from death.

This word is *"the law of the Spirit of life" (Romans 8:2)*, of which the apostle Paul spoke in verse 2 of chapter 8. God has set two laws for all mankind. One is the law of sin and death, that is, the law. It is the principle of God that He will surely judge the sin of anyone who has sin. The other is the law of the Spirit of life, that is, the law of salvation that causes sinners to be born again from sin and gives them new life. The law of sin and death pronounces death on those who have sin, but the law of the Spirit of life is the word that Jesus received the baptism John gave, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and gives salvation. This is because those who believe this word could receive the remission of sins by the faith that believes in the Lord, who received baptism from John,

had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death.

In John 3:5, Jesus said to Nicodemus, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. This word means that one could be born again by the faith that believes the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to His own body, was nailed to the Cross and bore the punishment for that sin, and rose from the dead. For those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the law of sin and death no longer has any power to assert its claim over them. This is because the law of the Spirit of life has set them free from the law of sin and death.

The reason John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus

Here we must clearly point out one thing before we go on. How could Jesus have the sin of this world transferred to His own body? He could do so exactly by receiving baptism from John. John the Baptist, the son of Zacharias the priest, was a person who received the mission of doing the work of transferring the sin of the world to the body of Jesus by giving baptism to Jesus at the Jordan River.

In Matthew 11:11, Jesus testified of John, *"Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11)*. How could Jesus say that John the Baptist was greater than all the prophets of the Old Testament? It is because John the Baptist was one who had received the mission of transferring the sin of the world to the body of Jesus by giving baptism to Jesus. Not Joshua, nor Isaiah, nor Jeremiah, nor Daniel, nor any other prophet became one who, like John the Baptist, gave baptism to Jesus and transferred the sin of the

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world to the body of Jesus, and thereby enabled Jesus to be nailed to the Cross, die, rise again, and save those who believe. Only John the Baptist, the last prophet of the Old Testament, was the one who, representing mankind, gave baptism to Jesus and helped Jesus so that He could be nailed to the Cross, rise again from death, and save those who believe. This is because John the Baptist was the one who could give the baptism that passed the sin of the world on to the body of Jesus.

This was the work of fulfilling the word of prophecy of the Old Testament. This is because Malachi 3:1 said, *"Behold, I send My messenger, And he will prepare the way before Me" (Malachi 3:1)*, and in Matthew 11:14, Jesus Himself testified, pointing to John, *"If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matthew 11:14)*. It was because this man was the Elijah who had been promised in the Old Testament to come. John the Baptist was the one who gave baptism to Jesus at the Jordan River and transferred the sin of the world to the body of Jesus.

Therefore we must not look only at the blood of the Cross of Jesus. We must know on what basis that blood of the Cross could bear the sin of the world. Because Jesus Himself had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He could, while bearing that sin, be nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, rise again from death, and become the Savior of sinners. The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection were not separate works of salvation, but one single connected salvation. This is because if even one of these three were missing, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit could not have been completed.

God does what the law could not do

In verse 3 of chapter 8, the apostle Paul says, *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. This word tells us that people born as descendants of Adam have a nature already corrupted by sin and even a flesh stained with sin, so they have become those who can never fully keep the law God gave.

The law is holy, just, and good. But the law is not the source of the power that changes people; rather, it is the standard of God that clearly defines what sin is. Although the law can condemn people, it cannot deliver them from all their sins and judgment. That is why people's striving to become righteous by keeping the law becomes futile labor.

Therefore, the point is that God the Father did what the law could not do by sending Jesus Christ, letting Him receive the baptism that John the Baptist gave and Himself have the sin of the world transferred to Him, letting Him shed His blood and be put to death on the Cross, and at last letting Him rise from the dead, and so made Him the eternal Savior of those who believe. This is the work in which the sacrificial law that God Himself established in Leviticus chapter 1 of the Old Testament, that is, the principle of the laying on of hands, by which a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed his sin on to that offering, was fulfilled just as it was. Just as animals were offered as sacrificial offerings in the Old Testament age, in the New Testament age Jesus Himself became our sacrificial offering. All these things were accomplished exactly according to the plan of salvation that God had established from eternity.

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The life and peace that come to those who follow the Spirit

In verse 4 of chapter 8, the apostle Paul says, *"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4)*, and then in verses 5 and 6 he says, *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5–6)*.

Here, following the Spirit does not mean following mystical experiences or going along with a vague spiritual atmosphere. Following the Spirit is keeping in our hearts what God Himself has done for us, namely the work of the baptism Jesus received from John and of His death on the Cross and His resurrection, and living with our feet set upon it. On the contrary, the carnal mind is the state of a person being dragged along by his own head, his own emotions, and his own circumstances. A person who goes to church but whose inner calculator keeps tapping away at his own deeds and qualifications is, in the end, a person who follows the flesh.

Why is the carnal mind death? For example, it is thinking, "I believed in the gospel of the Cross, but I have committed sin again, so how can I say that all my sins have disappeared?" Such a carnal mind may look honest on the outside, but in reality the problem is that it believes the human head more than the word of God. God is the One who transcends time and space. The point is that on the day Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River, He bore on His own body, once and for all, all the sin of mankind, past, present, and future, was put to death on the Cross, rose again, and gave salvation to those who believe. The

reason the spiritual mind leads a person to life and peace is that this mind does not look into human deeds, but stands on the faith that believes in Jesus Christ, who has accomplished salvation completely through the baptism He received from John and His death on the Cross.

So verses 7 and 8 point to a place one step deeper: *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7–8)*. As long as a person lives clinging to his own righteousness, that righteousness becomes an attitude of rejecting the righteousness God has accomplished. No sincerity, no devotion, and no moral effort of a person who has not been born again can become a joy before God. Only a person who has accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has come to have no sin in his heart can please God.

The resurrection guaranteed to those in whom the Spirit of Christ dwells

In verses 9 through 11 of chapter 8, the apostle Paul says, *"If anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:9–11)*.

This word contains in one sentence the decisive discernment of a Christian. Neither the fact of having attended church for a long time, nor the fact of having received a church office, nor the fact of having deep theological knowledge, none of these

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becomes the mark of a person who belongs to Christ. Only whether or not the Spirit of Christ, that is, the Holy Spirit, is in one's heart is the standard of division. Then how does the Holy Spirit come into a person? The apostle Paul gives the answer clearly in Ephesians 1:13: *"After you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)*. God seals with the Holy Spirit the person who has heard and accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart. The Holy Spirit comes into the heart that believes this word, that Jesus had the sin of the world, which included our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and remitted all our sins. The decisive sign that the Holy Spirit comes into a person's heart is the fact that true peace settles in that place in the heart where all sin has disappeared.

A born-again person lives with a twofold identity: *"The body is dead because of sin; but the spirit is life because of righteousness –ASV" (Romans 8:10)*. Even for a born-again person, the flesh is still weak and retains, just as it is, the tendency to commit sin. But the inner man, that is, the spirit, is different. Because he has been justified, he is a person who is alive before God. Therefore a righteous person does not look into his own shortcomings and despair. Not looking at the outer man, which falls short, he continues the walk of faith with his feet set upon the status of the inner man that has been justified. The dross that gathers in his heart is washed away again and again through the word of worship and through the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and his walk of following the Spirit is restored again.

And the final destination of that walk is in verse 11. The promise that He *"will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11)* makes it clear that our salvation is not salvation of the soul alone, but complete salvation in which He gives life even to our mortal bodies on the last day. Because that same Spirit who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in us, our resurrection is a promise guaranteed by the seal of the Holy Spirit. Those who have not received the remission of sins will also come to life on the last day, but that is in order to receive the judgment for sin; those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit come to life in order to enjoy everlasting life.

Now we have become people who are never condemned

Dear beloved saints, by believing that Jesus Himself bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the punishment for that sin on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead, we have been saved from all sins and have become people who are not condemned. Therefore there is now no condemnation at all for us. Because our sins have disappeared cleanly, we have become those in whom no sin remains to be condemned.

Then how should we live? Should we live remaining every day in the condemnation of sin and in self-reproach while looking into the weakness of our own flesh? We must not. Even a person as passionate as the apostle Peter could at last live the life of a true, born-again guide because he clearly believed the fact that Jesus Himself bore the sin of the world through the

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baptism He received from John the Baptist (1 Peter 3:21). We too must live following the Spirit, thinking of the will of God before our own thoughts. And we must preach this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit just as it is written in the Bible, so that the countless people who still know only the blood of the Cross and live in condemnation may hear this word of truth and become those who receive the remission of all their sins.

Now Jesus, who received baptism from John, Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. All of us must become those who believe in our hearts the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He has accomplished, and who live enjoying eternal salvation in which we are never condemned. I hope that all of us will become people who please the Lord by faith in the Lord, within the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Hallelujah! ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the present tense

< Romans 8:1–10 >

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness."

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There is no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2). The apostle Paul is now saying this. We, who were born as descendants of Adam, cannot possibly keep the law, and because we, who were born in the flesh, are already stained with sin, we were slaves of sin. In the midst of this, Jesus Christ came to this earth and accomplished that work of saving us from sin, that is, the work in which He was born, received baptism from John the Baptist to bear our sins, died on the Cross, and rose again from death to save us.

So Paul concludes that for the person who believes this, there is therefore now no condemnation at all to those who are in Christ Jesus—there can never be sin, there can never be judgment, and they have become those saved from sin and judgment—and then in verse 2 he repeats it once again and goes into a re-examination. That is, the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and death. Two laws appear here.

Why is believing in Jesus so difficult for you and me, who believe in Jesus, and why is it something we cannot understand and find puzzling no matter how we look at it? God has established two kinds of law. The triune God made all things in the universe and made man to resemble His own image, and this means that from the time God made man, He set the purpose of making him one of His people and then made him. We must think according to the word of God. If God made us according to the image of God, why did He make us that way? He made us

with the purpose of making us His people from the beginning. Then did God know that we would sin, or did He not know? He knew that we would sin. So the triune God planned, even before the universe was made and before you and I were born into this world, to save us from sin through His own Son.

That law that saves us is precisely the law of the Spirit in Christ Jesus. It means that God established the law in this way: He sent His own Son to this earth, had Him bear the sins of sinners through baptism, had Him hang on the Cross and shed His blood, had Him come to death and then had Him rise again, set up His own Son as the Savior of sinners, and caused whoever only believes to obtain salvation.

But there is one more law, and that is the law of sin and death. It is none other than the law. Where the law comes, death comes. Because the law is a law that brings down judgment, when the law comes, judgment is brought down, and nothing is exempted from it. When the law is held up against us, our wrongdoings are already exposed, and when our wrongdoings are exposed, we come to receive judgment.

God planned to multiply mankind through Adam and Eve, and even before He made them, He decided to send His Son to this earth to save us, who were made according to the image of God, from sin. He made His own Son the sacrificial offering, had Him receive baptism so that our sins were passed on to Him, and Jesus, who had received baptism, was nailed to the Cross, received all the judgment for the sin of our failing to keep the law, which is the law of God, came to death, and rose again. It means that God has worked through the law that accomplishes His purpose: to deliver us from sin by the faith that believes in that work of Jesus Christ, to keep us from receiving the judgment for sin before God, and to make us children of God.

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He condemned sin in the flesh

"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:3–4). Here the passage speaks of it again. Because we were born as descendants of Adam, inheriting the flesh and a heart of sin, we can never live according to the law. We have already fallen as those who cannot live according to the law, we have been stained with sin, and even if we make an effort, there is not the slightest chance of success. We have no choice but to go to hell. 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).* If there is sin, one must receive judgment and must go to hell.

God did what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. The law is not bad. It is a holy word, and all of it is right. Serve and acknowledge God alone, do not have other gods before God, do not make images and do not bow down to them, do not dishonor the name of God, accept the things God has done—the law is all holy and clean, but because we cannot keep it, we become sinners, and because we become sinners, judgment comes upon us.

But there is One whom God the Father sent. It says that God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and set sin in the flesh. That He set it means that God established by law that He would pass the sin of us human beings on to His Son through baptism, and that this law is precisely the law of the Spirit. It means that in the law by which God wishes to save us, He marked out His Son. "I will save you through My Son. My Son

will have your sins passed on to Him through baptism." This is how God established it. So it says, *"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4)*.

Verse 1 says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. This means that we have been saved from sin by believing in the baptism Jesus Christ received when He came to this earth to remove our sins, and in the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. So it means that we have become those in whose hearts sin cannot possibly be, try as it might. Just as God established it, how did we become those without sin? It does not come about by our deeds or efforts, nor does it come about because we are clever. It means that God first made us as those who had sin, and then, by sending His Son and saving us from sin through that Son, made us, through our believing, into those without sin, into those who cannot have sin even if they want to, into those who have no sin if they only believe.

It means that He established it according to the law of God. The law of the Spirit refers to the law of salvation. What I want to say is this. It is true that Jesus is our Savior, it is true that He is the Son of God, and it is also true that He was born on this earth as the Savior through the body of Mary and did the work of saving us from sin; but if there had not been the baptism He received from John, He could not have had our sins passed on to Him.

The word here says, *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. It means that God established that He would pass our sins on to His Son. So when Jesus came

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to this earth and turned thirty, He went to John the Baptist at the Jordan River and told him to baptize Him. When John the Baptist asked whether He, who was God, would receive baptism from him, Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. So, according to the Father's will, He received baptism and had sin passed on to Him. That is precisely baptism.

He set sin in the flesh: because Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, He died on the Cross. He died because He had our sins passed on to Him, and so He received judgment in our place; and because the purpose of His coming to this earth was to save us from sin and to make us live again, He rose again. He is God, who lives forever. For a short while, for thirty-three years, He gave His own flesh to us, bore sin in that flesh, and that flesh died and rose again from death; then He returned to the glory of God, and He accomplished salvation for those who believe, according to the will of God.

To confirm it once again: He came to this earth according to the Father's will, received baptism, hung on the Cross, and rose again from death. The starting point of our salvation is, first, that God the Father sent His Son to this earth; second, that He received baptism; third, that He died on the Cross; and fourth, that He rose again from death. So He became the Savior who completely accomplished our salvation. God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit created all things in the universe, and it means that this God, just as He had planned to make man resembling His own image and to make him His own people and His own children, sent the Son of God to this earth and did the work of saving us from sin.

Therefore, the person who has come into Christ Jesus cannot have sin. Dear fellow believers, is there sin in you, or not? There

is not. We believe in the law of the Spirit. The law makes us sinners and makes us receive judgment, but the law of God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit is the law that saves us, who had become sinners, from sin and makes us God's people. Because God made us for such a purpose, Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us according to the law God had established, and it means that we have become God's people by believing in that fact. It means that we have come to have that faith.

Reading the word of the Bible and knowing what this word means is not something I know by myself; I know it because the Holy Spirit is within me. And not everyone who has received the Holy Spirit comes to know it. It comes about because God gives such a gift.

The carnal mind and the spiritual mind

"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:5–8). A little while ago the law of the Spirit came up, and the Holy Spirit refers to the Spirit of God, that is, to God. Jesus, too, was not originally One who had flesh. He is Spirit and He is God. Those who live according to the flesh—those who believe in Jesus with the carnal mind—think only of Jesus hanging on the Cross as they please, and believe as they please.

But if we think spiritually, it goes like this. We think, "God established the law like that, planned to save us even before we

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were born, and then made us; and because we are weak and commit sin, He sent His own Son, had Him receive baptism, had Him die on the Cross, had Him rise again from death, and saved us." If God planned it that way, we believe in the work of the Holy Spirit. We receive salvation by believing in the work God planned and carried out, and those who believe that way receive salvation. If people think in a fleshly way by their own thoughts, wondering how a woman who did not know a man could have conceived a baby, they will only get a headache. So to believe in Jesus, we must follow this word of the Bible, and we must know what the word of the Bible is saying.

So it says, *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7–8)*. If people think only in a fleshly way, they cannot please God, and they become enemies of God. Don't people want to live only for themselves, thinking, "I alone want to live well, I alone want to live splendidly, I alone want to live enjoying honor, power, and wealth"? It is so even after being saved. But those who follow the Spirit, those who follow the word of God, those who follow by faith in God, want to please God, and when they do the work that pleases God, the Holy Spirit rejoices in their hearts, so they feel good along with Him; and they also receive the help of God, so they are glad along with it.

Knowing with the head and being united with the heart

"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9). It speaks of the

Spirit here, and we must truly listen to this part properly and know it properly. We believed that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism to bear our sins, died on the Cross, and rose again from death to become our Savior, and so we received salvation.

But if someone who knows only intellectually what Jesus did when He came to this earth preaches it to you intellectually, you too will come to know it all intellectually in your head. But you have not been united with Christ in your heart. Jesus received baptism like this in order to have our sins passed on to Him; He was nailed to the Cross and died in order to receive the judgment for my sins and yours; and He rose again from death in order to become our eternal God. We must become those united with Him by the faith that believes this way, but this word means that those who are not like this—whose hearts are not united with His work and who have it only in their heads—do not have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. It means that if they do not have the Holy Spirit in their hearts, they become people of the flesh. It means that they are not people of the Spirit but people who have only the flesh, people who have not been born again. Then it means that such people, however hard they try, can only live for their own flesh.

But what is it like when there is the Spirit in the heart? *"And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness" (Romans 8:10)*. Do you have the Holy Spirit in your heart or not? That is the point. The triune God caused you and me to be born as descendants of sinners, and we could only go to hell while committing sins, but God the Father sent His Son to this earth, had Jesus receive baptism and have my sins and yours passed on to Him, had Him hang on the Cross and die in place of you and me, and raised Him from death to become our Savior. It means that those who believe in that

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Lord with their hearts—believing in their hearts, "Jesus received baptism to have my sins passed on to Him, He died on the Cross to receive the punishment for my sins, and He rose again from death to make me live again and make me one of God's people"—and who are thus united with the Lord, become God's people. It is written, *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24)*. As it says, God is Spirit, and it means that when we believe in what the Lord has done, that God dwells in our hearts.

So it means that He lets us know that we have become children of God. And because our faith is still young, we follow the flesh and also follow the word of God, and both seem good. The world is good and the work of God is good; when we do the work of God, it is so very good, and then when we turn our eyes away for a moment, the world is so very good; and while we go back and forth like this, later on such things become settled.

So the apostle Paul said, *"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:12–14)*. We become children of God by believing in the law of the Spirit, by believing in that salvation by which God saved us. But because we have the flesh, if we live only for our own flesh, we cannot follow as the Holy Spirit leads, and we become people without fruit, like the servant who had received one talent. So the apostle Paul sums it up for us: those who are saved must live according to the word, as the Lord is pleased.

Believe in the present tense

There is one thing I tell you repeatedly. Just now, too, I have preached all those words—about the providence of God, the plan by which He saved us, His having saved us, and what we believed in order to receive salvation. But even after hearing this word, believing by thinking in a fleshly way according to one's own thoughts, "It must be like this," is not true faith; it is wrong.

Hearing this word now, if God planned our salvation before the creation of heaven and earth, knew that Adam and Eve would sin like that, and we were born as their descendants, and God the Father sent His Son to this earth so that He had our sins passed on to Him through baptism, received the punishment for sin on the Cross in our place, rose again from death, and became our Savior, and if God established that He would make us His children if we believe, then we believe just as He established. If we hear this word and believe like this, we receive salvation. But if we fall into the delusion that we believe while knowing it only intellectually, just as Satan the devil has dug a trap, the Holy Spirit does not come into our hearts.

Why is that? Knowing only with the head and being joined with the heart are different things. Those who unite with their hearts, believing, "The Lord's receiving baptism was His having my sins passed on to Him, and when the Lord received baptism, my sins were passed on to Him," have passed on their sins with their hearts. But if their hearts do not move and they are not united with the Lord's work, and they say only with their heads, "Yes, I got it. I am not a dull-headed person, so if I hear it only once, I can remember it forever," then there is no Holy Spirit in their hearts. Because there is no Holy Spirit, they cannot follow the Lord. They want to follow, but they can never follow. The point is: believe in the present tense.

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Believe now, in the present tense. If, hearing the word today too and thinking about it, you say, “So this is how Jesus saved me. That was God’s purpose and God’s plan. It was God’s plan toward us from before we were born into this world, the plan of salvation in Jesus Christ. So He saved us through His Son like that,” then believe at this very hour. Do not say, “I already believe,” but hear the word at this hour and believe at this hour. And when the next time comes around, hearing at that time and believing at that time makes your faith grow a great deal. But when the word is preached like this, if you think of something else, saying, “Today again he is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit; I know all of it,” there is no progress in faith. The heart of faith grows just as the body grows, just as muscles are built up. The word says that if, while pretending to be clever like that, a person does not have the Holy Spirit—does not have the Spirit of Christ—he is not Christ’s. If a person knows only with the head and does not have the Spirit of Christ, he goes to hell. Just as with an unsaved person, it is a matter of the head only.

“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation” (Romans 10:10). It is with the heart that one believes unto righteousness. The heart is what is important. Only those who have received the remission of sins can preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit repeatedly. When people repeat something they have said once, they themselves do not feel good, and those listening also say, “He talks only about that every day,” but those who have received the remission of sins can preach it again and again. Why is that? Because while preaching, they themselves become excited. Because they themselves are saved people.

I hope you will believe at this hour. You must believe at this hour that Jesus has become your Savior. Only then will you not

fall into the enticement of Satan the devil. I cannot tell you how cunning the devil is. The apostle Paul also believed that way, and we too believed that way and received salvation. I hope you will hear the word at this hour and believe at this hour. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Let us receive circumcision of the heart

< Romans 8:1–11 >

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

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A life of faith that follows the Spirit

More important than who preaches the word is the title of this message. I intend to preach the word of God based on this title: "Let us receive circumcision of the heart." Continuing the word of Romans chapter 7, the apostle Paul begins his message by saying, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. And as he carries on that word, he says, *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit" (Romans 8:5)*. While speaking in this way about how we should live a life of faith, the apostle Paul speaks of this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because every person has the flesh, people sometimes think the thoughts of the flesh and sometimes follow the flesh.

Here the apostle Paul, as a servant of God and as one who has met Jesus, is a person who follows the Spirit and thinks of the things of the Spirit. Today we carry the word of the Bible with us and go to church, and we hear the word and read it, pray, and believe. So we strive hard to change our nature and go through such processes. Then how should we live our life of faith? It means that we must live it spiritually. It says that those who follow the flesh think of the things of the flesh, and those who follow the Spirit think of the things of the Spirit; here, the flesh refers to our flesh itself, and the Spirit refers to God. It is written, *"God is Spirit, and those who worship Him must worship in spirit and truth" (John 4:24)*.

So God is a holy Spirit. Then how can we live a life of faith properly before that God, and how can we change our customs or our nature and do it properly? We can live a life of faith by thinking of what God has done, by thinking of the words God

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has spoken and the things He has done for us and believing them, and also by believing, hoping for, waiting for, and following what He has promised us. You and I equally believe in Jesus, but it means that the life of faith must be lived like this—by thinking of God and thinking of the things God has done for us—by faith. We can never live a life of faith by thinking of the things of the flesh. When we think of the things of the flesh, it is so very hard and painful. We cannot overcome our own violent emotions, we cannot control them, and we cannot rule ourselves. We human beings are those who end up being crushed by ourselves.

So it means that the life of faith can be lived by thinking of God, thinking of the things God has done for you and me, believing them, and following in that way.

He condemned sin in the flesh

What did the apostle Paul say here? *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1–4).* The apostle Paul says that there can never be sin in those who are in Christ Jesus, and that sin cannot be set in our bodies and made to remain there. Before we believed in Jesus, sin was in our hearts and in our flesh, but it means that if we know the righteousness of Jesus, that is, the things Jesus has done for us, and truly believe, sin

cannot be in our hearts or in our flesh. While speaking of this part, he says that the law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death. How did it set us free? It means that God did what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, that is, on account of sin He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and set sin in the flesh.

This word is very short, but if we try to speak of this word, we have to speak of everything concerning the law in the Old Testament, from Genesis to Malachi. And we also have to speak of how the Lord came to this earth in the New Testament age, how He bore our sins, how He received judgment for us, and how He rose again from death and became the Savior of those who believe. The apostle Paul says all of that in one word: *"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."* It is a matter of whether we follow the flesh or follow the Spirit, whether we follow our own thoughts or the emotions of our flesh, or follow the things God has done for us. It means that if we want to live a life of faith properly, we must know, believe, and follow, through all the words written here in the Bible, the things God did when He came to you and me. That He caused the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in those who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit means that God has delivered you and me from all that curse of the law, from all sin and judgment. This is what He said: *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*.

In fact, this human flesh is weak and cannot keep the law of God; then how did Jesus, who is the only Son of God the Father, come to this earth clothed in human flesh and bear all that sin? It says, *"He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. It means

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that He set sin in the body of Jesus, that He passed sin on to Him. So it means that He removed our sins. So you and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must also live our life of faith by following the Spirit. What is it to walk by following God? It is to think of the things God has done for you and me, to believe them, and to follow. Only then can we live a life of faith properly; otherwise, we cannot live a life of faith. It is written, *"For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:6)*. The spiritual mind is thinking of the things God has done—the things by which He loved us and saved us. It means that when we think of that and believe, we are not only saved from sin, but after receiving the remission of sins we can also receive and enjoy all the blessings God has given.

This word means that He set our sins in the flesh of Jesus, that He passed all our sins on to the flesh of Jesus. We do know that the law is the holy and righteous word of God, we also know that we cannot keep that law, and we also know that Jesus came to this earth clothed in human flesh and bore our sins in His own body. But we must know rightly how God saved us—those things He has done for us. To do so, we must hear and we must testify.

Tunics of skin and the sacrifice of the lamb

Let us go back to the first chapter of the Old Testament. In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, made man, and breathed the breath of life into his nostrils. And He placed every fruit tree in the Garden of Eden and told them not to eat the fruit of the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil, but to eat and enjoy all the rest. He said that if they ate of it, they

would surely die. But Satan the devil, the serpent, came and incited them, saying that if they ate of it they would become like God and would never die, and that God had told them not to eat of it for fear that they would become like God. So Eve ate of it and also gave some to her husband. After they had eaten of it, they knew that their bodies were naked, and they were ashamed and hid among the trees. When God came looking for them and said, "Where are you?" Adam confessed that the woman God had given him had made him eat this fruit, so he had eaten and hidden. Then God found that serpent, the one who had caused them to sin, and cursed it, saying, *"Because you have done this, You are cursed more than all cattle, And more than every beast of the field; On your belly you shall go, And you shall eat dust All the days of your life" (Genesis 3:14).*

Spiritually speaking, the devil lives by feeding on people's affections, emotions, and cravings. So he stirs these up and makes people commit sin. What was the very first thing Adam and Eve did after they sinned? They knew that their bodies were naked and were ashamed, they were afraid to face God, and so they hid. The next thing they did was to pick fig leaves and make clothes for themselves and put them on. Although they made clothes and put them on, they could not cover their shame. In fact, it was not their being naked that was shameful; rather, they were ashamed and afraid because they had been cut off from God on account of the sin in their hearts. So they covered the shame of their outward appearance, wondering whether the shame of their hearts would also be covered. Then God came to Adam and Eve, caught an animal, stripped off its skin, made clothes out of that skin, and clothed them. *"Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21).*

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Here we can think of two things. What was the material of the clothes Adam and Eve made and put on? The materials can be divided into plant or animal, that which has blood or that which has no blood. What they first made and put on was from plants. Plants have life, but they have no blood. When the scorching sun beats down, they all dry up and crumble. But what God came and made and clothed them with were tunics of skin. Tunics of skin came from a sacrificial offering. For Adam and Eve, an animal bore that sin in their place and died in their place, and its skin was put on Adam and Eve. Spiritually, we can say that this was God killing one sacrificial offering in order to save Adam and Eve and clothing them with the garment of righteousness. But the descendants of Adam and Eve all inherited, from the womb, the sin that Adam and Eve had, were born on this earth, and kept on committing sin. Sin kept flowing down.

Children were born to Adam and Eve, and children were born to them in turn, but God divided those who believed in God from those who did not. The representatives of these were Cain and Abel. Abel was the younger brother, but he was one who believed in the God his parents believed in, and Cain was one who did not believe. Here, too, two kinds of offerings appear. Cain wanted to bring the grain he had farmed from the ground, pile it up, and offer a sacrifice to God, and Abel caught a lamb and offered a sacrifice before God. God accepted Abel's sacrifice and did not accept Cain's sacrifice. What does this tell us? 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)*. When people are born with sin and commit sin, they must surely be put to death because of that sin. It means that because the wages of sin, the price of sin, is death, a sacrificial offering was surely needed for us human beings to be delivered from sin. It is

saying that for us to be saved from sin again before God and receive the remission of sins, a sacrificial offering was needed that would bear our sins in our place and die in our place.

The law and the sacrificial system: the way of passing on sin through the laying on of hands

So God formed a nation called Israel through the fathers of faith, through the descendants of Abraham. When the people of Israel were in slavery in Egypt for 430 years, He delivered them from there, made them cross the Red Sea, and led them into the land of Canaan; and while they were living in the wilderness, He gave them the two tablets of the law and gave them the commandments the people had to keep. How they should live, their relationships with people and their relationship with God, "Do not do what is bad, and do what is good," "Do not have other gods before God, and serve God alone"—like this, He gave them about 613 laws and commandments all at once. But the people of Israel could not keep that law. Because what God gave was all good, they did accept it and said they would keep it, but they could not keep it. So, while giving the law and the commandments through Moses, God at the same time gave them the sacrificial system of the tabernacle and the priests, so that when the people of Israel wanted to receive the remission of all their sins and be washed of them, whether they had committed sin or had been born as sinners, they would bring a sacrificial offering, lay hands on that offering just as God had established, and cause their sins to be passed on to it.

Then that sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering, killed it, and drew its blood. The laying on of hands is passing on sin, and the killing is because the wages of sin is death;

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according to the law of God's righteousness, the person who has sin must die, so the sacrificial offering dies in his place. When he killed it, drew the blood, and gave it to the priest, the priest put the blood on the four horns of the altar of burnt offering and poured out the remaining blood at the base of the altar. And as God had commanded, they cut the meat into pieces and laid it on the altar of burnt offering, took the unclean things such as the entrails and the head outside the camp and burned them up, and in this way He had them offer the sacrifice. The sacrificial offering received the laying on of hands in place of the sinner and had the sin passed on to it, shed its blood and was put to death in his place, and its meat was placed on the altar of burnt offering, and a fire was lit underneath to burn it all up and offer it before God. God accepted this sacrificial offering, and through it He saved the people of Israel one by one. In this way, the sacrificial system, in which God had the sin passed on and then had the offering receive the judgment for that sin, shows the salvation Jesus would accomplish. Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, bore that sin, shed His blood on the Cross, received judgment and died in our place, and rose again from death to give us the remission of sins.

But the people of Israel committed sin endlessly. They would go and offer a sacrifice in the morning and commit sin again on their way back; they would get through the morning well, then commit sin in the afternoon and commit sin again at night; there was not a single day on which they did not commit sin. So God established a special sacrificial system for them; in Leviticus chapter 16, He established the sacrificial system of the Day of Atonement. Through that sacrificial system, one high priest, on behalf of the people of Israel, first made atonement for his own sins and then brought two sacrificial offerings for the people of

Israel. For one of them, he himself laid hands on it before God and passed on all the sins of the people of Israel, killed it and drew its blood, went into the Most Holy Place where the ark of the covenant was, put the blood there, and so on. Because there would be no end if I tried to tell all of this, I am giving the overall story.

And on the tenth day of the seventh month, the Day of Atonement—the greatest feast, a day on which no work was to be done—the high priest, before the eyes of the people, laid his hands on the other sacrificial offering as well, passed on sin, and sent that offering away into the wilderness. *"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat, and shall send it away into the wilderness by the hand of a suitable man. The goat shall bear on itself all their iniquities to an uninhabited land; and he shall release the goat in the wilderness" (Leviticus 16:21–22).* The goat that had all the sins of the people of Israel passed on to it through the laying on of the high priest's hands goes to that place where there is no water and no grass. Sheep or goats should originally have a guide, but that animal, which bore all the sin of the people without a guide, goes far, far away and dies of thirst in a place with no water. So God desired to deliver the people of Israel from sin by having the high priest of Israel, on behalf of the people, offer a sacrifice once before God for all these sins, the sins the people of Israel had committed knowingly and the sins they had committed unknowingly, and also, before the eyes of the people, pass sin on to the sacrificial offering and offer the sacrifice for them. When this sacrifice had been offered, the people of Israel were so very glad that day, because they had all received the remission of sins.

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But because the people of Israel would commit sin again after a week had passed, they had to catch a sheep or a goat again and again, lay hands on it to pass on their sin, kill it, draw its blood, give it to the priest, and ask him, "Please offer the sacrifice in my place." So the people of Israel could live like that even while committing sin. It means that, in order to dwell with the people of Israel, God always granted them the remission of their sins if they only believed in the sacrificial system God had established and offered the sacrifice just as it was.

Israel, which served idols, and the promise of the Savior

But this went on being handed down, and when Solomon the son of David had become king of Israel and, being old, was about to die and pass the royal authority on to his son Rehoboam, a problem arose here. Before God, Solomon had taken as many as seven hundred wives for himself. Were those women all women of Israel? No. A few may have been women of Israel, but most of them were people brought in, such as the daughter of the king of Egypt and those from among the royal families and relatives of various neighboring nations. What did they bring with them each time they came? They brought in all the gods they had believed in in their own countries—idols carved from stone and carved from wood. They came to marry Solomon, but they did not offer sacrifices to the LORD God, in whom Solomon believed; instead, they offered sacrifices to their own idols in their own way. If there were seven hundred wives, how many maidservants and people must have been attached to them? Since they simply offered sacrifices to idols in crowds, the nation was full of idols. God hates idols. He wants God alone to

be served as God. But since worthless idols came in following the seven hundred wives and each claimed to be a god, God became angry and, in the time of Solomon's son Rehoboam, split the nation and handed over ten tribes to a man named Jeroboam, who had worked under Solomon. The nation became two. Rehoboam, Solomon's own son, reigned as king, and Jeroboam, the man who had worked under Solomon, also became king.

After Jeroboam became king, in order to protect his royal authority, he did such things as changing as he pleased even the dates of the feasts God had established, ignoring the family of the high priest God had established, and taking anyone who wanted to become a priest, dressing him in priestly garments, and having him offer sacrifices. Because of that sin, after that the people of Israel hardly ever served the LORD God alone properly. It was so from King Solomon until Jesus Christ came to this earth. In a word, it means that they served idols in that way. In today's terms, it means that while saying they believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior, they brought idols into their homes and bowed down to them, and rather than living by worshiping God and speaking to God, they bowed down to those idols and made wishes, saying, "Make things go well for me, make things go well for my sons and daughters, make my business go well," hoping that things would go well. God said that He is a jealous God.

So God raised up the army of Assyria and the army of Babylon and judged the people of Israel. Many people died and were taken captive to Babylon. Then the people of Israel realized, "This has happened to us because we served idols." When they realized it, turned back, and said before God that they had done wrong, God drove those enemy armies away for them. But this became a habit, and the people of Israel kept on serving idols,

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and God disciplined them in that way until Jesus came to this earth. Meanwhile, God sent the major prophets and minor prophets such as the prophet Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah, and the prophet Ezekiel—the servants of God of that time—and promised, "I will send you your Savior. I will send you your shepherd. I will send you a guide who will lead you rightly, your Savior."

The One who will save His people from their sins

Who is the One whom He promised to send in that way? He is Jesus Christ. Let us look at the word of Matthew. "*Now the birth of Jesus Christ was as follows: After His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, before they came together, she was found with child of the Holy Spirit. Then Joseph her husband, being a just man, and not wanting to make her a public example, was minded to put her away secretly. But while he thought about these things, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, 'Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take to you Mary your wife, for that which is conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. And she will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins'" (Matthew 1:18–21)*. It says that when Jesus Christ was born on this earth, He was conceived by the Holy Spirit. And it says that she would bring forth a Son and that His name should be called Jesus, for He would save His people from their sins. The name Jesus means Savior. God said that He would send the Savior, and said that He would send Him clothed in human flesh.

Through the prophet Isaiah, He said, "*Therefore the Lord Himself will give you a sign: Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah*

7:14). Immanuel means that God is with us. It means that God was born on this earth clothed in human flesh through the body of a virgin in order to save us human beings from sin. Jesus Christ came to this earth and became the Savior of mankind, the One who would save His people from their sins. Then how did God, who came to this earth in human flesh with the name Jesus, save us? Let us look at the word of Matthew chapter 3. *"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 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)*.

Jesus was born on this earth clothed in human flesh through the body of the virgin Mary, and that Jesus became the One who would save His people from their sins. Who are His people? They are human beings. They are people who were made according to the image of God. People of every nation and every race, without exception, long to live forever. Why is that? Because God is the One who has eternal life, we, too, instinctively know of living forever and long for it. And just as God is holy, people also always desire to live holy lives. Also, just as God created the universe, people have a nature that always tries to create and make something. That is why new cultures come about.

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He fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John

Now Jesus came as the Savior of mankind, and at the age of thirty He came from Galilee to the Jordan River to receive baptism from John. He tells the reason like this: *"But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him" (Matthew 3:15)*. What is the reason Jesus receives baptism? It means that He seeks to receive baptism from John the Baptist because it is fitting to fulfill all righteousness in this way. Jesus said, "I seek to fulfill all righteousness, all that is right, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist; so baptize Me." What is all that is right? The right thing that the Son of God, coming to this earth clothed in human flesh, would accomplish is this: just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament received the laying on of hands from the sinner and had the sin passed on to it, Jesus had my sins and yours passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. That is why He said to permit it now, for it was fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way.

Then who was this man John? In the Old Testament, God chose the tribe of Levi from among the twelve sons of Jacob and set them up as priests, and from among them He specially chose Aaron, Moses' brother, and entrusted him with the office of the high priest. God entrusted him with the work of passing on all the sins of the people of Israel to the sacrificial offering by laying hands on it on their behalf on the Day of Atonement, and offering the sacrifice in their place, so that the people of Israel would receive the remission of sins. John the Baptist is a descendant of that very high priest Aaron. So, in the New Testament age, Jesus came to this earth clothed in human flesh

and had the sins of all people passed on to Him by receiving baptism through John the Baptist, the last high priest God had sent. The sin of all mankind scattered throughout the whole world was entirely passed on to Jesus when John the Baptist baptized Jesus with both hands. Jesus had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for sin in our place and died, and then rose again to become our Savior. He received baptism from John the Baptist in order to fulfill that will to save His people from their sins.

So Jesus received baptism at the age of thirty. *"When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:16–17).* What did the Lord do when He came to this earth? He received baptism from John the Baptist in order to bear my sins and yours, in order to have my sins and yours passed on to Him. He was born on this earth clothed in human flesh and lived following the will of His parents, and when He turned thirty, in order to accomplish that public work for which God the Father had sent Him to this earth, He went to the Jordan River, received baptism from John the Baptist, and fulfilled all righteousness. This "all righteousness" is precisely His bearing all the sin of mankind. Why did Jesus receive baptism from John the Baptist before He hung on the Cross and died? He received baptism first in order to have all the sin of mankind passed on to Him, so that He would save His people from their sins. You must know this fact.

So Jesus wanted to receive baptism from John the Baptist, and John the Baptist baptized Jesus. So He fulfilled all righteousness and had all sins passed on to Him. What passed all

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sins on to Him at that time was precisely baptism. In the Old Testament, hands were laid on the sacrificial offering, and in the New Testament, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist. By receiving baptism, He had all sins passed on to Him. So He bore all sins on His own body, three years later hung on the Cross and died, and rose again from death to become our complete Savior. When Jesus received baptism, God the Father testified, *"And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17)*. When Jesus, the only Son of God the Father, came to this earth and received baptism from John the Baptist, God said that this was His beloved Son, in whom He was well pleased. He said that God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life. It means that because God loves us human beings, He sent His own Son, had Him receive baptism from John the Baptist, had Him have all the sin of mankind passed on to Him, and desired that He bear all my sins and yours and be nailed to the Cross and die in our place. God the Father was pleased with the One who obeyed this will of God the Father, and He said that the One who does this right thing—receiving baptism and having all the sin of mankind passed on to Him—is His own Son.

The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world

After receiving baptism, Jesus bore the sin of the world and went to the Cross. Let us look at the word of John chapter 1. *"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). After Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He bore the sin of the world. Where did He go bearing the sin of the world? He goes to the Cross to be nailed to the Cross. John the Baptist, who had baptized Jesus, testified to the people, "Look, the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world! That One is the very Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world." Dear fellow believers, the sin of the world is the sin from when to when? From the time Adam and Eve sinned, their descendants have kept on being born on this earth, committing sin, and dying, and again being born, committing sin, and dying; and though we do not know when this earth will perish, until the last human being is born and dies—up to that person is the world.

The sin that all those people have committed in that span—from Adam to your ancestors, to you, and to your descendants—the sin that all people commit until the day this earth ends, is the sin of the world. Jesus received baptism and had that sin passed on to Him. And He went toward the Cross bearing the sin of the world. In John chapter 19, as Jesus hung on the Cross and died, it is written, *"So when Jesus had received the sour wine, He said, 'It is finished!' And bowing His head, He gave up His spirit" (John 19:30)*. Jesus said, "It is finished!" and died, and He was laid in a stone tomb. And on the third day after His death, at dawn, He rose again. That is why there is Easter. That is why we do not call it the Sabbath but the Lord's Day, that is, the day on which the Lord rose again.

Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, and had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him. All the sins you commit from your birth until your death, all the sins your parents committed from their birth until their death, all the sins of your ancestors, and all the sins your children commit from their birth until their death—He had the sins of all the descendants until the day this earth ends passed on to Him once

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and for all. If the world is from the beginning of creation to the end of creation, it means that Jesus came to this earth and, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, had all the sin of mankind—past sins, present sins, and future sins—all passed on to Him once and for all; He went to the Cross, was nailed there, and said "It is finished!" as He died; and on the third day after His death He rose again and became the Savior of you and me.

Believe according to the Spirit in the salvation He accomplished once and for all

Then how should you and I believe when we believe in Jesus? We must believe not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. Those who follow the Spirit think of the things of the Spirit. It is thinking of how and how much God loved you and me, and how He bore our sins—whether He bore them in two installments or ten installments, or bore them once and for all. Jesus bore them all by receiving baptism once, was nailed to the Cross once and shed all the blood in His heart, died once and for all and rose again once and for all, and saved us forever, once and for all. It means that when we know, think about, and believe this fact through the word of God and accept that Jesus Christ as the Savior of you and me, we are truly saved from all sins. This is precisely the life of faith.

The life of faith is not following the flesh but following the Spirit. It is thinking of how the Son of God came to you and me, how He bore our sins and how He received judgment for us, and, if He bore the sin of the world, how much He bore. When you and I had to die because of sin, Jesus received baptism in our place. By receiving baptism, He had all the sin of mankind

passed on to Him. It is written, *"Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—" (Romans 5:12)*. It means that all people sinned and had to die, receive judgment, and perish, but our Lord came to this earth as the Savior of mankind, had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, bore that sin, hung on the Cross, said "It is finished!" and died, and rose again from death to become our true Savior. That is why we call Jesus our Savior. We call Jesus Christ our Savior, our King, the Creator who created us, and the Savior who loved us and came to this earth clothed in human flesh.

How should we live our life of faith? It is thinking of how God saved us for the sake of you and me. About 2,000 years ago, before you and I were even born, Jesus came to this earth, and at the age of thirty He fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and He gathered up even the sins that you and I commit and had them all passed on to Him. Not only you and I, but your children too are people of the world. In God's sight, they are the same mankind, equally lovely beings, beings who resemble the image of God. Your ancestors, too, are just as precious as you are. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had passed on to Him the sins of all people from Adam until the day mankind ends—all sins, of every race and every nation, without exception—and, taking all sins upon Himself, He went to the Cross, was nailed to it, and died.

The word for receiving baptism has the meaning 'to be covered over.' That is precisely the reason Jesus received baptism. By receiving baptism in the waters of the Jordan River, He had the sins of all mankind passed on to Him. In the Old Testament, this is the laying on of hands. It is exactly the same

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as the high priest's laying hands on the sacrificial offering. Just as the sins of the people of Israel were all passed on when the high priest laid his hands on the Day of Atonement, Jesus came to this earth, and at the age of thirty, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him once and for all. If you want to receive the remission of sins, you must think of this. The Son of God came to this earth, bore your sins through baptism, went bearing the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross through both hands and both feet, and poured out all the blood in His heart. Since the wages of sin is death, because He bore our sins, He was nailed to the Cross in our place and received the judgment for sin in our place. This is how He saved us. And He died, and on the third day after His death He rose again, ascended into heaven, and became our eternal Savior.

So when we believe in Jesus, we must believe according to the Spirit, and we must think of the things of the Spirit. Because God loved you and me, and because He knows all our weaknesses and shortcomings and knows well that we cannot help committing sin, He sent His Son to this earth in order to make us without sin, set up John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, had that Son receive baptism from John the Baptist so that He had all sins passed on to Him, had Him receive judgment on the Cross, and saved you and me. We come to receive salvation by believing according to this work God has done.

Those who have received circumcision of the heart

Dear fellow believers, think of all these things: Jesus' being born on this earth, His receiving baptism, His dying on the Cross, and His entering the tomb and rising again. The Lord came to

this earth, entered the tomb, rose again, and ascended, but He is coming to this earth again. Why is He coming? He is coming to look for those who believe, "I came to this earth for you, received baptism to bear your sins, was nailed to the Cross and died in your place, came to life again on the third day after My death, and became your Savior." It is written, "*But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5)*. His hanging on the Cross was because He had my sins and yours passed on to Him through baptism.

Dear fellow believers, the work of the Lord in coming to this earth, being born, receiving baptism, hanging on the Cross and dying, and entering the tomb and rising again is the work He did to save you and me from sin. And our Lord is coming to this earth again. What will He do when He comes again? He is coming to look for those who have received circumcision of the heart. Then who are those who have received circumcision of the heart? The people of Israel performed circumcision on the bodies of little children and cut off their flesh. Because God had promised it and had told them to do so, the people of Israel all performed circumcision. This came from what God spoke to Abraham. *"Then He brought him outside and said, 'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'" (Genesis 15:5)*. Can you look up at the sky and count the stars? There are too many to count. Abraham had not a single child at that time, and his wife Sarah was also so old that she could not bear a child. Yet when God said that He would make his descendants as many as the stars of the sky, Abraham believed the word God had spoken. *"And he believed in the LORD, and He accounted it to him for righteousness" (Genesis 15:6)*. God

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recognized as right the faith of Abraham, who believed the word God had spoken.

So Abraham became the father of our faith. Likewise, what exactly is circumcision of the heart? The Lord was born on this earth, received baptism and bore the sin of us human beings once and for all, went bearing that sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross, died and entered the tomb, came to life again after three days, ascended and sat at the right hand of the throne of God the Father, and will return to this earth in His second coming to take us. He comes to wake those who have entered the tomb, and He comes to take us who are alive. And He asks whether we believe this. He is asking, "Do you believe that because I loved you, I was born on this earth for you, received baptism for you and had all your sins passed on to Me and bore them, bore all those sins and went and was nailed to the Cross and received all the judgment for all sins; that I received baptism and had all your sins passed on to Me and made you without sin; and that I was nailed to the Cross in your place before God the Father and received all the judgment you were to receive?" It means that God has performed circumcision of the heart for those who believe this.

It means that it is not cutting off the flesh of the body, but that He lets us receive circumcision of the heart. Sin is in the heart. It is recorded in the heart. But for those who believe according to the Spirit, those who think of what God has done and believe, all your sins were passed on to Jesus when He received baptism. It is the fact that your sins were passed on to Jesus. Your sins, your children's sins, and your ancestors' sins were all passed on. He bore all that sin of the world, went to the Cross, and was nailed to it. So He saved you and me completely. He said, "It is finished!" *"Now where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18)*. The

Lord saved us in that way, and He said that He would come to this earth again to take us. The point is: believe this. When we know the work God did—coming to this earth clothed in human flesh for you, receiving baptism, hanging on the Cross, and rising again from death to save us—and we acknowledge and believe according to what God has done, the sins of you and me have already, before we know it, disappeared.

Dear fellow believers, our sins do not disappear because we offer prayers of repentance or fasting prayers. Our Savior is Jesus, not ourselves. If you and I were falling from a high-rise building, could we, while falling, decide halfway down, "This will not do," and climb back up by ourselves? Because you and I were already born as sinners, we cannot help committing sin continually even if we do not want to. So because of sin—since the wages of sin is death—we could not help being cursed forever. Your descendants were the same, and your ancestors were the same. That is why the Lord came as the Savior, was born, received baptism and bore our sins, hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior.

The righteousness obtained through faith

Therefore, those who believe receive circumcision of the heart. In those who believe, the sin in their hearts disappears. Sin has disappeared through believing this fact. It is because, regardless of our feelings, the sin that was here was passed on to Jesus when He received baptism from John the Baptist. The sins you committed from the age of one to the age of twenty, the sins you committed from the age of twenty to the age of forty, and the sins you will commit until you die are all the sin of the world. Your ancestors' sins, your descendants' sins, and the sins you

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will commit tomorrow are also the sin of the world. The sin of all mankind was passed on to Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ bore that sin, went to the Cross, and received the judgment for sin for us. So He became the Savior of you and me. Dear fellow believers, when we know and believe this fact, this is precisely receiving circumcision of the heart. It is receiving the remission of sins in the heart. It is having sin washed away in the heart. There is no other way. So what does the Book of Romans say? *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5–6).*

Those who follow the flesh think of the things of the flesh, but those who follow the Spirit think of the things of the Spirit. It is a matter of whether God saved you and me or did not. That He saved us is the fact that Jesus received baptism like this and bore our sins. If you hear this, know it, and acknowledge it, then because your sins have already been passed on to Jesus, your sins disappear if you only know the fact that they were passed on. This is precisely Christianity. It is the faith of justification by faith, the righteousness obtained through faith. We become righteous people before God through faith, not through our deeds. If Jesus had only been born on this earth and died on the Cross, your sins would not disappear no matter how much you offered prayers of repentance every day. But Jesus received baptism, hung on the Cross and died, and rose again from death to become the Savior of you and me.

Today many people all over the world—theologians, professors, pastors, and many others—believe the fact that Jesus bore our sins, hung on the Cross and died, and rose again from death to save us. But although they knew the fact that Jesus hung on the Cross and died, they have until now simply overlooked

the fact that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore your sins, neither thinking about it nor regarding it as important. If Jesus did not receive baptism, bear your sins, and then die on the Cross, His hanging on the Cross and dying becomes vain. He received baptism from the representative of mankind in order to make us without sin, in order to bear our sins, and then He hung on the Cross and died. I have told you, as a general overview of the whole, more precisely and in more detail, how God has worked for us from the Old Testament to the New Testament, though it may be different from what you have learned until now.

Dear fellow believers, if you die with all your sins while saying you believe in Jesus, you cannot pass on true faith to your children. People simply tell others to believe because Jesus hung on the Cross and died, and then they offer prayers of repentance, saying, "The sins I committed up to today were remitted, but I have committed sin again today; what should I do about this sin?" Some sins pierce the heart and are so very painful and sore. People say, "I could have not committed it, but after committing the sin I am so sorry and distressed before God that I cannot bear to live." If you believe in Jesus and yet carry your sins and die with sin, who is pleased? The devil is pleased.

The law is right, but we cannot keep it

Those who believe that Jesus bore our sins through baptism, even though they are lacking and weak every day and commit sin, look at this written word: *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. The law of God is

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righteous and holy. Honor your parents, do not murder, do not steal, do not bear false witness—all of it is right. Do not have other gods before Me, do not take the name of God in vain, keep the Sabbath holy—these are all right words. Then let us look at just the ten. It says, "Do not have other gods before Me"; do we have other gods, or do we not? Even while believing in Jesus, when we see something delicious, our hearts are captured by it; as soon as something catches our eye, we want to have it; and if there is something good, it even appears in our dreams. Because our flesh is weak, when we see something with our eyes, we want to have it and want to buy it, and even without seeing it with our eyes, we go wild in our imagination.

Sins committed in the heart, sins committed in deeds, sins committed in thought, sins committed knowingly, sins committed unknowingly—how many sins there are! That is what we ourselves are, you and I. Yet the law of God says, "Do not have other gods before Me. Do not set up idols and bow down to them." He tells us not to do it because people commit sin; where is there anyone who, having been born a sinner, does not commit sin? Furthermore, He commanded us not to bear false witness—yet how many people are there who, while asking, "How could someone who believes in Jesus ever bear false witness?" end up doing exactly that! Who are they? Isn't it us? You and I must know what we ourselves are like. Before believing in Jesus, we must know the fact that we are sinners, that we were born as sinners, and that even if we do not commit sin we are sinners and go to hell. Because we were born with sin, we must know that we are that kind of seed that always commits the twelve kinds of sins.

All of us are those who commit such sins before God, those who were born with sin, those who commit sin all our lives, and sinners who must receive the remission of sins before God. In

order to save us, such as we are, from sin, Jesus was born on this earth clothed in human flesh through the body of Mary; when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of us human beings; and He went to the Cross and received all the judgment for all sins. And He said, “It is finished!” and died, rose again from death, and ascended into heaven. And He said that He would come again to look for those who believe, saying, “In this last age, will there be those who believe in Me? Will there be those who believe that I loved you and removed all your sins?”

The Holy Spirit becomes the Master of our hearts

Dear fellow believers, this world is rough now. Natural disasters are also severe. We do not know when this earth will end. What does the Bible say? It says that God sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and set sin in the flesh. This is His setting it. His passing it on through baptism is His setting it. There was sin like this in your body and mine, and we believe this. In order to make you and me without sin, God nailed His Son to the Cross and judged Him in place of our sins and had Him accomplish it all. He has made those who believe this fact, those who believe in the water and the blood, His children. This is the right thing God did in loving us. God truly loved you and me.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus removed my sins and your sins in that way. We can tell our children not to do bad things, but that does not work. A son commits sin because he has a heart of sin, because he is that kind of seed. Committing sin is because one has sin. When people come to know the fact that Jesus received baptism and bore all these sins, hung on the Cross and

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died, and rose again from death to save us, and come to know that all their sins were passed on to Jesus and that Jesus received the judgment in their place, and truly believe with their hearts, then because the sin that was in this heart was passed on through faith—because they acknowledge that it was passed on—this sin is washed away and the Holy Spirit comes into this heart. *"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9)*. It means that the Holy Spirit takes hold of us in our hearts and changes us. We cannot change ourselves. You and I cannot change by ourselves.

It means, "The Lord has removed our sins like this, so know this fact." And it means, "Believe it." It means that if we believe, because sin has disappeared from our hearts, the Holy Spirit will come into our hearts, become the Master of our hearts, lead us, and change us. This is the basic truth of Christianity. I hope you will know and believe this fact. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

While we live on this earth, let us live carrying out the duty of righteousness by faith

< Romans 8:1–18 >

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead

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because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."

What the law could not do, God did

In Romans chapter 7, the apostle Paul saw his own flesh, which followed the desires of the flesh, and he also saw himself, who, because the Holy Spirit was within him, wanted to follow the desires of the Holy Spirit. Between these two, he followed the Lord and also followed the desires of the flesh, yet even in the midst of this, he made the confession of faith that he had truly been saved through Jesus Christ. He is saying that he knew that the law of God and its commandments were perfect and right, but that because of the desires of the flesh he came to go against the law of God and failed to keep it, and so he became a sinner; yet Jesus Christ came and saved us in this way. So,

moving on to Romans chapter 8, he sums up what came before and speaks in conclusion.

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2). In us there are both: there is that which follows the desires of the flesh, and there is also that which follows the desires of the Holy Spirit in our hearts; yet if we believe in the Lord and follow the Lord, there can never be sin in us. Since there is no sin, there is no judgment either. God has set us free from the law of sin and death by the law of the Spirit of life. God knew that we human beings would be born weak on this earth, and He knew all along that we would commit sin and that we would be enticed by Satan the devil. Nevertheless, in order to let us human beings know sin, He gave the law first; and after giving the law and letting us know before God what kind of sinners we are, He promised that, in order to make us His own people, He would send His own Son to this earth, have Him bear our sins, and save us. Just as He promised, the Son of God came to this earth as a man in the New Testament age, borrowing the body of Mary; by receiving baptism from John He bore our sins; He was hung on the Cross and was judged; and He rose again from death and saved us completely.

Speaking of this, verse 3 says, *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. We must be clear about this part. Why must we be clear about it? Because it says that God did what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh. God gave the Ten Commandments and the commandments to the people of Israel and also to all mankind.

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Although He gave the law in this way, we cannot keep that law because our flesh is weak. There is a power of the flesh—the desire of the flesh, which seeks to fulfill its own desires—and because it goes against the law of God, we cannot keep it.

So God did it. It means that God the Father did the work of saving us: He sent His own Son to this earth, passed on all the sins of people to the Son through the baptism the Son received from John, gave His own Son up to the Cross to shed His blood and to die, and raised Him again from death. It means that the Father of our Jesus Christ accomplished the work of removing the sins of us human beings by sending His own Son and receiving compensation through the righteous work the Son did—the work of saving us and of being judged—and that therefore He was able to accept us.

The atonement in which the price of our sins was received through the Son in our place

Suppose we have to settle accounts with a certain person, and that person owes us a debt, but that person is so poor that we cannot possibly collect the debt. I only need to get the debt paid. So if someone gives me money on that person's behalf, or pays an equivalent price, or gives me goods, that settles it. It is the same between God and us. God is holy, and because we human beings committed sin by not believing the word of God, the price of sin is death. That price must be received, and if it were received from us, we would perish and have to go into the fire of hell along with the fallen angels. That was not the purpose for which God made us. Since God needs only to receive the price, God the Father received that price through His own Son. It means that He received in our place, through His own Son, the

price of our sins, the price of the punishment of hell for our sins. It means that He sent His own Son and, through the work the Son did, received the price of the punishment for our sins.

So Jesus came to this earth clothed in human flesh, born by borrowing the body of Mary; He received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of mankind, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and declared that all was finished. And after He died, He rose again. Through the work His Son did—through His Son's suffering, His being put to shame, and His receiving punishment—God received the price for our sins. This is called atonement. It is removing sin in someone else's place. It means that God did what we could not do because our flesh was weak; that is, on account of sin, He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin in the flesh. Jesus was originally without sin, but because He received baptism from John and had sin passed on to Him according to God's plan, God set sin and placed it on the body of Jesus Christ, had that body nailed to the Cross, and so received in our place, through His own Son, the price of the punishment for sin, that is, the punishment called death. And Jesus died and rose again. Because He is God, only His flesh died, and He rose again from death.

So the apostle Paul said in verse 4, *"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4)*. To walk according to the Spirit is to walk according to the Holy Spirit of God. In us there are both the desires of the flesh and the desires of the Holy Spirit, so that at times we follow the flesh; yet it means that He has caused the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us who walk according to the Spirit, that is, in us who follow the Lord by faith. It means that He received the whole price of all our sins through His own Son. And it means that He therefore saved us. Here too, this gospel of the water and

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the Spirit is certainly applied. Wherever we look in the Old and New Testaments, there is no place where the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not applied in solving the problem of sin. This is the very law of salvation, the law of the Spirit of life.

He overcomes the devil not by force but by righteousness and mercy

It says, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2)*. God knew that we human beings would commit sin. He knew that if He made man and placed him on this earth and told him in the Garden of Eden not to eat of the fruit of the knowledge of good and evil but to eat all the rest, man would commit sin. So God had a plan. What plan? It was this: "Through the baptism My Son will receive from John, I will transfer the sins of all the people of mankind to My Son and have Him judged; through My Son, I will receive the price of their sins in their place; and to those who believe in what My Son has done, that is, to those among the people made in the image of God who accept My will and accept what My Son has done, I will give the right to become children of God." In this way, He overcomes the fallen angel, Satan the devil, who challenged God and tried to rise higher than God.

God overcomes the devil by righteousness, by fairness, by justice, by love, and by mercy. He does not overcome by force. If He did it by force, it would simply be over, but He does not do it by force. That is why God is truly God. If He did it by force, there would be no one who could win, and even if He did it by power, there would be no one at all who could win. But God does not do it that way, and He does not forcibly threaten us

either, saying, "If you do not follow Me, I will kill you." Nor does He actually lay a hand on us in that way. He simply endures for a long time and says, "Very well, I will settle the price of your sin for you. I will pass on sin to My Son, judge My Son, and raise Him again from death, and through My Son I will receive the price of your sins and make you My children. This is My will and My love. Do you believe?" Then those who believe, those who seek the mercy of God, accept it. It says, *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12)*. It means that to those who accept in their hearts God's plan, God's love, and that salvation, He has given the right to become children of God.

The true freedom that the law of the Spirit of life gives

So the apostle Paul said, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. It means that there is no judgment. That there is no condemnation, that is, no pronouncing of sin, means that there is no one who can say, "You are a sinner." If we believe in Jesus, we have become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Yet people say, "Where is there anyone without sin? Am I not a sinner, and are you not a sinner too?" Even so, we say that we have no sin. That is because God looks at us and says that we have no sin. Because God the Father sent His own Son and removed all our sins, because He received the whole price of sin, because He received the full price, we have no sin.

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The law of the Spirit of life refers to God Himself giving us new life by the Holy Spirit, who is holy, making us children of God, and letting us live well with God forever. God has established a law; what law is it? It is the law of salvation. The law of salvation is the law of sacrifices in the Old Testament and the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the New Testament. By the faith that believes in the fact that God received the whole price of our sins through His own Son, you and I become righteous, however lacking we may be. That is why it says that it has made you free from the law of sin and death.

There is a movie called "The Shawshank Redemption." There is a prison from which no one who once goes in can ever come out again, and the main character escapes from that prison. He escapes through a large pipe buried in the ground, the pipe through which all the filth flows away. When he comes out, how filthy the water of the ditch must be! But when he escaped and came out, it happened to be raining. Coming outside, he stood up and escaped, crying out, "I am free!" That scene is the one that stays with me the most. That is true freedom. Through the work in which Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, came to this earth and was born, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again and saved us, God the Father received the price of your sins and mine, the price of the sins of all mankind. Since He received the price of sin, the price of punishment, it is over. From God's side, it is over. And to those who believe, He granted the new life of becoming children of God and gave them the blessing of obtaining eternal life. This is the blessing of the Spirit of life.

But a certain person set up something like a spraying device used in farming, with a thin hose and a valve, in a high, hidden place in the church building, and while preaching the word and singing praise, he cried out, "The dew of the Holy Spirit is

falling on this place!" and turned it on and sprayed dew over the people. Then everyone inside went wild with excitement. But the law of the Spirit of life does not refer to such dew. It means that, to give new life to us who had died because of sin, God the Father received the price of the sin of mankind in our place through His own Son. In those who believe, new life sprouts here as they receive the Holy Spirit. Because God is the God of creation, He makes us live again. He first makes our souls and hearts live, and He also makes our bodies live again. This is the law of the Spirit of life.

The law of sin and death means that because the flesh is weak, it commits sin, and because the wages of sin is death, those who are in the law of the flesh die. Those who do not look to the Lord but look to the law die, however hard they try to keep it. But those who look to God believe that God the Father received the whole price of our sins through His own Son, that Jesus received baptism from John and was hung on the Cross, and that through the work the Son did, God received the price of our sins. If we accept in our hearts the work by which God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit removed our sins, we have no sin. Then we obtain eternal life; but those who cannot do so look only at the law of sin and death, that is, the law, saying, "Today too I have sinned, I have sinned," and fear comes upon them, so that they are afraid of death every day. Those who are under the punishment of sin are afraid. Since God has set us free in this way, we must not know the word only as letters; rather, just as it says, "*The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)*, the word must come into us and become flesh. There must be the realization, "So that is how it is!"

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Weak flesh, and the sin set upon the body of the Son

That God did what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh means that we human beings cannot obtain salvation by ourselves before God. Because the flesh is weak, we cannot live according to the law of God. We know that the law of God is right. We know that we must live that way. But it does not work, does it? Does it work? Is there anyone for whom it works? For example, let us suppose we leave the world, go into the mountains, and live as ascetics. Even if we were taken and placed on a deserted island with no people at all, you and I would commit sin. You may say, "There are no people—a man has no woman and a woman has no man—so how can one commit sin?" but because we were born with sin from the start, we bring out what is inside and commit sin in our thoughts. We think that if our environment is good, we will not commit sin. But people are born with sin from birth. Because we inherited sin through our ancestors, sin comes out by itself. A person is a storehouse of sin that runs by itself. That is why it is said that we are lumps of sin.

That the law could not do it because it was weak through the flesh means that God gave the law from His side, but people cannot keep the law because their flesh is weak. This is a word spoken from God's side. He is saying, "The law of God is right, and it is right for you to live this way before Me, but can you live this way?" It does not work because the flesh is weak. If you set out a lot of food, people each try to eat a lot. The law says, "Honor your parents, love your neighbor as yourself, do not covet, do not steal, do not bear false witness"; do we do what it tells us not to do, or not? We do it on our own. When God gave

the law and looked at people, it did not work because their flesh was weak. The desire of the flesh is stronger.

God did what could not be done because of weakness; He did it *"by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. As He promised, He caused His own Son to be born in the likeness of human flesh through the body of Mary. And He condemned sin in the flesh. He set sin there through the baptism the Son received from John the Baptist. The sin of mankind was originally in mankind, but by Jesus receiving baptism from John the Baptist, that sin came to be in the body of Jesus. Now it says, *"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4)*.

When we come before God, we demand the love of God. We look to the mercy of God, and we look to the grace and blessing of God. No one comes before God and says, "I will do this, so, God, please do this for me." Those who say such things are cursed. All people seek mercy before God. To want things to go well unconditionally, saying, "God, have pity on me, bless me, let things go well for me, and let me go to the kingdom of heaven"—that is demanding the mercy and love of God. It says that He would cause that demand to be fulfilled. When we seek to do well, God the Father says, "I sent My Son, and through My Son I have received the whole price of your sins, the price of judgment, so believe in My Son's saving you, in the love of My Son's sacrifice." He says, "Since I have caused the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in those who believe, the judgment is over in your hearts, and the judgment is over in My heart too. And I will bless you and become your God, your Father, and your Savior; you will become My children and My workers."

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The crossroads one faces after being saved

So the apostle Paul said in verses 5 and 6, *"For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:5–6).* We have now received salvation, and it says that those who follow the flesh think about the things of the flesh, and those who follow the Spirit think about the things of the Spirit. Up to verse 4, it speaks fully of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, speaks fully of the mercy of God, speaks fully of salvation, and tells us that those who believe have been saved from sin. It says that there is never any condemnation, never any judgment, and there can never be sin. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this?

We have already received salvation, but from here it starts again. On the premise that we have received salvation, verses 5 and 6 say that those who follow the flesh think about the things of the flesh, and now "things," that is, work, comes in. When people are alive, they work. Talking like this is work, eating is work, and breathing is work too. What is there that is not work? Yet even after receiving the remission of sins and becoming children of God, there are those who follow the flesh. They are those who live only for their own flesh, those who live only for their own profit. Those who follow the flesh think about the things of the flesh, and those who follow the Spirit think about the things of the Spirit. We have received salvation, and now we come to stand at the crossroads of "Shall I live happily and well doing the work of God, or shall I give up the work of God and live only for my own profit?" After receiving salvation, everyone faces this. I too, after receiving the remission of sins,

at this crossroads, made up my mind that I would do nothing but the work of God, just as I do now, until I go before God.

So it is saying that we work. The things of the flesh are work, and the things of the Spirit are work too. What kind of thoughts do we think? We must think. Our flesh is like a machine that moves as the brain commands. The body moves and works according to what we think in our heads, and the question is whether this is doing the work of God, the work of the Spirit, or doing my own work. It is not only the body; we must think well. If I think well, saying, "Today too I will do the work of God, and when evening comes I will eat dinner and sleep," and "As long as I live before the Lord, I will do the work of God until I go," then it will turn out as I think. If one thinks only of the flesh, one will do only the work of the flesh until one goes.

The mind that seeks only its own profit becomes enmity against God

Then, because they try to live only for themselves, problems keep arising. If you chase money, you become poorer instead. Money does not come in. If I meet that person and try to gain only my own profit, things go wrong between that person and me. If you meet someone and think, "I will gain benefit from that person; I will make a profit," you will surely become enemies. If I think, "When I meet that person, what benefit can I give that person? Not just helping unconditionally, which is not real benefit, but what can I give that person as the benefit he truly needs?" and deal with him with such a heart and talk with him with such a heart, I can give that person benefit. Then that person knows it too. People's hearts are like mirrors that reflect each other. Just as your appearance shows when you look into a

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mirror, the heart shows. When someone comes up to me and talks, having appeared in order to take something from me, it comes through in his words. Then I do not trust him. But if that person intends to give me benefit, after meeting him and parting, I say, "That person seems like a decent person." Because he intends to give me benefit, I feel that he is a decent person. But if that person seems like someone who intends to harm me, no matter how much he smiles as he approaches, I do not trust him. I know immediately that this is not someone to deal with. So those who seek the things of the flesh, who try to gain only their own profit, become enemies with people and also become enemies with God. God has saved us through His own Son, but because after being saved we try to live only for our own flesh, only for our own happiness, we become enemies with God.

God calls such a person one who received one talent. He says, "I paid the whole price of your sins through My Son and saved you; do you treat Me like this? Then do you want only yourself to go to the kingdom of heaven? Are you saying it is all right if the people beside you go to hell?" God is the God of love. He says, "If you too have become My child, the Holy Spirit is in your heart, so love should be welling up in your heart—why are you like this?" After we are saved, we sometimes think about the things of the flesh, and sometimes think about the things of the Spirit, the work of God. Those who think about the work of God gain many new lives, receive many blessings, share blessings, and we too receive blessings. Those who do not are carnally minded, and that is death. It says that to be spiritually minded is life and peace; they obtain life, obtain it more abundantly, and live in order to benefit other people, so they never make enemies of people. So how peaceful that is! If you make an enemy, you must always sharpen your knife. If you set your mind on harming the other person, thinking, "When that

person appears, I will do this," you become sick and your body does not become healthy. That is why it says, *"To be carnally minded is death" (Romans 8:6)*. Death means dying. It says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. It says, *"And come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29)*. Those who do evil come forth to the resurrection of condemnation, and those who have been saved, those who follow the Spirit of God, those who believe in the love of God, come forth to the resurrection of everlasting life and live with God forever. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this? That is why we must think well.

Verse 7 says, *"Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:7–8)*. Those who are captured by the carnal mind cannot please God. They become enemies with God. God regards such a person as one who received one talent. The servant who had received one talent said to his master, *"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" (Matthew 25:24–25)*. He was saying that his master had given him nothing, yet asked for much and ordered him to do much. He was saying, "I have buried in the ground the talents, the sound arms and legs, and the aptitudes God has given me, so take them out and take them away." Then the master treated that servant the same as the hypocrites. So I tell you: to abandon the work of God is to invite a curse upon oneself. But those who do the work of God by faith have blessings come in by themselves, even if they do not want to receive blessings. It is because God has opened up the way in order to give blessings through that

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way. Those who do the work of God cannot help but receive, even if they do not want to receive.

Carry out the duty of the Spirit by faith

So we must not be in the flesh. Though we are lacking, we have said, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*. After we receive salvation, when the desires of the flesh rise up and we want to follow them and live for ourselves, we must clearly settle, within the faith that believes in Christ, "I died with Christ; my old man has died." And we must settle it, saying, "I have become a new creation. Living only for myself is over. The friends I used to know are over too. Now I can live only through the Lord." Only then does that heavy burden leave in an instant.

There is such a thing as the duty of the flesh. And there is spiritual duty. At the very least, if we have received salvation, we must live for the salvation of other people as befits those who have received salvation. Just as there are two kinds of thinking, the carnal mind and the spiritual mind, and two kinds of work, the work of the flesh and the work of God, there are also two kinds of duty, the duty of the flesh and the duty of the Spirit. In order to keep the duty of their own flesh, people have duties toward their own families and those close to them, thinking, "Shouldn't I do this for them? Shouldn't I at least do this much?" But if they try to carry out that duty, they cannot do the duty of the Spirit. But if one says, "I have died with Christ; my old man has died," then by faith in Christ one comes to carry out the duty of the Spirit. If you set your heart in order like this—"Though I cannot do the one duty, I will do the duty of the Spirit, the work I must do before God"—and set your heart by faith and follow

the Lord, you also become able to do the duty of the flesh. If you pray, "God, please bless them; since I cannot help them, God, please bless them in my place," you can do both. That is also why I have followed the Lord until now.

Dear fellow believers, this is not a theory. Those who try to do both well, the duty of the flesh and the duty of the Spirit, cannot do even one. If you take up the duty of the Spirit, saying, "Since God has loved me like this and has made me a worker, I will serve God for the salvation of those people," you will also fulfill the duty of the flesh. If I pray while serving the Lord, God also blesses the people who are related to me. If I become an enemy of God, the people related to me are cursed as well. I hope you know that. We must carry out this duty well. Ordinary people, after receiving salvation, think only of the duty of their own flesh and simply go back to the old days. They work at their jobs and make a living only for themselves; they do not serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, do not unite with the Church, and live only for themselves. Then they are completely separated from God, and their hearts grow distant too. They say they believe, but when you meet them, they do not seem to believe. That is because Satan the devil never leaves such people alone. Therefore, while we live on this earth, we must live carrying out the duty of righteousness by faith. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

There is never any condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus

< Romans 8:1–6 >

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace.”

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The problem and the solution to the problem

When we look at the word from Romans 7:24 to 8:6, two things appear in sharp contrast. One is a problem, and the other is the solution to that problem. The apostle Paul said, *"O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, with the mind I myself serve the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin" (Romans 7:24–25)*. Looking at his own flesh, what did the apostle Paul say? He said that his body was a body of death and that he was a wretched man. And then, immediately after that, he said that he thanked God through Jesus Christ, and that with the mind he himself served the law of God, but with the flesh the law of sin.

If you understand these words the apostle Paul spoke, you are truly a born-again person, and if you do not understand them, you are a person who has not yet been born again. Because the Bible was written by people who had the Holy Spirit, a person who has the Holy Spirit can tell, when he reads it, with what heart this writer is now saying these words. The apostle Paul was born again, but his flesh follows and serves the law of sin. It means that it follows the flesh and follows the things of the flesh. It means that, rather than the work of God that saves souls and rather than a life that pleases God, it follows a life that does not please God. So he said that with the flesh he served the law of sin, but with the mind he served the law of God. There was a reason for everything when he said that, although he was a wretched man, a truly weary man, and a man who could not help but go to hell, he nevertheless gave thanks to God the Father through Jesus Christ.

The reason is that the apostle Paul had been saved by the law of the Spirit that he speaks of in chapter 8. Jesus Christ came to

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this earth and bore all our sins on His own flesh. And He gave up that flesh, which had borne sin, to the Cross and caused the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled. The wages of sin is death, and Jesus bore our sins and died in our place. It means that He saved us as He received the judgment.

"There is therefore now no condemnation"

Looking at verse 1, it says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. Who would be the one who has no sin in Christ Jesus? The words "there is never any condemnation" mean that no sin is pronounced; that is, they mean that you have no sin. They mean that for those who are in Christ Jesus there is never any sin, whatever happens and whatever shortcomings they may have.

To condemn means to pronounce sin. Among us people, we condemn a person, saying with one voice, "That person did something bad." People say such things among themselves. But what is said here before God is that there can never be any sin in those who are in Christ Jesus. That there is never any condemnation means that there is never any sin.

Who would be the one who has no sin in Christ Jesus? It is the one who has entered into Jesus Christ by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Anyone who wants to enter into Jesus Christ can enter only by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must know whether we are inside Christ or outside. We must look at ourselves and ask, "I believe in Jesus now, but am I believing in a religious way? However I may be believing, have I become one who has entered into Christ Jesus, or am I one who is outside, or am I sitting astride, neither inside

Christ nor outside?" This word says that there is never any condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. In Ephesians, it says, *"In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of His grace" (Ephesians 1:7)*. It means that in Christ Jesus God predestined us, chose us, and saved us.

To become a person who never has condemnation, a person without sin, we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given. Then we come to enter into the Lord, and when that happens we become people who cannot possibly have sin, however much one might try to find it. For those who have entered into Jesus Christ, having no sin rather than having sin is the right answer, and it is also far easier. Saying that it is easy is speaking of how it feels to our emotions, but those who have entered into Jesus cannot possibly have sin. We set some problem before us and calculate it and weigh it up; and religious people, who believe in Jesus but have not known or believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and so have not yet come into Jesus Christ, if they try calculating all the sins they commit as they live, turn out to be people who have sin; they cannot become people who have none. The more they calculate, the more they are people who have sin, and their own consciences make them people who have sin. But when those who live believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit calculate whether they are people who have sin or people who have none, they come to know that they are people without sin, even though they have shortcomings as they live. So who is the person who never receives condemnation, the person who never has sin? It is the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given.

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The two laws

Verse 2 says, *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2)*. There are two laws. What are they? There is the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus, and there is also the law of sin and death, which came through the law. These two laws are in God, and it means that the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus set the apostle Paul free from the law of sin and death, which came through the law.

It is the same with us. If we have not entered into Jesus Christ by believing in that word of salvation the Lord has given, we are under the rule of the law of sin and death, and so because of that sin we come to go to hell and to receive destruction. But those who have entered into Jesus by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit obtain freedom by the law of the Spirit of life, that is, by the law of salvation through which the Lord came to this earth and remitted all our sins by the baptism He received and the blood of the Cross. Concerning the statement that those who are in Christ Jesus never receive condemnation, can have no sin, and do not receive judgment for sin, verse 2 answers that this has come about by the law of the Spirit of life in Jesus. What sets us free from the law of sin and death has come about through that salvation in which the Lord came to this earth, was born, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and saved us.

God made man, and knowing that man was a weak being and would commit sin, He established laws: He established the law and the law of salvation. There is the law of God's commands, and if one does not keep those commands, sin is established; but God also established another law, and that is the law of salvation. That is why it says that the law of the Spirit has set us free from the law of sin and death. This law of the Spirit means the law of salvation by which God gave His own Son, had Him conceived

by the Holy Spirit, had Him receive baptism from John at the age of thirty and bear all sin, had Him die on the Cross and rise again from death, and so saves us; it is that law of salvation, by which He removes all our sins and gives us new life, that is called the law of the Spirit. The law of sin and death refers to God's commands, that law, which God gave to us mankind. If one does not keep the law's "Do" and "Do not," sin is established; once sin is established, one becomes a sinner; and if one has sin, one must go into death, that is, into hell.

The only One who can save us from there is Jesus Christ. We must know and believe how that Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us. Among us who believe in Jesus, there are many who know the former well but are very weak in the latter. It means that there are many who do not know well how Jesus came to this earth and saved us. Only when we know how Jesus came to this earth and saved us does faith arise, and we must believe it. Only when we believe it do we truly enter into Christ and does the Holy Spirit come into our hearts as a gift; and only when that Holy Spirit comes can we understand when we read the word of God and understand when we hear a sermon, preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others, and have no sin even in our own consciences. We must be strong in this latter part. We must be strong in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Many among those who believe in Jesus are very weak in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. If you ask them to discuss the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they cannot. Many know well how to believe in Jesus, and many, while believing in Jesus, try somehow not to commit sin so that they will not come to death. But that is not something that can be done.

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He condemned sin in the flesh

Let us look at verse 3. *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. How meticulously the apostle Paul is speaking here! That the law could not do it in that it was weak through the flesh explains the reason why our flesh cannot keep the law; it means that we cannot keep the law because we are weak. It means that we know the law is good and right, but because our flesh is weak, because people are weak, we cannot keep it. So we cannot keep the law perfectly, and therefore we become sinners and come to belong under the law that the wages of sin is death.

But God did it. How did God do it? It says that, on account of sin, He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin in the flesh. That He condemned sin means that He caused Jesus to be born on this earth and set sin upon the body of Jesus, that is, passed it on to Him. Let us look at Matthew chapter 3. *"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 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 3:15–17)*. Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River to receive baptism from John, and John tried to prevent Him, but in the end Jesus commanded him, saying, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, and received baptism. When Jesus received baptism from John and came up from the

water, the gate of heaven opened, and God the Father said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*. It means, "My Son has received baptism from John." And it means, "For My Son to receive baptism from John is fitting to fulfill all righteousness; He has fulfilled all the righteousness of God; He has fulfilled the will of God." All the righteousness of God means what is right, and that was Jesus having all the sins of all the people of mankind passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. It means that it was fitting for Him to have all sins passed on to Him and so to fulfill the work by which God makes us sinless. Who is the One who did this work? It is Jesus. Who is the One who planned this work? It is God the Father. That is precisely the reason it says that He condemned sin in the flesh.

Can we keep the law? Try asking yourselves the question once. Can you yourselves keep the law perfectly? You may try hard all your life, but in any case, what the other party wants is perfection. He demands that we keep all of it perfectly, one hundred percent. Can we keep it? On our side we can offer our devotion, but we cannot keep it perfectly as God demands of us. God gave us the law in order to let us realize and know sin, and He also promised to give salvation to those who keep this law perfectly. But because our flesh is weak, we cannot keep the law. So, in order to deliver us human beings, who had fallen into sin, from sin, God sent His own Son to this earth and set sin in the flesh of His own Son. It means that He passed it on to Him. And so it means that He made us sinless.

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Believe in what God has done

As we believe in Jesus, we must believe in what God has done. Here it says, *"God did" (Romans 8:3)*. Then how did God save you and me from the sin of this world, from your sins? It means that He sent the Son of God to this earth, had that Son receive baptism from John, the representative of mankind, and bear all your sins and mine, and had that Son bear the sin of the world, go to the Cross, and die in our place, and so saved us. That is why we must believe in what God has done. By believing that, we can receive the remission of all sins and become perfectly righteous people who cannot possibly have sin, however much one might try to find it. Therefore we become children of God. What is it for us to believe in God? It is to believe in what God has done. It is to believe in Him whom God has sent. It says, *"This is the work of God, that you believe in Him whom He sent" (John 6:29)*. For us to believe in Him whom God has sent is also the work of God, and to believe in what God has done is also to believe in God. So we must not try to believe in our own devotion; we must set our hearts on how God removed your sins, by what method He removed them, and believe in that.

Today there are a great many people who get divorced. And among those who get divorced, many live with wounds in their hearts all their lives. There are various kinds of people, but the husband commits adultery, a fight breaks out, the husband leaves home and does not come back, and later they get divorced; and even after the divorce, the fact that she has become alone, that she lives alone, becomes such a great wound in her heart, and this becomes a wound and that becomes a wound, so that it is very hard, they say. I believe that if those people had known and believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit, not only would

they not live all their lives holding on to such wounds of the heart, but they would also become people who live happily and well, who accept and are tolerant of their husbands, who accept and are tolerant of their wives, and who can at the same time accept and be tolerant of themselves. Those people, all their lives, think of the wrongs their husbands did to them, think of their husbands committing adultery and going off to live with other women, and when they think of how they themselves trusted their husbands faithfully all their lives and treated them sincerely, yet their husbands betrayed them, this hurts and that hurts, it becomes a wound and it stings, and they live in that wound all their lives until they die, they say. If those people truly knew this gospel of the water and the Spirit, their families could be reconciled again, and they could also accept themselves. I tell you that if they truly knew and believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit—this truth that God did what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, and on account of sin sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, condemned sin in the flesh, and caused the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled—those people would not live in such wounds but would escape from them and live happily in the flesh and truly happily in their souls as well.

When we look before God, the Lord said, *"Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28)*, and God is saying that even for the sin in the heart, even for the sin not yet committed, "Because you have that sin, you are a sinner and will go to hell." Yet people say, "Because the other person did this, I absolutely cannot accept him," and they also cannot accept him. Why is that? Because they do not know themselves. They are such people themselves too; weak people gather with weak people to form a family and live in this rough world, yet they say that they

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are not like that but the other person is. They cannot accept that. Because they cannot accept it, what happens? They enter into condemnation. Their hearts burn with pent-up anger and they develop inner ailments, and every day they kill that person in their hearts. When God looks, that person did that much wrong in deed, but this person is now killing that person every day, so it is a greater sin before God.

God has made the word clear. It says that the law could not do it in that it was weak through the flesh; what the law demands is holiness, righteousness, and truthfulness. But what are people like? People who were born with sin are not holy, are not truthful, and are impure. So the law is right, but we have flesh that cannot live according to the law. Because you and I have such a nature and have this flesh, we cannot possibly live according to the law. So God sent His own Son as the Savior and set our sins upon that Savior. It means that He passed them on to Him. I am not talking theory. It says that the law of the Spirit has saved us from the law of sin and death, and that means that He passed on sin. The sin the husband committed because he was lacking was also passed on there, to Jesus Christ. And the sin of her own lacking heart and evil intentions, and the sin of evil actions, were also passed on there. When Jesus Christ received baptism from John, all the sin of mankind was passed on to Him. The word baptism originally has the meanings to be washed, to be buried, to be passed on, and to be transferred. Because Jesus received baptism, He dies on the Cross. Why is that? Because He received baptism from John, had all our sins passed on to Him and transferred to Him, bore them on His own body, and went to the Cross and died for us; because He had our sins passed on to Him, He washed away our sins. That is why we say that Jesus received baptism. That Jesus received baptism from John means that He

bore once and for all the sin of mankind, the sin of the whole world, the sins you commit all your life. That is baptism.

Baptism means covering over completely in a tremendous way. Do we not say, "They poured down a baptism of bombs," when it is not firing one bomb or two bombs but pouring them all out the way rice is poured into a jar? Baptism means covering over completely like that. It means passing all sin over to this side and covering Him completely with it. In order to save us from sin, Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, had all sin passed on to Him and was completely covered with it, had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him and fulfilled all righteousness, and went to the Cross, was nailed, and died, and so saves us. So there are countless people on this earth who live gnashing their teeth all their lives with wounded hearts, and also those who live gnashing their teeth because of economic hardship; but in reality, if they believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they can accept their husbands, and the husbands also can be saved, and they themselves can be saved.

Some people commit sin themselves. They committed sin because they were weak, and they cannot accept themselves. Because they cannot accept themselves, they kill themselves. They hate themselves and suffer, saying, "Why did I do that? Why did I do that then? Was I out of my mind?" Even if they beat themselves and cry and wail, it does not help. Such people sometimes end up taking their own lives, and some harm others. Even those who cannot accept themselves—although they were so lacking that they clearly lived wrongly and acted wrongly—if they know the reason for the baptism Jesus received, if they know that Jesus received baptism from John and had all their sins passed on to Him, and, having had even that sin passed on to Him, was nailed to the Cross and died in their place and saved them, will never harm themselves. Rather, they give thanks. That

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is why the apostle Paul also said, *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25).*

The blood of the Cross alone cannot end the sin in the conscience

Also, today's society is a society in which sin abounds. Believers and unbelievers alike, in what current do all the people on this earth go? They go in the current of sin, in the current of the instincts of the flesh. It is filled with sin. Yet, living in such a world, if one tries to obtain salvation by believing only in the blood of the Cross, can one obtain it? One cannot. Living in a world so filled with sin, and also having such lacking flesh, how can people be saved from sin? They can obtain salvation by believing in the baptism by which the Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John, fulfilled all the righteousness of God, and bore all the sin of mankind, and in the blood of the Cross; if they do not believe that, they cannot obtain salvation.

Dear fellow believers, we do not commit sin once or twice a year; as soon as we open our eyes, we commit sin. The word for sin in Greek is hamartia, and when an arrow is shot toward a target and at first goes straight but then fails to hit the target and goes off to the side, that is called sin. We should live according to the will of God, but it means that as soon as we open our eyes, we fail to live according to the will of God. The will of God is holiness, justice, and love; it is sacrifice; it is that salvation of saving other people; but as soon as we open our eyes, the flesh goes the opposite way. By the law of the flesh, such things are very fitting and just right. In fact, people want to do so, but because the law of society points its finger at them, they cannot, and the world flows that way, saying among themselves that it

is good. Living in such a world, and this being what we human beings are, how could we be saved without believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? God set sin upon Jesus and caused the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled. Since the wages of sin is death, Jesus bore our sins through baptism, was nailed to the Cross, and died, and saved us from sin and judgment; it is asking how anyone can be saved without believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

God came to us and gave us salvation through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What mankind needs most now is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What you need most is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What do these people living in the world now need most? What those who do not believe in Jesus need is the gospel of the water and the Spirit; those who believe in Jesus also need the gospel of the water and the Spirit; and those who merely believe in Jesus religiously also need the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You say people receive the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross? Religiously it has plausibility, but that is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not the truth. Did the Lord come to this earth and only die on the Cross? He received baptism from John, had all sins passed on to Him, had sin set upon His own body and bore it, and went to the Cross and died, and so saved us. Who on earth says that He saves only by the blood of the Cross? In a world where sin abounds like this, how can anyone say that he has no sin without believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and how can anyone say that he is living a life of faith? That is religion.

This world is abounding in sin far too much. Then is it only so now? In the old days too, sin abounded. In the old days people did not sin openly but only sinned in hiding; those who had money and power committed sin as they pleased, and those who

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had no money were beaten and driven out even for small faults. Sin abounded then, and sin abounds now. The gospel of the water and the Spirit was needed then, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit is needed now. But people have hidden this. They do not know this. Satan the devil has hidden this, and people have hidden this.

You may have seen five people standing in a line and playing a game of passing words along. With their ears blocked, they watch only the shape of the mouth and pass the message to the next person. If you say to the first person, "I love you," that person passes on "I love you" to the next person. Up to the third person it is passed on well, but before you know it, it changes, and by the time it reaches the last person it has become "I like you." Then is it right or wrong? It is wrong. The words "love" and "like" may be similar in meaning, but they are different words. When words are passed along like this, a change comes after going through only five people. In fact, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is like that too. The biblical gospel of the early Church is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But after passing through the age of the apostles and a little beyond, in the time of Emperor Constantine, when Emperor Constantine legalized Christianity and it later became the state religion of Rome, a change came to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The baptism of Jesus was taken out, only the blood of the Cross remained, and it became nothing but the Crusades. So it was completely ruined, and the Dark Ages came. It has come down like that from that time until now. Even now people say that they receive the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross.

Let us think for a moment about how anyone can receive the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross. Realistically, let us suppose that each of us has committed sin at

this hour. When we commit sin, we confess and admit it according to our conscience, and we try to resolve that problem. Then let us come before the Cross and try it. Let us suppose we said, "Lord, I have sinned today. Please remit my sin. Lord, thank You for being nailed to the Cross and dying for me." Let us suppose we said, "The Lord shed His precious blood and washed away all my sins. Lord, I believe." But two hours later, we sinned again. "Lord, I have sinned again. Please remit it." Let us suppose we received the remission of sins again. Three hours later, we sinned again. "Lord, I have sinned again. I am a little ashamed. Lord, please do not be that way, but remit it. I thank You for the precious blood of the Lord, who died for me." This time, five hours later, we sinned again. "Thank You for remitting it. Still, I am sorry. Please just take care of it this one time." Let us suppose we received the remission of sins again. Three hours, two hours, five hours—that makes ten hours, and usually we are active for more than twelve hours, aren't we? This time, two hours later, we sinned again, and this time it was not a small sin but a sin that even we ourselves consider great. We should ask Him to remit our sin, but our consciences are so burdened with shame, awkwardness, self-consciousness, and embarrassment that the words asking for remission do not come out well. This time we say, "You know, don't You? You know, don't You?" This time it seems that something is not going to work, so we set aside time and go to pray. We fast and pray. This time we do not feel much of anything, and it seems that the Lord must be very angry, so we begin fasting, go into some cave where snakes may come out, cry, "Lord!" and go hungry for three days with growling stomachs, thinking, "Since I have fasted like this and prayed like this, God will surely overlook it; the merciful God has saved me," and come down again. And after coming down, we sinned again after seven hours. "Lord, please remit it." This

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time after three hours, this time after two hours: "Lord, please remit it."

If you try to wash this away at the Cross, if you sin every day and try to wash away your sins by prayers of repentance, well, people have consciences, do they not? Having a conscience refers to the righteousness of the conscience. People have a sense of shame: it is not once or twice; they commit the same sin and go again and do it again, not for a day or two, but they do it for a week, for ten days, for a month, for a year, for five years, for ten years, and in the end they say, "Oh, I am too sorry to do it anymore." So in the end they compose a song and try to soothe their consciences, singing, "You know, You know, You know that I am like this. I know that the Lord was nailed to the Cross for me. You know that the Lord shed His blood for me. I believe. Even if there is sin in my heart, I know that I am saved, because the Lord died for me." They can soothe their consciences for a while, but once it goes beyond the limit, it means that they cannot accept themselves. In religion it is possible. In religion, I make a Jesus, I make doctrines, and I appeal to my conscience with them and pour in my devotion, so it is possible. All of this is religion. It is something made by man. All the religions of the world are made by man, and Christianity also becomes like that if man makes it. Saying, "You know, don't You? You really know, don't You?" they say that God knows, I know too, and everyone knows. Within the framework one has made oneself, the framework called doctrine, that is possible; but if we look at it according to the law of God, according to the word, it says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, and it says that unless you pay even the smallest amount, you will not come out of there. The law that the wages of sin is death clearly exists, and the law of the Spirit clearly exists. If there is even the smallest amount of sin, one goes to hell before God. But if one goes by

the framework one has made oneself, one can hold out for ten years and hold out for twenty years. In religion it is possible and is recognized. But in the truth it is not recognized, and it is not recognized by God.

Dear fellow believers, do you want to be recognized by God, or do you want to be recognized by yourselves? You will want to be recognized by God. Whose desire is that? It is God's desire, and it is the role of the conscience God has given us. We want to live being recognized conscientiously before God. But it means that if one believes in Christianity religiously, one can endure to some extent, but it does not work. It means that one's own conscience does not accept oneself. If we believe in Jesus Christ, we must believe according to the word. You must bring your conscience before the word of God and do the calculation before God. If we bring our own consciences before God, saying, "If I did well, I did well; if I did poorly, I did poorly," and go through the whole calculation, what will come out? The result is that sin comes out. A bundle of sin comes out. Then how can that sin be resolved? Since Jesus Christ removed all our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit He has given, we can be saved by believing that word, by believing that love of God, by believing that salvation by which the righteous God remitted all our sins.

I hope you believe the fact that while Jesus was in the flesh, God set our sins upon that flesh. It means that you and I commit sin like this all our lives, but when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, this sin was passed on to the head of Jesus and was all passed on to His back. It means that not only your sins, but even the sins of your ancestors and descendants, even the sins of your friends, even the sins of all people, were all passed on. To believe this is faith. Those people who, living now in a world where sin abounds like this, do not believe in the gospel

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of the water and the Spirit but say that they believe while holding on only to the blood of the Cross—is theirs genuine faith? It is not faith. That is the faith of the hypocritical Pharisees. It is pretending to believe. What their consciences cannot believe, they pretend to believe because the majority believes that way. Do you want to stand before God, do you want to be recognized by God, or do you want to be recognized before the majority of people? You will want to be recognized by God. If someone lives in a world where sin abounds like this, and has such lacking flesh like this, and yet does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that person is deceiving his own conscience; hair has grown on his conscience. His conscience has rotted. That hair has grown on the conscience means that it has rotted. It is like mold growing on fresh fruit two or three days after it falls on the ground. That hair has grown on the conscience means that it has rotted. It is nothing but a rotten conscience. In this world with so much sin, there are countless people within Christianity who say that they receive the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross.

Jesus said, *"Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. The water He spoke of here is the baptism Jesus Christ received. It 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)*. Baptism is not washing away the sins of the flesh but causing the conscience to seek out God. It is receiving the remission of sins in the conscience that is the remission of sins; merely trimming the outer shell of the flesh well is not the remission of sins. While we live in a world where sin abounds like this, God has saved you and me, and also the apostle Paul, through the gospel of the

water and the Spirit. *"I thank God—through Jesus Christ our Lord!" (Romans 7:25).* Do you understand, and do you sympathize in your heart with, how the apostle Paul came to make such a confession?

We who walk according to the Spirit

The apostle Paul also said that with the flesh he served the law of sin, and with the mind he served the law of God. With our minds we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit, serve the Lord, and go forward believing. But what about the flesh? It follows the desires of the flesh. Following the desires of the flesh is what becomes sin before God. The will of God is holiness, and failing to live in holiness is all sin. So Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, and had our sins passed on to Him, and verses 4 through 6 say, *"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace" (Romans 8:4–6).*

That He has caused the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit raises the question of whether we will follow the flesh, that is, follow human thoughts, the doctrines or religions people have made, or walk according to the Spirit; whether we will believe and follow what God has spoken to us, or follow the thoughts people have devised. God says that He would cause the righteous requirement of the law to be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the

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Spirit. When we stand before God and think about it, we are people who commit sin until we die. But when we think about it before God again, it means that Jesus Christ received baptism from John, bore all our sins, died on the Cross, and saved us. When we hold on to that word of God and think about it, when we believe it, it means that our Lord received baptism and bore all sin, died on the Cross, received the whole judgment for your sins and mine, fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law, and saved us. He washed away our sins and received the judgment for sin, and so saved you and me. So, concerning those who believe in Jesus rightly, it says that those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit; for to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Those who believe in Jesus rightly follow the Spirit. They follow the spiritual mind. It means that they believe according to the word of God, going when the word of God goes and stopping when the word of God stops; they believe in this way. It means that they do not believe in doctrines made by man. Yet how much those who believe in Jesus value doctrine! They insist, come what may, on the one doctrine they learned in their own denomination. But what does the Bible say? It says that if we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we obtain the remission of sins; if we obtain the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift; and if we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, we become children of God and obtain glorification. Once and for all, that is.

While living in a world with so much sin like this, even those who have received the remission of sins are people who serve the law of God with the mind but the law of sin with the flesh; so how could we not be saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit given through our Lord Jesus Christ? Even

those who have already been born again are lacking in the flesh, and those who believe religiously are people who have not even come into Jesus Christ yet. Our Lord bore all those sins once and for all by receiving baptism from John, and once and for all received the whole judgment on the Cross, and so removed them all. *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. Because He bore the sin of the world, because He took away the sin of the world, He saved us from sin. The Lord is the Savior of us, who are so lacking. He saved us from all sins, made us sinless, and caused us to become people without sin. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this?

We must know the word of the Bible. If I were to read the Bible verse by verse and talk about it, there would be far too much to say. Do sins disappear by offering prayers of repentance? Sins do not disappear by offering prayers of repentance; it is only soothing one's own conscience. Do you think that if you kill someone and then say you did wrong, that resolves it? The wages of sin is death. The price for that sin must surely be death, but instead of your dying, Jesus Christ bore your sins through the baptism He received from John, died in your place, and saved us. How can a person who has sin in his heart be a saint, how can he be righteous, and how can he be a Christian believer? That person is a believer in the Christian religion, not a Christian believer. He is not a person who follows Jesus. The Lord bore all our sins in this way and saved us. I give thanks before God, and I believe so. Dear fellow believers, do you believe this? I give thanks that God has saved us in this way. ✉

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Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

On the work of the Holy Spirit

< Romans 8:1–11 >

“There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.”

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In verses 1 and 2 of Romans chapter 8, we can hear the apostle Paul say, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:1–2).* Through the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have obtained the blessing of becoming children of God and have become those who can have fellowship with God.

In the Bible, the law of the Spirit of life is extremely important. The baptism the Lord received from John, the punishment of the Cross, and the resurrection from death are the word of truth that is absolutely necessary for us believers. When we look at Genesis chapter 1, we can see that even when God created all things in the universe, God the Father, the Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit—these three Persons—worked together.

When God created the heavens and the earth, the Holy Spirit could not dwell in people's hearts from the beginning. This was because the state of people's hearts was in chaos because of sin. After that, when the Holy Spirit saw that those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by our Lord Jesus Christ had received the remission of sins in their hearts, He was able to come into our hearts and dwell there. The Holy Spirit caused us to understand the word of truth of the water and the Spirit, and He did the work of sealing as the Lord's people those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth.

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With what kind of faith can we receive the Holy Spirit?

Romans 8:9 says, *"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9)*. The Lord was born on this earth clothed in human flesh in order to save us from the sin of the world. As a result of receiving baptism from John, Jesus was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and three days after He died, He rose again and saved us who believe in Jesus from all the sins of the world once and for all.

When we were saved by the faith that believes in Jesus, who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior, we were able to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. It is recorded in Acts 2:38–41 that by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit we were able to be saved from our sins, and that in return we were able to receive the Holy Spirit of God as a gift. This means that only by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit have we become those who can receive the remission of sins and also receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

In order to make us, who were sinners, children of God, God determined before the foundation of the world to save us in Jesus Christ. (Ephesians 1:4–5) God the Father, His Son Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit—these three Persons—are God to us. The triune God planned together before the foundation of the world to save sinners from the sin of the world.

To put it concretely, God the Father planned in His own Son Jesus Christ to save mankind from the sin of the world, and Jesus Christ was born on this earth to accomplish with His own body

what the Father had planned; He is God, who paid the price of the sin of sinners through the baptism He received from John at the age of thirty and the blood of the Cross, rose again from death, and thus became the Savior. And the Holy Spirit has stood as guarantor for the blessing of salvation completed by God the Father and the Son Jesus Christ. Our salvation has thus been accomplished through the work of the triune God. Therefore, we were able to be saved from the sin of the world through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and to receive the Holy Spirit of God as a gift, and the Holy Spirit became the One who can dwell in our hearts.

The Holy Spirit gave our hearts the wisdom to understand the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives salvation, and He not only held our hearts fast but also gave us the power to obey the Father's will. The Holy Spirit was the One who caused people to believe in Jesus Christ. He caused them to believe in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross. By believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we not only entered into Jesus Christ but were also able to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and as a result we came not to receive any of the judgment for sin, and to receive as gifts even the remission of sins and eternal life. This is exactly the salvation obtained by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, who comes upon those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The Holy Spirit has made us those who can abide in the Holy Spirit only through the faith that believes in the word of the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit. The law of the Spirit of life that God has given us has set us free from the law of sin and death and given us salvation. The law of new life that God has given us has completely saved us from the law of sin and death. The Holy Spirit, who was given to us as a gift through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, has guaranteed that we have been saved from the sin of the world and from the judgment of God.

The Holy Spirit has guaranteed the faith that receives the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and in His death on the Cross and His resurrection, and He has caused us to receive eternal life as a gift. And by dwelling in our hearts, the Holy Spirit has guaranteed that we have become children of God. So the Holy Spirit is with us in the hearts of us who have received the remission of sins. That is, the Holy Spirit is with us in our hearts. The word that says, *"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9),* clearly teaches that if the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is in our hearts and the Holy Spirit is with us as its evidence, we are people of God, and if the Holy Spirit is not there, we are not people of God.

The person whose heart the Holy Spirit is with, and the person whose heart He is not with!

Whether a person has the Holy Spirit or does not have Him is determined by whether or not that person has in his heart the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In 1 John 5:8, the word says, *"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the*

three agree in one –ASV" (1 John 5:8). The gospel of the water and the Spirit, which God has granted us as salvation, is that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to His body through the baptism He received from John, and that the judgment for sin was completely carried out through the blood He shed on the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. Before God, there is no sin in the heart of one who believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a person who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that causes us to obtain salvation from sin by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John when He came to this earth and in the blood of the Cross that He shed. In the Bible, these three words—"the water, the blood, and the Spirit"—testify of the fact that Jesus saved sinners through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Therefore, one who has been saved from his own sins becomes one who has received the Holy Spirit of God as a gift. In this world, one who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord and has been saved from his own sins comes to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift and to be led by the Holy Spirit.

A person who has believed in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord and has received the remission of sins receives the Holy Spirit as a gift and becomes a person who walks with God. Are there any of you who do not know whether or not the Holy Spirit is in your heart? If so, please examine once whether you have in your own heart the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We can know the fact that only when a person has the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit given by the Lord can the Holy Spirit dwell together in that person's heart.

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The Bible says that a person receives the remission of all his sins through the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is not a mere doctrine. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who actually dwells in the heart of one who has received the remission of sins that came through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross, that is, through the water and the blood. In a person who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift, whatever his outward appearance may be, the evidence that the Holy Spirit has come upon him as a gift appears according to whether he believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart. That evidence is that the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which removed sin, is present in his heart. In such a person, the presence of the Holy Spirit is clearly revealed.

The Holy Spirit vouches for the remission of sins to those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and causes them to know that Christ is their Savior, and so causes them to follow Him. One who has died with Jesus Christ and come to life with Jesus Christ is one who always walks with the Lord, because the Holy Spirit is with him in his heart. One who believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to have the faith that is united with Jesus Christ. Such faith is the work of salvation accomplished through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with the work of the Holy Spirit. A person who knows the fact that he has received the remission of sins in his heart and that the Holy Spirit dwells there is one who obtains eternal life. Therefore, he is one who has become a new creation. Such people are different from the people of the world both in their thoughts and in their words. In the people of the Holy Spirit, the work of being saved from their own sins is manifested, and, being led by the Holy Spirit,

they come to devote their strength to the spread of the gospel throughout their whole lives.

The salvation that takes place in those in whom the Holy Spirit works!

When does the Holy Spirit work in your hearts? The Holy Spirit speaks to people who have received the Holy Spirit, and through such a person He carries out the work of God. The Holy Spirit can do the work of God only through people who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In the Old Testament times, the Holy Spirit worked in the prophets of God. But we can see that in the New Testament times the Holy Spirit is working in the hearts of people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Holy Spirit not only came as a gift when we believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, but He also vouched for us through the word of God. The Holy Spirit dwells only within a person who has received the remission of sins. The work of the Holy Spirit is at work only through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth. Through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit reveals what kind of spreading of the gospel God is pleased with. The Holy Spirit leads the faith of those who have received the Holy Spirit as a gift and has made them precious workers of the Lord.

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A life led by the Holy Spirit

A person who has been born again of water and the Spirit can be led by the Holy Spirit. But at times the Holy Spirit also rebuked the sins of one who follows the desires of his own flesh.

The Holy Spirit works within the born-again through the Church of God. The Bible says that one who is led by the Church of God is one who is led by the Holy Spirit. We must live recognizing the fact that the leading of the Holy Spirit is absolutely necessary.

Some people say that they have received the remission of sins but have never experienced the leading of the Holy Spirit. But we who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit live with the purpose of spreading throughout the whole world the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has given us. The people of the Holy Spirit long to be led by the Holy Spirit. When the people of the Holy Spirit live being led by the Holy Spirit, joy rises up abundantly in their hearts. Saints who are led by the Holy Spirit always live with the purpose of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts.

People who have the Holy Spirit are led by the Holy Spirit, but people who do not have the Holy Spirit come to follow theological doctrines and the emotions that worldly religion gives. Some people did not want to abide in the Church of God because they were not led by the Holy Spirit. The righteous who have received the remission of sins must surely take part in the work of the Holy Spirit. Those who take part in the work of the Holy Spirit and are led in spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not understand the word of God well right away, but they gradually come to understand it. “Ah, I did not know well the work of the Holy Spirit dwelling in my heart, but He is speaking such words to me through the Church of God! So this

is how the word of God that the Church of God preaches to me has held me fast!" Those who come to be led by the Holy Spirit are those who live having received the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of a person who has received the remission of sins by believing that Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to receive the judgment for that sin in our place, and rose again from death, and He leads that person.

Even a person in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells has times when his heart is uncomfortable, and that is when he has gone against the leading of the Holy Spirit. When one who has become righteous obeys the leading of the Holy Spirit, his heart is joyful, and when he goes against it, his heart is uncomfortable. But a person in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells does not live sunk in perdition. Rather, he becomes strong through the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in Jesus Christ, relies even more on the word of the righteousness of God, and follows it by faith in his heart. Such people learn faith through the word of God. And they come to confess that they themselves are people who can do nothing. A person of the Holy Spirit works for the salvation of other people's souls and makes that work his own purpose.

God the Father is our Father, and Jesus Christ is our shepherd and also our Savior. The Holy Spirit is working together within our hearts. The Holy Spirit causes us, the born-again, to be led by the word of God, to be led by the Holy Spirit as His leading is revealed through the Church of God, and to respond sensitively and work. The Holy Spirit and the word of God cause us to grow in faith and make us workers of righteousness. They cause us, as people of faith, to receive the blessing of salvation

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before God. Jesus Christ's purpose is to cause us who believe to be used as instruments of righteousness.

Are you now being led by the Holy Spirit and by the Church? Does the Holy Spirit stir up in your hearts a heart for spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Because the Holy Spirit is present, we can gather like this and have fellowship sharing our hearts. Because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, He stirs up in us a heart that obeys and submits to the will of God whenever something is God's will.

The Holy Spirit, who testifies that we are children of God

To those in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells, He vouches that we are children of God. The Holy Spirit testifies, "You are one of God's people. You belong to Christ." However lacking we may be in human terms, and even if we have no outward background, He Himself testifies that we are children of God and those who live for Christ's purpose. Romans 8:16 says, *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16)*. Are you living having received the testimony of the Holy Spirit?

Satan the devil ceaselessly attacks us using the weaknesses of our flesh. But God does not attack us using our weakness. However lacking and weak we may be, God entrusts the work of God to us and works together with us. God teaches us the fact that we are children of God and that we have no sin, and He also comforts us. The work of the Holy Spirit is to be together with the Church of God and to place its purpose in the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not One who works outwardly, but One who works within the heart of a

person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And He Himself testifies that Jesus has become our Savior.

The Holy Spirit of God is with those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is to say, Jesus Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from that death, and has now made us born-again people. The Holy Spirit is the One who testifies countless times, "You are children of God." Even when we are seized by feelings of inferiority and shame as we live in this world, the One who causes our sins to be washed away through faith in the work of the baptism the Lord received from John is the Holy Spirit. The spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth is the work of the water and the Spirit. We are all princes and princesses in the kingdom of God.

Since the Holy Spirit Himself testifies that we are children of God, what more could we wish for? Even if people who do not have the Holy Spirit slander us, what do we have to do with them? Nor is there any need to be intimidated before them just because we have nothing in this world. God makes people into those who are used in the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, however lacking they may be in the flesh. God brings about the work of salvation on this earth through His servants.

In this respect, the people of the Holy Spirit can live with the pride of faith. There are countless Christians in this world, but not all of them are people led by the Holy Spirit. We know that they are people being led by their own thoughts, that is, by the flesh. That is why we who are led by the Holy Spirit are all the more people being used in the precious work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are all royal priests before

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God. We are the people of the kingdom of God and servants of God chosen in Christ.

Heirs of God who are joint heirs with Christ

Romans 8:17 says, *"And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17)*. The word "heir" means one who will inherit everything that God has. When, indeed, can we feel the fact that we have become heirs of God? The mysterious world of all things in the universe feels far too distant for us to know, so how great a glory it is that we inherit as our inheritance everything that God, who created all things in the universe, has! To be honest, it does not really feel real that we are those who will inherit God's kingdom of glory.

Being heirs of God means being joint heirs with Jesus Christ, and it means that just as Jesus Christ received suffering and glory, we also suffer together with Jesus Christ. Therefore, because all the glorious things and good things of God belong to God, we can inherit them. This means that we are living in the glory of receiving and enjoying what belongs to God. This is a tremendous blessing that cannot be fully expressed in words. How glorious the kingdom of God must be! Is it a perfect place? Or is it a lacking place? The kingdom of God is an eternal and perfect place.

The Millennial Kingdom and eternal hope

The place where God is is glorious, because it is a place that the power and hand of God protect and govern. The Lord said

that when He comes to this earth as the Lord of the second coming, He will take those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been born again to the Lord's kingdom. The Lord promised that when He comes again to this earth as the Lord of the second coming, we will be raptured and He will grant us the Millennial Kingdom. When some brothers and sisters are asked, "What would you like to do when you go to the Millennial Kingdom?" each of them speaks of various wishes. But all of that is merely what we think at our narrow level; in reality, that kingdom is a place so glorious that we cannot possibly imagine it.

God is God the Creator. The kingdom of God is a place so glorious that even we who are born again cannot imagine it. We merely look by faith to the Lord's kingdom and receive comfort when things are hard while we live on this earth. We cannot even fully imagine how good a place the Lord's kingdom will be. The fact is that the Millennial Kingdom is waiting for those who have been raptured in spiritual bodies. We know and believe that for us who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord's kingdom is the eternal hope we must hold on this earth.

When, through the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we believe in our hearts and become children of God, we accept the second coming of Jesus Christ into our hearts by faith. As we abide in the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we come to run the race of faith by faith through the leading and work of the Holy Spirit. In the heart of one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit dwells within us, leads us, comforts us, and is fulfilling the Lord's will for the spread of the gospel. The Holy Spirit causes our faith to grow ceaselessly, causes us to receive blessings, causes us to do righteous works, causes us to know

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that we are children of God, and also causes us to know that we are heirs of God. He also causes us to live for the spread of the gospel with the faith of those who have become children of God on this earth, and causes us to suffer by faith as well. The reason we can hope for the Lord's kingdom even in the midst of suffering is that Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin in our place, and rose again from death to make us children of God.

If the Holy Spirit is not in our hearts, we cannot endure suffering for Christ in the last days. Because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, we can accept by faith even the sufferings we undergo and achieve spiritual growth. Because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, even if we seem like those who have no strength before we are persecuted by the disciples of the Antichrist, when the time comes for us to be persecuted by them, He gives us new strength. And so the Holy Spirit is giving us spiritual faith and wisdom. He also comforts us and gives us new strength.

We were able to be born again from our sins through the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even after we have been born again, we continue to be led by the Holy Spirit, preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and live through the work of the Holy Spirit until we enter the Lord's kingdom. Without the work of the Holy Spirit, we cannot live a life of faith. The Holy Spirit, our Comforter, does not leave us but leads us to be together with the Church of God. Please believe the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells within our hearts. Even though we are lacking and weak, because the Holy Spirit dwells within our hearts and works for us, we can spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with the Lord. The

fact is also that the Holy Spirit presides within the Church of God and is leading us. Please believe this in your hearts.

This means that until we enter His kingdom in the future, we can keep our faith through the work of the Holy Spirit. Please believe this fact in your hearts. The fact is that in the future we are those who will enjoy the glory of God as heirs of God. This means that the Holy Spirit Himself speaks to us the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and is leading the lives of those who have been saved.

If the word of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit disappears from within the Church of God, that church is finished. This present age is the age of the work of the Holy Spirit. It is also the age of the grace of salvation that those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive. The Holy Spirit seals the faith of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, saying, "That is right; you are My child," and even after that He continues to dwell within us, causing us to do the work of spreading the gospel of righteousness, and giving us power to testify of the gospel. Also, the Lord causes us to know the glory we will receive in the future, and causes us to undergo the sufferings we receive for Christ. Therefore, this age is the age of salvation and at the same time the age of the work of the Holy Spirit.

The mission we must fulfill in the age of the Holy Spirit

We are now spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world through the work of the Holy Spirit. The fact is that when people throughout the world see the written word of God that we are delivering to them, the Holy Spirit

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works together with them, gives them in their hearts the understanding of what the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is, and gives them the faith to believe. When we also heard and believed the word of God, the Holy Spirit put His seal within us and gave us understanding, so that we came to know that we had been saved. Therefore, before the age of the Holy Spirit is completely over, before the work of the Holy Spirit is finished, we must faithfully carry out the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When the age of the Holy Spirit ends, this world enters the age of destruction. When our Lord comes again as the Lord of the second coming, we who have the Holy Spirit in our hearts will be raptured. And we will take part in the first resurrection. We will live again for a thousand years with incorruptible bodies. This is exactly the result of the work of the Holy Spirit. The second resurrection is the raising again of those who were not born again and opposed the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth, so that they receive the judgment of God's wrath. But because Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment of wrath in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death, we who believe this will not come into that judgment.

All people pursue eternal life. Everyone will be resurrected, but we must know the fact that those who take part in the second resurrection will enter the fire that is never quenched, which is brought upon sinners. They also want eternal life, but there is fear in their hearts. But in the hearts of people who have the Holy Spirit, there is no fear. No matter how gloomy the world may be, there is still no fear in our hearts. It seems as if the sound of the Lord coming as the Lord of the second coming is drawing near.

It is as if the time for finishing the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit is being revealed.

The world is running toward its end, and when the Lord comes again as the Lord of the second coming, people who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts will be raptured. The rapture means being caught up. The Lord will come to this earth and rapture only people who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. People who do not have the Holy Spirit will remain on this earth just as they are. At that time, whether they have believed in Jesus all their lives, whether they are elders, whether they are pastors, or whether they have accumulated merit, none of it will matter at all. Only people who have the Holy Spirit will be caught up at that time. People who do not have the Holy Spirit will remain as they are and have to face the second resurrection.

The blessing of those who have taken part in the work of the Holy Spirit

We who have taken part in the work of the Holy Spirit are people in a tremendously blessed position. This means that we have come to a precious position that cannot be bought with money. I sometimes think about this. Some may know what kind of people we have become and admire it and give thanks, but I wonder whether there might be some brothers and sisters who, not knowing this glory, get irritated, complain before God, and try to leave the church just because they are having a little difficulty right now. Whether we are outstanding or worthless, we must give thanks by faith because of the fact that we have taken part by faith in the work of the Holy Spirit and have become the protagonists of the work of the Holy Spirit.

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God has given the Holy Spirit into our hearts, and the things the Holy Spirit did through the apostles He is now continuing through us. Truly, thanks be to God. What an amazing work this is! The whole world is now growing ever gloomier amid an uneasy and uncertain future, and in this last age, in this chaotic age, the fact that we are in this work of taking part in the work of the Holy Spirit, spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given, and serving the gospel is truly a glorious and thankful thing. Please believe that we truly are blessed people. It is such a thankful and good thing.

In just a little while, the Lord will come again. The Holy Spirit has come into our hearts and is still working even now. When the Lord comes again, we will be caught up before the Lord. And until the Lord comes again, the Holy Spirit continues to lead us. He leads us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And when everything is finished before God, we will go to the Lord's kingdom. The Lord will first lift us up.

The Book of Revelation says that on the last day the Lord will lay waste to this world. And He has promised to make all things new for the righteous and cause them to live for a thousand years. Now this age of salvation is coming to a close. There are times when things are hard and wearisome for us, but let us endure a little longer and faithfully carry out the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And then let us go to the Millennial Kingdom at that time and live gloriously and well. I believe that the Lord will reward us abundantly.

The work of the Holy Spirit is accomplished within those who have received the Holy Spirit. If you have not yet taken part in the work of the Holy Spirit, please first meet that Holy Spirit who works within those who have received the Holy Spirit. In order to meet that Holy Spirit, you must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is because if you understand and

believe the mystery of the baptism Jesus received from John and of the Cross, you can receive the indwelling of the Holy Spirit in your heart as a gift. ✉

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Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

There is no condemnation at all for those who are in Christ

< Romans 8:1–39 >

"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death. For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit. For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God. But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead

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dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the

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Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

God's way of fulfilling the righteous requirement of the law

Romans chapter 8 is the summit of Paul's faith and a chapter that proclaims that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has been completed. The sentence "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)* is not a mere consolation but a declaration that closes a court verdict. This result was possible because all our sins were transferred to the body of Jesus Christ and He received the judgment for sin in our place. God Himself accomplished what the law could not do because of the weakness of the flesh; that is, He sent His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and condemned sin in that flesh. Here, the word that He condemned sin means that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to His own body through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin by being nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and has now given salvation to those who believe. Jesus received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, and shed His blood, and thus He fulfilled the righteous requirement of the law in righteousness.

In Romans 8:1, the apostle Paul says, "*There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*. This word meant that if we want to have our sins washed away, we can receive the remission of sins through the faith that believes in Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross for us, and rose again from death. And so we become those who have received

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the remission of sins through the faith that believes in the truth of the eternal remission of sins that is in the Lord, that is, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We become those who believe in the righteousness of Jesus with our hearts and receive and enjoy the gift of the remission of sins. That is, it is a word saying that for those who believe as their Savior in the Lord, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross for us, and rose again from death, there is no longer anything for which they will be judged for that sin.

This word has its basis in the word of prophecy recorded in Jeremiah 31:31–34. *"Behold, the days are coming, says the LORD, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah—not according to the covenant that I made with their fathers in the day that I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt, My covenant which they broke, though I was a husband to them, says the LORD. But this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, says the LORD: I will put My law in their minds, and write it on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people. No more shall every man teach his neighbor, and every man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' for they all shall know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, says the LORD. For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:31–34).*

In order to fulfill the word He had covenanted anew through the word of God, not through the old law, God accomplished our salvation through Jesus' receiving baptism from John, having the sin of the world transferred to Him, being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood, and rising again from death, and He made those who believe this the people of God. Therefore, this means that He became the God of salvation to those who have

become the people of God by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that we were able to become His people. Therefore, the word that makes us realize that we are sinful beings before God is the law, and the One who makes us realize our sins through that law, and who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to His own body, rose again from death, and became our Savior, is Jesus Christ. That is, Jesus Christ, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, had the sin of the world transferred to His own body, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, shed His blood and died, rose again from death, and has now given eternal salvation as a gift to those who believe. Therefore, we must come to realize and know our own sins through the word of the law, and come before the Lord with the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Savior Jesus has bestowed on us. We have become those who receive the remission of our sins by faith and can live as the people of God.

How was our salvation completed?

In Romans 8:3, the apostle Paul says, *"For what the law could not do in that it was weak through the flesh, God did by sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, on account of sin: He condemned sin in the flesh" (Romans 8:3)*. This word tells us that when those who were born as descendants of Adam had become people who could never completely keep the word of the law that God Himself had given, because their nature was already corrupted by sin and even their flesh was stained with sin, God sent His Son to us and bestowed salvation from sin. Therefore, God the Father sent His own Son Jesus Christ into this world and caused Him to receive the baptism John gave,

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have the sin of the world transferred to Him, be nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and receive the punishment of our sins in our place. And He raised Jesus Christ from death and made Him our Savior. Jesus Christ received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again from death, and so became the One who can give eternal salvation to those who believe.

That is, through the baptism John gave, God caused Jesus to bear our sins, and Jesus Himself received the judgment for those sins on the Cross for us and rose again from death, and so God caused us who believe to receive eternal salvation as a gift. God the Father caused His own Son Jesus Christ to receive baptism from John so that the sin of the whole world would be transferred to His body, and He permitted Him to receive the judgment for that sin Himself on the Cross. The Bible clearly testifies that God's causing John to give baptism to Jesus, and causing Jesus to save us by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood while bearing the sin of the world Himself, came to pass exactly according to the plan of salvation that God had predestined entirely from eternity.

God the Father caused Jesus Himself to receive the baptism John gave and to have the sin of the world transferred to His body, and permitted Him to become the holy sacrificial offering in place of us sinners. It is exactly this holy work of salvation of Jesus Christ that is the truth that has made us sinless. This way of salvation, in which Jesus bore the sin of this world Himself by receiving baptism from John, was exactly the method of the laying on of hands that our God Himself had long before established in Leviticus 1:4 of the Old Testament. That is, in the New Testament times as well, He caused the same principle of the laying on of hands to be applied through the work in which Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to His own body

through the baptism He received from John and Himself received the judgment for that sin on the Cross for us.

What kind of life of faith does Romans 8:4 teach us?

Let us listen together to the word of Romans 8:4. *"That the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:4).* A right life of faith comes from living while holding fast to the word of God. The Bible teaches us that living a true life of faith before God is living according to the word of God and living a life that pleases the Lord by faith within the grace of the remission of sins that the Lord has bestowed. We must firmly believe that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to His own body through the baptism John gave, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so has now saved us from all sins. The salvation that God Himself planned before the foundation of the world was something He caused to be accomplished exactly according to the plan of salvation He had established, that is, according to the principle of the sacrifice in which the high priest himself offered the sacrificial offering and so washed away all the sins of the people.

In the New Testament times, He has made it possible for us to receive salvation from the sin of the world once and for all through the faith that believes in the fact that Jesus Himself bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death. This means that Jesus Christ, who Himself had the sin of this world passed on to Him through the baptism John gave, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross in our place and gave us life

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by rising again from death, and so we were able to obtain eternal salvation through the faith that believes in this Lord as the Savior. That is, He is the One who has enabled us to receive the remission of sins in our hearts by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and to reach eternal salvation.

We have become those who can be saved from all our own sins by believing in the fact that the sin of the world was passed on to Jesus once and for all through the baptism John gave, and that He Himself shed His blood and died on the Cross for us. Therefore, we should give thanks to the Lord, who has enabled us to live in this world by that faith, holding deep in our hearts the baptism John gave to Jesus, His having Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, and the word of the Cross. The Bible testifies that even a person of fiery temperament like the apostle Peter was at last able to live a true life of faith because he clearly believed the fact that the sin of the world was passed on to Jesus through the baptism John gave. Peter was one who clearly believed the fact that, because Jesus had received baptism from John, He was at last able to pay the price of the agony and death of the Cross. Peter, too, was a disciple of Jesus who clearly believed that Jesus, who received baptism from John, Himself bore all the sins of the world for us (1 Peter 3:21).

What do the baptism and the Cross of Jesus, which delivered Peter from the sin of the world, teach us?

Jesus once told His disciples in advance about the things that were going to happen to Him. The Lord told them in advance that He would suffer many things from the chief priests and the scribes, would stand in the court of Governor Pilate and be interrogated, and would at last be hung on the Cross and die.

Hearing those words about the things that would happen to Jesus, Peter among the disciples protested vehemently in distress. Peter was a man who cried out that he could not just stand by and watch such things happen to Jesus, whom he loved: *"Be it far from thee, Lord: this shall never be unto thee –ASV" (Matthew 16:22)*. Then Jesus sternly rebuked Peter and said: *"Get behind Me, Satan! You are an offense to Me, for you are not mindful of the things of God, but the things of men" (Matthew 16:23)*.

In order to save all who live on this earth from the sin of the world, Jesus earnestly desired to receive the baptism John gave and so Himself have the sin of the world transferred to Him, to be nailed to the Cross, and to rise again from death, and so to save from sin all who believe in Him.

Clearly knowing that our life of faith today can also be like Peter's, we must think first of God's will rather than our own thoughts and live according to the Lord's will. In each of the places where we live, we must receive the remission of sins in our hearts by believing in the fact that John passed on the sin of the world to Jesus through baptism, and we must live by faith in order to spread the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we should humbly lay down our own thoughts, which the Lord does not want, and live only according to the Lord's will.

We must clearly know the fact that the Lord is pleased with those who believe that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, Himself received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so became our eternal Savior. We must also engrave in our hearts the fact that the Lord is pleased above all with the work of spreading this gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we have received the remission of sins in our hearts through the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from

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John and the blood of the Cross, the Lord granted us the Holy Spirit in our hearts as a gift at that very moment. (Acts 2:38–41) Jesus is the One who gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and who Himself testifies that we are the people of God. If in our hearts we clearly believe the work of salvation in which Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John and Himself received the judgment for that sin on the Cross for us, then we are those who have already become people who belong to Jesus Christ.

Let us give thanks deep in our hearts for the fact that, by believing in the fact that Jesus Himself accomplished righteous salvation through the baptism He received from John and the holy work of the Cross, the Holy Spirit has come to be able to dwell within our hearts.

Today many people are living with the faith that Jesus remitted the sin of mankind only on the Cross.

The word of God written in the Bible clearly says that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and at last rose again from death, and so became the eternal Savior of those who believe in Him.

Matthew 3:13–17 in the Bible is the holy record that shows that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to His own body by receiving baptism from John. Therefore, we must have the faith that firmly believes in the fact that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world transferred to His body by receiving baptism from John, went to the Cross and received the judgment for that sin, and rose again from death, and so became our eternal Savior.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus became the One who bore the sin of this world on His own body once and for all. And

by being nailed to the Cross and dying and rising again from death, He has become the eternal Savior of you and me, who now believe in Him. For the sin of mankind, Jesus received baptism from John, Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. Also, Jesus is the One who will soon come again to this earth as the Lord of the second coming and take those who have become righteous to the Lord's kingdom. We clearly believe that, in order to save us from the sin of the world, Jesus Himself received baptism from John the Baptist, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so became our eternal Savior.

Now we have become those who live waiting for the Lord's second coming. We give thanks by faith to such a Lord. We have become those who will live doing the Lord's will while we live on this earth. Even now the Lord Himself is helping and blessing our work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord is One who is alive even now. The very fact that we have lived until now without dying is all the grace of the Lord. How could we ever measure in words the boundless love of the Lord? Even if we quietly look back on the footsteps we have walked until now believing in the word of the water and the Spirit, we can clearly know the fact that the Lord has been with us and has Himself walked with us. Lord, thank You. The Lord, as the Son of God who lives forever, has now become our eternal Savior. The Lord has become the One who will receive praise from all of us forever. Hallelujah! We praise from deep in our hearts the righteousness of our Lord, His love, and His mercy.

Since the Lord Himself bore for us all the sins we commit every day through the work of the baptism He received from John, received all the judgment for those sins on the Cross for

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us, and rose again from death, and so became our eternal Savior, how could we not believe in this gospel of salvation that the Lord Himself has accomplished, that is, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? We discover that the Lord's great love is clearly revealed in that holy work in which He had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, which continued on to His death on the Cross and His resurrection, and we can become those who offer up praise and thanksgiving by faith in this grace of salvation until the day we meet the Lord. We praise forever and offer worship of thanksgiving to the Lord, who has saved us through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Hallelujah! ✉

Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

What is being taught to us about the realm of the flesh and the realm of the Holy Spirit?

< Romans 8:5–8 >

“For those who live according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who live according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit. For to be carnally minded is death, but to be spiritually minded is life and peace. Because the carnal mind is enmity against God; for it is not subject to the law of God, nor indeed can be. So then, those who are in the flesh cannot please God.”

Before dealing with man’s attitude of faith, Paul clearly contrasts and shows where exactly the realm of dominion is to which a person belongs. That is, those who follow the flesh are already remaining in the realm of death, but those who follow the Holy Spirit belong to the realm of life and peace. To be in the Holy Spirit does not simply mean maintaining a high ethical level or a stable emotional state. The word says that it means having become one who clearly believes that Jesus Christ Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the

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Cross, and became our eternal Savior by rising again from death. It is saying that one who has such faith is one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one who has already had his own sins completely resolved, and one who clearly belongs within the realm of those who are saved. With the human flesh, one can never submit to the law of God nor please Him; but instead of educating and correcting our flesh, God, in order to save us from the sin of that flesh, Himself had His own Son Jesus Christ have the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, had Him be nailed to the Cross and shed His blood to receive the judgment for sin, and raised Him from death, and so has caused us to enter into the realm of the One who has given new life to us who believe.

The indwelling of the Holy Spirit, the eternal Guarantor who testifies of the completion of salvation

"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:9–11).

The word of the Scriptures declares, *"You are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you" (Romans 8:9)*. Paul clearly speaks of the indwelling of the Holy Spirit not as a condition of salvation but as the result of a salvation already accomplished. Since the Holy Spirit can never

dwell in the heart of one in whom sin still remains, the very fact that the Holy Spirit dwells in us clearly testifies that the Lord Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and removed all the sins of those who believe in Him by rising again from death. Those who believe in such a Jesus, the Savior of mankind, as their own Savior have been saved from all sins and have become children of God.

The word says that the Holy Spirit is not One who repeatedly condemns or accuses us; rather, to those who believe that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and brought the judgment for sin to an end on the Cross, He is the One who testifies that they have been saved. Because God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead, comes and dwells in us by the Holy Spirit, we are no longer those who are bound to a body that must die because of our own sins, but have at last become the people of God who have obtained the new life of the resurrection.

Know that you are one who has cast off the yoke of bondage and become a child of God through the Holy Spirit

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if

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children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:12–17).

This word means that those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has made for us have now become those who can no longer be shut up under the condemnation of the law and under the judgment of sin. It means that those who have been saved from all their sins are those who have become children of God. Therefore, our coming to call God "Abba, Father" is not simply an expression of psychological intimacy; it is saying that we have become sons of God the Father by faith.

Such faith is a holy confession that shows that one's own status has been completely changed into that of a legal heir. This change of status is not a salvation obtained through any effort or achievement of ours. It is that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body by receiving baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for sin, and by rising again from death bestowed on those who believe the right to become children of God.

The one who is born again refers to one who has the faith that he has been saved from all his sins through the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord Himself has accomplished. The word says that from now on, those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit have now become those who, as joint heirs with Jesus Christ and as those who have obtained the qualification to enjoy the glory that will be revealed, can live walking together with Jesus Christ. We have become those who have the faith to walk together along the path of the glory of God.

What is being taught to us about the realm of the flesh
and the realm of the Holy Spirit?

The future glory that is more certain than the present sufferings

"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:18–25).

Paul proclaims that the sufferings of the present are by no means worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. He clearly says that this life of glory is not a vague promise for the future but a hope in a future that has already been determined. The reason that the whole creation groans together until now and earnestly waits for the sons of God to be revealed is not that our salvation is still incomplete. It is because our salvation has already been completed by the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and is therefore moving toward the redemption of our body. Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from

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death, and so He has already accomplished our salvation. Even though we have not yet put on the complete change of the body that is visible to the eye, this holy waiting is not an uncertain adventure. Rather, it is the hope of faith that we can have because the promise of God has already been fulfilled in our lives through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The groaning of the Holy Spirit is the holy work of intercession that applies the completed salvation to us

"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:26–27).

In helping us, the Holy Spirit who is in our hearts is not One who is like a mere tool that takes the place of our inadequate prayers. Rather, He is the One who does the holy work of intercession, concretely applying to our lives the salvation already completed according to the will of God. There are times when we, being weak, wander about without knowing what we should pray for as we ought; but the Holy Spirit, who Himself dwells in us, has become the One who is in us who have been born again by believing in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and who Himself makes intercession for us. That is, the Holy Spirit is the One who does the powerful work of a guarantor, applying the perfect righteousness of God in our lives so that our salvation may never be canceled or fail. That righteousness is the righteousness that Jesus accomplished by

having the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and receiving the judgment for that sin in our place, and rising again from death.

The chain of the salvation of God that cannot be broken

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:28–30).

The text says that the salvation from our sins started from His work of the water and the Spirit and was completed once and for all. That is, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had all the sins of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, paid the full price of that sin by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and rose again from death. It clearly shows that the work of saving us from sin was accomplished without interruption within the absolute sovereignty of God, and it has shown that this work was completed by the faith that believes in the righteousness of God within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The fact is that God the Father's predestining us in Jesus Christ, His calling us, His saving us from sin, and His glorifying us are all recorded in the past tense. This shows that all these things are works that God planned and completed on His part.

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This holy confession of faith, *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28)*, means that human devotion can never produce any result. It was a blessing proclaimed as the promise of God that God Himself, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, saves those who believe from all sins once and for all and guides them so that they can live a glorious life.

No one can bring a charge against God's elect

"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:31–34).

Using majestic legal language, Paul firmly declares by asking who could possibly bring a charge against God's elect and condemn them. Because God, who did not spare His own Son but Himself delivered Him up for us as the sacrificial offering, is Himself for us, no enemy whatsoever could make us distant from Jesus Christ. That was the point. The reason is that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death, and so has now saved those who believe from all sins and judgment. It is because Jesus Christ, our Savior, is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. That is, because the very grounds of

sin for any accusation have already been perfectly removed in history through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is now nothing in this world that can cut us off in Jesus Christ.

The love of God from which nothing can separate us

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:35–39).

This final declaration is not simply a moving phrase but the conclusion of the historical salvation proven by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that neither tribulation nor famine, nor even death, can separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. This is because the love with which Jesus Christ saved us from the sin of the world is that He, the Son of God, bore the sin of the world on His body through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death to save us. In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loves us, and neither things present nor things to come, nor any power whatsoever, can turn back our salvation, which has already been confirmed. This is the love of God toward us.

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Romans chapter 8 is the declaration of the completion of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The word of Romans chapter 8 records the fact that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred onto His body by receiving baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for our sins, and rose again from death and saved us who believe from sin and the curse once and for all. Therefore, it proclaims that our status has been changed from that of sinners to that of sons of God, that the future glory has been determined, and that the great plan of salvation of God has been completed. The only basis on which all of this was possible stems from the goodness of God and His great power.

This is because the work of salvation, in which Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John and shed His blood on the Cross and received its judgment, and which was confirmed by His resurrection from death, has been completed. Therefore, the life of the righteous is not a life of anxiety over losing salvation; rather, because their salvation has already been built upon the rock by the faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they can live calling God Abba, Father, and enjoying true salvation and glory. They have also become those who can live praising God by faith. Hallelujah! ✉

Sermon 11 by Paul C. Jong

Let us give glory to the Lord, who has given us the Holy Spirit

< Romans 8:9–17 >

“But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His. And if Christ is in you, the body is dead because of sin, but the Spirit is life because of righteousness. But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you. Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, ‘Abba, Father.’ The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together.”

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The responsibility to preach

At the time of the last harvest, we must do the work of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit so that there is no one who does not know it. If, after we have preached it all, there are people who know it and still do not believe, nothing can be done about that, and those who will believe will believe and receive salvation. But what if we have not made it known to them? The responsibility lies with us. Even people who are said to be religiously famous, and people who have believed in Jesus for a long time, deserve to go to hell if they have believed only religiously. It is just as the word says, *"(Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? –ASV). And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:22–23)*. The Lord has so clearly saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has removed all our sins, and He tells us to believe this; so if people do not believe it, it is right that they go to hell. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we are to preach says that Jesus had all the sins of the world, which include the sins of your whole lifetime and mine, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. For the sins that He had transferred to Him in this way, Jesus received the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and saved us. But what we must do on this earth is to fulfill the responsibility to preach.

It is settled by whether one has the Spirit or not

If we look at the word of Romans chapter 8, it says, *"But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His" (Romans 8:9)*. Here it speaks of the Spirit, saying that if you do not have the Spirit of Christ in you, you are not of Christ. What does it call that Spirit? The apostle Paul said, *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15)*. It is saying that we did not receive the spirit of bondage but received the Spirit of adoption, by whom we cry out, Abba, Father; that is, we are those who have received the Spirit of God.

In fact, if one does not have the Spirit of Christ, one is nothing. A person has a body and a spirit, but if he does not have the Spirit of God, that person is not a person of the Spirit, and is a person who cannot please God. The fact that the Spirit of Christ is in the hearts of you and me, the fact that people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of the remission of sins, have this Spirit—this gives us great comfort. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and because He bore those sins, He received in our place the judgment we should have received by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. Because Jesus, who rose again from death, has saved us, this comfort, that we have received the remission of sins and have the Spirit of Christ, is also based on the salvation that Jesus accomplished. For those who believe in Christ, it is ultimately settled according to whether they have this Spirit or not. That is why the apostle Paul says that there are people who have

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received the spirit of bondage and there are people who have received the Spirit of adoption of God.

To have received the spirit of bondage means that one is a slave. It means that a slave is one who has nothing to do with God, with the Father. However much such a person may say that he lives for God and for people, because his spirit is still different from God's, and because he is one who has received that spirit of destruction, he is destroyed. Dear fellow believers, do a slave and his master have anything to do with each other, or not? If we say they have something to do with each other, they are related only in the part of doing some work; in reality, there is no relationship between father and son, no relationship of family. If there is no relationship as family, that person is not one of the family. That person is simply finished once the work is all done. But if it is a relationship between father and son, a relationship of family, then that person is one who will inherit everything of the father, and he must be a happy person. The father manages everything he has in order to give it all to his son. That is why a person who has received the spirit of bondage and a person who has received the Spirit of adoption are different. A person who has received the Spirit of adoption is a son who will in the future inherit everything of the Father.

That is why the apostle Paul says in Romans chapter 8 that those who have received the Spirit of adoption cry out, Abba, Father, and that a person who has received the spirit of bondage lives the life of a slave all his life. A person who does not have the Spirit of Christ is in vain like this. He believes in Jesus, but he believes in vain. Because you and I have the Spirit of Christ, we do the work of God; and because we also have the flesh, we have weak parts too; but even so, we follow without change, doing the work of God and doing what God is pleased with. And though our bodies died together with Jesus Christ, the word says,

"But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you" (Romans 8:11). And so ultimately it says, *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16)*, and it says that He causes us to cry out, Abba, Father. This is exactly what makes a person who has received the remission of sins different from a person who has not received the remission of sins. They are different because one has the Spirit; they are different because one has the Spirit by which he has become a child of God who calls Him Abba, Father.

What is different if one does not have the Spirit? If one does not have the Spirit, he is consequently a servant, and to be a servant means being related only to work and not related to God. But because we have the Spirit, we are related. What the apostle Paul is now talking about is that because we have the Spirit of Christ, we are related to God the Father, we are related also to the Lord, we are related also to that inheritance we will receive next in the world to come, and we are related to everything. If one does not have the Spirit, one becomes a person who is not related; if one has the Spirit, one becomes a person who is related. This is the part that the word speaks of. And you and I must clearly know this part. You must know what kind of person you are.

Are you and I truly people who have the Spirit? Because we have received the remission of sins and have the Spirit of Christ, we are children of God; because we have the Spirit, we follow the will of God; and ultimately, because we have the Spirit, we are related to God. That is why the word says, *"And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17)*. That is why the world to come, the kingdom of

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heaven, the paradise on earth, and then the new heaven and the new earth as well—all of them are related to us for that one reason alone, that we have the Spirit. It means that we will inherit and receive all of it. If one does not have the Spirit, every bit of it is in vain. Dear fellow believers, have you received the remission of sins? Do you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? You and I have received the remission of sins because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. Jesus rose again from death and saved us, and God has given the Spirit of adoption to us who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Because you and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have the Spirit of Christ, we call Him Father when we pray to God; and because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, we have no sin. That is why, though we are lacking, we still call on God and do the things He is pleased with; and when we do what He is pleased with, our hearts are glad, and when we do what He is not pleased with, our hearts shrink; but even so, we still come to call God Abba, Father without change. There is such power. All of it is possible because we have the Spirit. That is why the saints—you and I—are blessed.

The world we will receive as heirs

Dear fellow believers, how good would it be if we lived amid beautiful and good nature? Do you long for such a thing? Someone may say that even after living in a place with good nature, there was nothing special about it and nothing good about it. But if nature is truly beautiful and the environment is good,

and there is no one to harm that place and no evil spirits, then living in such a place would truly be so very good. Even if there are many good environments in this world, it is not good because in this world there is Satan the devil and there are those who have received the spirit of bondage, that is, evil spirits, and also because Satan the devil is at work. However much there may be lakes and trees and abundant food and good people, this world is always unsettling because evil exists together with it. But I can imagine how good it would be if that evil were truly gone and a good environment were granted to us and we lived there.

It means that He gives all such things to us as heirs. The word says, *"All things are full of labor; Man cannot express it. The eye is not satisfied with seeing, Nor the ear filled with hearing" (Ecclesiastes 1:8)*. Why can man not express all the weariness of all things? It is because evil things exist in this world. The evil things are exactly the spirit of bondage. It would be good if the Spirit of Christ were in people's hearts; but because the spirit of the devil rules over a person, and an evil spirit enters into that person's spirit, takes its place there, makes it its home, and works, even this beautiful world turns into a world truly like the devil, into such an environment.

That is why people who have received the spirit of bondage are truly a tragedy. There are people who believe in Jesus but have received the spirit of bondage, and there are people who have received in their hearts the Spirit of adoption, the Holy Spirit by whom they can call God Father, and those people are none other than you and me. That is why one must receive the remission of sins. One must hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, know what kind of sinner one is and with what sin one was born, and know and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all

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through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins and received the judgment in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. And because He rose again from death and saved us, the basis on which we receive the remission of sins lies in this salvation that Jesus Himself accomplished. When we receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit is within us; and when the Holy Spirit is within us, we come to call God Abba, Father, we come to call Him Father whenever we pray, and we come to call Jesus my Savior. By coming to believe this, the Spirit who is holy comes to be in our hearts, our thoughts become holy and our actions become holy, and because there is no sin in the heart itself, we come to live with a very holy heart.

A person who has the Spirit grows

The apostle Paul is speaking of this part. He said that if the Spirit of God dwells in you, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit. It means that even if a person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been born again is somewhat lacking and weak while being in the church, if he has the Spirit of Christ, then you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, you belong to God, and you are a child of God. That is why change takes place in those saints as they listen to the word in the church. Why is that? Change takes place because they have the Spirit. If they did not have the Spirit, they could not possibly understand the word or listen to it attentively; but because the Holy Spirit is in their hearts, when they are told something they come to understand it, faith comes to grow in their hearts, and they come to have realization.

By this they now come to grow spiritually. Just as the body grows in height, they grow spiritually, and their hearts grow in faith; and so later they come to discern whether something is good or evil, whether it is right or not, and they become mature Christians. What at first saw only a tiny bit of the world and of the world of God changes and keeps broadening, and later they change into people who seek not their own personal benefit but the benefit of God and the benefit of the kingdom of God, people of faith.

That is why having the Spirit is so important. For that one reason alone, that we have the Spirit, we can obtain everything, we can receive every blessing, and as our faith grows, we become able to follow the whole will of God. That is why, fundamentally, when we believe in Jesus, we treat as important whether one has the Spirit, whether one has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit or not. It is so important because one has the Spirit through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and if one does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one cannot receive the Spirit. If one has the Spirit, it goes like this; if one does not have the Spirit, it does not. Dear fellow believers, is the Holy Spirit in your heart?

When a person of the Holy Spirit has grown in faith for several years, he later comes to think more and more about the work of God and to seek the benefit of God. A person who has newly been born again keeps falling into his own thoughts of what he will eat and what he will drink. Even if he tries not to follow them, he keeps coming to follow them. This is because, though he has the Holy Spirit, he does not have in his heart the faith that believes in the word of God. It is because he does not know what it means when the Lord said, *"But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added to you" (Matthew 6:33)*. If one believes and follows

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according to that word, it actually comes to pass that way; but because he does not know this, he keeps following the flesh. Yet while he keeps being rebuked and growing, he later comes to follow the will of God, comes to seek first the righteousness of God, and comes to experience that both spirit and body live within it. Such a life of believing and following the word of God also stands first of all upon the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins of your whole lifetime and mine, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and saved us.

Having the Spirit—this is something tremendous. Today, people who believe in Jesus come to church and believe in Jesus, but the question is this: whether they have received the Spirit of adoption in their hearts or the spirit of bondage, whether the spirit of the devil dwells in them or the Holy Spirit dwells in their hearts. The apostle Paul is now telling of this in Romans chapter 8, and this has actually been accomplished in the hearts of you and me. People who still do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the spirit of bondage. That is why they become slaves of sin, slaves of evil, and slaves of their own flesh, and they always live in bondage. But people who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and in whose hearts the Holy Spirit is have escaped from such things and become servants of God, servants of righteousness, servants of righteous work, and servants of the work of God, and so they are different. Their position as servants is also different, and because the Holy Spirit is in them, these people keep bearing the fruit of the Spirit, the fruit of preaching the gospel, and the fruit of saving souls. Then, even while the evil things of their own flesh

keep being exposed and broken, as it is said, *"Therefore we do not lose heart. Even though our outward man is perishing, yet the inward man is being renewed day by day" (2 Corinthians 4:16),* they are renewed with every rebuke they receive, and the more they come to know that they are wrong, the clearer their faith that believes in the word of truth of God becomes.

That is why the place where born-again people are gathered is called the church. People who believe in Jesus but have not been born again, people who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, are people who have received the spirit of bondage. Such people do not accept the word of God even when it is spoken to them. Because we have the Spirit, however lacking we may be, what are we like? When the gospel of the water and the Spirit is spoken of and believed, our hearts rejoice together; when this gospel is preached, we rejoice together; and when the will of God is accomplished, we rejoice. That is how we are. But people who are not like this do not rejoice even when the word of truth is preached to them, even when this truth of receiving the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit is brought to them. This is the difference, and its result, between having the Spirit and not having it. It is so because they do not have the Spirit, because they do not have the Holy Spirit. If the Holy Spirit is present, it is not so.

Only, the rate of growth differs, whether one grows quickly or slowly. In the tidal flats by the seashore, many living things live. But in the salty marshland inland, only grasses like reeds grow. There, neither cabbage nor other vegetables grow, nor can fish live; only grasses like reeds grow thick. Even a person who has believed in Jesus, been born again, and has the Holy Spirit, if he does not believe the word of God and acknowledge what is right as right and what is not as not, still has a heart like that. And so he becomes neither this nor that. There are some such

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people, but in general, people who have received the remission of sins grow well.

A person who has the Spirit is a person of Christ

According to the word, what you must remember now is that the Spirit of adoption is in the hearts of you and me, that the Holy Spirit is present, that we have this Spirit. A person who has the Spirit is a person of Christ. A person who has the Spirit is a person of Christ, and a person who does not have the Spirit is a person of the devil. Whether one has the Spirit or not—God saved us; did we make the Spirit? Jesus had all the sins of the world, which include our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and because He bore those sins, He received in our place the judgment we should have received by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. Because Jesus rose again from death and saved us, a person who has believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the Holy Spirit has become a person of Christ through the salvation Jesus accomplished. We must regard as important whether one has the Spirit or not. A person who has the Spirit will someday become a spiritual person. A person who does not have the Spirit, however hard he tries, cannot have the Spirit, cannot go to the kingdom of heaven, and cannot become a child of God. The saints and sinners are divided by whether one has the Spirit or not.

You have the Spirit. Whenever I myself am lacking, at such times I always shake off all anxiety, worry, and care, and erase the thoughts of the flesh through this word the Lord has given me and through the Holy Spirit who actually dwells in me. It means that you and I have the Spirit. What I am saying as the

main point is this: A person who has the Spirit is a person of Christ. You and I are people of Christ.

Two perspectives on viewing the Bible

What is the most confusing thing in Christianity? When we view the Bible, there are just two things: whether, while believing in Jesus, we look at the humanity of Jesus and try to become like the character of Jesus, or whether, while believing in Jesus and reading this Bible, we are interested in the fact that Jesus has saved us. Everyone reads the Bible and believes in Jesus, but the question is from which perspective they view it, and how they believe and follow. Some people, while reading this Bible, see that Jesus is humble, that He has power, that He is full of love, and such aspects. If we read the Bible, we see many such aspects too. And so they admire and love these parts and follow, thinking, "I must become like Him." And so, saying, "Jesus is humble, but I am not humble; I have not yet been sanctified," they repent of not being humble and try to become like Him.

But another group of people sees that the Lord came to this earth as the Lamb of atonement. In the Old Testament, the sacrificial lamb, a goat, or a sacrificial offering had all the sins of the people passed on to it and shed its blood and died. And so it brought salvation through the laying on of hands and the blood, through that death. In the New Testament, Jesus Christ came to this earth to save His people from their sins, and when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him and bore it all, bore all my own sins as well, bore the sin of the world and went to the Cross and died there, and rose again three days after His death and saved us. For all

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the sins of the world that He had transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, Jesus received in our place the judgment we should have received by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. Such people believe, give thanks, and praise Him for having saved them in this way. There are these two groups of people.

From what perspective do these two groups of people view the Bible? Either they view the Bible from the perspective of the humanity of Jesus, of the Savior who came as a man and was holy, merciful, and loving, and believe in that Jesus and follow, believing in order to become like Him; or else, while those aspects are also truly to be thankful for and worthy of respect, they fundamentally give thanks for and believe that the Lord has saved each one of us, has saved me myself, and they spread this gospel of the water and the Spirit and live a life of faith in order to spread this gospel of the water and the Spirit. People view the Bible, believe in Jesus, and follow Him from these two perspectives. You and I belong to the latter. We believe by faith, give thanks, and follow, believing that Jesus Christ, who became the Lamb of atonement, has saved you and me from all sins. And we spread this gospel of the water and the Spirit. But the people of this world are not like this.

Even today they gather and speak every day of the merciful God, the God full of love, the humble God, the God of very good character, and they set that as their goal and follow it. And so, at times, someone who greets others with a smile inside the church suddenly becomes a completely different person when he goes outside. The Holy Spirit does not come into a person's heart just because he greets others well inside the church. Jesus has saved him, yet he does not give thanks for this; and although the purpose for which God gave this Bible, the purpose for which God so loved the world that He sent Jesus to this earth, was to

save you and me from sin, if he does not look to Jesus Christ, believe, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit from that perspective, that person is living his life of faith in vain.

But you and I, by believing that our Lord came to this earth and saved us, have received the Holy Spirit in our hearts, have become people of Christ, and have become people who have the Spirit of Christ. We know all such things as that He is humble, but what does His being humble have to do with our going to hell because we have sin? He is worthy of respect, but we were in a situation of going to hell because we had sin, so what do His being holy and His being full of love have to do with us? If He is holy, then He is holy, and if He is full of love, then He is full of love; but we were about to go to hell because we had sin. That is why sinners must first believe in Jesus. They must believe in the fact that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John and bore all the sin of us mankind, received on the Cross all the punishment for all our sins, and rose again from death and became our Savior.

We must meet Him by faith, we must become His, we must receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts so that, with the Holy Spirit present in our hearts, we become Christ's and become God's, and we must be able to call God Father. We must become His family, and we must become His. You have the Spirit of Christ in your heart. You and I have the Spirit in our hearts because of the redemption of Christ. And so we become those who have received the Spirit of adoption. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

There is only one thing that we must remember. Though I say many different things, it is just one thing. Though I preach the same one sermon every day, it is that Christ has saved us. Speaking it every day, hearing it every day, and believing it every day—because this is the bread of life, we do not view the

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Bible from another perspective. The Bible is the book of salvation. It is the book of salvation that saves us from sin. Talking about what a person's character is like is following the moral teachers of the world; what need is there for that? If one is holy, it is good for oneself, but is it good for the other person? Does that mean we do evil to others? No, it does not. We never do evil. We cannot do so because we have the Spirit. When the hot temper of the flesh rises up, we have such a heart, but we do not do it. We cannot. This is because doing so would not be of benefit to the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

I give thanks that God has poured out the Spirit of Christ on us. You have the Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in your hearts. I give thanks that He has given us the Spirit of Christ. ✉

Sermon 12 by Paul C. Jong

As debtors to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are not those who should live as slaves of sin

< Romans 8:12–25 >

"Therefore, brethren, we are debtors—not to the flesh, to live according to the flesh. For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live. For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God. For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father.' The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans

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and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance."

To whom are we indebted?

In Romans chapter 8, verse 12, the apostle Paul refers to the born-again by saying, *"We are debtors" (Romans 8:12)*. A born-again person is certainly a person who is in debt. But we must clearly know to whom that debt is owed. The apostle Paul clearly makes known that the debt is not a debt owed to the flesh.

Then to whom are we indebted? We are those who are indebted to Jesus Christ. We are those who owe a debt of love to Jesus Christ, who became the Savior when He received baptism from John at the Jordan River and Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death. In the salvation we have received, there is nothing at all that we ourselves accomplished. From beginning to end, it is the love of God the Father and the love of salvation by which Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and removed our sins. Therefore, we have become debtors to the grace of salvation.

That is why the apostle Paul says clearly: If one who has become righteous does not follow as the Holy Spirit leads, he ends up becoming one who falls away from Jesus Christ. As

those who are indebted for salvation to Him who saved us, we must live following His Holy Spirit.

What does it mean to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit?

In chapter 8, verse 13, the apostle Paul divides the end of that path into two lines: *"For if you live according to the flesh you will die; but if by the Spirit you put to death the deeds of the body, you will live" (Romans 8:13)*. Even a born-again righteous person goes back and forth between these two paths. But the outcome is clear. If we seek to follow the thoughts of the flesh, our souls will die. If we follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit, our hearts and our flesh will also live.

Then what does it mean to put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit? To put to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit means that a righteous person does not follow the thoughts of his own flesh but lives following the Holy Spirit. A righteous person is not someone who becomes holy by his own strength. The Holy Spirit who is in us guides the heart of the righteous person. When we hear the word of God preached during the time of worship, the Holy Spirit removes from our hearts the sins that come from the thoughts of the flesh.

Therefore, a person who puts to death the deeds of the body by the Spirit is not someone who fights against sin and overcomes it by his own will; he is someone who, by believing in his heart every day the truth of the remission of sins he has already received, lives for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That person becomes one who can live by the faith that believes that Jesus Himself had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He

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received from John, was nailed to the Cross and received the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood, and rose again from death and saved us who believe.

Those who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God

In chapter 8, verse 14, the apostle Paul clearly makes known the identity of the born-again: *"For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, these are sons of God" (Romans 8:14)*. This is a declaration that a person in whose heart the Holy Spirit has come to dwell and who has come to live a spiritual life is a son of God. Then into whose heart does the Holy Spirit come? As the apostle Paul says in Ephesians 1:13, God seals with the Holy Spirit those who have believed with their hearts in the word of truth, that is, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and have been saved from their own sins. That word says that Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted our sins. In the heart of a person who has not received the remission of sins, even if the Holy Spirit seeks to come in, He cannot come into that heart because there is sin.

In chapter 8, verse 15, the apostle Paul explains the crying out in prayer that follows that Holy Spirit: *"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15)*. Before we were born again, we were those who trembled in fear under the condemnation of the law. Before the law, no one could call God Father and draw near to Him. But the

Holy Spirit comes into the hearts of those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as a little child calls his father without fear, a person who has received the remission of sins comes to cry out to God, *"Abba, Father" (Romans 8:15)*, without the weight of any condemnation. The Holy Spirit who is in the righteous draws us back again with groanings which cannot be uttered, even when the righteous lose their way and wander.

In chapter 8, verse 16, the apostle Paul makes known the firm basis of that crying out: *"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God" (Romans 8:16)*. The fact that we are children of God is not something our heads produce. It is the Holy Spirit, who has come into our hearts and dwells there, who Himself testifies of it. Therefore, we do not confirm that we are children of God by looking at our feelings or circumstances; rather, we are assured of it according to the testimony of the Holy Spirit who is in us.

The path we walk as heirs overlaps with the path our Lord walked

In chapter 8, verse 17, the apostle Paul further explains the weight of the status of being children: *"If children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:17)*. An heir refers to one who has the qualification to inherit all the inheritance of his father. A person who has been born again from his own sins is not simply one who receives the remission of sins and enters the kingdom of heaven, but one who will enjoy all the promises and glory of God together with Christ. How great and amazing the grace of God is!

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But the apostle Paul honestly adds one fact beside that glory: *"If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17)*. The path of heirs overlaps exactly with the path our Lord walked. It means that born-again Christians come to walk, just as it is, that path of suffering and glory in which the Lord came to this earth, had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, rose from the dead, ascended to the right hand of the throne of God the Father, and took part in the glory of the Father.

Here we must clearly know one thing. The suffering that the born-again receive is not suffering received because of their own wrongdoing. Just as the Lord saved us from the sin of the world, it is suffering received in order to uphold the will of the Lord, in order to save other souls from the sin of the world. Suffering received over useless things only hurts one's pride, but suffering received for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is suffering received for Jesus Christ, and it is glory. Therefore, the suffering we receive while preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit becomes the path of suffering that we must rightly pass through.

The present sufferings are not worthy to be compared with the glory that will be revealed

In chapter 8, verse 18, the apostle Paul teaches on what scale that suffering should be placed: *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*. Every born-again person, too, in one corner of his heart, wishes for peace and safety. But the apostle Paul tells us clearly: The

path that pursues only peace and safety on this earth is not the path a born-again person should take.

This word can be compared to the course of a marathon. A marathon runner finishes the race only when he goes from the starting point to the turning point and comes back again to the finish line. For the born-again, the suffering of this earth is the midpoint between the start and the finish, and only by passing through that midpoint does one reach the final glory. Therefore, the word says, *"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*.

In chapter 8, verses 19 through 21, the apostle Paul says that the weight of that glory is not a matter limited only to people. The creation that the apostle speaks of here refers to the heavens, the earth, the sea, and all the living beings in them. In Genesis chapter 3, the ground was cursed because of Adam's sin, and all of creation fell into the situation of groaning together because of man's sin. Originally, the creation is not something that took on such suffering by its own will. It was dragged into suffering together because of man's sin. Therefore, the creation eagerly waits for the people who have been born again as children of God to be revealed gloriously on the last day. This is because the event in which the born-again come to take part in glory together with Christ is itself the event in which the whole creation is released together. Because Jesus had that sin which made even the creation groan, that is, the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted our sins, we were able to be born again as children of God.

In chapter 8, verse 22, the apostle Paul depicts the present state of that groaning: *"For we know that the whole creation*

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groans and labors with birth pangs together until now" (Romans 8:22). The natural disasters, diseases, death, and destruction of the environment that we face in daily life are all the groaning of the whole creation. But this groaning is not the groaning of despair but the pangs of childbirth. It is the sound of labor pains made while waiting for the day when the creation will again reach its original glory in the new heaven and the new earth.

A person who waits for the unseen hope of heaven as though he sees it

In chapter 8, verse 23, the apostle Paul honestly explains the twofold situation of the born-again: *"We also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23)*. Because our Lord received baptism from John and bore the sin of the world, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and then rose again from death, those who believe now have already become those whose souls have come to life. But our flesh has not yet been born again; it has not been born twice. Our bodies are still bodies that grow old, fall ill, and die. Therefore, the promise remains that the Lord will also give life to our bodies that will die. Our souls have already been justified and are alive, but our bodies will reach complete salvation only through the resurrection on the last day. This is the meaning of the word that we are waiting for the redemption of our body.

In chapter 8, verses 24 and 25, the apostle Paul makes clear the nature of that salvation: *"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait*

for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:24–25). The salvation from sin that we have received is a salvation that contains both a part that was completed once and for all and a part that will be completed on the last day. We have received the remission of our sins and the seal of the Holy Spirit once and for all, and we will receive the redemption of our body and the glorious liberty on the last day.

Therefore, the apostle Paul clearly points out in a word the attitude of the born-again person. It is that if we hope for what we do not see, we should wait with perseverance. This perseverance is what brings hope to fulfillment; it is not optimism. It is a perseverance that stands upon the salvation already guaranteed through the work of the baptism Jesus received from John, the precious blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from the dead. Even when a born-again person, in one corner of his heart, becomes anxious about whether he will be able to continue his life of faith to the end, he must hold on to the fact that the Lord received baptism from John and made the sin of the world to be no more, and that He is using us as workers of the righteousness of God, and he must persevere to the end.

As debtors to the gospel, go to the end for the glory of Christ

Dear beloved saints, we are debtors in our hearts. But we are not debtors to the flesh; we are debtors to God the Father and to Jesus, who have delivered us from sin. Jesus Himself had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, paid the price of that sin on the Cross, and by rising from the dead has made us

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who now believe children of God, that is, heirs of God. The Holy Spirit who is in us Himself testifies that we are children of God, and He draws us back again every time we lose our way.

Therefore, we must not be those who live according to the flesh, yielding to the flesh, but must become people who live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The suffering set before us must be suffering received for the glory of our Lord. We must rightly pass through the suffering received for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which saves other souls from sin. One who has passed through that path of suffering with perseverance will be blessed as one who will enjoy the glory of a joint heir with Christ within the promise of the resurrection, by which He will, on the last day, give life even to the body that must die.

The word says that the sufferings of the present are not to be compared with the glory that will be revealed in us. Our final destination is the glory of God, and the midpoint set between here and there is the suffering for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I hope that all of us, as befits debtors, will keep in our hearts the grace of the remission of sins we have received, live following the Spirit, and become those who meet Jesus Christ with perseverance. I bless you in the name of the Lord. ✉

Sermon 13 by Paul C. Jong

Those who will inherit the kingdom of God

< Romans 8:16–27 >

"The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together. For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance. Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows

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what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God."

The testimony of the Holy Spirit is not a feeling but faith in the gospel

Everyone who has received the remission of sins believes in the word of the water and the Spirit. And the Holy Spirit is in their hearts. The Bible says, *"He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself" (1 John 5:10)*. A person who has the righteousness of God in his heart is one in whose heart the Holy Spirit dwells, and he is one who has the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the condition on which the Holy Spirit can dwell in that person's heart forever.

We have received the remission of sins and become children of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is because Jesus, by receiving baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and thereby remitted all our sins. The Holy Spirit is in our hearts and testifies, "You are a child of God. You are one of God's people." But to those who do not have the Holy Spirit in their hearts, the law testifies, "You are not a child of God but a sinner."

To those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit testifies, "You are a child of God. You have no sin. You are one of God's people." This means that He has caused us to know fully that we are children of God through our believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

You may have the question, "But I have no feeling at all; am I not a child of God?" There are also cases in which some people, because their faith is young, do not realize that the Holy Spirit is

in their hearts. But the Holy Spirit speaks to us, who may have such questions: "You are a child of God. Do you not believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? That is why you are one of God's people." Therefore, even at the very moment we doubt, anyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a child of God. The One who testifies that we are children of God is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not One who comes and works through feelings, sensations, and emotions. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts have no sin in their hearts, and the Holy Spirit is present in the hearts of those who have no sin. They are surely children of God.

The Holy Spirit speaks to my heart and to your hearts: "Since you have believed in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the word of the Holy Spirit and have received the remission of sins, you have no sin and are a child of God."

However, such a word of testimony does not appear as a voice heard as an audible human voice. Therefore, do not wish to hear an audible voice. If you seek to hear such a voice, Satan may come to you in a human voice, condemning you. Satan is a spirit who works according to the thoughts of men, but the Holy Spirit, who is God, is the Spirit who works in faith according to the written word of God.

Those who have the righteousness of God are children of God and heirs

Let us read verse 17. *"And if children, then heirs—heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, if indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17)*. If one is a child of God, one is also an heir of God. The word "heir" means

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one who will inherit all that the Father has. In other words, it means that one is qualified to enjoy together all that God the Father has. Who are the heirs of God the Father? Those who have received the remission of all sins once and for all by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are the heirs of God the Father's kingdom.

Those who have such faith are greatly blessed people who will inherit, together with Christ, all the glory of the Father in the kingdom of God. The saints must know, and believe, that they are the ones who will in the future inherit all the splendor that God the Father has. Here it says that since we are heirs of God and joint heirs with Christ, we must also suffer with Him in order to be glorified with Him. That one has become a joint heir with Christ indicates that he has become one who lives forever in the Father's kingdom. If you have now believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you are those who have become joint heirs with Christ. This is because an heir is one who will receive by succession all that the Father has.

Now and then I suddenly feel that the kingdom of God is coming near to us. There is a time for anything to be accomplished. In the same way, the word God promised us in the Bible is already being fulfilled. I believe that the day is drawing near when those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit will live forever with the Lord in His kingdom.

The kingdom of Christ for which we have waited and waited is drawing near to us step by step. In our hearts, too, which have already received the remission of sins, we feel through the Holy Spirit that the Lord's kingdom is drawing near. Now everything comes to pass according to the word of the Lord. That is why the day of His word that He will let us reign for a thousand years,

and of His promise that He will give us a new heaven and a new earth, is approaching. Let us wait by faith.

Since all the things God has planned take place within the time God has appointed, we must not set a date and an hour and wait, like those who set a date for the end of the world. Those who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit come to see God's prophecies being fulfilled. In the hearts of those who believe, the hope arises, "The kingdom of God and the paradise on earth that God has promised us will surely come!" Then I believe that such days will come to us before long.

Now the time is coming when, rather than asking the Lord to do something for us, we will believe and see in hope the words the Lord has spoken being fulfilled one by one. The thought arises that the day will come when the kingdom of God promised to us, and the Millennial Kingdom on this earth as well, will be accomplished. Do you also have such thoughts through the Holy Spirit? Do you believe that all the promises of God's prophecies are fulfilled through the Holy Spirit? It is truly believed in our hearts. In our hearts, through the Holy Spirit, there is a heart that believes in and waits for the plans for the last days that God has promised. We believe that the thoughts that come to our hearts through the Holy Spirit, and all our desires, will be fulfilled together with all the prophecies God has promised. This is true faith. Because you and I are heirs who will inherit all the blessings God has promised, we must wait through the Holy Spirit. I believe that the kingdom of God will come to us before long.

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The glory that will be revealed to the righteous

Many people are now waiting, saying, *"Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus!" (Revelation 22:20)*. Because he was an heir of God, the apostle Paul said, *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*. That is because he believed that the kingdom of God would come and was waiting for it. Because we, too, are heirs of the kingdom of God, we believe in that day and wait for it, and we also suffer with Christ in order to be glorified with Him.

The hope the apostle Paul looks to is as follows. All created things now living, whether plants or animals, are waiting to be set free from death. That is why he said, *"For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God" (Romans 8:19)*. The reason all created things so earnestly desire the children of God to be revealed is that what the children of God desire is that eternal day when even created things can live without dying.

Therefore, we saints must know that we have received the great blessing of eternal life. Whether we will be alive to welcome the day the Lord comes, or whether the Lord will come, call us who are sleeping, take us, and fulfill it as He promised—that we must wait for. Is the glory of God that will be revealed to us in the future truly great?

The glory that will be revealed to the righteous in the future is a glory that never changes. That glory is to inherit the kingdom that exists forever and to live forever in glory. That kingdom is a place where there is no death, no disease, and no pain, and because the light of Jesus shines forever, it is a place that has no need of sunlight. Because it is a place where only the Lord and the born-again who are without sin live together, it is a kingdom

filled only with the glory of God. It is to live forever in a kingdom of brilliant gold, a kingdom filled only with glory that can no longer be described in any words. That cannot but be a truly great glory. The glory that will be revealed to us in the future is such a thing. That is why it was said, *"The sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*.

As we live in this world doing the work of God, there are times when we see the glory of God in nature. When we gaze at nature, in which the flowers of lovely colors that God has spread out, the grass holding dew, and the glistening leaves are in harmony; when we suddenly feel the warm air of spring, the freshness of the forest and the clear wind that clear our minds, the starlight of the night sky that shines all the more brightly as it holds the cold air, and such lovely four seasons; when we come to see the peaceful scene of nature in which all kinds of grains and fruits ripen beautifully in their many colors—we truly cannot help but think of the kingdom of heaven. When we see such things, the hope arises, "How good it would be if the kingdom of God came!"

When the kingdom of God comes to us, there is no death there. And we live in glory. Because there is nothing lacking there, we live in abundance and glory. Just at the thought that we will live enjoying glory forever in a place where everything is perfectly prepared, we feel the glory of God fully in our hearts. That all of this has become ours, who have become saints, is truly like a dream, and we give thanks once again for how great the glory of having become saints is. We thank the Lord, who has made such hope overflow in our hearts. Now we hope for the kingdom of heaven only in our imagination, but we believe and know that in the future all those promises will be fulfilled according to the faithfulness of God. That is why, as the days go

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by, we feel our hope growing greater and the glory of God coming closer to us.

That is why the life of the saints has hope for the future. The faith that believes in God's promise and the hope for the future are the faith and the glory of those who will inherit the kingdom of God. Is such glorious faith a blessing given only to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Yes, it is. Now, once time passes, the glory God has given will all be accomplished for the righteous. When the time God has promised arrives, it will surely be accomplished for us. All of this is the glory that will actually come upon the saints. Glory is a beauty that is exceedingly splendid and perfect.

I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and you, who have the same faith as I do, are people who will enter and live in the kingdom of glory. At times our hearts grow dark, our heads spin, and we struggle because of the complicated and difficult things of the world, but because the born-again have the faith that they have become heirs of God, they overcome all tribulations. And at times there are also moments when our hearts are depressed and stifled and we struggle, but because of the heavenly promise that God says He will give, we recall our hope and take strength. Even though there may be many storms of all kinds in the hearts of the saints who are without sin, they always recall the hope God has promised and live on, taking strength. We are so thankful that the Holy Spirit is always in our hearts, giving us comfort, and testifies that we are children of God. Even those who received the remission of sins not long ago must live in hope, looking to the glory of heaven. We are all equally those who have become God's people. Those who have lived a life of faith for a long time in the Church of God see the Holy Spirit Himself rejoicing in the glory of God within their souls.

The hearts of the righteous also groan on this earth

Let us read verse 23. *"Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23)*. What do the saints hope for as they live out the days ahead? Let us ask this question. The saints live waiting for the redemption of our body. That we are children of God means that our souls have become children of God. Therefore, our bodies have not yet obtained glory. That is why all saints desire their bodies to be changed.

At that time, when the bodies of the saints are clothed with the glory of God and transformed, they will become bodies that do not feel hot even if they are put into fire and that can simply pass through any obstacle or wall that blocks the way. They are transformed bodies that are not subject to any limitation of time or space.

But because we do not yet have such transformed bodies, even we who have the firstfruits of the Spirit groan within ourselves. That is why even the righteous who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit wait for the redemption of the body. It says, *"We also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves" (Romans 8:23)*. Have you ever felt the Holy Spirit groaning in your heart? When does the Holy Spirit groan? The Holy Spirit groans when we follow the lusts of the flesh.

When we look at the world and love it, the Holy Spirit who is in our hearts groans within us. Because our bodies have not yet been transformed, we look at the things of this world, like them too much, and try to follow them, but because we are those who have been clothed with the transformation of the spirit, the Holy Spirit groans within our hearts. Therefore, we should turn

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around the heart of the flesh that likes the world and tries to follow it, and be led by the Spirit of God. That the Holy Spirit groans in us, who have become heirs of God, is because the Holy Spirit is with us. When we look at this present world, we see how very bleak it is and how truly lacking our flesh is, and at such times we look to the blessing of the heirs of God. Because they know that at that time their bodies, too, will be completely redeemed and transformed into spiritual bodies, the saints wait for the day when they will put on perfect bodies that will be completely redeemed.

Live with the hope of glory

Let us read verses 24 and 25. *"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:24–25)*. Have we been saved from all sins by hoping for the kingdom of God? Let us ask this question. We have been saved from all sins by faith within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We have been saved by believing in the word of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gave, in order to go to the kingdom of heaven and in order to remove our sins. If, after being saved from all sins, we hope for what is visible on this earth, we are not those who know the glory of God, nor are we those who wait. If we hope for what is visible to our eyes now, that cannot be hope. So, just as Paul asked who would hope for what he sees, what we righteous hope for is not what is on this earth but the Millennial Kingdom and the new heaven and new earth that God has promised. Such faith is the hope that we righteous have. The righteous live by the hope of looking to the new heaven and the

new earth. What is visible to the eyes of the flesh is not what we truly hope for. Though it is not visible to the eyes of the flesh, with the eyes of the spirit we hope for and wait for the kingdom of glory that God has promised. That is why the truly righteous have set their hope on the kingdom of heaven. Believing that what God has spoken to us will surely come to pass is hope.

The Bible says, *"And now abide faith, hope, love, these three" (1 Corinthians 13:13)*. We have received the remission of sins by faith and have come to have hope in the kingdom of heaven. Since His kingdom comes on this earth and also in heaven, we hope that we will live forever in His kingdom. That is why we believe the word of the Lord's promise, endure the sufferings of the present, and wait. Here it says, *"But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:25)*. What we endure and wait for is not what is visible to the eyes of the flesh. We believe in and wait for the promise of God that is not visible to the eyes of the flesh. The word of God's promise will be fulfilled for us saints. This is because He has given us the word that the things that reveal the glory of God will be accomplished before long, and we believe that word. We endure the sufferings of the present because we believe that our Lord will surely come again to this earth.

The kingdom of God will surely be accomplished on this earth. When the gospel of the water and the Spirit is spread to people, the glory of God will surely be accomplished. The righteous wait with perseverance for that day, which will surely come. As we keep waiting, the Lord will soon come. This is all the more so, especially for you and me, who are living in this age. When we see the things by which the world is collapsing, a determination arises in us that we must quickly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. It is natural that hope for this world disappears from our hearts, and when

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something does not go well, our hearts may also come to groan, but as long as we are alive, we endure and wait for the kingdom of God, which is not visible to the eyes of the flesh but visible only to the eyes of the spirit.

Because we believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we set our hope on heaven, endure, and wait. Because we believe that the kingdom of God is coming to us, we live enduring all difficulties. That is possible because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. Dear fellow believers, are you suffering? Endure it well and persevere. It is not only you who are suffering; all of us are suffering and having a hard time. It is hard for everyone, but a hope arises: "Once I finish well just the work I have been entrusted with now, things will be all right." Do you know that if there is nothing hard for the flesh, we do not have hope spiritually? If the flesh is too comfortable, we stop seeking God and stop asking for grace as well, and so there are cases in which our hearts grow distant from God and also distant from hope. Therefore, we who are born again must hold on to hope, look to the glory to come, and endure and wait. It is said that those who endure and persevere for the Lord are blessed. The day will come when the Lord's kingdom comes upon this earth and we enter the kingdom of God. For that day, we must endure well, not lose hope, and surely keep it. No matter how hard and sad the present may be, let us endure well and wait until the Lord's kingdom comes upon this earth and in heaven.

The Holy Spirit helps those who have the righteousness of God

Let us read verse 26. *"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we*

ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). Does the Holy Spirit Himself pray for us? Yes, He does. The Holy Spirit knows our weaknesses and prays on our behalf.

Earlier I mentioned the word about groaning a little. In other words, the Holy Spirit groans when we go in a direction God does not want. If we look at the circumstances of this world and groan in our hearts, or go in a direction that God does not want and that does not fit the Father's will, or think thoughts completely different from the Father's will and live according to our own thoughts apart from the Lord's will, the Holy Spirit grieves and groans. When the Spirit who is holy and dwells in the born-again, the Holy Spirit, groans with groanings that cannot be uttered, we lose heart, have no strength at all left in our hearts, and lose our energy. At such times, the Holy Spirit causes us to pray. There are times when the Holy Spirit Himself makes intercession, and He also awakens our hearts and causes us to pray.

The Holy Spirit groans in our hearts and causes us to pray before the Father according to the Father's will. "The Lord has remitted all our sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, and we are children of God. We also desire that the will of God be quickly accomplished on this earth. So please let the will of God be accomplished." He causes us to pray such prayers. And He causes us to ask for spiritual faith. "God, please do this for us and do that for us as well. Since we are completely worthless and lacking in God's sight, please give us faith and help us." Then the Lord knows our weaknesses and helps us. He does not leave us as we are but causes us again to pray according to the Father's will, and the Holy Spirit Himself also makes intercessory prayer for us on our behalf, giving strength to our hearts. He causes us to pray according to the

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Father's will, and when we ask for help, He again lets us know what the Father's will is, and He also gives us new strength.

"For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26). Have you felt such things? I am asking whether you have felt the Holy Spirit saying something in the heart of the righteous when you think thoughts different from the will of God, act differently, and live in a direction the Lord does not want. At that time, the Holy Spirit rebukes us and causes our hearts to fall into groaning. Do you know that this is the Holy Spirit groaning? You will have experienced that when the hearts of the righteous are joyful, that is precisely the Holy Spirit rejoicing. Then you will know that when your hearts fall into groaning, that is the Holy Spirit groaning.

When we are so weak and do wrong, the Holy Spirit within us groans and makes intercessory prayer to God the Father on our behalf. And so God the Father gives us strength. Everything we pray is what the Holy Spirit causes us to pray. There are also times when the Holy Spirit tells us to pray. And so He gives us new spiritual strength. That is why a person in whose heart this Holy Spirit dwells is a very happy person. The work in which the Holy Spirit gives us new strength is accomplished as He works within the word of God.

The Holy Spirit works through the written word and the Church of God

The Holy Spirit does not want to speak through anything else. He gives new strength to the saints by working surely through the written word and the word preached from the Church of God,

and also within the gatherings of the brothers and sisters. That is why the Church of God is very important, and within the work of the Holy Spirit, the position of the Church of God is great. In this Church there are saints, they hold gatherings, they sing praises, and whoever it may be who preaches the word, the Holy Spirit causes him to speak the words needed at that time and works. This means that the Holy Spirit gives understanding and works together among the one who preaches the word and those who hear it. The Holy Spirit gives understanding to the saints and gives each individual the grace he or she needs. And the Holy Spirit surely works within the Church of God, within the gathering of the righteous. That is why the place called the Church of God is extremely important to the saints. There are times when the saints cannot speak of it no matter how many difficulties have piled up in their hearts, and even at such times the servants of God notice it first. When the saints are within the gatherings in the Church of God, the Holy Spirit touches their hearts and binds up their wounds again. He causes them to hold on to the word again and gives them strength and restores them.

That is why the life of faith is carried out as follows. We believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of sins, and become children of God, and as the evidence of having become children of God by faith, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. After that, He gives us the Church of God. He gives us the Church of God, speaks to His servants through the Church, and God causes His servants to speak the word. Through the word He causes wounds to be healed, raises up those who have no strength, gives blessings to the weak, and gives the ability to do the work of God. And He causes us to accomplish His will. Therefore, those who are called saints are in a relationship with the Church of God that can never be severed. And the saints can never cut themselves off from the

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fellowship among the righteous and from being nurtured within the word of God. The absolute truth is within the Church of God. Therefore, within the Church the saints must be united. Faith that is not united is vain faith.

Do you believe that the Holy Spirit is in your heart? When we unite according to the written word and according to the word preached in the Church, the Holy Spirit helps us, gives us understanding of that word, and also gives us blessings. With that faith, unite with the Church. That is what the Holy Spirit is pleased with. And we have lived until now by the help of the Holy Spirit. In the future, too, we will live by the help of the Holy Spirit. That is why the Holy Spirit is very important to us who have received the remission of sins. We must know and believe that the Holy Spirit is present. Also, knowing that we must live by the Holy Spirit, we must be led by the Holy Spirit in our hearts. And those in whom the Holy Spirit dwells must follow the will of the Holy Spirit. If one is a righteous person, the Holy Spirit is alive in his heart, so he must follow the law of life as that Holy Spirit leads.

Let us read verse 27. *"Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27)*. God the Father knows all the thoughts of the Holy Spirit who is in us. Since the Holy Spirit knows all our hearts, it follows that in the end God the Father knows all about us. So the word that the Holy Spirit makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God means that since the Father knows the thoughts of the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit prays according to the Father's will, the saints come to live according to the will of God. That is why those who have received the remission of sins in the end obtain the benefit of the life of faith

through the Holy Spirit. All that is in the hearts of the righteous is understanding given by the Holy Spirit.

Those who do not have the Holy Spirit have a hard time with one another even when they are in the church. Those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and do not know that word do not have the Holy Spirit, so they have no fellowship in the word with those who have the Holy Spirit, and their very being in the church is hard for each other. On the other hand, when a person who has the Holy Spirit listens to the sermon of a person who has the Holy Spirit, he understands everything that is said, so his heart is at ease. They understand everything because both have the Holy Spirit. That is why the Holy Spirit surely dwells in the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins and works together with them. As for us, the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, and through that Holy Spirit we come to live according to the will of God the Father.

The Holy Spirit leads us as follows. Sometimes through the Church, sometimes through the saints, or through the word of the Father, He causes us to seek the will of God and abide in it, and to live following that will. He gives us new strength and helps us live on God's side, so that we live until we reach the Lord's kingdom. So we must know how important the Holy Spirit is in your life of faith and mine. That is why, when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we come to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, just as the word says, *"You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)*. He gives us the Holy Spirit as a gift and, through the Holy Spirit, leads us to live according to the Father's will. This is the will of God the Father. That is why the Lord said, *"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)*. Only when we have the Holy Spirit can we do the Father's will, and that Holy

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Spirit is received only by those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the Holy Spirit as a gift are the ones who do the Father's will and go to the Father's kingdom.

It is not that we receive the Holy Spirit separately and the remission of sins separately. People today think as if the Holy Spirit is one thing and the remission of sins is another. And they think that the Holy Spirit comes upon them only if they go into the mountains or into caves and pray fervently. They think that then the Holy Spirit comes upon them, speaks to them directly, and they can converse with Him, but that is absolutely not so. The Holy Spirit and the word are in an inseparable relationship, and the relationship between the Holy Spirit and the saints is also inseparable. Therefore, the relationship among the saints, the Holy Spirit, the Church of God, and God the Father, and the work of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit working in the saints, have an equally close relationship.

You and I, who are living in this last age, live by the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit we live according to the Father's will. And the Holy Spirit knows all of the Father's will. The Father knows all the thoughts of the Holy Spirit. Since the Holy Spirit governs the thoughts in our hearts and communes with God, ultimately the Holy Spirit causes us to pray earnestly according to the Father's will. And the Father gives the answers to our prayers and causes us to live doing the Father's will. That is why the apostle Paul spoke of the work of the Holy Spirit in this word.

We wait for the kingdom of God, too, through the Holy Spirit. We also endure well the sufferings we undergo now, and live according to the Lord's will, hoping for the kingdom of God. It means that He has given us everything through the Holy Spirit:

enduring through the Holy Spirit, serving the Lord by the power of the Holy Spirit, and even the talents to serve the Lord through the Holy Spirit. Therefore, knowing the fact that we are those who walk with the Holy Spirit, we should always examine the word of God carefully, and when we hear the word, unite our hearts, believe, and follow it. So we should live as the Father is pleased and as the Holy Spirit is pleased. We should not follow what the flesh is pleased with, but live as the Holy Spirit is pleased. That is what the apostle Paul is saying.

We hope that He will be with us in all our lives, guard our hearts, and help us, and that God will continue to bless us. When the Lord comes, all of this will change into glory. We who have the righteousness of God inherit the kingdom of God and all glory. Whoever wants to inherit the kingdom of God, listen attentively to the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which the righteousness of God is contained, and believe it in your heart. Hallelujah! I bless you and wish that the righteousness of the Lord be with you. ✉

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Sermon 14 by Paul C. Jong

The day of glory for which the righteous wait while groaning

< Romans 8:18–25 >

“For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the creation eagerly waits for the revealing of the sons of God. For the creation was subjected to futility, not willingly, but because of Him who subjected it in hope; because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God. For we know that the whole creation groans and labors with birth pangs together until now. Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body. For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees? But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance.”

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The glory of the children beyond suffering

Even after we have received the remission of sins, our bodies grow tired, and difficulties accompany the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then why is there still groaning in us, who have already become children of God, and what should we live waiting for? Paul turns our eyes from the present, in which there is suffering, to the glory that will be revealed to the children of God. This is because, to know whether today's difficulties are our final state, we must look not only at the circumstances visible now but also at the future God has promised.

Let us read verse 18. *"For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*. What Paul compared was not a comfortable life and a weary life, but the sufferings we receive now for the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the glory we will enjoy with the Lord in the future. He did not say this without knowing the pain he himself was going through; rather, even while being beaten, being driven from place to place, and being slandered because of that gospel of the water and the Spirit, he thought of how great the glory he would enjoy in the kingdom of God was. We, too, when difficulties come, grow weary in heart if we count only what we have lost, but when we think of the inheritance God will give to His children, we discover again the reason to walk on until that day. That is why the weaker and more lacking a person is on this earth, the greater his hope toward the kingdom of heaven is.

That glory does not lie in being recognized by people for a moment or in having one's circumstances become abundant. A life of living forever with the Lord and never again being bound to death and decay is promised to the children of God. We are

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the ones who will reign with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom and enjoy the glory of God the Father in the new heaven and the new earth. Therefore, what we must hold on to in the sufferings we undergo because of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the faithfulness of the Lord, who has spoken of the glory He will give in the future. It is not that we try to obtain the rights of children by receiving many sufferings; rather, because we know the rights of children we have already received, we also endure the sufferings we share with Christ. In order to give us those rights of children, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in our place. And He rose again from death and remitted all our sins. When we start from the grace that has given us salvation in this way, we can rightly see the relationship between suffering and glory.

The creation that will be freed from corruption

This hope does not stop at comfort within our hearts; it is also connected to the future of the creation. Verse 19 says that the creation eagerly waits for the sons of God to be revealed, and this is because the day when the born-again will be clothed with the glory the Lord gives and the day when all things will be made new are not separate from each other. Now both our bodies and the creation are decaying, but when the Lord comes, the life bound to that corruption will not continue.

Verse 21 tells what that hope is. *"Because the creation itself also will be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God" (Romans 8:21).*

Withering and dying after being born and growing up is the present state of the creation. In this world, where even beautiful things cannot be kept forever, we see what the bondage of corruption is. All things were subjected to futility in this way because man sinned and left God, but God did not leave that futility as the eternal end of the creation; He sent His Son and first removed that sin. The reason Jesus received baptism from John was to have all the sins of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him, and because of that sin, the Lord shed His blood on the Cross, received its judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Since that very sin was the cause for which the creation came to be subjected to futility, the hope of the creation that will be freed from corruption also stands on this salvation. Therefore, the liberation of the creation is not something people can accomplish by caring for and tending nature, and still less is it a matter of revering and serving the creation. The future of the creation is bound to the day when the sons of God are revealed, and making all things new is the work the Lord will do when He comes again.

Verse 22 goes on to say that the whole creation groans and suffers together until now. Therefore, looking at the present world and seeing its imperfection and decay does not conflict with the word of hope. Rather, because we know what we will be set free from, the freedom He has promised is all the more precious. We have no reason to end by being discouraged at seeing the world decaying. This is because the Lord, who made all things, also has the power to make them new, and He will surely accomplish the kingdom He has promised to His children.

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We who have received the remission of sins also wait for the redemption of our body

Paul, having spoken of the groaning of the creation, makes clear that we who have received the Holy Spirit also groan within ourselves. Let us read verse 23. *"Not only that, but we also who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, eagerly waiting for the adoption, the redemption of our body" (Romans 8:23)*. What we wait for here is not an uncertain salvation in which we do not know when He will remove our sins, but the redemption of the body that has not yet been clothed with glory. Even those who have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit as a gift now have bodies that become sick and weary, so they wait for the day when the Lord will transform those bodies.

The basis on which we believe that we are already children of God is not that our bodies have become perfect but the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, which include the lifelong sins of you and me, transferred to Him once and for all. And by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross because of that sin, He received its judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and remitted all sins. Because we believe in this salvation revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we know that we are sinless children of God even while we still live in weak bodies.

Therefore, there is no need to doubt again even the remission of sins we have already received, on seeing our bodies grow weary and decay. We must believe both the fact that Jesus removed our sins and the promise that our bodies will be transformed in the future. Since the Lord rose again from death, we also will rise again. When that Lord comes again, He will

raise again and transform the bodies of those who belong to Christ, and He will cause the righteous, both those who have already fallen asleep and those who are alive to welcome the Lord, to live forever with Christ; therefore our hope does not disappear even in the face of death.

We who have received this promise must look back on what it is that we are waiting for whenever our hearts become bound to the pleasures of the flesh. If we try to be satisfied with what we enjoy for a moment, the body that will decay in the end becomes the standard of our hearts, but when we look to the redemption of the body, we come to know why a life for the kingdom of God is precious. The Holy Spirit, dwelling in us who have received the remission of sins, causes our hearts, which used to lean only toward the visible world, to turn around toward the Lord's promise. Following that leading, we must hear the word and look to the perfect life the Lord will give.

Wait with perseverance for the invisible promise

Let us read verse 24. *"For we were saved in this hope, but hope that is seen is not hope; for why does one still hope for what he sees?" (Romans 8:24)*. Hope is different from the greed that makes what we hold in our hands now even bigger. Since it is believing in and waiting for the glory God has spoken of but that has not yet appeared before our eyes, we cannot regard it as nonexistent just because it is not visible. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Just as this remission of sins we have received and the Lord's resurrection are real, the transformation of our bodies is also not an illusion

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but real. The fact that God, who has already washed away our sins in this way, has also promised the redemption of our body is the basis of our waiting.

So in verse 25 Paul urges as follows. *"But if we hope for what we do not see, we eagerly wait for it with perseverance" (Romans 8:25)*. Perseverance is not a numbness that does not feel suffering, but faith that does not let go of the promise even in the midst of suffering. It is looking to the body the Lord will raise again even on the days when our bodies decay, and carrying out the work entrusted to us today while thinking of the glory we will enjoy with the Lord even on the days when we grow weary serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we think of the faithfulness of the One who has promised rather than the length of the waiting, we can live on without abandoning what we must do now.

That groaning still remains in us who have received the remission of sins is because our bodies have not yet been clothed with glory, not because our salvation is insufficient. Our souls have already received the remission of sins and obtained salvation, and our bodies wait for the day when the Lord, who has made us His children, will come again and redeem them. Therefore, we must not accept the present sufferings and decay as the conclusion of our lives, but must endure and wait, thinking of the glory that will be revealed on that day. At the end of this waiting is that day when we will live forever with the Lord, who removed our sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross and rose again from death. ✉

Sermon 15 by Paul C. Jong

Weak children live by the help of the Holy Spirit

< Romans 8:26–30 >

“Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered. Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God. And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified.”

Our weakness of not knowing what to pray for

There are times when we sit down to pray to God but do not know what to ask for first. Sometimes words fail us because our circumstances are hard, and sometimes our own thoughts come first and we set our hearts on things different from the will of God. Since the One who helps us in such a state is the Holy Spirit, there is no need to draw back before God on the grounds that our prayers are lacking. Paul makes clear not how powerfully we

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pray but what the Holy Spirit does for us, who are weak.

Let us read verse 26. *"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26)*. The subject of this word is not a person who has overcome weakness, but the Holy Spirit, who helps in our weaknesses. We are neither people who know everything we need nor people who always rightly follow the Father's will, but the Holy Spirit, knowing that lack, Himself makes intercession for us. Therefore, we must not think that we will receive help after our prayers have become perfect, but must rely on God at the very time we are lacking.

The Holy Spirit is in the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel of the water and the Spirit says that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, by receiving baptism from John, had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted our sins. Man was made from the dust and is weak, and because he is weak, he lives with countless faults even after being born again, but even so, we are God's children. The Holy Spirit does not turn away from us because of those faults, but groans on our behalf over that very weakness and prays for us before the Father. That help is revealed in His causing us, who have fallen, to lift our eyes again to the Father. This is because only when we have the faith that we are God's children just as we are, lacking as we are, can we come boldly before God. He also keeps us, who live in bodies not yet transformed, from losing hope as we look to the redemption we will receive in the future.

However, we must not regard every emotion or special sound that arises within us as the groaning of the Holy Spirit. The

evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is not an ecstatic experience, but lies in having received the remission of sins in our hearts by believing that Jesus removed our sins through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. Since the Holy Spirit works not through our feelings but through the word of God, the weaker we are, the more we must go forward with the faith that hears the word and seeks the Lord's will. For those who need help to ask for help is not something shameful, but relying on the grace He has given to His children.

The Holy Spirit makes intercession according to the Father's will

Let us read verse 27. *"Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27)*. God the Father searches our hearts and also knows the mind of the Holy Spirit. Even if we have not been able to say everything, our circumstances are not hidden from the Father, and the Holy Spirit, too, does not lead us by a will unrelated to the Father. Because the intercession of the Holy Spirit is offered according to the will of God, we can trust His help even at times when we do not know what to ask for.

Just because there is something we want right now does not mean that it is always what we need most. When a heart that used to ask only for the comfort of the flesh comes to know, through the word, the preciousness of the work of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the content of its prayers also changes. The prayer the Holy Spirit causes us to pray is, first of all, the confession that we are sinless children of God. This is because Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed

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on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in our place, and rose again from death. Since on that faith we also come to realize through the help of the Holy Spirit what we should pray for, the mouth that used to list only its own wishes changes into a mouth that asks for the Father's mercy, saying, "Lord, we are this lacking," and that prayer widens even to people whom the gospel of the water and the Spirit has not yet reached. In this way the Holy Spirit lets us know the Father's will and helps us to live following that will.

Therefore, believing in the help of the Holy Spirit is different from trying to obtain the power to fulfill one's own wishes just as they are. If our thoughts differ from the word of the Lord, we must lay those thoughts down and turn toward the direction the Lord is pleased with. The Holy Spirit gives that help to those who desire to pray according to the Father's will. When we place before the word the heart that, all alone, used to look only at its own weakness, we can pray again by faith to the Father, who knows that weakness.

The good that works together is salvation in Christ

This help is connected to the purpose for which God called us. Let us read verse 28. *"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28)*. Here, those who love God are not people who have pleased God by their own strength, but people who, knowing their own sins and faults and desiring the mercy God gives, have come forward to His calling. It is because they have received such grace that they love God; it is not that they have earned salvation by loving Him.

Also, if we narrow the good spoken of here to all our own plans succeeding or our circumstances always getting better, we miss the meaning of the word. This is because the word that follows speaks of His causing us to be conformed to the image of the Son of God and of His justifying sinners and glorifying them. At the center of the good God has accomplished is the salvation by which He makes us His children in Christ.

We were originally weak people who could not remove our own sins by ourselves. Yet God did not call us without knowing that weakness; He knew it and prepared the remission of sins in Jesus Christ. Because we are weak and commit sins, Jesus came, and by receiving baptism from John, He had the sins we commit throughout our lives passed on to Him. And because of that sin, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place. If we had been perfect people on our own, we would not have needed a Savior, and there would also have been no becoming children of God. Even our being made from the dust, weak and lacking, has worked together in God to make us His children. Since it is the plan of God, who knows even our lack, there is no reason to seek the basis of our salvation in our own strength.

Verse 29 makes the purpose of that plan clearer. *"For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29).* God determined to save sinners in Jesus Christ, make them His children, and cause them to be conformed to the image of His Son. In the word that Jesus becomes the firstborn among many brethren is contained the grace that we who believe in Christ become one family belonging to the Father. Our calling is not hidden in a fate whose reason cannot be known, but is revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has given.

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Therefore, rather than being anxious, guessing whether we have been chosen, we must see where God has placed salvation. Since He has given the gospel of the water and the Spirit to sinners and called them to obtain righteousness by believing that word, the object of faith is not a mark hidden from me, but the salvation accomplished by Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, and rose again from death. If, regarding the grace the Lord has prepared, we wait until our own deeds become better, we end up relying on our own strength, contrary to the will of God, who called the weak.

He has placed those He justified in the glory of His children

Let us read verse 30. *"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:30)*. Paul does not speak of a process in which a person who has sin polishes his own deeds for many years and finally becomes a person without sin. He preaches the work in which God called sinners in Christ, actually removed their sins and justified them, and gave them the glory of His children. Since growing in faith and receiving the remission of sins must be distinguished, we must not regard the righteousness God has given as insufficient on the grounds that our faith is still young.

The salvation by which He justified us was accomplished concretely. When Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River, He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*.

Through that baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and because of that sin He shed His blood on the Cross and received its judgment in our place, and on the third day He rose again from death. Since He remitted even the sins you and I will commit throughout our lives by including them in that sin of the world, we who believe in the word of the water and the Spirit stand before God as those without sin. It is not that God called us righteous while leaving our sins as they were; rather, after removing our sins through His Son, He made those who believe in that righteousness His children.

His having made us His children means that He has also given us the glory of living forever in His kingdom. Since the Father's plan of salvation is not drawn up again from the beginning because of our weakness, we must turn around from wrong thoughts and conduct before the word, but must not throw away even the assurance of the remission of sins He has given us. In this way the Holy Spirit causes us to realize the grace we have already received and leads us to live relying on the Father as His children should. When we lay down the heart that used to try to prove its own strength in order to obtain salvation, our prayers, too, become the prayers of children asking the Father for help.

Think of the times when words failed you because you did not know what to ask for. Even then, the Holy Spirit knew our weaknesses and Himself made intercession according to the Father's will. Since God, who has made us His children in Christ, helps us through the Holy Spirit, do not try to hide your lacking heart, but pray relying on the word. We can come to the Father not because our words are perfect, but because the salvation Jesus accomplished for us through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross is perfect. ✉

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Sermon 16 by Paul C. Jong

Our salvation, which He predestined

< Romans 8:28–39 >

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose. For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren. Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to

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separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Our salvation is what He predestined in Christ

Whether you received the remission of sins just this time or whenever you received it, all of us who have received the remission of sins must know that we have been saved just as God determined in Jesus Christ to save us. We were not saved because we were so great. God the Father determined to save us, and in Christ He predestined to give us the gift of receiving the remission of all sins by believing in Jesus Christ and of becoming children of God; it is within that predestination that we have been saved.

All of us must know that. Our having received this salvation is what God predestined in Christ. God determined to make us His own children, and just as He had set it, when the time came He called us, made us righteous before God in Jesus Christ, and clothed those He had made righteous with the gift of the glory of becoming sons of God. This is the work God planned in His own Son before the foundation of the world, even before He made us.

"And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28). Those who are called according to His purpose are those of us who have received the remission of sins. For such people, all things work together for good. There was a mother whose child had left home, and until he returned she spent a long time, offered many prayers, shed many tears and was sick with worry; then that son received the remission of sins while he was away and came back. For that mother, all of it was

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something through which the will of God was accomplished, something in which all things worked together so that the salvation of God the Father was accomplished. It is the same with us. You and I were born on this earth, met the Lord in various circumstances and were saved. There were many events before we were saved. What He called us to believe in, through all those circumstances, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had not only the sins of our whole lifetime but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, He paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death and made us children of God.

Now, what does it mean that you and I have been saved and have become children of God? It means that we belonged to the plan by which God, before He created us, determined to adopt us as sons in His own Son. We belonged to it and were saved. We were not saved by chance. In all the things that take place in this world, there is no such thing as chance. In order to call us, God moved all of history and placed us in all our private lives, plans and circumstances; He led us through those circumstances, caused us to meet Jesus Christ, and caused us to receive the remission of sins. God had only one Son, His only Son, but God has made those who believe in Jesus Christ His second son, third son and fourth son. Jesus is the firstborn Son of God the Father, and all of us are His younger brothers under Him. This did not happen by chance. It was not made by accident, as evolution claims; it was the plan of God. It was a very meticulous plan. God mobilized absolutely everything and saved us according to His will.

"*For whom He foreknew, He also predestined to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the firstborn among many brethren" (Romans 8:29)*. Who are those

whom God foreknew? They are us. They are you and I, we who have received the remission of sins. Also, in order for us to be conformed to the image of His Son—in order to make us children exactly like Jesus—God predestined us in Jesus Christ. This is so that Jesus might be the firstborn among many brethren.

When we believe in Jesus Christ and are saved, we become children of God. The children of God have no sin at all. They are holy. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who have received the remission of sins and have become righteous. He gives the Spirit who is holy, the Spirit by whom they become His own sons. And so God takes us as His own children.

The baptism Jesus received was also within the plan of God

How does God call us? He predestines us beforehand and calls those He has predestined. This means that God drew a blueprint within His plan. He firmly set beforehand, in Jesus Christ, the work of making us children of God by believing in Jesus, and He also calls those He has predestined. Before God made this universe, before He made us human beings, He firmly determined to save us in Jesus, and after that He caused us to be born into this world. After He caused us to be born, Satan the devil made us stumble, and we fell into sin. And so, when we were sinners, God called us through Jesus. The Lord said, *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Matthew 9:13)*. We were born into this world within the plan of God, but we were born as descendants of Adam, and we were born as sinners. That is why, when we were sinners, God said that He would send Jesus Christ to this earth, and He called us,

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who were sinners, saying that He would save us through Jesus Christ.

Also, those He called, He also justified. Our receiving the remission of sins and becoming righteous—Jesus Christ's being born on this earth clothed in flesh and receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River at thirty years of age—was the work God the Father had predestined beforehand for us, in order to justify us and to make us sinless. That Jesus Christ received baptism at the Jordan River when He turned thirty was also within the plan of God. Aaron was the high priest. According to the Book of Numbers, those from the house of Aaron who were to perform the office of the high priest were made to take up that office from the time they turned thirty and to carry it out until they were fifty. And so our Lord Jesus Christ came to this earth and, when He turned thirty, removed our sins as was promised in the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the high priest laid his hands on the sacrificial offering on behalf of the people and passed on their sins; in the New Testament, the Lord, the High Priest who came to remove the sin of the whole world, did not do it with the blood of animals, but through the baptism He received from John had all the sin of all mankind transferred to His own body. And then, by offering His own body as a sacrificial offering before God the Father and receiving the judgment for sin in our place on the Cross, He saved us from all sins. In this way Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, and so He perfectly accomplished the salvation He had predestined.

Our having been saved is within the plan of God. We were not saved by chance. Even before we were born, God planned it beforehand; when the time came, He sent Jesus two thousand

years ahead of us; when the time came, He caused us to be born on this earth; when the time came, He caused us to hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit; and by having us hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He caused us to be saved through faith and to become His children.

When our sisters conceive a child in the womb, what do they prepare? They do not prepare diapers only; some even take out education insurance before the child is born. Then they make plans to prepare everything, the house and all the rest. In fact, all the plans were there even before the child was conceived, even before they married. Because that plan was there, when they marry and have a child, the diapers are already prepared and the insurance has been taken out. That means the child was born under the plan of the parents. Before that child is born, there are a grandfather and a grandmother, and there are parents. The parents had a child, but they also had a plan to see grandchildren, and the grandfather and grandmother also had a plan. It is exactly the same as grandsons and granddaughters being born under that plan. It is the same with our being born. We were not simply born by chance, and our receiving the remission of sins was not something that just happened to us. We were included in the vast providence of God, in His vast plan, and you and I have been saved according to His good plan and will to make us His own children and to reveal the glory of God. I praise the Lord. We will go to the kingdom of heaven and live there forever.

That He glorified us means that He made us children of God

God has made us sons of God. *"Whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:30)*. That He glorified them means

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that He made them children of God. For a created being to become a child of God is glorious. I do not know how to express this. It is believing in that glory: that those born as created beings become children of God within the plan of God. It is a great blessing and a great glory. Even though we live as we do now, when we go to the kingdom of our God, the kingdom of the Father, we will live gloriously. With bodies that do not decline, do not decay and do not fall ill, we will live as children of God, as children who possess all the angels, all creation and all the possessions of God the Father.

Receiving the remission of sins is being clothed with glory. It means that a sinner has become righteous. Not only does he become righteous, but he becomes a child of God. He is clothed with the glory of becoming a son of God. This is the greatest gift and the greatest grace. And this is within the plan of God. God the Father, together with Jesus Christ, has clothed us with the glory of becoming sons of God the Father as a gift.

What, then, shall we say about this? In this chapter 8, the apostle Paul says, *"There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit" (Romans 8:1)*, and he confesses his faith while giving thanks before the Lord, who saved us from all sins. And he goes on to say, *"What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31–32)*. The assurance that there is no condemnation and the glory of becoming children are based on the salvation Jesus accomplished. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore once and for all not only the sins that come from our shortcomings but also all the sins of the world; He received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood and

dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and gave us life.

God the Father has taken us as His own sons through His own Son. He has clothed us with glory. He has made us beings who will never be cast out again, who can never be cursed again, and who will live forever just as God the Father lives forever. Then what shall we say? If God is for us, who will oppose us? It means: when God makes us His own children, is there anyone who could oppose it? God the Father gave His one and only Son to us, passed on all our sins to that only Son, judged that only Son in our place, and saved us from sin. It is already something for us to be thankful for that this God made us righteous and delivered us from judgment, but He loved us so much that He even gave His own Son; so what flaw could there be in His making us His own children? That is what this means. Will He not, with that Son, give us all things as a gift? He gives us the kingdom of heaven and every gift.

God has clothed those who have received the remission of sins with the glory of becoming children of God as a gift. *"As many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12).* He has clothed them with the glory of becoming children of God. Once we have become children of God, unless we truly betray Jesus Christ with our mouths, unless we really spit out the gospel of the water and the Spirit ourselves, then no matter what shortcomings we may have, God never again reduces to servants those whom He saved according to His plan and clothed with the glory of becoming His children.

Our having become children of God, our having been clothed with this glory, came about according to the plan of God predestined toward us. This is something to give thanks for before God. What if this had come about by chance? With one

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slight mistake, it could be canceled. But because God's saving us came about within the plan of God the Father, no matter what shortcomings we may have, our having been clothed with the glory of becoming children of God does not leave us—unless we were to say, "Jesus is truly not my Savior. Jesus did not remove all my sins." I praise the Lord.

Who shall bring a charge against what God has done?

No one can accuse us, who have been clothed with the glory of the sons of God. *"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:33–34).*

Many created beings protest about our having received the remission of sins and become righteous. An angel is a spiritual being a notch above man. But one day an angel looked and saw that a certain person had become a child of God. When that person had become righteous and a child of God, the angel said, "When he was made, he was inferior to me, but one day, suddenly, one who is inferior to me has become a child of God. God, how can this be? Isn't this too unfair?" But no one can bring a charge against those whom God has chosen in Christ. Why is that? It is because the One who justified us and removed our sins is God. Then who can look at us and condemn us, saying that we have sin? Our having received the remission of sins is God's having removed our sins through Jesus Christ. No matter how lacking we may be, can anyone—people or angels—look at a person who has received the remission of sins and say, "You

have sin"? The beginning of our salvation was not human merit or effort, but the work in which Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had not only our sins but also all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all. Since Jesus paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross because of that sin and rose again from death, we have become righteous by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If a person had made us sinless, people could say something about it. If we had become righteous by spending a lot of money before God, anyone could accuse us and protest. But our being made righteous and made children of God did not come about through us; we became righteous because God loved us. Because we became righteous through God, no one can say anything against it. People say, "How can you say that person has no sin? How can you say that he faces no judgment and becomes a child of God? He is a person who eats, sleeps and lives just as we do; just because he believes that one thing, does he suddenly become a child of God while I go to hell? How can anything be this unfair?" But the apostle Paul says that they cannot do so. No one can condemn us, because the One who saved us is God, because the One who determined to save us is God, because the One who justified us is God, and because the One who glorified us is God. Who will overturn what God has done?

Jesus Christ died for us. It is Christ Jesus who not only died but also rose again. Jesus bore all our sins, received the judgment in our place on the Cross, and, because the wages of sin is death, died in our place; and God the Father raised His own Son in order to give us life. He raised His body. And Jesus Christ is now alive at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. Jesus is the One who makes intercession for us. He comes to us by the Holy Spirit and is on our side as the One who earnestly prays on our behalf for the help we need to ask of God the Father. God is

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on our side. God made us within His plan and caused us to be born in order to make us His children, and Jesus Christ saved us and made us His children. He did so in order to live together with us. Then who can accuse us? Who can look at us and say that we have sin?

No matter how lacking we may be, what created being can look at us and say that we are sinners? Can a person say to himself that he has sin? God has removed all sins, so how can a person say to himself that he has sin? He cannot say it. Because God has saved us, we cannot say this or that about our salvation. Salvation does not depend on us; it has been given to us as the gift of salvation entirely through God. It was the gift of God.

A salvation planned before the foundation of the world, not a stroke of luck

This salvation was not obtained by some stroke of luck. God planned it in His heart from eternity; according to what He had planned, He created the heavens and the earth, made us, caused us to be born and arranged all our circumstances; and then what He had planned before the foundation of the world, just as He planned to make us children of God through Jesus Christ, has come to you and me today as the salvation of God. So please do not underestimate your own salvation. Do not say, “Is this salvation, or is that salvation? Are those people believing rightly, or am I believing rightly?” It is right that we who believe in Jesus Christ have no sin. If someone believes in Jesus and still says that he has even 0.1 percent of sin, that kind of faith must be thrown away. It is right that we who believe in Jesus Christ have no sin. It is right that we have become children of God by believing in Jesus Christ. It is right that we have been clothed

with glory. What we must clearly believe is the fact that, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only your sins and mine but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all. And so, since Jesus received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rose again from death, do not measure the love of God by our lacking deeds.

He who gave His own Son for us, even to death, and even sacrificed Him—for what purpose does He save us? He saved us in order to make us His own children. That is the gift of God, but because God loved us so much and His plan was so magnificent and gracious, in order to save us and make us His own children, He had to pay such a price: giving His one and only Son for us, putting Him to death once and raising Him again. Therefore, receiving the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ does not just happen. You must know what is certain. After you clearly believe, you must certainly have no sin. Are you righteous, or are you a sinner? Once righteous, righteous forever. No one can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ.

No one can separate us from the love of Christ

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35). Can tribulation cut off what God has done in making us sinless and making us His children? No matter how severe tribulation may be, it cannot make one who has become a child of God cease to be a child. What about distress? Even if, after believing in Jesus, we are weary, powerless and in distress, no matter how great our distress, a child of God is still a child. No matter how hard our lives may

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be and how weary our hearts, before God His people are still His people and His children are still His children. Among children there are worthless children and fine children, but a child is still a child. What about persecution? If you are persecuted after receiving the remission of sins, do you cease to be a child of God? You who have received the remission of sins, do not fear persecution.

After you receive the remission of sins, there is nothing for you to do. Be still. Believe that the Lord has removed your sins, and wait quietly. Tribulation will come, and persecution will come. Distress will come. At such times, do not struggle by yourself. The more you struggle, the more the other side will come at you. At such times you must call the guide of the church and call on the Lord. When you call the guide, the guide leads you beautifully. He leads you so that you do not suffer needless tribulation. On your own, no matter what you do, it does not work. At such times you must call the pastor of the church or the workers of the church, and call the brothers and sisters of the church.

Tribulation comes. Persecution comes. When we are born as sinners and remain sinners, there is no persecution. But after we receive the remission of sins, the people of the world simply cannot understand us. Who understands us? Only God understands, and only the righteous understand. Only the saints in the church who have received the remission of sins and the servants of God understand. If you go somewhere else and say that you have no sin, you are treated as a strange person. At such times, if you come to the church and say, as though giving testimony, “Brother, I have no sin. The Lord removed my sin in this way,” hallelujah, you have met a companion. You sing praises, give thanks and give glory. But if you go before unbelievers and say that you have no sin, you are told that you

have lost your mind. That is why God told us to come out from among them and be separate. The remission of sins we testify of has such clear content. We give thanks together because we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only our sins but also all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and that because of the sin He bore, He shed His blood on the Cross, received its judgment in our place and rose again from death.

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: 'I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.' Therefore 'Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.' 'I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters, Says the LORD Almighty'" (2 Corinthians 6:14–18).

The apostle Paul met Jesus Christ on the road to Damascus when he was in Judaism. He became righteous. The apostle Paul knew that when Jesus Christ received baptism from John, his own sins were passed on to Jesus Christ. He had come to realize it. After meeting Jesus Christ in Damascus, he never went back to Judaism. And he set out to find the born-again brothers and sisters and began to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, people in Judaism came and began to hinder and persecute his preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But he did not go back. The people in Judaism were those who had

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applauded when Saul was arresting and killing those who believed in Jesus, but now the apostle Paul was no longer arresting and killing them but preaching the way of believing in Jesus and becoming righteous. Then the Jews began to rush at the apostle Paul to kill him. If the apostle Paul had said, "I was wrong," and gone back, he would not have been beaten or persecuted. But he could not go back. He could not go back because those Jews were people who rejected Jesus Christ and rejected the fact that Jesus Christ had removed all their sins. And so the apostle Paul, as a righteous man, preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

While preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Paul said that you must not be yoked together with unbelievers. Being yoked together means being bound together and going to this village and to that village. It means not to work wearing the same yoke. It is saying not to do such things as serving God together, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit together and praising together with unbelievers. How can righteousness and lawlessness go together, and how can light and darkness have fellowship? Lawlessness refers to sin. This means: how can a righteous person go together with a sinner? Therefore, the righteous must preserve themselves as the righteous for a long time. After becoming righteous, after receiving the remission of sins, one must return to the born-again church in order to be welcomed and to be able to live. One must return to the church that caused him to be born again, the church where sinless people who have the same Spirit as he has gather and worship, the church where he received the remission of sins through Jesus Christ. In the church where the children of God live a life of faith on this earth, the parents, too, must be with the children. The One whom born-again people must believe in and rely on together is Jesus. We care for one another within the word that,

through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sins of all of us but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and so He paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and He rose again from death and took us as children of God.

Do not fear persecution within the born-again church

Persecution will surely come. Do not fear persecution. The only way to escape persecution is the Lord's embrace and, on this earth, the Church of God. When you come to the Church of God, you are protected. We must be wise like serpents and pure like doves. It is fitting for a person who has become righteous to come and live where the righteous are gathered. We must go to sinners to preach the gospel, but the life of faith must be lived in the born-again church. This is because, where there is no food of the word, the soul suffers famine.

Whether nakedness or peril or sword, no danger can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. Even if they kill us, can they undo the fact that Jesus Christ removed our sins? They cannot nullify it. No one can make void the fact that the Lord removed our sins. *"As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter'" (Romans 8:36)*. The saints who live on this earth, the saints who have received the remission of sins, are killed all day long for the Lord and are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. They are treated as wicked people by the people of this world. So, in any case, the righteous must stick tightly together, preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to sinners, and, after scattering and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, come back and

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gather in one place. You must decide on a church where there are righteous people, a church where there are a pastor and workers of the church who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and attend it; when you go out to preach the gospel, you go out to sinners, but when you come back, you must return to the Church of God. If it does not work this way, you will be persecuted. The church gives us rest. It heals our souls and heals our wounded hearts. When you come to the church and listen to the word, your problems are resolved. There were many very troublesome matters, but as you come to the church and quietly listen to the word, those problems are all resolved before you know it. That is exactly what it means that the Father walks among them. The Father binds up and heals all the wounds of His children. He binds up their wounds through the servants of God and the people of God.

We are more than conquerors in all things through Jesus Christ, who loves us. *"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:37–39)*. Can anything separate us? No. Before the foundation of the world, God predestined in Jesus Christ to make us His children; when the time came He called us, and those He called He also justified in Jesus Christ; He took those without sin as His own children and clothed them with glory. As for this—that God so loved and blessed us—neither angels nor height nor depth nor anything in this world can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. That love was shown in the work by which, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore once and for all not only the sins of us who are weak but also all the sins of the world.

Since Jesus received the judgment for the sin He bore in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rose again from death, no created being can tear us away from that salvation.

The sufferings of this present time cannot be compared with the glory to be revealed

So, after receiving the remission of sins, we must get a vaccination shot. Getting that shot is according to the word that says, *"If indeed we suffer with Him, that we may also be glorified together" (Romans 8:17). "For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*. If we have truly been clothed before God with the glory of becoming children of God, if we believe that we have been clothed with glory, we will go to that kingdom and live there forever, happily, shining like the sun. Then we must not fear or be ashamed of being persecuted on this earth because of Christ, because of the salvation by which the Lord has saved us. We have future happiness. Then, whatever sufferings there may be now, we must endure, persevere and give thanks. If we avoid present sufferings, we will be put to shame before the Father. Our future has been guaranteed. Those whose future is guaranteed can endure, persevere, be faithful and give thanks no matter what happens now.

Dear beloved saints, doubts about our faith often come to us, and we fall into weakness. When we fall into weakness, what kind of thoughts come to us? When we do a little well, we feel very good, and when we do even a little wrong, our hearts quickly grow dark. But Jesus Christ bore all the sins of our flesh.

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It does not end there; we must know that, before He removed our sins, God predestined beforehand to save us—that He set it beforehand. When there is a deep faith in our hearts that we are in the love of God, within His plan, we can always follow God with thanksgiving, praise Him and endure persecution for the Lord's sake.

No one can separate us from the love of our Lord Jesus Christ. Just because others persecute us, do we become sinners? The apostle Paul says that his being saved was within the predestination of God. It is predestination in Jesus Christ; it is what He set beforehand. In Jesus Christ, He determined to make us righteous and set beforehand to take us as the people and children of God. Through that plan of God, through His determination, we became children of God when the time came. We have been clothed with glory. No one is as glorious as we are. Where in this world is there anyone clothed with glory as we are? Even though we are lacking and weak, we are kings and priests. We are righteous. We are children of God who will enjoy glory together with God forever. We merely rejoice when the things of the world that are visible to our eyes go a little well and are discouraged when they go even a little wrong; but can the glory of this world be compared with the glory God has given us? It cannot be compared. Jesus Himself accomplished this salvation, which cannot be compared with the glory of the world. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sins we commit but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all; and because of that sin He shed His blood on the Cross, received its judgment in our place, rose again from death and gave us eternal life. So we can believe in that love even in the midst of suffering.

So what if we suffer a little? Dying does not make us sinners. Even if things are hard, it is all right if they are hard because of

the Lord. It is all right to have hardships while serving the Lord, but it is a pitiful thing to suffer hardship after failing while striving needlessly to live well for oneself, to eat well and live well in this world. We will go to that kingdom and enjoy happiness forever, so what if we suffer a little on this earth? The pleasure of suffering is no ordinary pleasure. When we go through difficulties we greatly dislike them, but once we have experienced a little difficulty, the light of brightness and blessing surely come afterward. That is why the truth has its own taste. Do not be afraid after receiving the remission of sins. After receiving the remission of sins, receive the guidance of the church. After receiving the remission of sins, and while receiving the guidance of the church, be persecuted and pointed at by many people. Take it upon yourselves willingly. If you are in a house that is not your own, you will be driven out. A wise person quickly finds his own home before he is driven out.

When John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus at the Jordan River, our sins were passed on to Jesus through the laying on of hands. They were passed on safely. That is why we praise the Lord. If the sins had not been passed on at that time, the plan of God might have come to nothing, but they were truly passed on safely, and the plan of God was completely fulfilled at the Jordan River, on the Cross and in the kingdom of heaven. I praise the Lord. Height or depth or powers or things present or things to come or principalities or angels or life or death or any other created thing cannot separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. No one can separate us. Our salvation did not come about through us but through God. That is why we have become righteous forever.

The apostle Paul revealed the grand and eternal plan of God. Like the apostle Paul, we too have been saved within the grand plan of God. Our brothers and sisters who have heard the gospel

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of the water and the Spirit, all the people of God—none of us came to this by chance. It did not just happen. It was planned from eternity and was fulfilled for us when the time came. If being born again happened by chance, that would be wrong. If someone says that, while dreaming, he heard a voice in a vision saying, "I love you," and was born again by chance, that is a great mistake. That is not salvation. For salvation, one must clearly be born again of water and the Spirit. Only when the grand plan of God is revealed through the word do we receive salvation within that word. We give thanks to the Lord, who has saved us completely, and we praise the Lord. ✉

Sermon 17 by Paul C. Jong

No one shall be able to separate us from the love which is in Jesus Christ

< Romans 8:30–39 >

“Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified. What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall bring a charge against God’s elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: ‘For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.’ Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord.”

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God determined before the foundation of the world to make us His children

All mankind can only be so thankful before God. However, among those who believe in Jesus today, there are some who even dispute this fundamental matter of whether Jesus is God or not. Their thoughts are gripped by confusion. But Jesus is King and God to mankind. It is only that, in order to save human beings from the law of sin and death, Jesus put on a body of flesh and came into this world for a while as the Savior. Jesus Christ is the very Being who created the universe and all things. Because He spoke, this world and the universe still exist even now, exactly as He spoke.

In the word, it says, *"Moreover whom He predestined, these He also called; whom He called, these He also justified; and whom He justified, these He also glorified" (Romans 8:30)*. That God predestined us means that, on God's side, He had already determined before the foundation of the world to make us His children. And so He called those He had predestined, but as what did He call them? He called them as sinners. In order to make us the people of God, God first caused us to become sinners.

Why is that? It is that, in order to make created beings children of God, God had a plan to first cause us to become sinners and then bring us into the amazing blessing of God. What was absolutely necessary for God to clothe us with the grace of becoming children of God? It was the grace of the remission of sins. This was the mercy and the gift of God. In other words, created beings become children of God through the grace of the remission of sins that God gives. In order to give this gift of the remission of sins, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. That sin of the world includes all the sins that you and I

commit throughout our lives, and we have become children of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that because Jesus bore that sin, He shed His blood on the Cross, received its judgment in our place and rose again from death.

God first caused Jesus to be born under the law, just like us human beings. And through Jesus Christ He defeated the angel who had challenged God. But through the wicked devil, people were tempted and fell into sin. God permitted this. Why did He do this? It was in order to give mankind the blessing of becoming children of God. God led us into Jesus Christ and made righteous those who believe in the law of the Spirit of life, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why the Book of Romans says that those He called He justified, and those He justified He also glorified. The work of salvation of God is that, from before the foundation of the world, He made a plan beforehand to save us from sin and make us His own children, accomplished it Himself and made us righteous. His giving us the gift of the remission of sins in this way is because He made us the objects of God's blessing. And we, the righteous, have become those who have already entered into that will. We who already believe have received the blessing of God.

Therefore, as the word says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17),* we have received the blessing of being able to call God "Father" by faith. And when we pray to God the Father, God hears the prayers of us who have become His children. The people who follow this gospel of the water and the Spirit have become those who can receive the blessing of God, and they are also those who have already received the blessing. What kind of people are we? There is a fairy tale we know well called The Prince and the Pauper. In a certain kingdom, a prince and a pauper were born at the same time, and they also looked exactly alike. One day the prince wanted to see every corner of the world,

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so he secretly slipped out of the palace and went out into the streets; there he met the pauper who looked exactly like him, and they exchanged clothes, and from then on the two lived the different lives each had dreamed of. Why am I telling this story? Because we are just like that. No matter how much we may live in this world wearing clothes like a pauper's, what is our fundamental status? Our status, as those who have received the remission of sins through the water and the Spirit and have been born again, is that of sons of God.

In Jesus Christ, the law of the remission of sins toward us has been accomplished. This law of the Spirit of God is a great blessing to us. It is a miracle of blessing. Before I met the Lord, I prayed like this: "God, please teach me. I know nothing. Please teach me from the very basics. I am a little child before God. Please teach me with the truth." And as I read the word of God verse by verse, I came to realize that, although people commit sin until they die, that sin of the world had already been completely removed in Jesus Christ through the baptism and the blood. I came to know deeply and believe that the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood had ample power, more than enough to remove all the sin of this world.

He shone the light of salvation on us, who have no human righteousness

The Lord came as the light of salvation to us, who were stained with sin. Our Lord came to this earth, to those who live according to the flesh, and shone the light of the remission of sins into the dark world. Just as light brightens the whole house when you flip on the electric switch, the baptism the Lord received and His blood were sufficient to remove all the sin of

this world and ample to make the dark world bright. The Lord has made sinners who live according to the flesh into righteous people who have no sin at all. The righteous are living within the law of the Spirit, but those living under the law of the flesh still do not know the truth and are wandering in darkness.

The meaning of the word of verse 30 is that, already when God made this universe, in the heart of Jesus Christ He made sinners righteous and made them objects that receive the blessing of God. And those who are to receive the blessing of God know that they have no human righteousness and hold on to the righteousness of God. Jesus is the Creator. As this word says, *"The world was made through Him" (John 1:10)*, this world was made through Jesus. We, too, were made through Jesus and exist in this world. And we have been saved from all sins through the remission of sins that Jesus gave. Jesus alone is the One who can save our lives from the sin of the world. Jesus has completely saved you and me from the law of the flesh. Because, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sins of your whole lifetime and mine but also all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, He paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, and He delivered us from sin and death, from which we could not escape by our own strength.

Have you been saved from the whole law of sin and death? God has applied the law of the Spirit to us in order to give us blessing. That we could be delivered from living according to the flesh was something predestined and planned in Jesus Christ from before the foundation of the world. The only thing we did was to believe. God's making us righteous means that He has fulfilled all that He predestined and planned in Jesus Christ, making us children of God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In Jesus Christ, through this gospel of the water and

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the Spirit, God has made those who know and believe the truth His own children and has clothed them with blessing.

Let me say it again: all this came about through the law of the Spirit that was in Jesus Christ. *"What then shall we say to these things?" (Romans 8:31)*. That is right. What can we say about the work by which God glorified us and made us righteous? What can we say about the law of salvation God has set? Do we, who are created beings, have anything to dispute before God about His having removed the sin of mankind in Jesus Christ through the baptism and the blood of the Cross? Yet people complain about what God has done and do not believe in the love of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the substance of the law of the Spirit. What is there to say in the face of the established fact that God predestined and made us in Jesus Christ? If God has set the remission of sins by this law in Jesus Christ, can we change that law? No, we cannot. The Bible says that we are beings who have nothing to say about God's having made us His children by the law of the Spirit.

The unrighteousness of man has demonstrated the righteousness of God

It says, *"But if our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say? Is God unjust who inflicts wrath? (I speak as a man.) Certainly not! For then how will God judge the world? For if the truth of God has increased through my lie to His glory, why am I also still judged as a sinner?" (Romans 3:5–7)*. God has said that, because people live according to the flesh, they cannot be saved from their own sins by their own strength, but that they have been saved through the righteousness of God. God says, "I have saved you from all sins

through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the law of the Spirit. Therefore you who believe in this gospel are righteous. I have removed all your sins once and for all by this law." Then some people say, "If God has done that for you, you will go on sinning even more recklessly."

But on this matter the apostle Paul says, "If our unrighteousness demonstrates the righteousness of God, what shall we say?" This means that, although in fact human beings are those who live according to the flesh until they die, the Lord took away even the sins we will commit in the future and so has made us perfect, and through this the righteousness of God is exalted all the more. What did God say to those who do not believe this truth? He says that you who say such things deserve to be judged and go to hell because you do not believe in God. The statement that He removed even the sins we will commit in the future also means that, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore once and for all not only the sins of our whole lifetime but also all the sins of the world. Since, because of the sin He bore, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross, received its judgment in our place and rose again from death, that salvation is not insufficient even when our unrighteousness is revealed.

The apostle Paul testified, *"If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:31–32).* The meaning of this word is: if God has predestined to make us His own children through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who can oppose what God has done? If people oppose the law of salvation that God has set, can the will of God collapse? No, it cannot. Even if we do not believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is not that the will of God is not accomplished. As the word says, if God is for us, who will oppose us? That God is for us means that He makes us

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blessed people who become His children. Then who will oppose God's blessing His own children? No one can oppose God and us.

You may not know all of God's will, but you clearly know and believe the fact that, in order to remove our sins, God predestined it in Jesus Christ and caused us to be born among sinners, and that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, shed His blood and removed all our sins. Then who will oppose us in the matter of Jesus' having made us sinless? Can unbelievers oppose us? That would not be opposing us but opposing God. They think that people who have received the remission of sins are strange, but in the end they are opposing God. Of course, it was not that we had the ability to escape from the law of sin by ourselves. We became righteous by believing in the law of the Spirit. We believed because someone, following the will of God, told us about this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as we were not born on this earth because we wanted to be born, we could become righteous because God caused us to become righteous by the law of the Spirit. Nothing in our salvation came about as we wished.

Down to the finest details of our existence and of everything about us that can be seen, there is nothing we made ourselves. We only enjoy what God has done. Because God has removed our sins by the law of the Spirit, we are saved from sin simply by believing it. But if we do not accept this law, we are not saved from sin. Those who do not believe in the law of the Spirit God has given go to hell because they are arrogant and stubborn. Not believing in what God has done and insisting that one's own thoughts are more right than God is a challenge to the authority of God, and so they come to go to hell. If one does not accept by faith the way of the remission of sins of the Spirit that God has given, who could be saved from sin? Whoever he is, because he

does not believe this law God has set, he will surely go to hell. If God is for us, who will oppose us? There is no one in this world who can oppose us, who have become righteous by faith.

The epistle in the Bible that comprehensively covers faith is the Book of Romans. And if I were to name the place that tells the core of the Bible precisely, I could say it is Romans chapter 8. In conclusion, it is the fact that, if God is for us, no one can oppose us.

"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32). God the Father gave His own Son to mankind. And so He had that only Son receive baptism from John and have the sin of the world transferred to Him, and had Him shed His blood on the Cross, and thereby He completed the work of saving all sinners from sin. We believed that and were saved. Will not God the Father, who gave us even His own Son, give us all things as a gift? Yes, He will. The greatest gift God has given is the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism and the blood He received for us. Through Jesus Christ, God not only saved sinners from the sin of the world but also made them His own children. That is why we have come to be able to call God "Abba, Father." Only the born-again righteous can call God "Father." God has given us the blessing of becoming children of God as a gift. And together with the kingdom of heaven, He has given us the gift of eternal life, so that we can live happily with God forever without dying.

Who can bring a charge against the people of God?

"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies. Who is he who condemns? It is Christ who died,

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and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter'" (Romans 8:33–36).

As this word says, who can bring a charge against us, who have become children of God? Who can say that we believe wrongly? No one can accuse us before God concerning our faith. God chose us sinners in Jesus Christ by this law of salvation and made us righteous. Since God has acknowledged us and justified us in this way, who could accuse us? This is the meaning of the words "bring a charge." In order to deliver us from all sins, Jesus Christ, according to this law of the Spirit, received baptism from John, bore the sin of the world and was nailed to the Cross in place of sinners. If we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished by the water and the blood that washed away all our sins, no one can ever say that we have sin. Since Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, our assurance lies in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

You must know that believing in Jesus and yet believing before God, "I am a sinner," is a faith that is utterly different from the Bible. Who can say that a righteous person has sin? Who can say that a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit has sin? No one. You yourselves cannot say to yourselves that you have sin. Just because our flesh or we ourselves are very weak, can we say to ourselves, "Do you have sin?" We cannot. Can people who are not born again talk to the righteous and say that

they have sin? No one can. No one dares to say that those who believe in God and in what God has done have sin. Jesus also said to the woman caught in the very act of adultery, *"Neither do I condemn you" (John 8:11)*. Therefore, people who say they have sin even after believing in Jesus, or whose sins never go away no matter how long they believe, are in fact not believing in the truth of salvation but believing in their own thoughts and in their conscience that has not been born again.

The apostle Paul gives a full summary of his faith in Romans chapter 8. *"It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34)*. *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" (Romans 8:35)*. As this word says, can tribulation separate us? Can persecution separate us? Can distress separate us from the love of Christ? Nothing can separate us from the love of Christ. *"As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter'" (Romans 8:36)*. This word means that, because we believe in Jesus Christ, we are persecuted and suffer hardship on this earth. But although in reality we seem to be those who have nothing, we are not those who have nothing; we are rich, and we are truly those who have received blessing. No one can separate us from the love of Christ and of God. That nothing can separate us from the love of Christ means that nothing can separate us from His love by which Jesus, the perfect God, came as Priest and as Prophet, gave His own body to us and saved us—that is, from the love of God for our salvation, which has made us perfect. No persecution, tribulation or distress, nor famine or nakedness or peril or sword, can separate us.

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No persecution can separate us from the salvation that is in Jesus Christ

After we believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is much persecution, just as the Bible says. But no one has been able to separate me from the love formed between God and me. Even if people persecute me because I follow the will of God and threaten to kill me, they cannot nullify the fact that the Lord removed my sins. No hardship can nullify the fact that I have become a child of God. Nothing can nullify all the blessings of God I have received.

When we look at the Bible, we see that people who met the Lord were persecuted by unrighteous people. The apostle Paul was also persecuted. The Bible says that he was beaten with rods three times. Also, he received forty stripes minus one—that is, thirty-nine lashes—five times. On top of that, he was stoned; people beat him, and thinking he was now dead, they dragged him out and threw him away, but he came back to life. In this way, believing in and following Jesus is not always joyful and comfortable. But we have been saved from sin because of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord accomplished. We are always thankful because of that. The apostle Paul says, *"As poor, yet making many rich; as having nothing, and yet possessing all things" (2 Corinthians 6:10)*. God has blessed the righteous; He has given them every spiritual blessing of heaven and the blessing of the fatness of the earth. When we live believing in God, God also abundantly fills the things of the earth for those who follow His will. Whether our circumstances are plentiful or hard, the love of the salvation we have already received does not change. Since, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only our sins but also all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and because

of that sin He paid its price with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death, we believe in that love that gave us life and rely on the Lord today as well.

"Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37). That is right. The material things of the earth are things that can be there and then gone, and gone and then there. They are truly nothing. Just as it is written in the word, we are truly content if we now have something to eat, a place to sleep, a church in which to live a life of faith, and are together with the people of God. If we are united with the church, live faithfully, believe in God and pray, God gives us in due season, of His own accord, as much as He thinks we need. Will not God, who has given us every spiritual blessing of heaven, give us the blessing of the fatness of the earth? It is because we have not lived by faith that we are tied up in our circumstances and at a loss; God surely keeps what He has said.

"For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38–39). Can anything separate us from the love of Jesus? No. But if we do not unite with God and live by our own thoughts, we become foolish and senseless, and our faith becomes weak. The Church of God means Bethlehem, that is, 'the house of bread.' That is why there is always the bread of heaven in the church. Just as God blessed Jacob with the blessing of the fatness of the earth and the blessing of the dew of heaven, He has blessed us who are born again. I believe in God. I believe that, for brothers and sisters who are united with God and grow faithfully by faith, He is the God who takes responsibility for all those things.

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You must live by believing in the law of the Spirit. If, after being saved from all sins through this gospel of the water and the Spirit, you live by faith, you become descendants of faith like Abraham. Dear beloved saints, we have been saved from all sins through the law of the Spirit. God, who made the heavens and the earth and all things in the universe, has delivered us from all sins. And I believe that He will not only let us live forever in the eternal kingdom to come but that this God will also help us on this earth. The righteous are those who have received blessing by faith and who will be blessed forever. I am so thankful that Almighty God has saved us from all sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I give thanks that He has made us belong to His plan and taken us as His children, and that He has clothed us with eternal glory. When I think that there was that plan of the Spirit of God toward us, I praise God. No one can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ. ✉

Sermon 18 by Paul C. Jong

The love of God, from which no one can separate us

< Romans 8:35–39 >

"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Yet in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

The Holy Spirit, who Himself makes intercession for us

In Romans 8:26, the apostle Paul shows the greatest comfort of a born-again person. *"Likewise the Spirit also helps in our weaknesses. For we do not know what we should pray for as we ought, but the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26)*. We are

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those who do not know how we should pray for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given us. But the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our hearts, neither sleeps nor slumbers, and Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.

What is the reason we have been able to live a life of faith on the path of faith until today? It is not because we ourselves prayed well. It is because the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the hearts of the righteous, has helped us and led us in due season.

In Romans 8:27, the apostle Paul speaks of how that intercession is always answered. *"Now He who searches the hearts knows what the mind of the Spirit is, because He makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God" (Romans 8:27).* The reason God the Father, who searches the hearts, knows the mind of the Spirit is that the Holy Spirit always makes intercession for the saints according to the will of God.

Then what is the way for a born-again person to enjoy this fact safely? It is not confirming the presence of the Holy Spirit by one's own feelings or experiences. Because God is Spirit, He discerns the things of the Spirit. The righteous live by faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That word says that, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

The truth of salvation, linked together like a golden chain

In Romans 8:28, the apostle Paul defines the life of a born-again person in a single line. *"All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose" (Romans 8:28)*. It is the promise that, whatever happens, all those things in the end come together into the way that causes the righteous to take part in glory together with Christ. The salvation of the remission of sins that a born-again person has received, the sufferings for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that lie in between, and the participation in the final glory that lies at the end—all these things are bound into one way and shape the life of the righteous.

In Romans 8:29 and 30, the apostle Paul shows how He causes all things to work together for good. Before God made this universe, He determined to save sinners in Jesus Christ and make them the people of God. And so He caused those He had predestined to live by faith in the righteousness of God.

Then how did God justify those who were called? Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, rose again from death and gave salvation to those who believe. God has already determined even that He will glorify them on the last day. God's foreknowing, predestining, calling, saving from sin and glorifying—these five stages are linked together like a golden chain.

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If God is for us, who will be against us?

In Romans 8:31, the apostle Paul speaks of the firm salvation of a born-again person. *"If God is for us, who can be against us?" (Romans 8:31)*.

In Romans 8:32, the apostle Paul shows how far the guarantee of that love reaches. *"He who did not spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things?" (Romans 8:32)*. God the Father caused Jesus Christ to receive baptism from John, to be nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and rise again from death, and so He granted salvation to those who believe. Therefore, the greatest gift God has given the righteous is the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross and His resurrection from death. The Lord, who has given the Holy Spirit to those who believe in that great salvation, is the One who gives the righteous everything they need.

In Romans 8:33, the apostle Paul says, *"Who shall bring a charge against God's elect? It is God who justifies" (Romans 8:33)*. The living God Himself has declared to those He saved, "You have no sin; you are My child." So who could overturn that declaration? That is what this means. Therefore, no one can bring a charge against those who have been born again by faith in the Lord, who, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and rose again from death. No one can say that something is wrong with us, who have received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and rose again from death. There can be no one anywhere who can say that a person who has received

the remission of sins in his heart by faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit has sin.

In Romans 8:34, the apostle Paul explains precisely, within one verse, the reason condemnation has disappeared. *"It is Christ who died, and furthermore is also risen, who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34)*. Our Lord Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, ascended after forty days had passed, and has now become the One seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus Christ is now seated beside God the Father and is Himself making intercession for the saints. In verses 26 and 27, the Holy Spirit within us makes intercession with groanings which cannot be uttered, and in verse 34, Christ, who is at the right hand of God, Himself makes intercession; so the righteous have become those protected by the intercession of these two.

Neither tribulation nor sword can separate us from the love of Jesus Christ

In Romans 8:35, the apostle Paul is assured that a born-again person and the love of Christ can never be separated. *"Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword?" (Romans 8:35)*. The basis of that assurance is not firmness on the side of the righteous. It lies in the fact that the love of God is a love that began on God's side and that God holds on to from His side. That love, which began on God's side, is the love by which Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him,

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shed His blood on the Cross and received its judgment in our place, and rose again from death and saved us from all sins.

The seven things the apostle Paul lists—tribulation, distress, persecution, famine, nakedness, peril and sword—are the persecutions that the righteous actually go through when they are martyred for the glory of the Lord in the last days. Put the other way around, if a born-again person is living smoothly without any difficulty at all, he comes to feel the need to examine honestly whether he is now living according to the word of God. Why did David not drift away from the love of God even after receiving so much persecution, distress and nakedness from Saul? It was because he clearly believed in his heart the fact that the love of God was always with him.

In Romans 8:36, the apostle Paul honestly portrays the form of persecution the righteous receive on this earth. *"For Your sake we are killed all day long; We are accounted as sheep for the slaughter" (Romans 8:36)*. The apostle Paul received thirty-nine lashes five times, and he came back to life at the place where he had been dragged and thrown away after he was stoned and thought to be dead. The way of the born-again righteous following the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not always a joyful and comfortable way. But a life of being accounted as sheep for the slaughter is not abnormal; it is the normal appearance of a person who abides in the love of Christ.

In Romans 8:37, the apostle Paul explains how to pass through that way. *"In all these things we are more than conquerors through Him who loved us" (Romans 8:37)*. The driving force of being more than conquerors is not the will or perseverance of the righteous themselves. Faith in the truth that the Lord has saved sinners perfectly forever, and faith in the companionship of Immanuel, who promised, *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)*—this

overcomes the world. Whenever the righteous meet any extreme tribulation, the love of our Lord Himself holds them up and causes them to leap over that difficulty.

His love is the love He accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

In Romans 8:38 and 39, the apostle Paul binds the whole text into one conclusion. *"Neither death nor life, nor angels nor principalities nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height nor depth, nor any other created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 8:38–39).*

What is the reason that no created thing can separate the righteous from that love? That love is the love of salvation obtained by believing in the work in which the perfect Jesus came to this earth and had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and by believing in the blood He shed on the Cross and in Jesus, who rose again from death. No one can nullify that love by which Almighty God has saved us from all sins by the law of the Spirit of life, has taken us as children of God within His plan, and will glorify us on the last day.

Here we must clearly know one thing. The way for a born-again person not to fall away from the love of God does not lie in holding on to that love by one's own feelings or will. As long as we abide in the word of truth, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we become those who never fall away from that love. Even when our hearts were shaken, the love of Jesus Christ was not shaken. This is because that love is not something made on our side; it is the love God established from His side with the

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price of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Abide in the love of God and live by faith to the end

Dear beloved saints, we can see that we who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit are those who live by the protection of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit within us makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered, and Christ, who is at the right hand of the throne of God, Himself makes intercession for us. Before the foundation of the world, God foreknew us, predestined us, called us, justified us through the baptism His only Son Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and has already determined to glorify us on the last day.

Therefore, since God is for us, who will oppose us? Since the living God has declared us righteous, who will bring a charge against us? He has said that neither tribulation nor distress nor persecution nor sword, neither death nor life nor any created thing, shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ. Whatever difficulty we may meet while serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is the normal appearance of abiding in the love of Jesus Christ.

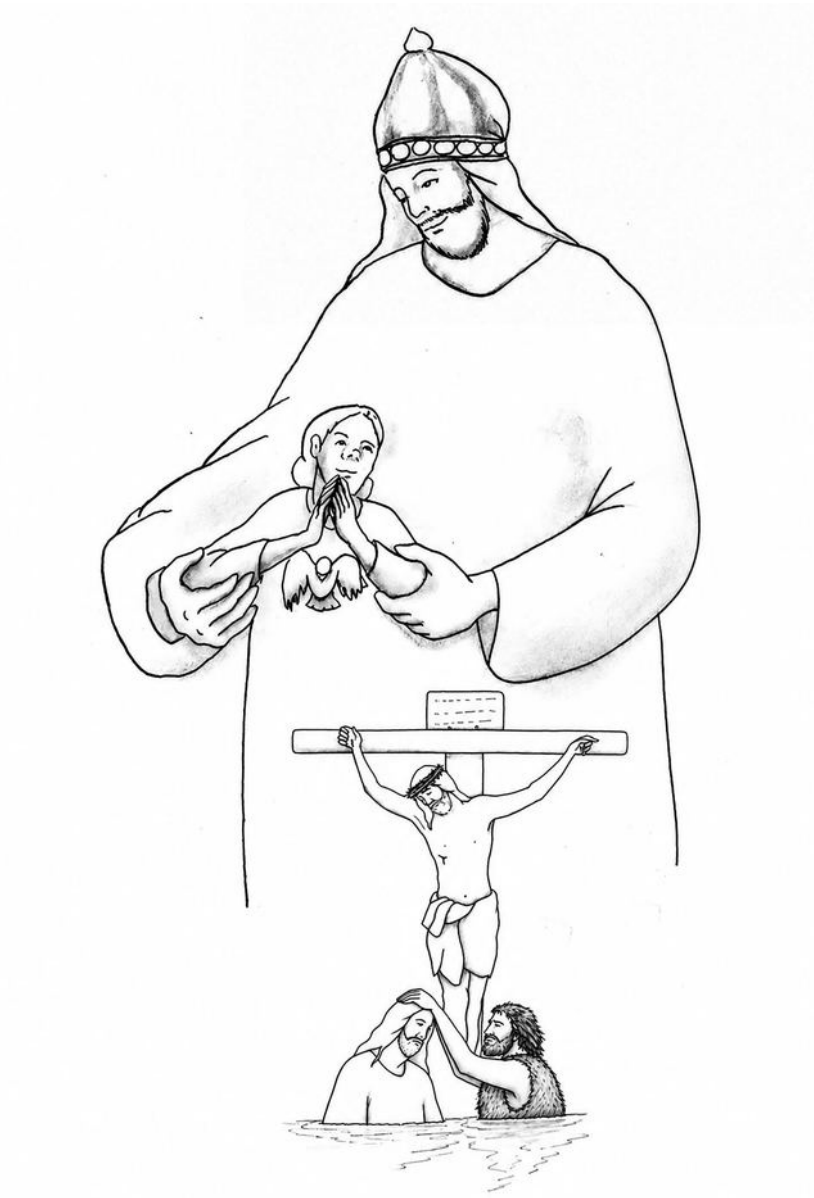
Let all of us clearly believe in our hearts this inseparable love of God, abide firmly in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live our lives for the purpose of spreading the gospel until the last day, when Jesus Christ comes as the Lord of the second coming. Hallelujah! ✉

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CHAPTER

9

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The reason Israel, which possessed privileges, drifted away from the gospel

< Romans 9:1–5 >

“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

Romans chapter 9 is not a chapter that simply deals with the debate over the doctrine of election. Rather, it can be said to be a chapter that clearly proves, through the history of Israel, why true salvation can never be reached through human lineage, the law, or human zeal. Paul wails for his brethren, that is, the Israelites who are his kinsmen according to the flesh, and lists one by one that they had the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises, as well as the fathers, and also that they had those great privileges

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in which, according to the flesh, Christ Himself was born from among them. But the problem lay in the fact that all these privileges never removed the fundamental sin of mankind. The tragedy of Israel never lay in their denying God; rather, it lay in their disobedience of not believing in the historical way of salvation that God Himself had prepared, that is, how the Messiah Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, rose again from death, and saved sinners from sin.

The word of God's promise has not been made void

"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated'" (Romans 9:6–13).

Paul makes it clear that the word of God has by no means been made void, that even those who are of Israel are not all Israel, and also that even those who are the seed of Abraham are not all his children. As is clearly revealed in the election of Isaac

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and Jacob, God's standard of election never lies in human morality or deeds; it depends only on Him who Himself calls, that is, on what way of salvation God will take to fulfill that promise. This line of promise flows in the direction of being fulfilled only through God's sovereign word of covenant, thoroughly excluding every human possibility. In the end, our salvation is not something won by human effort; rather, it is given along that line of promise, namely, the way of salvation that God Himself has established, which is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Mercy bestowed on those without qualification is God's way of salvation

"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.' So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.' Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens" (Romans 9:14–18).

Paul firmly rejects the objection that there is unrighteousness with God, and he clearly proclaims that mercy is by no means a right that man can demand, but rather the way of salvation that God Himself has established. Our salvation is by no means brought about by the efforts of him who wills or him who runs; it is determined only by the righteousness of God, who shows mercy. God is by no means One who merely turns a blind eye to

sin. Rather, He actually removed sin through the work of salvation in which Jesus took the sin of the world upon His own body through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, poured out His blood, rose again from death, and gives life to those who believe. This is precisely the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it was the mercy of God.

The right of the potter and the mercy bestowed on the vessels of wrath

"You will say to me then, 'Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?' But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, 'Why have you made me like this?' Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:19–24).

The parable of the potter is by no means meant to confine man in fatalistic despair; rather, it is a word that clearly emphasizes that the sovereignty of redemption belongs to God alone. Rather than destroying the vessels of wrath immediately, God endured for a long time in order to bestow mercy, and that mercy was at last clearly revealed in history in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin,

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and rose again from death and saved those who believe. Also, the vessels of mercy whom God Himself called were by no means limited to the Jews by lineage; at last that calling was broadly extended even to the Gentiles who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Thus, the fact is that our salvation is not determined by the protests of created beings, but rather is completed through the work of atonement of God, who is the Creator and at the same time the Savior.

The calling of the Gentiles and God's plan toward the remnant

"As He says also in Hosea: 'I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved.' 'And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," There they shall be called sons of the living God.' Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth.' And as Isaiah said before: 'Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah'" (Romans 9:25–29).

Quoting the writings of Hosea and Isaiah, Paul proves that the salvation of the Gentiles was by no means a temporary alternative prepared suddenly, but rather God's clear plan that had been prophesied from the beginning. Also, through the clear truth that however great the number of the children of Israel may be, only the remnant who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will be saved, he clearly proclaims that the standard of

the true Israel never lies in lineage. There is only one standard of salvation, and it depends on whether or not we believe that our sins have actually been dealt with through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ Himself accomplished in history. God Himself left the seed of salvation, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so that mankind would not come to destruction like Sodom and Gomorrah.

Israel failed because they were caught in the law of works

"What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame'" (Romans 9:30–33).

Paul concludes that the decisive reason Israel finally came to fail was that they did not follow faith but instead relied on their own deeds. Israel had waited so earnestly for the Messiah, yet they did not have the faith to believe that the Messiah Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death, and so they ended up stumbling and falling. Therefore, to them Jesus Christ became a stumbling stone and a rock of offense; but to the Gentiles who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that this Rock Himself accomplished, He became the

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opportunity to be saved. In the end, Romans chapter 9 clearly testifies that the way of our salvation by no means lies in lineage or human zeal, but that salvation is obtained only by faith that believes in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God Himself has established.

Romans chapter 9 declares the only way of salvation that God has established

Romans chapter 9 is a chapter that clearly shows that God's promise by no means failed, but rather that people misunderstood and rejected the very way in which that promise was being fulfilled. Because the sin of the world could never be removed by human lineage, the law, or any religious zeal of man, God at last prepared the way of salvation for those who believe, in that His own Son Jesus Christ Himself took all the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and rose again from death. That is precisely the work in which Jesus received baptism from John and Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, the work in which He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and received the judgment for that sin, and the work of the Holy Spirit in which He saved sinners by rising again from death. Therefore, our salvation is by no means the result of human choice or debate; rather, it depends on that way of salvation by which Jesus received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood on the Cross, rose again from death, and confirmed salvation for those who believe. What we must remember from now on is that we must become those who believe in the Lord, who 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, and so became the Savior of sinners. I hope that both the people of Israel and the Gentiles will be saved from sin before Jesus Christ, who has become the Savior. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Paul’s great sorrow—the fate of his kinsmen who rejected the gospel

< Romans 9:1–5 >

“I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen.”

Romans chapter 9 is a passage that contains, together with the apostle Paul’s love for his own people, an exceedingly deep sorrow over Israel, which, despite having been the first to receive God’s tremendous blessings, ended up rejecting the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This desperate word in which Paul confesses, “I would wish it even if I myself were accursed and cut off from Christ,” is by no means an expression that merely sprang from nationalistic feelings.

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The source of this sorrow was the heartbreaking reality that the people of Israel, whom God Himself had chosen, were still clinging only to the deeds of the law and walking the path of destruction, while rejecting Jesus Christ, whom God Himself had sent to accomplish salvation, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it was their spiritual blindness, in that they failed to recognize Jesus, who is the substance of that righteousness, even though they possessed all the background and promises of salvation, that tore Paul's heart apart. The sight of his own people, who held the type of salvation in their hands but were missing the very substance of that salvation, was the greatest spiritual anguish to him. Jesus, who is that substance of salvation, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and remitted all our sins.

The eight privileges Israel received

Because God Himself made Israel a holy channel for conveying the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all mankind, He bestowed special blessings on them one by one.

The first was *"the adoption."* God called Israel *"My son, My firstborn" (Exodus 4:22)* and Himself established a special relationship of father and son. The second was *"the glory."* Through the pillar of cloud and the pillar of fire in the days when they passed through the wilderness, and through God's glorious

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presence that appeared in the midst of the tabernacle, they were able to experience firsthand the fact that God was with them.

The third was *"the covenants."* These were the holy promises given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and God's plan to save the whole world Himself through the water and the Spirit in the future was guaranteed by God Himself through these covenants. The fourth was *"the giving of the law."* God first gave them that holy standard which makes people realize what sin is and so at last lets them know their need for Christ, the Savior.

The fifth was *"the service of God."* That is, through the system of the tabernacle and its sacrifices, God Himself taught them in advance how a sinner must come before God, through the type of laying hands on an animal to pass on sin and shedding its blood. The sixth was *"the promises."* God Himself gave them exceedingly specific promises that He would surely send Christ, the Messiah.

The seventh was *"the fathers."* Great forefathers of faith who are examples of faith, such as Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, were raised up among them first. The eighth was *"Christ."* As the climax of all these blessings, Christ, who would Himself come by water and the Spirit to wash away the sin of mankind, came to this earth precisely through the lineage of Israel.

More important than a sense of privilege is faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The reason Paul listed these eight privileges in detail was by no means to boast about Israel. Rather, it was to throw out the

question, "Having received so many guarantees, why do you not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit?"

Israel held the type of salvation, that is, the sacrifices and the law, in their hands, yet because they did not believe in Jesus Christ as the Savior, who is the substance of that salvation—the baptism Jesus received from John, that is, the water, and the Cross, that is, the judgment of sin—they came to be placed in the crisis of losing all those privileges. We who live today can also easily settle into the religious privilege of having much Bible knowledge and holding various offices in the Church of God. But what matters most is the question of whether my heart has truly believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of my own sins. This question of Paul is asking us today as well, "Are we truly united with Christ?"

Romans 9:6–13 is a passage that vividly shows that the history of God's salvation by no means flows according to human lineage or effort, but rather is founded on God's absolute sovereignty and on faith that believes in His promise. When we unfold, from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the principle of the children of the promise that Paul emphasizes through the cases of Isaac and Jacob, its meaning comes to us all the more deeply.

The distinction between the children of the flesh and the children of the promise

Paul is saying that it is by no means the case that all who are descendants born from the body of Abraham become God's true people.

First, the *"children of the flesh" (Romans 9:8)* are those represented by Ishmael and Esau. These were people grounded

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on the natural human method of procreation, or on human outward conditions such as the birthright.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it symbolizes those today who try to obtain salvation on the basis of their own deeds, their moral goodness, or a religious background such as having been raised in the faith from birth. These are people who always put human zeal and physical conditions ahead of God's promise.

On the other hand, the *"children of the promise" (Romans 9:8)* are those represented by Isaac. Isaac was born in a state that was humanly utterly impossible, that is, when Sarah's womb was already dead, relying only on that one promise, namely, the word of God.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the children of the promise symbolize those who have been born again by believing God's promise, "My sin was passed on through the baptism Jesus received from John, that is, the water, and was judged through the Cross, that is, the judgment of sin." These are people who take not their own qualifications but only God's one-sided grace and His promise as the basis of their salvation. The content of that promise is that Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross and so received the judgment for that sin in our place, rose again from death, and completely remitted our sins.

God's sovereign election—He loved Jacob and hated Esau

God Himself had already chosen Jacob before the two children in Rebecca's womb had done any good or evil. Although this is a very shocking choice, a very deep spiritual principle is contained in it.

What this choice clearly shows us is the fact that our salvation is by no means given as a reward for human good deeds. By placing the condition of salvation on faith alone, God completely excluded all human conditions.

When we apply this and look at it from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we finally became righteous never because we were better than Esau, but simply because we believed in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God Himself established. God Himself determined from before eternity to call those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit the children of the promise, and according to that sovereign election He has now called us through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Who is the true Israel?

The true Israel by no means comes about automatically by being a Jew by lineage; rather, it is those who firmly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the substance of the promise given to Abraham.

The reason Paul presented this case specifically was to shatter the illusion of the chosen-people mentality that the Jews held. No matter how much they claim to be descendants of Abraham, if they are rejecting Jesus Christ, whom God Himself

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sent, and His gospel of the water and the Spirit, they are in the end nothing more than children of the flesh. On the contrary, even a Gentile, if he firmly believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is the very person who becomes the seed of promise that God acknowledges. Therefore, the basis of our salvation today must by no means lie in fleshly boasting such as one's own sincerity, but rather in God's promise that has already washed away all our sins, that is, in the water and the Spirit. Just as that promise said, Jesus, who is God, had all the sin of mankind, including our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the full price of that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death; and those who believe this fact are the true Israel regardless of lineage.

Romans 9:14–18 is a passage that deals with God's absolute sovereignty, which is difficult to understand easily with human reason. When we unfold, from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the answer to the question of whether God's election, which has mercy on some and leaves others as they are in their stubbornness, is truly righteous, that answer is revealed all the more clearly.

God's mercy is not human effort but God's gift

Paul proclaims that our salvation *"is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16)*.

We must first look at the reason God chose so sovereignly. If our salvation depended on human effort or conditions, none of us would be able to pass the standard of the holy God. Therefore, because God Himself sovereignly determined that He

would have mercy, the opportunity of salvation was at last opened even to us, who have no qualification at all.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God determined from before eternity to have mercy on all mankind, and as the concrete method, He Himself established that holy law: the water, that is, the baptism Jesus received from John; the blood, that is, the Cross; and the sealing of the Holy Spirit. We finally came to be saved never because we desired it more earnestly or ran harder than other people, but because God has now bestowed on us that mercy by which He Himself lets us hear this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and also causes us to believe it in our hearts.

The reason God raised up King Pharaoh, and the power of God

God Himself revealed His own glory even through Pharaoh, the stubborn king of Egypt. This event provides us with a deep understanding of God's providence.

First, we can look at it in terms of revelation through judgment. The more stubbornly Pharaoh resisted, the more dramatically God's ten plagues and the event of His parting the Red Sea came to be revealed. Through this whole process, God clearly proclaimed to all the earth that He Himself is the Ruler of the whole universe.

When we unfold this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Pharaoh can be said to be the typical image of one who has the carnal mind, trusting in his own righteousness and strength to the end and never submitting before God. Through the ruin of such a person, God clearly

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showed before the whole world how powerless human strength is before God.

On the other hand, the people of Israel at last came to be saved through the blood of the lamb, that is, the type of the Cross, together with the event of crossing the Red Sea, that is, the type of the baptism of water Jesus received from John. In this way, God Himself used Pharaoh's stubbornness to clearly spread to the whole world the truth that human beings can live only through the method of salvation that God Himself established, that is, through the water and the Spirit. Just as that type showed, Jesus bore the sin of the world, which includes our sins, through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross like the Passover lamb and received that judgment in our place, rose again from death, and delivered us from the slavery of sin.

It came about not by unrighteousness in God but by His absolutely righteous justice

God has opened wide and presented to all people that way of mercy, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But He leaves those who insist only on their own righteousness to the end just as they are in their stubbornness, and in this way He clearly reveals His righteousness. This is exactly why Paul firmly answered *"Certainly not!" (Romans 9:14)* to the question *"Is there unrighteousness with God?" (Romans 9:14)*.

Just as a potter has the authority to make, from one lump of clay, a vessel to be used for honor and a vessel to be used for dishonor, God, who is the Creator, is working sovereignly to reveal His own name and power. Therefore, we must remember deep in our hearts that our having believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and finally becoming righteous is by no

means because we were outstanding, but rather the result of God's complete mercy. That I did not become a stubborn person like Pharaoh, but received God's mercy and at last came to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—this very fact itself is a tremendous miracle and something for which we ought to give thanks.

Romans 9:19–24 is one of the most powerful parables in the Bible, answering man's rational objections to God's absolute sovereignty. When we unfold this parable from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can come to realize deeply, beyond the relationship between the Creator and created beings, how intricate and merciful God's providence of salvation is.

The parable of the potter and the clay and its relation to creative sovereignty

Here Paul likens God to a potter and likens man to clay. The core of this relationship lies in ownership and the right to decide.

First, if we look at the authority God has, deciding what kind of vessel to make from one lump of clay depends entirely on the potter's own freedom. In the same way, God, as the One who Himself made us, has the right to shape each person according to His own purpose.

On the other hand, if we look at our position as created beings, clay does not have the right to decide its own form or to resist the potter's intention. That is, man by no means has the legal position or the essential qualification to argue against God's sovereign plan, saying, *"Why have you made me like this?" (Romans 9:20)*. Yet the Creator, who has all such authority, Himself became a man and came to this earth; He is Jesus, who

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had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death.

God's answer to man's rebuttal

Man often protests, "If God decides everything, why does He rebuke us?" To this, Paul presents an answer from two perspectives.

The first is the pointing out of pride that goes beyond the limits of a created being. The word *"O man, who are you to reply against God?" (Romans 9:20)* is a word that clearly points out that human perception can by no means fully understand God's vast providence. The very act of a thing that was formed arguing with the One who formed it is already a pride that destroys the order of the universe.

The second is the answer that the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives concerning God's longsuffering and the purpose of His glory. God is by no means an absolute being who merely compels one-sidedly by force alone. Rather, even toward *"the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction" (Romans 9:22)*, that is, those who insist on their own righteousness and reject the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God does not judge right away but endures for a long time. And He is leading all this holy work in order to make known the riches of His glory to *"the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory" (Romans 9:23)*, that is, to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The vessel for honor seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The concrete method by which God makes us, who are like clay, into vessels for honor is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

First, if we look at the original state of the clay, we were all descendants of Adam and, by nature, vessels for dishonor, that is, children of wrath. But God did not simply throw us away; He shaped us anew. That is, Jesus bore the sin of the world, which includes our sins, through the baptism He received from John, washed away our filthy sins by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death and made us clean.

And so now those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have become vessels for honor that contain the glory and life of God. The reason we have become such precious beings is not that the quality of the clay itself was good, but that God, who is the Potter, Himself shaped us cleanly through the water and the Spirit.

Kneel before the love of the sovereign God

God sovereignly chose us Himself and, by a sovereign method, that is, through the water and the Spirit, made us righteous. This is precisely the highest glory a created being can enjoy. This parable teaches us humility. I finally became righteous by no means because of my own effort, but because God, who is the Potter, Himself chose me as a vessel of mercy and washed me clean through the water and the Spirit.

If today you have any desire to argue with God, saying, “Why did You make me like this?” you should humbly lay down

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that thought and instead give thanks deep in your heart for that sovereign love by which He Himself shaped you, who are like worthless clay, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made you a child of God. In this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have already become the most honorable vessels, containing the glory of God.

Romans 9:30–33, the conclusion of Romans chapter 9, is a passage that starkly contrasts the two ways by which mankind comes to salvation, namely, the way of works and the way of faith. When we unfold these verses from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can understand all the more vividly why religious zeal cannot guarantee salvation and why only the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the only answer.

What caused the outcomes of the Gentiles and Israel to be reversed?

In this text Paul is explaining an extremely paradoxical situation. It is the fact that the Gentiles, who originally did not even seek salvation, instead obtained righteousness, while Israel, which had pursued the law of righteousness, that is, the law, all their lives, instead ended in failure.

First, the cause of Israel's failure lay in this: they sought it *"as it were, by the works of the law" (Romans 9:32)*. They tried to establish their own righteousness before God through their own moral sincerity and their keeping of the law. But because no human being can keep the law perfectly, that path of works cannot but be a path that ends in condemnation and failure.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, these were people who ignored that holy event in which Jesus took away sin through the baptism He

received from John, that is, the water, and still strove to wash away their own sins by their own strength.

On the other hand, the cause of the Gentiles' success lay in *"the righteousness of faith" (Romans 9:30)*. The Gentiles honestly acknowledged the fact that they were sinners who could not but receive judgment, and instead gladly accepted the grace that God bestows freely.

When we look at this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they accepted just as it is God's promise that when Jesus received baptism from John, the sin of the world, which included their own sins, was passed on to Jesus, and that He received the judgment for that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rose again from death. This faith became the only key to being acknowledged as righteous by God.

Who is the stumbling stone over which they stumbled and fell?

Paul says that Israel stumbled and fell over *"a stumbling stone and rock of offense" (Romans 9:33)*. This stone refers to none other than Jesus Christ.

Then we must look at why Jesus ended up becoming a stumbling block to them. To the Jews, Jesus was One who came in an appearance that was all too humble and exceedingly human. In particular, the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which anyone becomes righteous simply by believing in Jesus, who had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again on the third day—was something utterly unacceptable to them, who had kept the law

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and steadily piled up their own merits; it was something that tore down their pride.

In the end, because they could not give up the righteousness of their own deeds to the last, they at last stumbled and fell over that stone, Jesus Christ, who is the only way to salvation, and ended up being pushed outside of salvation.

The conclusion is the word that they will not be put to shame

Verse 33 of the text says, *"Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame" (Romans 9:33)*. This word is the promise of final victory given to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The word *"will not be put to shame" (Romans 9:33)* means that on the day of the last judgment we will not receive the sentence of condemnation, "You are a sinner," but will instead stand confidently before God. The reason we will not be put to shame is by no means that we ourselves are perfect, but rather that we take as the rock of our faith Jesus Christ, who washed away our sins perfectly through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who rely on their own deeds cannot but stumble and fall over the stone of condemnation, but those who firmly believe in the righteousness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Himself accomplished will enjoy forever the glory of not being put to shame. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who loves those who believe in the righteousness of God

< Romans 9:1–13 >

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, 'The

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older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'"

Do not believe by emotion, but know and then believe

The Lord also said that He made the whole world and then rested, and I believe that we, too, should rest after we have done the work entrusted to us. There is so much work to do. If we now turn our eyes to spiritual matters and look at this world, there are many people among those who believe in Jesus in this world who truly believe in Jesus in vain. That is, they believe in Jesus far, far too emotionally. I do not know why people are so emotional. They believe in Jesus emotionally, and they also work emotionally. Human emotion is nothing at all; it simply ends once a single tear drops and dries up. People must have intellect. They must have knowledge, intellect, feeling, and will. People must not be without feeling either, but they must have intellect most of all. And after that, will must also back it up. But those who say they believe in Jesus have far too much feeling. They believe in Jesus by feeling. Because the people of the world believe in Jesus by feeling, there is far, far too much work for you and me to do.

What does the Bible say? The apostle Paul says that the people of Israel received the word of God, became the children of God, also received the promises for the future, and received the law and everything for worshiping God, and yet he says that there are many among his own people who have not been born again. So from verse 6 on, the apostle Paul is saying that the word of God has not been made void. *"But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are*

of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed" (Romans 9:6–8).

They are not all Israel who are of Israel

I believe this is a word we know well. That is, they are not all Israel who are of Israel. While talking about the people of Israel, the apostle Paul talks about the people of God, and he talks about the descendants of Abraham. Not all the seed of Abraham are Abraham's descendants; rather, it is said, *"In Isaac your seed shall be called" (Romans 9:7)*. Abraham's son is Isaac, and from Isaac, Esau and Jacob are born. Just because Esau and Jacob are Abraham's children does not mean that they are all people of Israel. Speaking spiritually, it means that they are not all the people of God. Those who believe in God's word of promise, those who were born through that word of promise, are the people of God. Speaking spiritually, this means that those who simply believe in the word of God are the children of God. No matter how many people believe in Jesus, those among them who were born through the word are truly few. Everyone knows well the teaching that those who believe in Jesus are saved by faith. But just because people are Abraham's children does not mean that they are all Abraham's children.

Abraham begot Isaac, and Isaac begot Jacob and Esau. Then, among Abraham's descendants, who are Abraham's people? It means that those who were born by the word of God, by the promise, are Abraham's descendants and the people of God. So people know that they are saved by faith, but in reality they do

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not know what they must believe. God promised Abraham, *"At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son" (Romans 9:9)*, promising to give him Isaac, and He also promised to make his descendants as many as the stars of heaven. And who is the child obtained through that word of promise? It is Isaac. The child Abraham received from God is Isaac. The word says that only the children born through that Isaac are Abraham's true children. Then did Abraham beget only Isaac? Abraham also begot Ishmael. Then is Ishmael not Abraham's child? Ishmael is not Abraham's child. This means that he is a child in the flesh but not a child spiritually. Ishmael is not in the kingdom of God. In the kingdom of God there is Abraham, there is Abraham's son Isaac, and there are together with them those who were born by believing through the word of God. But people like Ishmael are not there. If someone reasons this out with fleshly logic and asks, "Ishmael is also his child, so why is he not?" I have nothing to say, but Abraham's child is Isaac, and those born from Isaac's son Jacob are the descendants of Abraham.

Why does the Bible speak like this, taking just two people as examples? Our minds are dull, so if three people were given as examples, our minds could not understand. If about five people were given as examples, saying that this person is like this and that person is like that, we would get confused. So He contrasted them clearly by taking exactly two people. God made a promise to Abraham with His word. He blessed him, saying, *"'Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them.' And He said to him, 'So shall your descendants be'" (Genesis 15:5)*. But no matter how long Abraham waited, he had no child. His wife had now become an old woman, and since her monthly periods had ceased, she could not bear a child. It was then that God fulfilled the word of promise He Himself had made to Abraham. Abraham made mistakes and committed sins

along the way, but in the end, Abraham believed the word God had promised him, and the child he received by that faith was Isaac. That is why Isaac came to be one of the people of God.

In the same way, it is so for the people of Israel, and it is so for Christians today as well. One is not saved just by believing in Jesus; one must know and believe what God said and how God fulfilled that word of promise He had made. One must not believe emotionally without knowing this. Those who believe emotionally are Ishmael and Esau.

How Jesus fulfilled the word of promise

If someone knows and believes only this much—unconditionally, "Jesus is our Savior; He hung on the Cross and saved us"—then that person is precisely one who believes like Ishmael and Esau. Such people are not Abraham's people. They are not family. They are enemies. Though they are children, they are not children. In the spiritual world, this is clear. When Christians today believe in Jesus, they must know the word correctly and believe.

In the Old Testament, God said that if one laid hands on the sacrificial offering to pass on sin, killed that sacrificial offering, and offered it to God, God would accept that sacrificial offering and remit the sinner's sin. That is, God accepted the offerings just as He had established and remitted the sins of the people. This is the very word of the covenant. The word of the Old Testament is the word of the covenant, the word of promise. It was the promise of God the Father: "I will send My Son to this earth in the future, pass on your sins to My Son, bring down the judgment for your sins upon My Son, and save you." That is why Jesus came to this earth and, for you and me, saved us from sin

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according to the word of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament, the sacrificial offering received the laying on of hands and had the sin of the people passed on to it—the sacrificial offering of atonement had the sin of the people passed on to it—and we must know how Jesus fulfilled that word of promise. We must not believe blindly without even knowing. We must know correctly and believe. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him and bore it, He hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and having died, He rose again. What Jesus did in this way was the word of promise by which God gives the remission of sins to you and me today, and it was the realization and the fulfillment of that word. Therefore, when we know and believe in that Jesus Christ, you and I become the descendants of Abraham.

So being saved by faith is a different thing from what the people of the world today say about being saved by emotion. To say that one is saved if one just believes unconditionally is a wrong faith. Faith must have knowledge, and knowledge leads us into the truth. Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. Only when a person knows can you entrust something to him or do something for him, but if that person knows nothing, nothing can be done for him. In the same way, though people who believe in Jesus today, and also the people of Israel, say that they believe in the LORD God, they had to know the word of promise: what promise God had made to them, and how He would remove their sins and save them from sin. How can one be saved without knowing that? Being saved in this age today is being saved by faith, and what is called faith is something obtained through the faith that believes in God's word of promise.

We are saved by knowing what the word of God has said and believing it. This is the very salvation obtained by faith and the very way of becoming the people of God by faith, but people do not know this. When I look at such people, I feel frustrated. It is shown in the Bible in writing, in letters, but even while seeing it they do not know it. If they would stop merely pretending to know and would read the Bible, it would be resolved simply, but because they do not know it, they say that they were saved by the blood of the Cross. The blood of the Cross is the concluding part of the story. So saying that the Lord is my Savior with only the blood of the Cross is exactly the same as cutting off the head, cutting off all the legs, and talking only about the torso. Saying that one was saved by believing only in the blood of Jesus' Cross is being a person who has cut off the head, cut off the legs, and is holding on only to this torso.

Your and my salvation can be complete because the Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, and died on the Cross, so that He Himself became the sacrificial offering before God the Father. Because Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of mankind, and shed His blood and died on the Cross, He was able to save you and me, all mankind, from sin. That is, the Lord saved you and me by the water and the blood, by the baptism and the blood of the Cross. If someone cuts off the head and the tail of this truth, strips it all away, and says that one is saved only by the blood of the Cross, is that faith? It is not faith. It is a religious faith that tries to be saved by works.

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Faith is believing in the facts

What is being saved by faith? It is being saved by faith, just as the words say. Then what is the content of being saved by faith? It is believing in our hearts that the Lord saved you and me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and acknowledging that we are lumps of sin before God and therefore people who cannot but go to hell. It is believing in our hearts that the Lord came to this earth to save us, received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins, hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us. Knowing in the heart, acknowledging in the heart, and believing in the heart—that is precisely what it means to be one who believes. Faith is believing that fact. Faith is not something mysterious; it is believing the fact. Faith is knowing the fact as it is. Acknowledging the fact as it is—that is precisely faith.

A life of faith can be lived even after one has grown old, but a life of believing is best when one is young. Why is that? Because the young believe purely. Before you and I believed in Jesus, we were people bound for hell. We were people who had sin and who commit sin, and because we were born as a seed of sin, a seed of evildoers, we are people who commit sin throughout our whole lives. You and I are fundamentally people bound for hell, but the Lord came to this earth and did the work of saving you and me from that sin. What Jesus did for you and me was to receive baptism from John the Baptist and bear our sins, and to give His body over to the Cross, receive the judgment for sin, die, and rise again. That is the very salvation by which He saved you and me. Our knowing and believing it is faith. Faith is, just as the word says, believing the fact. Therefore, we must not confuse faith with works. Without the truth, no matter how hard one tries to believe, one cannot believe.

If Jesus had not received baptism from John the Baptist and borne our sins, then no matter how much you and I believe, saying, "Jesus is my Savior; Jesus hung on the Cross and suffered for me," sin would not completely disappear from the conscience. Even though your and my conscience believed this, when we commit sin, the conscience says, "You have sin." And it says, "Jesus did not remove all your sins." The conclusion is that it says, "You have sin." No matter how much a person believes in Jesus, it is of no use. Only when we know exactly and believe, even in our conscience, what Jesus did for you and me do we come to have no sin. You and I must believe even with our conscience that Jesus received baptism, hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us in order to save you and me. It is believing when we hear of the work Jesus did to save you and me—the gospel of the water and the Spirit He accomplished with the water and the blood. When that happens, that is salvation.

Your and my conscience says that it is not salvation unless there is this exact price: that Jesus truly received baptism and bore your and my sins, hung on the Cross, and received the judgment. So if one just blindly and emotionally believes only in the Cross of Jesus, one's own conscience says that one has sin. Those who believe holding on only to the blood of the Cross of Jesus, with no connection at all to Jesus' receiving baptism from John the Baptist and bearing our sins, become sinners every day whenever they commit sin. Their own conscience is telling them, "You are a sinner." They condemn themselves. They are judging themselves. Why is that? It is because such people do not acknowledge, because they do not know, that Jesus received baptism for them. That is why Jesus said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*.

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When we say that we believe in Jesus, it is true faith only when we know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we want to be born again of water and the Spirit, we must know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must be born again of water and the Spirit, yet to say that one can be born again just by believing in the blood of the Cross makes no sense. If we want to be born again of water and the Spirit, it is when we know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we are born again of water and the Spirit. Because our purpose in believing in Jesus is to be born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the process, too, is being born again by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So blindly believing in Jesus is truly foolish. It is exactly the same as a person who keeps investing in a company without knowing that it has already gone bankrupt. If I think, "If I believe in Jesus, I will go to heaven someday; if I keep believing in Jesus, I will be born again someday," that faith is a faith that has already been ruined. If one wants to be born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one must know the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be able to believe and be born again. One wants to be born again of water and the Spirit, but is it enough just to believe in the blood of the Cross, and not the gospel of the water and the Spirit? A person who thinks, "If I just believe in Jesus as my Savior, I will be born again; He will let me go to heaven," is exactly the same as a person who buys just any stock of a company he does not even know, as he himself thinks fit. That is why it is truly frustrating.

God hated Esau and loved Jacob

Speaking through Jacob and Esau, the apostle Paul says this: Whom did God love? What kind of person is born again? If believers have been born again, what kind of people are they? Of Jacob and Esau, it is Jacob. Then how was Jacob born again? Esau tried to receive blessing by his own effort, by his own strength, by his own ability. When his father was giving the prayer of blessing, Esau was one who tried to receive the prayer of blessing by his own ability and so receive blessing. Jacob was one who believed the word his mother conveyed to him, did exactly as his mother told him, and so received blessing. As a result, Jacob went before his father Isaac and received everything as a blessing, including the birthright. Therefore, he enjoyed all those blessings.

Let us look at verses 8 through 13. *"That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated'" (Romans 9:8–13)*. God hated Esau.

God hates those who try to come to heaven by their own strength. God hates such an Esau. Then whom did God love? He loves Jacob. Why did God love Jacob? Jacob believed what his mother told him. His mother said, "Put on your brother's clothes and bring me two young goats. I will make the savory food your father likes and give it to you, so put on your brother's clothes

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and go. Your hands are smooth, so put on the goat's hair." When Jacob said, "Mother, even if I disguise myself like my brother with his clothes, what if Father finds out and brings down a curse on me instead of a blessing?" his mother said, "Jacob, if your father brings down a curse on you, I will take responsibility. Turn it all to me." Jacob believed his mother's word and did as she told him. So he went before his father and said, "I am Esau. Father, eat this savory food and bless me." Then, after eating the savory food, his father kissed Jacob and smelled his clothes and, saying, *"The smell of my son Is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed" (Genesis 27:27)*, gave Jacob every blessing, such as that he would rule over others. That is how it actually comes to be. Blessing goes down like this, from above to below. So as Jacob was coming out after receiving the blessing and the prayer of blessing, his older brother Esau came. Esau, learning that his younger brother Jacob had deceived him and received the blessing in that way, tried to beat him to death, but their mother had the younger brother flee and hide.

In the end, just as the word says, *"That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls" (Romans 9:11)*, God wants people of faith, not of works. God lets those who believe in their hearts what God has done enter heaven, makes them His children, makes them His workers, and blesses them. It is said that God hated Esau and loved Jacob; please take a look at whether you yourselves are Jacob or Esau. Please consider whether you are those who can be saved by making your works perfect, or those who, because your works are not perfect, can be saved only by the faith that believes that Jesus saved you yourselves through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And I hope you will believe. If your own works cannot be perfect, I hope you will be saved by believing in your hearts in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which Jesus

removed all your sins and mine. I hope you will become those who believe.

It is such a simple story, but people do not know it at all. Some people say that they were saved by the blood of the Cross, but such people keep talking only about the blood of the Cross because they do not know the word; if they knew the word, they would never do so. It is because Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had our sins passed on to Him that Jesus was nailed to the Cross; He did not remove your and my sins by being nailed to the Cross without the baptism. It is because Jesus had your and my sins passed on to Him through the baptism that He could hang on the Cross; Jesus could not save you and me by being nailed to the Cross on His own. If Jesus had not received baptism and borne your and my sins, even His death on the Cross would be a vain death. It would be in vain. Yet countless people in the world believe only in the blood of Jesus' Cross and say that they were saved. Isn't the Bible speaking of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? The Bible speaks of the salvation of Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Even so, when I see people who speak only of the blood of the Cross, I feel so, so frustrated.

God loves those who believe in the word of God

Ask people who believe in Jesus. If you ask them how one goes to heaven—whether by faith or by works—they all say that one goes by faith. Then on what basis is that faith believing? People say that they believe in the blood of Jesus' Cross too, but that their own works must also be good enough for them to go to heaven. Jesus did not only shed His blood on the Cross; He came to the Jordan River, received baptism from John the

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Baptist, and bore our sins. He also did the work of receiving baptism and bearing all our sins. You and I cannot but commit sin throughout our whole lives because of the sin we inherited through our parents, through our ancestors. But did not Jesus come to this earth clothed in human flesh, receive baptism, hang on the Cross, and rise again from death in order to remove your and my sins? If Jesus' receiving baptism was not His bearing your and my sins, then why did Jesus receive baptism? Why else would Jesus have come to John the Baptist, put His head forward, and said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*? And why would Jesus Himself have said, *"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffers violence" (Matthew 11:12)*? It is because Jesus had already borne all the sin of this world by receiving baptism.

Being saved by faith is our being saved by the faith that acknowledges that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist for you and me and bore our sins, hung on the Cross and received the judgment for sin, died and rose again, and became your and my Savior. It is salvation obtained by faith. If Jesus had not done such a work, none of us, neither you nor I, could be saved. If Jesus had not received baptism for you and me, died on the Cross, risen again from death, and become our Savior, then no matter how well you and I believed in Jesus, sin would not disappear. It is because Jesus bore your and my sins through the baptism and shed His blood on the Cross and saved you and me from sin that we have been saved. Because there is that work in which Jesus saved you and me from all sins, and because we know and believe that fact, we were able to be saved. Because there is a work God did to save you and me, you and I can be saved. That is why those who believe are saved.

There are so many people in the world who say they believe in Jesus, but all those many people believe in Jesus without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So they even give up their own lives, but that is not truly believing. That is precisely opposing God. It is ignoring the righteousness of God, and ignoring God's rightness in order to put forward human righteousness, their own rightness. Such a person becomes an adversary of God. Such a person goes to hell. If what the Lord did for you and me were not clear, then no matter how much you and I believed in the Lord, sin would not disappear. Even though God is God, if He said that He would remove our sins, there must be the fact that He actually removed our sins concretely in this way. Only then do we come to have no sin by faith; would sin disappear just because God says, like the kings of this world, "I remove your sin"? Of course, since God is the Judge and the King, He might be able to remove it that way, but God is a righteous God. If God unilaterally loved some and hated others, what kind of heaven would that be? What meaning would a heaven without righteousness have? If God saved some and did not save others according to His emotions, anyone could go to hell. If God's emotions changed, we could go to hell.

God's saving you and me is a righteous salvation. If we reject what God has done, or give up living according to God's will and choose of our own accord to live as God's enemies and so choose hell of our own accord, we will go to hell; but if not, we are saved. We go to heaven. Even God cannot nullify the salvation that we received by faith in His having saved us. It is because it is the work He Himself did. I believe so. Do you also believe so? Abraham also believed so. He believed according to the word of God.

Those whom God loves are those who believe in the word of God. They are people like Jacob. Because Jacob's works were

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lacking, he had to listen to his mother's word. Jacob was a person who could live only by accepting the blessing God gives. Such a person receives blessing from God, receives salvation as well, becomes a worker of God, and is blessed. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

We have been saved from sin by receiving the mercy of God through faith

< Romans 9:1–13 >

"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying, my conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit, that I have great sorrow and continual grief in my heart. For I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh, who are Israelites, to whom pertain the adoption, the glory, the covenants, the giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises; of whom are the fathers and from whom, according to the flesh, Christ came, who is over all, the eternally blessed God. Amen. But it is not that the word of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but, 'In Isaac your seed shall be called.' That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed. For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son.' And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls), it was said to her, 'The

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older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated.'"

Those who had much yet missed the one way of salvation

From Romans chapter 1 through chapter 8, the apostle Paul has defended at length the salvation that comes through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the life of the born-again righteous. Then, upon reaching chapter 9, he turns his gaze toward his own people, Israel. He opens his words with *"I tell the truth in Christ, I am not lying" (Romans 9:1)*. Then he adds, *"My conscience also bearing me witness in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 9:1)*. This is not a mere outpouring of emotion. It is a sincere confession of faith offered in the Holy Spirit by the good conscience of a person who has been born again from his sins.

The sorrow Paul had for his countrymen according to the flesh was no ordinary sorrow. It was so great that he said, *"I could wish that I myself were accursed from Christ for my brethren, my countrymen according to the flesh" (Romans 9:3)*. He means that he wishes his people to be saved from sin, even if he himself were to be cut off in their place. Why did the apostle agonize so much in his heart? It was because the people of Israel were his own nation.

Paul lists one by one the privileges Israel received. They were those who had been adopted as God's sons, the glory of God was theirs, and all the covenants of the Old Testament were theirs. The giving of the law, the service of God, and the promises all belonged to them. The fathers were also theirs, and above all, Christ was born from them according to the flesh. Every channel of salvation was held in their hands. Yet they

failed to recognize Jesus Christ, who is the very substance of that promise.

Jesus was born in Bethlehem, in that very land of Israel. In that land, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He bore all the sin of mankind once and for all. With all their sins passed on to Him, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and on the third day after His death He rose again. Though He bore the sins of His own people completely in this way, they did not accept Him as their Savior. They had so much, yet they became those who rejected the one most important thing, namely Jesus Christ, who is the central figure of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This tragedy tore Paul's heart apart.

Today we, too, must look back on ourselves before this text. There are not a few people who attend church, own a Bible, offer service and offerings, and have built up a long record of religious life. But there are so many who have become people who believe only by emotion, without knowing whether Jesus had our sins, the sin of the world, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. No matter how many outward privileges these people have, what use is it if it does not lead to the faith that kneels before the substance of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes with the heart?

The word of God has been entirely fulfilled in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Even while facing the reality that most of Israel had not been born again, Paul declares, *"It is not that the word of God has taken no effect" (Romans 9:6)*. Since most of his countrymen rejected the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it may seem as if God's promise had failed. But Paul makes it clear that this is not

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so. The word of salvation that God promised has not failed. It has only become clear who the people are to whom that word applies.

Paul says, *"They are not all Israel who are of Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham" (Romans 9:6–7)*. This means that not everyone who is an Israelite by blood has been born again. Being born as a descendant of Abraham does not make one a spiritual descendant of Abraham. Then who are spiritually the descendants of Abraham? It is said, *"In Isaac your seed shall be called" (Romans 9:7)*.

Abraham had two sons: Ishmael and Isaac. How was Ishmael obtained? He is the son that Abraham and Sarah, unable to wait for the time of God's promise, had through the maidservant Hagar by human thinking and by fleshly means. In people's eyes, he too was clearly Abraham's seed. But God did not acknowledge Ishmael as heir. The one God acknowledged was Isaac alone. By what was Isaac born? He was born by the word of God that said, *"For this is the word of promise: 'At this time I will come and Sarah shall have a son'" (Romans 9:9)*.

Sarah was already at an age when she could not bear a child. Abraham was also old. It was something altogether impossible by human ability. But the word God had promised was fulfilled just as it was, and Isaac was born. Therefore, Isaac is not a son obtained by human effort, but a son obtained only by the word of promise that was heard. That is why Paul states it clearly: *"That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God; but the children of the promise are counted as the seed" (Romans 9:8)*.

What does this word teach us? It teaches that the principle of salvation lies not in bloodline or works, but in faith in the word that has been heard. Jesus Himself said, *"Unless one is born of*

water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5). Here, the word of promise is precisely the saving gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood and died on the Cross while bearing that sin, and rose again on the third day. Those who have heard this gospel and accepted it in their hearts are the children of the promise and the true spiritual Israel. You cannot say that you have become children of God on the basis of the mere fact that you attend church and read the Bible.

When they were not yet born nor had done any good or evil

Paul does not stop here but goes one step further. He saw that the mere fact that Isaac was born through the promise was not enough. So he takes up Isaac's two sons, Jacob and Esau, and presses the principle of salvation all the way through.

"And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls)" (Romans 9:10–11).

Jacob and Esau were twins born of one father, Isaac, and one mother, Rebecca. Yet God had already determined His choice while the two children were "*not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil" (Romans 9:11)*. When the two children had not yet done anything, how was one chosen and the other not? This clearly shows that salvation has nothing to do with a person's morality, devotion, or religious effort. If salvation were accomplished by human works, there would be no reason for the

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choice to be determined at a time when they had not yet done anything.

Paul makes the reason clear: *"That the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls" (Romans 9:11)*. God is the One who calls sinners who have sin in their hearts, preaches the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them, and saves them. Those whom God calls are those who have become sinners. Jesus Christ appeared as the One who received baptism from John and took the sin of the world upon Himself, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and rose again from death, and so removed the sins of sinners and saved them. But today, Christians try to be saved from all sins by believing in Christian doctrines. Therefore, they do not try to receive the remission of sins by believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit spoken of in the Bible. I think that the problem of Christians today lies in their trying to believe the doctrines of their own denominations more than the word of the Bible. Perhaps that is why they try to receive the remission of their own sins through a legalistic faith.

Many people try to accomplish their salvation from their own sins through the works of their own faith. They think that if they repent more zealously, serve more, and live more holily, they will come closer to salvation. But the word of the Bible directly tears down the doctrines that humans have set up. When Jacob and Esau were not yet born and had done neither good nor evil, Jacob was able to become one of the people of God through Him who calls. Salvation is being born again through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, only through Him who calls us.

The older shall serve the younger

God spoke to Rebecca like this: *"The older shall serve the younger" (Romans 9:12)*. By human order, it would be only right for the younger to serve the older. But God overturned human ethics. He made the older brother Esau serve the younger brother Jacob. Here, the word of the saving gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gives was applied differently to the two. God called Jacob, who committed many sins, and granted him the blessing of salvation. And Esau refused when God called him. This is the truth of salvation that the Bible speaks of.

In the word of the Bible, Jacob and Esau show two forms of faith. Esau was skillful at hunting and was the one who had the birthright. He tried to win his father's favor by exercising his own ability. He was a person who went out into the field, hunted, made the savory food his father enjoyed, and tried to obtain his father's blessing. In other words, Esau tried to obtain the blessing of salvation by his own works and ability, but he became one who failed.

Jacob, on the other hand, was not skillful at hunting; he was a person who stayed by the side of his mother Rebecca and tried to receive the blessing God gives by obeying the word. In human terms, Jacob was a person more lacking than Esau. But he became one who received blessing from his father by obeying the word his mother conveyed to him. He was one who put on his older brother's clothes, put the skins of young goats on his hands and neck, went before his father, and received the blessing. What he relied on was not his own strength. What he relied on was the word of promise that was heard through his mother. As a result, he became one who received the blessing in which all the blessings of the firstborn flowed to Jacob.

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We must think more deeply about one thing here. When we look at what Jacob did in going before his father as his mother told him, we cannot see it merely as a deception. The reason Jacob received God's blessing lay in the word that Rebecca conveyed to Jacob. What Jacob did was obey just as his mother told him. Though there was nothing outstanding about him, it was because he relied on his mother's word. Even now in the twenty-first century, there are many who have been saved by the faith that believes, as their Savior, in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and rose again from death—this is the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has recorded in the word of the Bible. None of these people believe in Jesus Christ by their own fleshly thoughts; rather, they were able to be saved by the faith that believes in the baptism of Jesus—Jesus, written of in the Bible, who received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to His own body—and in His sacrificial work of the Cross, and in His death and resurrection. Receiving the remission of a person's sins had nothing to do with human effort and ability.

Here, the meaning of the word *"The older shall serve the younger" (Romans 9:12)* becomes clear. A person like Esau, who relies on his own ability and works, never receives the salvation God gives but instead puts forward his own righteousness, and so he becomes one who cannot come into the genealogy of Christ. Rather, a person like Jacob acknowledged his own lack and relied on and believed the word of God that was heard through his mother, and so he became one who was saved by believing the word of the saving gospel of the water and the Spirit that God gave. We must know that the order of the kingdom of God is not determined by human ability, but depends

on the faith that believes the written word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the righteousness of Jesus Christ. Our being saved from our sins is determined by whether we believe the written word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit just as it is.

Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated

Paul finally quotes the weightiest word: *"As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated'" (Romans 9:13)*. This word means that God called those who, though lacking like Jacob, believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has spoken, and made them children of God. This word is God's proclamation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit concerning the principle of salvation that He has spoken to mankind.

What kind of person does God hate? It is the person who covers his own sins with his own works. He dislikes the person who tries to receive the remission of his own sins by relying on fleshly thinking, whether through prayers of repentance or through service. In other words, this means that He hates a person like Esau, who tries to establish his own righteousness. What kind of person does God love? He loves the person who acknowledges his own lack and confesses that he is one who must receive the judgment of sin because of his own sins. When people go before God carrying their own works and merits, God dislikes them and does not acknowledge their faith. He acknowledges only the person who has his own sins washed away by believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit written in the word of God.

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Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jacob is one who hears this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and, with faith in his heart, believes in the salvation God has given. He is a person who knows that he has nothing in the flesh to boast of and relies by faith, just as it is, only on the word of salvation of the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished by the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from death. What is Esau? He is the picture of a person who tries to add his own works and religious merits to the blood of the Cross. He is a person who, while saying that he believes in Jesus, thinks that salvation is completed only when he repents more and strives more.

But there is something we must clearly know. Who among us was a person worthy of being loved as Jacob was? No one. The meaning of the name Jacob is ‘one who takes hold of the heel,’ that is, ‘one who deceives others.’ He was a lacking and weak person who deceived his brother and deceived his father. Yet God loved him. It was not because he was outstanding, but because he was one who desired the mercy of God. This is precisely our true self. We, too, were originally sinners, weak sinners, but God had mercy on us and sent Jesus Christ, and Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so became the Savior of those who believe in the merit of Jesus. The Lord washed away once and for all the sins of us who believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—us, who were sinners.

In the New Testament age, God’s word of promise saved those who believe in Jesus, who received baptism from John and died on the Cross, as their Savior.

Now we see that the whole of Romans chapter 9 makes one truth clear again and again. It is the fact that people's salvation from sin does not come through human bloodline or works, but comes only to those who believe in the mercy of God and in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which holds that mercy. Israel had much but missed that one thing. Ishmael, because he was a son obtained by human effort, did not obtain salvation from God. Esau, because he relied on his own ability, did not become a channel of blessing. But Isaac, who was born through the promise, and Jacob, who believed the word he heard from his mother just as it was, were acknowledged as children of God.

The trap we most easily fall into while living a life of faith is precisely the way of Esau. At first we begin with faith that believes in Jesus and in His Cross and blood, but as some time passes, before we know it we try to hold on to salvation by our own works and efforts. We think, "Since I have prayed this much, since I have served this much, since I have devoted myself this much, God will accept me." But that is the faith of Esau, which tries to add one's own merit to the blood of the Cross. God never acknowledges such efforts as becoming a part of salvation. The only thing we must hold on to until the end of the age is the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus has already completed through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Before this gospel, no one can boast of himself. God wants only people of faith who believe that Jesus Christ, who bestowed the mercy of God—that is, Jesus, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and rose again from death—alone is the Savior.

The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit we have received is as follows: We were not saved because of the

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righteousness of our flesh. We were not saved because we were holier, served more, or repented more deeply. We have obtained salvation only by receiving the mercy of God. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus Himself had all our sins transferred to Him; by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross while bearing those sins and by rising again from death, He has now become our Savior; and He has guaranteed that salvation forever to those who believe this fact. Whoever has heard this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the ears and accepted it with the heart has become a child of the promise.

Therefore, we no longer live relying on the works of our own flesh. What do we have to boast of? Just as Jacob had nothing to boast of, neither do we. We only give all glory to God, who called us and had mercy on us. Is there anyone who, even now, does not have the assurance of salvation because of his own lack? Please remember the fact that Jacob was not loved because he was outstanding. Our salvation does not depend on us, but on God who called us. Those who believe, just as it is, and accept in their hearts the salvation that Jesus has already accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit live today, too, as children of the promise within the mercy of God. How could we, who have received this amazing mercy, not give thanks to our Lord? I hope that we will all hold firmly to this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and give glory to the Lord, who had mercy on us, to the end. I hope you will become those who are born again by believing in the righteousness of the Lord. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Do not look for the basis of salvation in yourself

< Romans 9:14–18 >

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.”

There is no unrighteousness with God

The question “How much more must I strive to be able to stand before God?” is one that anyone who longs for salvation has probably held at least once. A person may think that since he has sought God for a long time and has lived more diligently than others, his reasons for being saved have piled up just as much; yet when he sees that the sin in his heart remains just as it was, he cannot tell how far that toil must go to be enough. When we read this text holding that question, we find that Paul does not count our toil, but first speaks of what God has done

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toward sinners. It is because that is where Paul places the basis of salvation.

Paul first asks and answers, *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!" (Romans 9:14)*. When one hears the preceding word that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, it can sound as if God saved one person and abandoned the other for no reason at all. But if one tries to compare people's character to determine who is qualified to be saved, one cannot rightly understand this word. It is because Jacob, Esau, and we were all equally born before God as sinners bound for hell, so that no one can demand salvation from God by putting forward his own righteousness.

The fact that there is no unrighteousness with God is revealed in the salvation He bestowed through Jesus Christ. If God, leaving Christ out, had unconditionally chosen some people and unconditionally abandoned others, it would have been impossible to avoid saying that there is unrighteousness with God. But God loved all people and sent His Son, and He did not declare people righteous while leaving their sin as it was, but had His Son bear the sin of the world and its judgment. That is, when Jesus Christ received baptism from John, He had that sin passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Yet there are people who put forward their own rightness and refuse that love. God's hating that unbelief is different from hating a person for no reason. It is because it is not that God did not bestow salvation, but that people refused the salvation He bestowed. Therefore, even when the word speaks of Jacob and Esau, we should not leave Christ out and merely compare people's conduct; rather, we must see whether they believe in the salvation God has given or hold on to their own righteousness and refuse it.

The mercy of God revealed through the remission of sins

Paul conveys just as it is the word God spoke to Moses: *"For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion'" (Romans 9:15)*. Mercy is God's having pity on people who must be judged because of sin. This mercy is that God could not leave those placed where they could not avoid going to hell as they were, because in God's sight they were so pitiable. We did not receive this love because we had a righteousness that could move God; rather, God had pity on us, who had no power to escape from sin.

In this word spoken to Moses, the One who shows mercy is God. We cannot demand salvation from God by putting forward how much we have suffered because of our own sins, and that suffering itself cannot wash away sin either. God first sent Jesus Christ to give life to sinners, and He had Jesus actually accomplish the remission of sins we needed. Therefore, we who seek mercy must not offer our own earnestness as the price of salvation, but must hear how the Lord removed our sins and receive that salvation.

God did not proclaim this mercy only in word, but actually accomplished it through His Son. Jesus, the Son, came to this earth and, by receiving baptism from John, had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lives, transferred to Him once and for all. Because of that sin, Jesus hung on the Cross, shed His blood, and died; in this way He received in our place the judgment for sin that we should have received. And He rose again from death, remitted our sins, and gave us new life. The mercy of God revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a love that took sin lightly and let it pass, but a love that

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removed our sins through His Son and even finished their judgment.

The reason we can say that we have no sin also lies in this salvation. We did not become righteous by forgetting our own transgressions or by considering sin not to be sin; we became righteous because Jesus bore all those sins and paid the price of sin. A heart that believes in the mercy God has bestowed does not hide its own lack, yet does not doubt the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished. The more we look at our lacking selves, the more we come to rely, rather than giving up on salvation, on Jesus, who received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross for those very selves.

A willing heart and toil do not accomplish salvation

Paul makes even clearer where salvation came from: *"So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16)*. While speaking both of the heart that wishes to be saved and of the life of striving for it, he says that neither of them can become the basis that accomplishes salvation. It is because willing and running contain human zeal, but the power to remove sin does not come from that zeal.

Having a great desire to go to heaven does not make sin disappear, and striving to keep the commandments cannot receive in one's place the judgment for sins already committed. The word that it is not of him who runs is a word spoken about people who are especially good at religious life, people who pile up many good deeds to go to heaven. If one tries to become righteous by adding to Jesus' salvation the resolution to live diligently before God, in the end one comes to check again

whether one's toil is enough. The reason people are anxious that their works fall short, even while hearing that the Lord has removed their sins, is that they place the basis of salvation in two places. But Paul points only to the mercy God has bestowed as the source of salvation.

That does not mean that there is no need even to believe in the salvation God has given. Believing in what Jesus did is not adding one's own resolution as a righteous merit, but receiving just as it is the remission of sins that the Lord has accomplished. What we are to believe in is not a feeling about how strong our own faith is, but Jesus Christ. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had our sins passed on to Him; with the blood He shed on the Cross, He paid the price of those sins; and He rose again from death and saved us. A person who has believed in this salvation and become righteous does not put forward that service as the price of salvation even when serving God, but lives giving thanks for the grace already bestowed.

Do not be hardened before the word of God

A heart that relies on human strength is revealed not only when one tries to obtain salvation through religious zeal, but also when one rejects God by putting forward one's own authority. Paul goes on to convey the word spoken to such a Pharaoh: *"For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth'" (Romans 9:17)*. Pharaoh relied on the strength of his own army and his own nation and rejected the word of God. He thought that he had the power to hold Israel back, but with that power he could not stop what God was doing. While God sent down plagues, divided the sea, and

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delivered Israel, the limits of the power Pharaoh relied on were revealed, and God's power and name became known in all the earth.

There is also a meaning in the word that God causes His name to be declared in all the earth. He does not only make known the fact that He broke Pharaoh's power; He lets people know who it is that delivers people and whose word they must rely on. Therefore, we, too, cannot boast of our own strength while speaking of the power of God. We must preach the Lord who gave salvation to sinners, and we must turn even the faith of those who hear toward that Lord, not toward human ability.

We must not read the word that God displayed His power through Pharaoh as meaning that God's power grows greater only when people are made evil. Nor did God consider it right that Pharaoh rejected Him. God sent Moses to convey His word and gave Pharaoh a chance to turn back with each plague, but each time Pharaoh hardened his own heart and stood against the word. Even though God left Pharaoh, who believed himself to be strong, as he was, God accomplished what He intended regardless of Pharaoh's opposition. No matter how stubborn a heart that boasts of human strength may be, that strength cannot be greater than the authority of God, who bestows salvation.

"Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens" (Romans 9:18). This word does not mean that some people are made from birth unable to believe and so cannot but perish. On God's side, when Jesus received baptism from John, God passed on the sins of all people to Him, had Him shed His blood on the Cross and receive even their judgment in their place, and so removed sin, and He gave all people a conscience so that they might know their own lack. Therefore, the dividing point lies on the human side, in whether one believes in that salvation or not, and the meaning of this word is that God leaves

the person who rejects the word and insists on his own strength in that hardness as he is. We, too, were originally people with hardened hearts. Therefore, even when we discover that our own hearts are stubborn, we should not conclude that it is our destiny not to be saved, but should cast away the self-righteousness that such hearts put forward and accept the word of salvation the Lord has given. Even after being saved, we must take care not to harden our hearts before the word.

To the question "How much more must I strive to be able to stand before God?" this text does not answer with an amount of toil. There is no more toil to be piled up; there is only the One who has already removed the sin that could not be removed by that toil. Just as what Pharaoh needed was not greater strength but faith that acknowledged the word of God, what we need, too, is not adding more qualifications but believing in the salvation Jesus has accomplished. Lift your eyes, which used to count your own toil, and look to Jesus, who received baptism from John and bore our sins, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death. The basis of salvation is not in us, but in that Lord. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Of God who shows mercy

< Romans 9:14–18 >

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens.”

There is no unrighteousness with God

In the verse just before, the apostle Paul quoted the weighty word *“Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated” (Romans 9:13)*. Then a question immediately arises in people’s hearts. If God loved one and hated the other when the two children had not yet been born and had done neither good nor evil, is that not God being unfair? Paul does not avoid this question but faces it head-on: *“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!” (Romans 9:14)*.

There is no unrighteousness with God. God is holy, just, and without blemish. Look at all the things God has made. When you look at a single flower blooming in the field, a single bird flying in the sky, and the order of nature that turns with the seasons,

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they are so perfect that there is nothing to add to them or take away from them. Why would God, who made all things so perfect and clean, act unrighteously only in the work of saving people? Unrighteousness is not something found in God.

Then where is unrighteousness? Rather, it is on the side of people who reject the grace of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has bestowed and who put forward their own righteousness. There is one thing we must clearly know. Before God, Jacob and Esau were originally in exactly the same situation. Both were sinners born as descendants of Adam, and both were people who could not help but receive the judgment for sin as they deserved and perish. When God sent the two of them into this world, He did not make them different from each other as a righteous person and a sinner. Both of them were standing together in a place where they could not help but fall into hell because of sin.

In that hopeless place, if God had mercy on some people and saved them, that is not unrighteousness but rather the grace of His mercy. How could it be unfair to bestow salvation on those who deserve to perish? If God had judged all people just as they were, no one could have said that He was unrighteous. Yet God bestowed mercy among them. Therefore, in that proclamation that God loved Jacob and hated Esau, there is not the slightest unrighteousness. There were only mercy and justice together. That mercy has come to us today through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all; He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment for that sin in our place; and He rose again from death and remitted our sins.

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God, who had mercy on those on whom He would have mercy

Paul then quotes the word of Exodus 33:19: *"For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion'" (Romans 9:15)*. This word is the promise God Himself made to Moses on Mount Sinai. But why did He use the expression *"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15)*, repeating it twice?

This repetition is meant to make one truth clear. That is, God's mercy is not based on any qualification or effort on man's part, but comes only from the love that flows out of God's heart. People do not receive mercy because they have the qualifications to receive mercy. People are not shown compassion because they are better and more righteous. They receive mercy because God Himself determined, *"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy" (Romans 9:15)*. This repeated word clearly teaches us the fact that the beginning and the source of salvation from sin lie not in man but only in God.

Here we come to look into the heart of God. All people were placed in a hopeless situation in which they could not help but fall into hell because of sin. Seeing that pitiful condition, God could not possibly leave it as it was. Because He had such great compassion on them, He Himself sent the Savior and carried out the work of salvation. He sent His own Son Jesus Christ to this earth and did the work of giving life to us, who could not help but die because of sin.

That salvation is the very word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus Himself had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. With that

sin passed on to Him, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and thereby completely bore the price of sin, and by rising again three days after His death, He became the Lord who has solved all the sins of us who believe. The reason we are qualified to believe this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is that we were fundamentally sinners. Because God had mercy on us, salvation has been granted to those who believe through the work of God, namely, the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection from death.

We must not take the word *"mercy"* of God lightly. Mercy is the love that bestows grace on those who deserve to receive punishment. What a sinner should receive was originally the judgment for sin. But God withdrew that judgment and instead granted salvation. This is mercy. Therefore, a person who has received mercy can never say, "I was saved because I did well." Rather, he comes to confess, "I was one who deserved to perish, but God had compassion on me." A person who has this confession in his heart is a person who has truly been saved from his own sins.

It is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs

Then upon whom does salvation come? In verse 16, Paul clearly reveals the channel of salvation: *"So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16)*.

Salvation is not *"of him who wills" (Romans 9:16)*. However earnest the desire to go to heaven may be, that earnest wish cannot produce salvation. However strong a person's will may be, sin is not washed away by it. Nor is salvation *"of him who runs" (Romans 9:16)*. Even if one never misses early morning

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prayer, is zealous in service, gives offerings with all sincerity, and runs the path of faith more diligently than anyone, those labors and deeds cannot become the basis of salvation.

Then by what does salvation come? *"Of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16)*. From beginning to end, salvation comes from God, who is rich in mercy. Salvation comes when we accept with our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God Himself promised, that is, the work in which Jesus bore the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again on the third day. All we did was simply hear that gospel and believe it just as it is.

Today many people are missing the faith that believes in this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. While saying that you believe in Jesus, have you thought that salvation is completed only when you desire more and run more? That is an attempt to add one's own will and deeds to salvation. However much we desire and however much we run, the power to solve the problem of sin by ourselves does not come out of us. Only the mercy God has bestowed, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has already completed, saves us from the sin of the world. Therefore, we have nothing at all to boast about. We only boast of the love of God, who has had mercy on us.

The providence of God, who raised up Pharaoh

In verses 17 and 18, Paul gives the example of yet another person. It is none other than Pharaoh, the king of Egypt. *"For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, 'For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth'" (Romans 9:17)*.

We must carefully examine the word that God hardened Pharaoh. This does not mean that God forcibly made evil a man who was originally without sin. From the beginning, Pharaoh was a man who relied on his own power and army and opposed God. Although God spoke to him repeatedly through Moses, Pharaoh did not bend his heart to the very end and did not submit to God. God raised up that hardened Pharaoh just as he was, so that through him the power of God would be revealed in all the earth.

Because Pharaoh relied on his own strength to the end and would not let Israel go, God showed His power through the ten plagues. In the end, Pharaoh led his army in pursuit of Israel and perished in the Red Sea. But through what happened to Pharaoh, the greatness of the LORD God was proclaimed to the whole world. Pharaoh was one who served as an indirect advertisement, so that not only Egypt but all the surrounding nations would hear and believe what kind of God the God of Israel is.

Here we see two kinds of people. One is a king like Pharaoh, who held on to his own righteousness to the end and became hardened. The other is a person like Jacob, who acknowledges his own shortcomings and accepts God's mercy. Pharaoh relied on his own power and ability and perished, while Jacob, knowing that he had nothing to boast of, relied only on the word of promise and received blessing from God. Where were the destinies of these two divided? It depended on whether one accepts or rejects God's mercy, that is, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, with a believing heart. That word says that Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death to save us from sin.

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Return from the path of hardness to the path of mercy

This passage poses the same question to us today as well. Are we now walking Pharaoh's way? Or are we walking Jacob's way? Those who rely on their own deeds and merits to the end have hearts that grow harder and harder, just like Pharaoh. Even when they hear the saving word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has bestowed, they think that they have their own righteousness, and so they do not kneel before that mercy of God. But those who have realized that they have nothing come before God's mercy, just like Jacob.

God's mercy is still flowing even now through the word of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and of the Cross. Two thousand years ago, by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death, becoming the Savior of sinners. The work of Jesus Christ was not for just one person. Whether Jew or Gentile, the salvation of God's mercy comes upon anyone who believes in and accepts this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart. We, too, were originally not God's people, but God calls us *"My people" (Romans 9:25)*. How amazing this grace of God's mercy is! Therefore, we must remember this love of mercy every day and praise Him.

As we live a life of faith, there are times when, without realizing it, we come to resemble the heart of Pharaoh. We think, "I have prayed this much, I have served this much, and I have lived this righteously, so God will accept me." But that is a heart that tries to add its own merit to the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit; in the end, it is a hardened heart that tries to put forward its own righteousness. God does not regard such

efforts as fitting. What we must truly realize is the fact that there is nothing in us to boast about.

Who was Jacob? The meaning of his name is “one who grasped the heel,” that is, “one who deceives others.” He was a deficient and weak man who deceived his brother and deceived his father. Even so, God loved him. It was not because he was impressive, but because God had mercy on him. This is exactly what we are like. We, too, were originally sinners from birth and those who could not help but be destroyed, but God had compassion on us, sent Jesus Christ, and saved us, who believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, once and for all.

Those who have realized this merciful word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit have roots of faith that differ from those of ordinary people. Before, they were always anxious as they strove to do better, but now they live giving thanks before God through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that they have already received. Before, they tried to earn points before God by their own good deeds, but now they believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has fulfilled completely, and they enjoy true peace and the grace of salvation. What we should offer is not greater effort, but faith, thanksgiving, and praise toward God, who has had mercy on us. Those who believe in such a word of the gospel are the ones who have received the love of mercy from God.

Therefore, we no longer live as those who will or as those who run. Our salvation depends not on our earnestness or our labor, but only on God, who has had mercy on us. Is there perhaps anyone who even now has not gained the assurance of salvation because of his own shortcomings? Please remember that Jacob was not loved because he was impressive. Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the

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baptism He received from John and has already accomplished salvation through His death on the Cross and His resurrection. Those who believe in and accept that salvation in their hearts live today as God's people within God's mercy. Before that great love of God, who had mercy on us who deserved to perish and saved us Himself, how could we not give thanks? I pray in the name of the Lord that we may all hold firmly to this merciful word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and give thanks and all glory to the Lord, who has had compassion on us, to the end of the age. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

We have been saved by the great mercy and power of God

< Romans 9:14–24 >

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?”

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God has opened the way for anyone to be saved by believing in the righteousness of God in his heart. We examined this part together through the previous message. God spoke clearly about this, giving Jacob and Esau as one example. It means that God made people obtain salvation not by works but according to His election. The word says, *"The purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls" (Romans 9:11)*. And God said: *"It was said to her, 'The older shall serve the younger.' As it is written, 'Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated'" (Romans 9:12–13)*. In other words, obtaining salvation before God is obtained by faith, and that faith is the faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and faith is nothing other than believing in the facts. We heard this part together through the previous message.

Dear fellow believers, we do not obtain salvation just because we vaguely believe in Jesus as the Savior and believe in the blood of the Cross. Jesus came to this earth to save us, received baptism from John the Baptist in order to bear our sins, and, with our sins passed on to Him, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. And on the third day He rose again from death and remitted all the sin of the world, which includes our sins. It is precisely because this fact took place that the Lord has saved those who believe in that fact. Therefore, the Lord has given salvation to those who believe in that fact. Because no one can keep the law of God perfectly, God has given salvation only to those who believe in the righteousness of God. Therefore, when we believe in God, we too must believe in the fact that God has saved me and you through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We must know well what the world is like, watch and pray, and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit well by faith.

God loved people like Jacob

Dear fellow believers, God saved people like Jacob. There are Esau and Jacob, and the point is that the kind of person who has nothing impressive in himself relies on and believes in the righteousness of God and obtains salvation. But a person who has much to be proud of in himself, a person who has much strength of his own, does not believe in the righteousness of God. He only relies on his own strength and does not rely on the word of God. That is why God said that He loves people like Jacob and hates people like Esau.

Fundamentally, God loves all people equally. However, He hates the person who tries to put forward only his own rightness and rejects the love of God and the rightness of God. Dear fellow believers, is it not fitting for God to hate such a person? Is it not the same for me and you? If I truly sacrificed myself for someone and treated him well, but that person did not appreciate it and instead ignored and rejected me, would I not hate him? It is exactly the same.

Dear fellow believers, God loves all people evenly. Yet man, who before God is nothing but a sinner and a lump of sin, and who is headed for hell, ignores and rejects that salvation of God. God had compassion on people and came to this earth to save them, and He saved them through the baptism He Himself received from John and the blood of the Cross that He Himself shed, yet people do not believe it. People do not believe in God's salvation, and they try to enter even the kingdom of heaven before God with their own good deeds and their own impressiveness. In God's sight that is a laughable thing, and in God's sight it is an accursed thing. That is nothing other than showing off before God, and such people are hated by God.

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When they are not impressive at all and are headed for hell, what is there for them to show off about?

Those who know themselves cannot show off

Dear fellow believers, although this should never happen, let us suppose, for example, that someone killed a person without anyone knowing. Let us suppose that somehow, before he knew it, he ended up killing a person. He himself knows that he killed a person. But let us suppose that he disguised that death well, so that other people do not know. Yet he himself knows that if this matter comes to light, he will have to go to prison and be put to death. Then would that person be happy? Could that person show off? He could not.

Other people may not know what he has done, but he himself knows that before God he is a murderer who killed a person. Moreover, even under the law of the world it will be discovered someday, and then he will have to go into prison, and if things go wrong, he may even be put to death. What could there be to be proud of for a person who knows the misery of his own future? And even if he had something to be proud of, could he boast of it? He could not. In the same way, all people have nothing to be proud of before God, yet they show off.

God hates such people. If you ask who the person God hates most is, it is the person who thinks that he is more impressive than God and so does not rely on God. God dislikes such a person most and hates him most. Why is that? It is because man cannot live without God's help. Dear fellow believers, isn't that so? Can a person live without God's help? He cannot.

In fact, no one can live without God's help. So it is with all human beings, and so it is with us. Would anyone have the

ability and the confidence to go on living even without God's help? We, too, cannot live well without God's help. The same is true even of little children. God loves the parents and bestows grace on them, and so the children who receive the love of those parents are ultimately receiving the love of God.

Is there unrighteousness with God?—Certainly not

Verse 14 says, *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!" (Romans 9:14)*. This word asks what unrighteousness there is with God, what wrong God has done. God loved Jacob and hated Esau, so what is wrong with this?

God so loved the world that He loved all people. But a person like Esau, who only shows off his own strength and insists only on his own rightness, did not accept that love. Even if he has so much strength and so much that is right, he must go to hell because of his own sins, so what is there for him to show off about? If he does not receive God's love and does not believe in the righteousness of God, how can he come into the kingdom of heaven, how can he prosper, and how can his life go well? He cannot help but go to hell.

That is why God loved more the person who has little rightness of his own and therefore believes in and relies on the rightness of God all the more, the person who therefore receives the remission of sins by faith and enters the kingdom of heaven, the person who has become a worker of God. But what could be wrong with this? Dear fellow believers, the word "unrighteousness" refers to sin. The word *"Is there unrighteousness with God?"* means, "God does nothing wrong." God hated Esau, but would that be a wrong thing? If left alone,

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such a person will go to hell, and because, even though he is headed for hell, he goes there showing off before God, such a person is hated.

This is because it is not God's will that people go to hell. God loved people this much. Jesus, who is God, came to this earth, had all the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death, thus saving the people who would have had to go to hell. "By receiving My help, you have been kept from going to hell, for I have removed all your sins, so believe it. Believe it, come into My kingdom, and let us live well together with Me." That is the will of God, but people trust in their own strength and reject it. God does nothing wrong. That is why God hates people like Esau and loves people like Jacob.

God, who has mercy on those on whom He will have mercy

Verse 15 says, *"For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion'" (Romans 9:15)*. Truly God has mercy on those on whom He will have mercy. The reason He recorded such a word so repeatedly is that those who do not receive mercy from God go to hell.

We human beings do so many wrongs before God, we also do so many wrongs to one another, and we even do so many wrongs to ourselves. Therefore, God has such great compassion on the person who has been placed in such a position that he cannot avoid going to hell however hard he may try. He had such

compassion on that person that He could not leave him as he was. God Himself rolled up His sleeves and personally saved such a person so that he would not go to hell.

God Himself came to this earth, bore all the sins of such a person by receiving baptism from John, and, in place of this person dying and in place of his being judged, was Himself nailed to the Cross, received the judgment, died, and rose again, and so saved this person. That is the mercy with which God has compassion on this person.

A person so pitiful that He could not help but love him—such a merciful love was in our God. Yet in God's sight, among us human beings there are people like Esau and people like Jacob. In truth, they are people who equally need to receive mercy, but a person like Esau shows off all by himself: "I live trusting in my own fists. I live trusting in my own money. I trust in myself. I do not trust others, I do not trust religion, and I do not trust God; I trust only in myself." There are people of this kind.

And there is another kind of person, one who looks pitiful when others look at him, looks pitiful when God looks at him, and looks pitiful even when he looks at himself. The Lord has compassion on such a person. Such a person is Jacob. On the other hand, the person who trusts in his own strength is Esau. Dear fellow believers, in truth, if you know yourself rightly, you cannot become, like Esau, a person who does not believe in the righteousness of God and the love of God. A person who knows himself becomes, like Jacob, a person who believes in God.

It is not of him who wills or of him who runs

Verse 16 says, *"So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:16)*. By

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whom do we become righteous people? We become righteous people by God and by the righteousness of God.

The word *"So then it is not of him who wills"* means, in other words, that we cannot go to heaven or receive the remission of sins just because we want to go to heaven. The word *"it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs"* is spoken to religious people. It is spoken concerning those who do many good works in this world because they want to go to heaven, those who are especially good at religious life—such people.

We cannot go to heaven just because we are good at religious life, or do much good in this world, or benefit many people. Then whom must we meet to become people without sin before God, to go to heaven, and to become workers of God? The word says that it is only of God who shows mercy.

That is so. That is right. God had compassion on us and saved us with the righteousness of God. God had compassion on us and made us children of God. God had compassion on us and made us workers of God. God had compassion on us and gave us the blessings of the world to come. He kept us from going to hell, sent us into heaven, and gave us all blessings. Where did all of this come from? It came from that love in God's heart, from God's great mercy, from that heart with which God has compassion on us, and from that power by which God is able to have compassion on us. In that way Jesus had compassion on us, had all the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received in our place the judgment we should have received by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death to make us righteous. Therefore, we were able to become children of God by believing in that God. It is truly so.

The authority of the potter—vessels of wrath and vessels of mercy

Yet because God says that He loved Jacob and hated Esau, the people of the world think, "Isn't this unrighteous?" So people make many guesses about this part and put forward their own views. They say many different things, such as, "Isn't God an unfair God? Then isn't God wrong?"

So the apostle Paul also speaks about this part. He says that when God raised up a man like Pharaoh in the Old Testament times, raising up a man with a hardened heart, He raised him up in order to reveal His power. A man like Pharaoh belongs to the Esau kind. He is a man who trusts only in his own strength and neither relies on God nor believes in Him. God does not love such a person, so why did He raise up such a person? He raised him up in order to show what His power is like.

Dear fellow believers, if we compare God to a potter who makes vessels, God can make all kinds of vessels from clay—He can make chamber pots, rice bowls, pottery, flower vases, wine cups, and even very precious things—and a potter makes whatever he wants to make. And if he makes something and it does not please him, he breaks it. The potter has the right to break it.

Some potters fire things like rice bowls in a single batch; they usually make two or three hundred of them and put them into the fire to bake them. Then they take them out and break the ones that do not please them. To our eyes they all look like good vessels with no difference among them, but that potter sets aside only three or four or so and breaks all the rest. The broken vessels pile up like a mountain. The broken vessels can no longer be used. They cannot become clay again either. Because they were made by firing, those vessels are useless. How much

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money must have gone into kneading the clay and firing it to make them like that! Yet that is up to the will of the potter who makes the vessels. Dear fellow believers, God is like that too.

God made all human beings, and He made them all in order to save us in His own Son and make us children of God. All human beings were born as fundamental sinners who commit sin, but God had compassion on such human beings, removed all their sins, and saved them. Therefore, those who accept that love of God receive the love of God, become workers, become children, and go to heaven.

But if there are people who do not believe in this God, it is fitting for God to punish them and to send them to hell, and it is also fitting for Him not to love such people. Dear fellow believers, does God not have such authority? God does have such authority. Would God not exercise that authority? If God did not exercise that authority, He would not be a just God. God is exceedingly just and also merciful.

The justice of God is surely alive

God did not merely say that He is just; He truly acted justly. They were all people who had to go to hell; all people had sinned and fallen short of the glory of God, and they were all about to go to hell. But God sent His own Son to this earth, passed on all the sins of such people to His Son through the baptism the Son received from John, carried out the judgment on the Cross, and saved them all. Jesus had all those sins passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death, and so He remitted all the sin of the world, which includes our sins, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

So God decided to give salvation to everyone who believes that fact, if only he knows it and believes it in his heart. So some people received salvation because they believed it, and some people did not believe it and simply remain sinners. So they must go to hell, and if things simply stopped in that state and ended there, the justice of God would not be alive.

Also, even those who go to heaven by faith would not be grateful to God. If there were no hell in the world to come, what reason would those who go to heaven have to be grateful? If people simply disappeared when they die, if they simply returned to nature, which is nothing, then the justice of God would become nothing.

Some people say, “Life and death are one.” But, dear fellow believers, are life and death really one? Never. God clearly said that He has mercy on those on whom He will have mercy and that He surely pours out wrath on those on whom He will bring wrath. This is the will of God.

So we must acknowledge what God does as right, and we must know that even if we had much to be proud of, all of it is sin before God. We must acknowledge and believe before God that we are fundamentally those who must go to hell. We must believe in the love of God and in the righteousness of God that was fulfilled through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross. We must rely on God. We must hold on to God. And even after receiving the remission of sins, we must live receiving God’s help. We must receive blessings. We are not people who become self-made by our own strength alone.

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There is no such thing as a self-made person—there are only God and coworkers

Even a person who is said to be self-made is in reality nothing. When you look at those who are said to be self-made, they are extremely arrogant, but then some of them collapse completely overnight. They are nothing. Even if you look at a certain famous entertainer in the world who was said to be self-made, he achieved great success with singing and dancing from childhood, bought a large estate, and carried out work for children, but in the end, it is said, he lost all that money and fell into debt. That is how life ends. Because at that age he still had to sing the songs he had sung in his prime and dance as well, he could not help but rely on drugs, and as a result he lost his health and in the end died of a heart attack. Dear fellow believers, man is nothing. Even a self-made person is nothing.

I am nothing either. It is because our workers are here that I can speak with such confidence; if I were alone, I would be nothing. The reason I can speak with confidence is that our coworkers are here. Because our evangelists and all of you are here with me, I can confidently say, “Let us do this; let us do that.” Otherwise, what could I do?

Without you or God, I am nothing. I was one who was going to hell. In this world, if you judged by good deeds or by the way I lived, I may have been better than most people. In the past, I tried to live as good a life as I could, tried to live rightly before God, and tried to live rightly before people. But after I met the Lord and looked around, I see so very many people in this world who truly deserve to be rebuked. There are truly many wicked people.

That is why no person can rebuke God or speak ill of Him.

We were all earthen vessels that could not help but break

So in the Bible the apostle Paul spoke about vessels, and these vessels are none other than us. We are all weak earthen vessels. Because we are all vessels made of clay, all weak vessels, and in fact vessels that are nothing and will break, God had compassion on us and saved us completely. God loved us perfectly and made us perfect people. This is because Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so remitted all the sins of us, who are like vessels that will break.

Yet there are people who do not know that they are vessels that will break, who boast of their own impressiveness and fall into destruction and are destroyed. Dear fellow believers, who are these vessels? They are me and you today. We were exactly such vessels. Dear fellow believers, isn't that so? Yes, it is. Even now we are doing the work of God, but if we do not continually receive God's help, we will be ruined.

We are earthen vessels that cannot help but break before God, yet the Lord had compassion on us, saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, made us children of God, and made us workers. So He has let me and you now do such precious works as these. I truly thank God, who has let us do such precious works of God.

Now, after we have done this work, when the Lord says, "Come," we will go to the kingdom of heaven that the Lord has prepared for us. For those who do not believe this and show off, hell is prepared. Hell has been made ready for them. Dear fellow believers, I and you believe in God's justice and His love and

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praise God alone. Let us give thanks before our God. I will close the word here. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

God saved sinners bound for hell through His mercy

< Romans 9:14–26 >

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He

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says also in Hosea: 'I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," There they shall be called sons of the living God.'"

The vessels of wrath and the vessels of mercy

In the word, God the Father says, *"Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?" (Romans 9:21),* and in saying this, He says that even if He made all human beings this way—just as He said that He loved Jacob and hated Esau—making one to be honored and the other to receive wrath, the one who was formed could not question God, and that no one can say such a thing. He then says, *"What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory" (Romans 9:22–23).* This means that even if God had made Jacob and Esau so that one was made a vessel of wrath to show His wrath and the other was made weak so as to receive compassion, how could a created being that was formed protest, saying, "Why did God make me a vessel to receive wrath like this?"

The point is this: even if God had made one a weak vessel in order to reveal the riches of God's glory and had made the other a hardened person in order to receive wrath, could we human beings really question God? Could we say, "Why did You make me like this? Isn't this unfair?" While talking about Jacob and Esau, the apostle Paul raises the question: I loved one and I hated

the other; then, if God determined this in advance, did God do wrong? But, continuing on, the apostle Paul, speaking of Jacob and Esau, says that it is not so. And he also says that, on top of that, even if He had done so, the one who was formed cannot oppose the One who formed him.

So, our receiving salvation from sin from God is not something we obtain because we want it, nor did we come to be saved because we did something well or ran well. Rather, when God looked at us, He had compassion on those on whom He would have mercy, and when God looked, He poured out wrath on those on whom He decided, "I must pour out wrath." So, what is all this—our receiving salvation, our becoming those who have received grace before God, and our receiving blessings from God? In conclusion, it all depends on God.

God raised up a man like Pharaoh as king of Egypt in order to pour out God's wrath, and He raised up a man like Pharaoh in order to show God's power. And God had mercy on those on whom He would truly have compassion, people like Jacob. God has determined it that way, and regarding what He has determined like this, all of us human beings, who are created beings, can never resent God, nor can we protest. Moreover, we have no right to protest at all. Even if the Creator made them that way, those who were made have nothing to complain about. But the grace of God came down upon people. God said that, as He saw it, He called those who were not His people His people and loved those He had not loved, those who were not worthy of being loved, and He said, *"And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God" (Romans 9:26)*. Even if God had determined to love one person and send him to heaven and to send the other to hell, we would have no right to resist at all.

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However, what the apostle Paul is speaking of is not the doctrine of predestination. The word has a theme, and we must know the theme, but people argue over the introduction without knowing the theme. That is a tremendous mistake. This word was not about that. What theme is God speaking of? It is that we, mankind, the descendants of Adam, could not help but receive God's wrath and be destroyed, that God could not love mankind even if He tried, and that we were those who had lost our qualification; yet in spite of this, God bestowed His salvation, saying that He would call those who were not His people His people and those He had not loved beloved, and that in the place where it was said that they were not His people, they would be called sons of the living God. This word was speaking of having received the grace of salvation from God.

Even if God made human beings vessels to receive wrath and poured out wrath on them, we human beings would have nothing to say before God; but this word was saying that to mankind, who could not help but receive wrath, God instead showed mercy in place of wrath, and in place of judgment gave the gift of God's salvation, the gift of becoming children of God. Though we were those who deserved to receive wrath, nevertheless, because God one-sidedly showed love to mankind and one-sidedly clothed us with grace, we received salvation and came to be called God's people and sons of God. That gift of salvation is the remission of sins that Jesus gave by having all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again from death. By believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we have become those who have received God's mercy.

Because God had compassion

So, through the apostle Paul, God spoke by giving an example. He says that God raised up Pharaoh and hardened his heart in order to show what God's wrath is like and to show how great God's power is—that is why He hardened Pharaoh's heart. But that is one example. All of us human beings were born as descendants of Adam, so no one is better and no one is worse. All of us were those who could not help but receive wrath before God. So God said that even among such people, He showed mercy to those on whom He would have mercy and poured out wrath on those on whom He would pour out wrath. Although He should pour out wrath on all alike, there are still those to whom He will show mercy—those who are so pitiable that He will save them and make them His own children. And what kind of people are they? They were people like Jacob. *"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15)*. When seen before God, all people are sinners, and all must go to hell. All deserve to be cast away.

But among them there were those who were truly pitiable. There were those who would receive God's mercy. Such people are those who knew that they were going to hell, knew that they deserved to be punished, and desired mercy before God. There were those who asked God for help, saying, "God, please have compassion on me," bowing their heads if they could and bending their bodies if they could, and asking Him to have mercy on them. God had such compassion on such people that He could not just leave them alone, and so He poured out on them God's mercy, God's grace of salvation, and blessings. That is how you and I have all been saved. Look. We human beings are all the same. No one is any different. In Ecclesiastes it says

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that for all human beings, whether fool or wise, death is the same and living is all the same. In fact, our going to hell because of sin was also all the same. It is not that some go to a lesser hell and others go to a worse hell. Everyone, without exception, had no choice but to go to hell, fairly. Yet among them, some received mercy from God. Who are those who have received mercy? They are the righteous who have received the remission of sins.

Those on this earth who have received salvation from God were those who had received mercy from God. The phrase "those who have received mercy" means that they were shown compassion by God. We could not have received mercy; we could not help but go to hell; but because we were so pitiable, we were shown compassion by God. We received mercy. How did we receive salvation and become righteous? How did we come to receive God's grace? The apostle Paul talks about this part. Truly, when God looked at sinners, they were all pitiable people, and those who had not received salvation were also pitiable people. There were those who searched for God, for the truth, anywhere, and who had a heart that asked God for mercy because they wanted to live according to God's will and wanted to receive grace. Those who pleaded like that, asking Him to have mercy on them, received grace and were saved by receiving God's mercy. God met them and saved them.

And some people do not truly even desire mercy from God and live as they please, but when God saw them, their lives were so pitiable—they do not know their own condition, and they live without even knowing that they are now going to hell—that, because they were so pitiable, He gave them an opportunity. God gave such people the opportunity to believe in Jesus Christ and be saved from sin, and so He caused them to be saved. In reality, before God, how uninterested we human beings are in salvation,

and how, though we are a mess in our deeds, we live not wanting to acknowledge God! Yet God met such people and saved such people. *"I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God" (Romans 9:25–26)*. This was the grace of God.

We human beings have neither seen God nor known Him, but the Creator existed. Faith, the life of faith, must begin from the fact that the Creator exists. And from there, there are 613 commandments in the law, which is God's command, and before these commandments we must think it over carefully with a sense of alarm, asking, "What did I do right, and what did I do wrong? Did I live according to the Creator's command or not? And if I did not, is that sin or not?" So, it is not that we should resolve to do right by our deeds. Rather, only when we come to have the attitude of heart that asks what kind of being I am before God, and, if I am truly one bound for hell, if I am a sinner, if I have done many wrongs before God, says, "I want to be saved; I want to receive grace; I want to receive the grace of the remission of sins," can we receive the grace God gives. This was the point.

The heart that receives the grace of the remission of sins

Among the many people on this earth, who is saved? God saves people who have this kind of heart, saying in their hearts: Though my deeds are lacking, God exists; but I do not act well; still, I want to receive God's grace; I want to receive God's blessing. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit

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and meet people, some people, even though they have nothing to show for themselves, are intent only on keeping their pride. They say, “Well, still, I…,” and I do not know what is so great about them. Some people say, “Oh, I don’t believe in Jesus. Don’t talk to me about such things.” Others say, “Oh, how could someone like me be saved?” But when we let them hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit as the word, there are those who, because they know their own lacking selves, when told that Jesus has saved them like that and that He passed on all their sins through baptism, believe it meekly, saying, “So they were passed on. Then I have no sin, right? I have no sin. Thank you.” There are people who accept the grace of salvation that God has accomplished in that way. Such people receive grace from God. Those who accept God’s gospel of the water and the Spirit, His salvation, have become God’s people. In the place where it was said that they were not His people, they have become those who have received grace as God’s people. All human beings must desire mercy from God. God said that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and will have compassion on whom He will have compassion.

All of us human beings must truly desire mercy before God. Only when we ask, “Have compassion on me; clothe me with grace,” can we receive mercy. How could we receive God’s mercy if we act proud before God and are stiff-necked like King Pharaoh? We must truly know how lacking we ourselves are and desire to be shown compassion before God. When we have such a heart and accept this salvation of the remission of sins with such a heart, we come to be saved. Look. God has determined that He will have mercy on whom He will have mercy and will pour out wrath on those on whom He will pour out wrath. Then it happens exactly as He Himself has determined.

Now, look at our salvation. The word mercy means to love someone because he is so pitiable. Look at us human beings with God's mercy. In saving us, mankind, God the Father sent His Son to this earth. And He let His Son Jesus grow up on this earth until He was thirty years old. And when He turned thirty, God caused Him to have all the sin of mankind transferred to Him when He received baptism through the hands of John the Baptist, who gave baptism. And He caused His Son to bear all the sin of mankind and receive the judgment for sin on the Cross. He caused Him to bear the sin of the sinners of mankind and receive the judgment for sin. And He caused Him to die and to live again. He lifted Him up to the right hand of God's throne. God has determined it this way, saying, "To everyone who believes in this Son of Mine, I will grant mercy, I will have compassion, and I will give the grace of salvation."

If God has determined it this way, we must see what attitude of heart we human beings should have. Some people think as they please, asking why God had to determine it that way and whether that is the only way; they say that one can be saved by the blood of the Cross alone, or can be saved just by hearing a voice in a dream saying, "I love you"; and they ask whether one must climb to a mountaintop only by the path, saying that one may climb up a cliff, go up by airplane, go up by stairs, go up along a ditch, or go up burning down all the barbed-wire fences, and that it is enough as long as one gets to the top. If they believe according to their own thoughts like that, it is wrong.

Believe as God has determined

God has accomplished our salvation by the water, the blood, and the Spirit. If He has determined the salvation of all human

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beings like this, then if we want to receive mercy from God, we must believe that way. Some people come up before God arguing about how human beings receive salvation, asking why they must believe it that way, why they must believe only that, whether they must believe in the baptism of Jesus, and whether it is salvation only if they believe in both the baptism and the blood of the Cross, and saying that even if they do not know the baptism or do not believe in it, it is salvation if they just believe in the blood of the Cross, since they believe. If, even though God says, "I saved you by the water, the blood, and the Spirit; I have determined it this way," human beings defy Him, defying God like Esau, like King Pharaoh, then such a person will receive from God the wrath by which he will be destroyed.

On the other hand, when God has determined it this way, when He has determined to save by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, some among us human beings say, "Did God determine it that way? If God saved us like that by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, then we have been saved! Thank You, God. Oh, please have compassion on me. I believe." Such people are saved. Others might defy Him and argue, "God, it's not as if I don't believe in You. I believe. I believe in the blood of the Cross, so why do You say it is not salvation? Must it be by water?" But God has definitely determined man's salvation from sin to be by the water and the blood. He says that He has determined it this way: *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. He says that He has determined it so. Jesus had to bear man's sin through baptism in order to die. That is why our God bore all of man's sin and removed it all. When God has determined that He saved people by the water and the Spirit, to stubbornly insist on being born again by the blood and the Spirit, leaving out the water, and to believe like

that and ask God to acknowledge one's salvation is to fail to receive mercy and to believe as one pleases.

God loved Jacob and hated Esau. Then we must believe as He has determined. We must know why He loved Jacob and hated Esau, and believe in God. Only then do we receive mercy from God. The reason God loved Jacob and hated Esau is that, although Jacob was cunning and wicked and lacking in conduct, he simply believed one hundred percent what his parents taught him, and so he was saved. Not by his own deeds, but by having his parents' faith handed down to him, coming to have the faith his parents had, he was saved by that faith. But Esau was not so. Esau tried to be saved by his own strength. He tried to receive the blessing of the salvation of the remission of sins that God gives as he himself pleased. That is why God said this—*"that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls" (Romans 9:11)*—and determined the paths of Esau and Jacob as a vessel of wrath and a vessel that would receive mercy. When God speaks of Jacob and Esau, we must pay attention to the word that says He loved Jacob and hated Esau. Are you now Esau, or are you Jacob? If your heart is Esau, you will be cursed in the future, and if it is Jacob, you will receive every blessing. It came about according to God's election: before they were even born, He chose this; He chose to love Jacob.

But we must not read only this far. *"And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls)" (Romans 9:10–11)*. God clearly determined to give blessing to one and determined to give a curse to the other. He chose. He chose people like Jacob and chose to cast away people like Esau.

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Then by what method did God choose? He chose not by works but so that they might stand only by Him who calls. That is, the one He chose was one whom God could call, one who, like Jacob, had no righteousness of his own. What kind of person does God call? God sought such people—the pitiable, sinners, those whose deeds are lacking, those who have absolutely nothing to boast of before God by their own deeds. When Jesus came to this earth and called people, He said, *"I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance" (Matthew 9:13)*, and He called sinners. He called those who knew that they were fundamentally sinners before God, sought mercy before God, came forward, and sought to receive the remission of sins. God called such people, clothed them with the grace of salvation, made them His children, and wished to live together with them in His kingdom as His own people. He wished to live together with them not as servants but as God's children, as His own family. This was God's election.

The salvation of the remission of sins has nothing to do with deeds

God did not choose by looking at our deeds. It is not that God chooses those who do well in their deeds and casts away those who do not; rather, the ones God chooses are those who are so pitiable, those whose deeds are not perfect—such people He called. He called those who know that they are lacking. All human beings alike are descendants of Adam and so all go to hell; but among them, God casts away those who keep defying and challenging God by doing something through their own deeds, those who try to become gods themselves. But to those who ask Him to save them, ask Him to have mercy, and request

compassion, saying, “Oh, I can’t do anything. I’m no good. So, God, if You exist, have compassion on me and save me,” God, even though their deeds are not right, had compassion on them, saved them, and made them God’s people. This is precisely God’s election.

When I look at this world now, I think that there are many strange things. I am not talking about what some denomination says, nor am I trying to establish our denomination. I am not saying that something is the truth just because our denomination says it. In this world there are countless denominations, and each has something it asserts in its own denomination. Then what is the truth? As for the truth, the Bible is the truth. What does the Bible say? What does it say about our being born again? The Bible says that the testimony of being born again is the water, the blood, and the Spirit, and that these are one—*“For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV” (1 John 5:8)*—that God saved us this way, that if you have this testimony within you, it is salvation, and that if you believe this, it is salvation.

But people say no; they say that one obtains eternal life and obtains salvation only by believing in Jesus and also doing good deeds. Some even say that one must receive a seal to be saved. Some people also say that believing in Jesus alone is not enough, that one must live a good life, must reach sanctification, and must become a true saint. Generally, everyone looks at it that way. They say that only by believing in Jesus, living a good life, helping others in need, doing right deeds, not committing sin, and living well might one possibly go to heaven. There are many people who add human deeds. They say that believing in Jesus alone is not enough, and they tell us to look at the apostle James, asking whether he did not say that faith is followed by works. But that is not so. The assertion of people who say such things

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is that one must reach sanctification. Other religions also say that one must become a saint, and within Christianity, too, people say that one must believe in Jesus and reach sanctification, must be changed, and that one becomes a child of God only by being holily changed. So all of this is wrong. In the Bible, salvation is the water, the blood, and the Spirit. Jesus, who is God, came to this earth, received baptism and washed away all our sins, shed His blood on the Cross and received all the judgment, and then rose again and is seated at the right hand of God's throne. Those who believe in that Lord, who saved them by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, as their Lord, as the Savior who saved them from sin, are saved.

We believe in the water, the blood, and the Spirit. No matter what anyone says, we believe. But some people do not believe. Even while saying that they believe, they do not actually believe. And some people say this: Is that the only way? Must it be baptism? One obtains salvation just by believing in the blood of the Cross. Look at world history; look at the history of Christianity. Who talks about baptism? Apart from the twelve apostles, who else has treated baptism as so important? Look at history. Don't you know even that? Then I say, "You are the one who does not know history. Jesus' actual disciples are the twelve disciples. What did Jesus' twelve disciples record in the Bible? How did they believe? Did they believe only in the blood, or did they also believe in the baptism?" When I speak from the Bible, what they say is wrong, and when they challenge me with the history of those who have believed only in the blood for several thousand years, with their vast numbers, what I say is wrong. But when we return to the Bible, what I say is right. When we return to the Bible, this is right. And there is real evidence in our hearts. If we look at history, those who said that people must receive baptism again even suffered the most severe persecution

in the world. There was a reason why those people said that people must receive baptism again. Baptism needs to be received only once. But one must know the meaning of baptism and then receive baptism and believe. If one receives it without knowing, it is utterly void.

When the Bible says that we are born again of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, and that He saved us by the water and the blood, if we accept and believe the word of God like this—"Lord, thank You. Hallelujah, Lord, thank You. Oh, even though I am so lacking, do I just have to believe? Thank You. You took away all my sins! You saved me! Thank You."—then we are saved. But there are those who do not believe, asking why God determined it that way. What I want to tell you clearly is that God has determined it this way. It is just as God said that He loved Jacob and hated Esau. This does not come about according to works; it is God's election. It is determined. That He loved Jacob is determined, and if so, God's saving us is also determined. That He saved you and me and all mankind is determined. How was it determined? The Bible says that God chose this way: He saved us like this by the water and the blood; whoever believes this is Jacob and has stood in the ranks of Jacob; such a person is chosen by Him, and such a person becomes His child and becomes His people.

Then what is there to argue about? No matter how much people say that in theology Calvin, Luther, Zwingli, or so-and-so said this or that, is that person the truth? Is a theologian the truth? The Bible is the truth. That person is not the truth. If that person interpreted the Bible according to the Bible, then what that person says is right. Originally, the truth is in Jesus. Grace and truth are in Jesus Christ. The word says, *"For the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ" (John 1:17)*. So Zwingli, John Knox, Calvin, or whoever

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it may be is not the truth. Yet people place their standard largely on those people. Why do they ignore the Bible?

We must believe as God has determined. If God has accomplished our salvation by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, we must know it as such and believe. And we must also preach it that way. We give thanks to the Lord, who has completely remitted and removed our sins by the water and the blood. Though our deeds are lacking, we give thanks to the Lord, who has clothed with grace those who, like Jacob, seek mercy before God. We give thanks to God, who has saved us by the water, the blood, and the Spirit. We give thanks to the Lord, who has given us the sure evidence of salvation within us. ✉

Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord called those like Jacob and blessed them

< Romans 9:14–33 >

“What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, ‘I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.’ So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy. For the Scripture says to the Pharaoh, ‘For this very purpose I have raised you up, that I may show My power in you, and that My name may be declared in all the earth.’ Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens. You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He says also in Hosea: ‘I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them,

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"You are not My people," There they shall be called sons of the living God.' Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth.' And as Isaiah said before: 'Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah.' What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.'"

Today, let us examine together the word centered on Romans chapter 9, verse 14. The apostle Paul says as follows: *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not!" (Romans 9:14)*. To understand the background of this word, we must first examine the preceding text. From Romans chapter 9, verse 1, the apostle Paul is speaking about God's election.

God chose Jacob from the time he was in his mother's womb. When Jacob and Esau were together in the womb of their mother Rebecca, God spoke to Rebecca: *"The older shall serve the younger" (Romans 9:12)*. And as it is written through the prophet Malachi, *"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated" (Romans 9:13; Malachi 1:2–3)*. On the basis of this word,

people say this: even before we were born on this earth, it had already been decided that some would be chosen and others would be rejected.

The calling from the mother's womb—*"The older shall serve the younger"*

There were twins in Rebecca's womb: Esau and Jacob. Before the two children were even born, God spoke to Rebecca: *"The older shall serve the younger" (Romans 9:12)*. Esau was born first. Following him came one who had taken hold of his older brother's heel with his hand, and he was Jacob. The name Jacob has the meaning 'one who takes hold of the heel,' that is, 'a deceitful one.' That is why, when God later called Jacob, He called him a worthless one, saying, *"You worm Jacob" (Isaiah 41:14)*.

Thus God said that even before they were born, and before they had done any good or evil, He had already loved Jacob and hated Esau. So, many people call this "the doctrine of election." Many people who believe in Jesus Christ agonize over this problem: "I believe in Jesus, but am I really one of the chosen, or one who has not been chosen?" Christian believers all over the world live with this agony.

Who would be the most recognized among theologians? John Calvin. What he teaches as most central is precisely the doctrine of election. He teaches that those whom God chose before the foundation of the world will surely be saved and go to heaven, and that those who were not chosen will go to hell even if they believe in Jesus. But this teaching makes people remain in endless anxiety. God does not leave us in such anxiety; rather, He makes His children those who believe in the gospel of

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the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rose again from death to save us.

Not of works but of Him who calls

Let us look at Romans chapter 9, verses 10 and 11, together. *"And not only this, but when Rebecca also had conceived by one man, even by our father Isaac (for the children not yet being born, nor having done any good or evil, that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls)" (Romans 9:10–11).*

The key here is the word *"that the purpose of God according to election might stand, not of works but of Him who calls" (Romans 9:11).* It means that before Jacob and Esau were even born, and before they had done good or evil, God had already chosen. But that election does not come about by man's works; it comes about by Him who calls.

The two were born, and both lived as descendants of Abraham. But God called Jacob, and Jacob answered that call. Esau did not answer the call. So God loved Jacob, gave him blessings, and blessed his descendants. The story of these two men is a word given to all of us today. Do we really belong on Jacob's side, or on Esau's side?

Jacob and Esau—two kinds of people

Jacob was one who came out at birth holding on to his older brother's heel. As the name Jacob tells us, he was full of petty

tricks, weak, and, in human terms, not very manly. He was a person who was lacking in deeds, one who would act friendly before the strong and act tough before the weak.

On the other hand, Esau was a very strong man. He was good at hunting, shot arrows well, handled a sword well, and roamed the fields and mountains catching wild animals. He had the ability to run on his own feet and catch wild animals and bring them back, and he also had much wealth. But which of these two men did God call? He called not a man like Esau, but a man like Jacob.

This is the key. God calls people like Jacob. Those who, in human terms, have nothing great to show off, no family background, are not very healthy, lack intelligence, and are not very good at studying—it means that God calls such people.

Jacob knew his own shortcomings. People like Jacob are those who, because they have nothing great and nothing perfect in themselves, confess, "I cannot live without God. I will live depending on God. I have no confidence that I can take responsibility even for my children, so I will depend on God." God calls such people. He calls them through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death to remit all our sins.

Those who depend on their own strength and those who depend on God

People try to live diligently by their own strength. They try studying and they try making efforts. But this world is not so

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easy. A population of eight billion people each run on the playing field called life, saying, “I will succeed; I will become rich; I will become a great person.” But among them, those who truly succeed are only a very small minority. The majority end up as failures.

Your parents were like that, too. They labored all their lives to live well. But even though they strove until their hair turned white, they did not have very much they could pass on to their children. There are not very many successful people who move the whole world. Even among classmates, those who seem to have succeeded and those who have failed go separate ways, and in the end, when we quietly look into ourselves, we discover a truly miserable self.

In elementary school, everyone dreams, saying, “I will become president.” In middle and high school, the dream gets smaller: “I will become a soldier, a police officer, or an athlete.” In college it comes down to “I just wish I could get a job,” and after marriage, their wish becomes, “I just wish I could scrape out a living and lead my family well.” That is the limit of human strength.

At this point, Jacob and Esau part ways. People like Jacob are those who know their own condition and depend on God, those who ask for God’s help, and those who, when told that God has given them blessings, believe it and hold on to it. But people like Esau are those who say, “I don’t need God. I can live by my own strength. I can live well and grandly, and I can take responsibility for my own family.” Which of these two men did God choose? A man like Jacob.

God does not love those who depend on their own strength. This is because those who depend on themselves can never love God. But those who depend on God, God loves, calls, and blesses.

God, who has called us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

When God created man, He made him with a purpose. When He told him in the Garden of Eden not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, God already knew that man would pick that fruit and eat it. He also knew that the fallen angel, that is, Satan the devil, would entice man and make him fall. There was an angel who opposed God, and there were other angels who followed that angel. God said to them, "Even if you oppose Me, you cannot take My place by your power. I will give My love and blessing to those I call from among people."

When the ancestor of us, mankind, sinned, all of us, his descendants, inherited sin from our mothers' wombs and became sinners. The Bible says, *"For as by one man's disobedience many were made sinners, so also by one Man's obedience many will be made righteous" (Romans 5:19)*. Jesus Christ came to this earth clothed in a human body, and according to the Father's will, He bore the sin of the whole world once and for all by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. Carrying that sin, He was nailed to the Cross, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, shed His blood, and died, and on the third day He rose again from death and became our Savior.

He was God the Creator. He became our Savior, and now He calls us: "I am your Savior. I have loved you like this." There are those who answer this call of God, and there are those who do not. It is here that those who are chosen and those who are not chosen part ways.

God promised, *"He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15)*. Just as He promised, the Creator came to this earth as the Seed of the woman, clothed in a human body, bore all the sins we have committed through the

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baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for sin, gave us new life, and rose again from death. To those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has accomplished, those whom God calls, God gives eternal blessing.

God, who has mercy on whomever He will have mercy

Therefore, the apostle Paul says as follows: *"What shall we say then? Is there unrighteousness with God? Certainly not! For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion.' So then it is not of him who wills, nor of him who runs, but of God who shows mercy" (Romans 9:14–16).*

Even if God chose people like Jacob and gave them the blessing of becoming children of God, and hated people like Esau, what can we say? People do not become children of God because they want to, nor because they run well and have ability; it comes about only by God, who shows mercy.

What would a person going to hell have to say? When God calls—that is, when He calls through the gospel of the water and the Spirit—what would those who refused that call have to say, when all they had to do was answer, "Yes"? Some answer that call, saying, "Yes, Lord. So You loved me like that, Lord! So You bore all my sins like that! So You received the judgment in my place like that! So You gave me new life like that! You rose again from death and gave me life again!" To such people God gives heaven and the blessing of becoming His children.

Such people confess like this: "God, I depend on You alone. I believe in You alone." Because they are so wretched, they have

become people who depend entirely on God alone and believe in Him. God blesses such people.

King Pharaoh and the hardness of heart

In the Bible appears King Pharaoh of Egypt. How great was his power! But when God sent Moses and said, *"Let My people go" (Exodus 5:1),* Pharaoh did not let the people of Israel go. So God sent ten plagues. From the first, second, and third plagues to the ninth plague, when a plague struck, he would say, "Go, go," but when the plague stopped, he would hold on to the people, saying, "No, no."

The last plague was the plague of the death of the firstborn. It was a plague in which every firstborn in the land of Egypt, whether man or animal, was put to death. But God, through His servant, had the people of Israel put the blood of the lamb on the lintel and the two doorposts, and when He saw that blood, He passed over them. This is the Passover. Because Jesus, our Passover lamb, had the sin of all mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in our place, and on the third day rose again from death, God passes over those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit without judging them.

And so the firstborn of the people of Israel all lived, and all the firstborn of Egypt, from the son of King Pharaoh on down, died. Only when even his own son died and the whole nation wailed did Pharaoh give in and let the people of Israel go. But after letting them go, the thought came to him, "Then who will do the work?" and he sent his army again to pursue them. So, when the people of Israel were being chased by the Egyptian

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army at the Red Sea, God parted the sea and made it dry land. After the people of Israel had all crossed over, the sea water covered the Egyptian army that had come in after them, and they all drowned.

It is also God who hardened Pharaoh's heart. Therefore, if, while serving the Lord, your heart becomes hardened, you come to dislike obeying, the arrogance of "Who do you think I am?" rises up, and you come to feel, "If not for me, who would do this work?" then you must truly be careful. Something terrible will happen. King Pharaoh, with a hardened heart all his life, acted proud until his army was entirely destroyed and all of Egypt was ruined. While Pharaoh was trying to destroy the people of Israel, Egypt was ruined instead.

The sovereignty of God, who is the Potter

This was to reveal the glory of God. It is the word of verse 18: *"Therefore He has mercy on whom He wills, and whom He wills He hardens" (Romans 9:18)*. To those whom God wants to save, He allows many sufferings on this earth.

After Adam and Eve sinned, God drove them out of the Garden of Eden and also cursed the ground, saying, *"Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you" (Genesis 3:18)*. It is because of this curse that human beings, living on this earth, have come to face countless difficulties. But through these difficulties God causes man to return to God.

People dislike difficulties. Where is anyone who likes difficulties? But we must know the fact that God has allowed difficulties and pain on this earth in order to call His people, to give them the remission of sins through His Son, to make them children of God and clothe them with glory, to make them

workers of the Lord while they live on this earth, and to let them live enjoying eternal glory in the kingdom of God.

That is why it says, *"Who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, 'Why have you made me like this?' Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?" (Romans 9:20–21)*. This means that the authority belongs to God.

He will call those who were not His people His people

Let us look at verses 23 and 24. *"And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:23–24)*. This means that God called people like Jacob not only from among the Jews but also from among the Gentiles. Today we, too, are those who have received that call.

Even among those who believe in Jesus, there are those who clearly hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet refuse it, saying, "The pastor of our church did not say that. We believe only in the blood of the Cross. We do not believe in the baptism Jesus received from John." This is precisely the appearance of those whose hearts are hardened. If it is clearly written so in the Bible, we must accept it. That is the appearance of those who belong to the Jacob type.

It is the word of verse 25. *"As He says also in Hosea: 'I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, "You are not My people," There they*

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shall be called sons of the living God'" (Romans 9:25–26). Originally, we were not God's people. We were not the people of Israel either, nor were we without sin like God; we were all those who had sin and were going to hell.

God had compassion on us, who were like that. "I cannot bear to watch them go to hell. They live so hard on this earth, and then when they die they must go to hell and suffer forever. They are so pitiable. I will send My Son and have Him save them." He carried it out just as He had promised. Through His Son, God the Father called those He had not loved beloved.

Originally, God could not love us. But God loved us. Through the baptism His Son Jesus received from John, He bore the sin of the world, including our sins, and washed it all clean; with the blood He shed on the Cross, He received the judgment in our place; and He rose again from death. Thus God has made us completely His people, made us righteous, made us a holy people, said to us, "You are My beloved child," told us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit for the Lord while we live on this earth, and uses us in that work.

Only the remnant will be saved

It is the word of verse 27. *"And Isaiah crieth concerning Israel, If the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, it is the remnant that shall be saved: for the Lord will execute his word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short –ASV" (Romans 9:27–28)*. He said that though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, only the remnant will be saved.

Today the world's population reaches about eight billion. But even though the people of Israel were so many, only the

remnant were saved. About one million people came out of Egypt and crossed the Red Sea. But even though God had said He would give them the land of Canaan, when they saw the mighty warriors of the Canaanite tribes, they said, "Did you bring us here to kill us?" and could not enter. Only Caleb and Joshua believed. God said to Moses, "All those twenty years old and above who came out of Egypt will die in this wilderness. Only their children, and Caleb and Joshua, will enter the land of Canaan."

Although countless people live on this earth, only the remnant are saved. Why do you think He said *"remnant"*? This is related to the Church. Even if they are in the Church, those whose hearts are hardened and arrogant do not remain in the Church in the end. Even after being saved, there are those who say, "I have believed, so that's enough. Now I will enjoy my life and then go," and disappear.

The Lord said that He would fulfill His word on this earth and finish it. We are now preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it would be good if everyone were saved, but in reality that is not so. We preach the gospel to everyone, but among them only those who belong to the Jacob type are saved. When God sees and says, "These people from each nation have been saved; this is enough," then the end will come. The Antichrist will appear and make the righteous be martyred, plagues will come upon this earth, and only the remnant will be saved.

Do not harden your heart but be united

What kind of person is one whose heart is hardened? It is one who, while working, does not listen to the words of his

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colleagues, the words of his seniors, the words of those who teach him, or even the words of his juniors. The apostle Paul said, *"Though you might have ten thousand instructors in Christ, yet you do not have many fathers" (1 Corinthians 4:15)*. Everyone can become a teacher to us.

We must also lend an ear to the words of our colleagues and know how to accept them, saying, "Yes, I think your idea is right. Now that I hear what you say, it seems more right than my idea. Then let's do it that way." When those above accept the opinions of those below and work together in unity, the joy is great, and the work of God is accomplished well.

But what will happen if one says, "Be quiet. Do as you please"? The unity between them will be broken. While hearing the word of God, we must realize, "I must become one who belongs to the Jacob type. Those who act proud will in the end become like Esau and be hated by God." Those who belong to the Jacob type are those who do not put forward their own righteousness, but believe in and depend on the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished by bearing the sin of the world, including our sins, through the baptism He received from John, paying its price by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death.

Whose words did Jacob listen to well? He obeyed his mother's words. When his father Isaac had grown old and his eyes had grown dim and he was about to give the prayer of blessing, his mother Rebecca told Jacob, "Go quickly and catch a young goat and bring it. I will make the dish your father likes, so take it to him and say, 'I have made the dish you like, Father, so please eat it and bless me.'" So Jacob did as his mother told him and received the prayer of blessing.

Isaac blessed him, saying, *"The smell of my son Is like the smell of a field Which the LORD has blessed" (Genesis 27:27)*,

and Jacob received blessing to his heart's content. When the people of God bless, that blessing comes. Every Lord's Day, when the prayer of blessing is given at the end of the worship service and it is proclaimed, "May the LORD, the God who saved us, give health to all who have become His people and His workers and want to live for the Lord, give them the fullness of the Holy Spirit, fulfill the desires of their hearts, and through their service let all mankind be saved," this is not merely human words, but a word proclaimed according to the promise of God. It is because God has promised that He will do so.

Do not act proud, but become one who belongs to the Jacob type

Therefore, we must not harden our hearts. I once heard the story of a young saint who wept in fear, saying, "I seem to be a person who belongs to the Esau type. Could it be that God hates me?" A heart with such spiritual discernment is truly precious. God blesses such people. We must surely become those who belong to the Jacob type.

Acting proud just because one is good at one or two things is foolish. If we quietly look back at ourselves, we human beings are lacking in more than ninety out of a hundred things. Being conceited over one or two things one does a little better than others is nothing before God. We must become people who are fitting in God's sight, people after God's own heart.

A person who believes and accepts the word of God as it is, unites with the words of those who have gone before, with the word of the Bible, and with the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and regards it as the greatest thing that God's will is accomplished when we work together in unity, even if one

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cannot do well alone—that person is precisely one who belongs to the Jacob type. I hope that you will become such people and receive blessing.

Because God has called people like Jacob, we, too, must always examine whether we belong to the Jacob type or to the Esau type. God is the One who regards as precious and blesses those who, though lacking, unite with and submit to the word of God and the will of God. It will be revealed that those who act proud and depend on themselves are in the end nothing before God.

No theologian in the whole world can solve the problem of the doctrine of predestination and the doctrine of election. They argue, "If He chose some and did not choose others, how unfair God is!" But God has set these two kinds of people before us and has clearly taught us that those He calls are people like Jacob. And He says that He blesses such a person.

God did not simply end with this election alone; rather, He calls people like Jacob in their actual lives and blesses them. Your shortcomings, your weakness, your illnesses and pains become an opportunity for you to seek God and become the material through which you can receive blessing. Knowing this fact, even if God has made things hard for you until now, do not resent it, but I hope that you will know and believe this fact, saying, "God did this in order to call me." ✉

Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

The grace of salvation that has left us as a remnant

< Romans 9:19–29 >

“You will say to me then, ‘Why does He still find fault? For who has resisted His will?’ But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed it, ‘Why have you made me like this?’ Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor? What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He says also in Hosea: ‘I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved.’ ‘And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, “You are not My people,” There they shall be called sons of the living God.’ Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth.’ And as Isaiah said before: ‘Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah.’”

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We who were formed stand before the Creator

Before God, who speaks of salvation and judgment, people want to hold God responsible rather than look back on themselves. They argue over why He rebukes people's faults if everything depends on God's will, and whether it was not God who determined even their own unbelief that way. Paul does not hide that question but brings it out, and he makes us see who we are as we stand before the Creator, and what He has bestowed on sinners. This word does not tell us to accept destruction as fate; rather, it leads us to know rightly and believe in the salvation God has given.

The rhetorical question in verse 19 contains the thought of trying to justify one's own unbelief on the grounds of God's sovereignty. If people think that they bear no responsibility because God has determined everything, they end up not seeing even the love God has actually bestowed. But God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save sinners, and He passed on to Him all the sins of the world, including even the sins of those who will perish because they do not believe. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had all those sins transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. People perish not because God determined it so, but because they do not believe in that salvation which has already been accomplished; and since it is God's will that all people believe in the Son and receive the remission of sins, the one who resists that will is also not God but the unbelieving person himself. Therefore, what we must confirm first is not a guess as to whom God might have excluded from salvation, but what He has already accomplished for sinners.

Let us read verse 20. *"But indeed, O man, who are you to reply against God? Will the thing formed say to him who formed*

it, 'Why have you made me like this?'" (Romans 9:20). Paul first makes clear the relationship between the one who was formed and the One who formed him. We are neither people who made life by ourselves nor people in a position to judge what God has done. Yet when we place our own judgment above the word of God, we come to think as if the Creator had to explain Himself to us and receive our approval. What we must turn away from before the word is precisely this lofty heart.

Even so, we must not understand this to mean that God made people without purpose and cast them away as He pleased. God, who made people, has revealed His will to save sinners in Christ and make them His children. To know Him, we must look at the word and the salvation He has actually given, but if we first set up a God determined by our own thoughts, we end up fitting even the word of grace to those thoughts. A person who knows himself as one standing before the Creator acknowledges his own limits and sins and listens to the salvation God has accomplished.

Acknowledge the authority of the potter

Verse 21 explains the relationship between the Creator and the created being through the potter and the vessel. *"Does not the potter have power over the clay, from the same lump to make one vessel for honor and another for dishonor?" (Romans 9:21)*. Just as the one who shapes a vessel from clay has the authority to decide how the vessel will be used, God, who made us, has the authority to speak concerning salvation and judgment. Just as a vessel cannot rule over the potter, people cannot determine the way of salvation in their own way and demand that God approve it.

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Here we must also see that we are beings made from the same lump of clay. It is not that some people are originally without sin and only some are sinners, so that they are divided; all were people who had fallen into sin and needed God's salvation. Even if they put forward their lineage, ability, or good deeds, they are no different in that they cannot remove their sins by themselves. Therefore, there is no one who can claim before God that he is qualified for salvation.

To people who had thus fallen into sin, God bestowed salvation through His Son. Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world, which included our sins, passed on to Him; He received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and He rose again from death. And God saves those who believe in this grace and judges those who do not believe. If God has said that He will give the remission of sins through faith, and we demand that He also approve our own deeds, that is putting our own standard first rather than accepting salvation. To acknowledge the authority of the potter does not mean resigning ourselves to an unknowable fate; it means believing in the rightness of the salvation God has given.

His longsuffering and the riches of His glory

Let us read verses 22 and 23 together. *"What if God, wanting to show His wrath and to make His power known, endured with much longsuffering the vessels of wrath prepared for destruction, and that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory" (Romans 9:22–23)*. Paul asks what people could say, even if God had done so. Therefore, we must not turn this word into a conclusion that God made certain people hardened from the

beginning in order to destroy them. The text, too, says that the vessels of mercy are vessels which God prepared beforehand for glory, while it says only that the vessels of wrath are vessels prepared for destruction, without saying who made them so. The action of God that the text speaks of concerning those who are to receive wrath is that He endures them with longsuffering and forbearance.

When God looks at sinners, He also has the authority to be wrathful toward them, but He has shown His longsuffering to us. We, too, were not people who knew God's salvation from the beginning and accepted it obediently; we were those who relied on our own thoughts and our own righteousness. But since God sought us out and let us hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we who are now saved have no ground to look at other people's unbelief and boast that they are inferior to us. To begin with, the very salvation we have obtained lies within the grace of God's longsuffering.

What separates the vessels of wrath from the vessels of mercy is not a status hidden at birth, but whether one believes in the mercy given in Christ. Although God had Jesus bear the sin of the world, if someone rejects it and holds on to his own righteousness, he cannot enjoy that salvation. On the contrary, the one who knows his own sins and believes in the salvation God has accomplished obtains mercy. It is not that realizing one's own shortcomings paid the price of salvation; we are saved because the Lord removed the sins that we could not resolve by ourselves.

God's mercy did not end as a feeling of looking on with pity. Because it is a love that could not simply let sinners go but took responsibility Himself, Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world, including the lifelong sins of you and me, transferred to Him once and for all, and because of those

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sins He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving that judgment in our place. He also rose again from death, remitted all sins, and gave His merit to us; this work revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the mercy God has bestowed on sinners. Because we believe in the Savior who Himself bore the judgment we should have received, we can stand as those without sin.

To those who have received this salvation, God also makes known the riches of glory. He did not stop at delivering us from sin and judgment but has let us live forever in the kingdom of God as His children, so even if what we have now is little, that grace does not become small. The fact that we have become those who will share in the glory that belongs to God, who saved us, is the reason for our thanksgiving. Because He has given us a glory that we could not obtain by our own strength, we do not boast of ourselves but praise the Lord.

The name of children given to those who were not His people

Verse 24 makes clear who the vessels of mercy are. *"Even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:24)*. Paul does not leave the story of the vessels as someone else's fate, but turns it to us who have been saved. The vessels that have obtained mercy are not some people far away, but we ourselves, who received the calling and became children. Whether Jews or Gentiles, they have become one people not because one side was originally a better vessel, but because all were saved by believing in the same righteousness of God.

The words that He called us also from among the Gentiles

mean that God did not keep the grace of salvation within one bloodline only. We, too, were originally people who could not put forward the name of children of God. But we heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received that name by faith. That gospel of the water and the Spirit is the news that Jesus Christ received baptism from John and bore all the sins of the world, including our sins, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Therefore, what we must ask first as we read this word is not the status of other people, but what the grace is that made me one of His people. Because it is not a name we obtained by our own qualifications, we receive that name with thanksgiving.

In verse 25, Paul cites the writing of Hosea and presents the promise that God calls those who were not His people His people, and calls those who were not loved beloved. A person does not become one of God's people by giving himself the name of God's people; God must call him. But the fact that this calling has reached us does not mean that we first sought God and did something worthy of His approval. It means that God gave the remission of sins through His Son and came to us first so that we might receive and enjoy that grace.

Let us also read verse 26. *"And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God" (Romans 9:26)*. The change of being called sons of God in the very place where it had been said that they were not His people cannot be brought about by human strength. We did not obtain this name by changing our former origins or by disguising our past deeds as though they had never happened; we became children because the Savior actually removed our sins. Therefore, when we look back on our deficient past, we must not end in despair, but must look at the grace of Jesus, who remitted even those sins.

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The remnant who are saved among the many descendants

Having spoken of the salvation opened to the Gentiles, Paul now points out who among Israel is saved. Let us read verse 27. *"Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: 'Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved'" (Romans 9:27)*. The fact that the number of the children of Israel is great and the conclusion that they will all be saved are not the same. This is because the name of being physical descendants cannot take the place of the faith that believes in the righteousness of God. Salvation belongs to those who believe in the grace given in Christ, and Paul presents them as the remnant.

This word does not tell those who want salvation to give up because the chances are few. God has accomplished salvation for sinners. Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of all the sinners of the world passed on to Him, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Although God has had this gospel of the water and the Spirit preached so that people might believe, people can reject that grace by relying on their bloodline and deeds. Therefore, we cannot feel secure merely because we belong to a large number or to an old tradition of faith. What we must rely on is not the size of the group we belong to or the age of its tradition, but the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who has remitted sins.

Neither should we make the word remnant a standard for dividing who will be saved by how long people have endured after believing or by how many years they have attended a certain church. If they were people who remain to the end by their own strength and complete their salvation, the basis of

salvation would go back again to human deeds. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of God is the one left by grace, and his faith and life also continue by relying on that grace. We cannot leave the word the Lord has given and make our own perseverance our savior.

Verse 28 makes clear the basis of that assurance. *"For the Lord will execute his word upon the earth, finishing it and cutting it short" (Romans 9:28)*. The salvation God promised does not remain incomplete because of human shortcomings. God has completely delivered from sin us who believe in the salvation accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and He surely accomplishes what He has spoken. The reason the hope of the remnant is firm is not that people have made up a great number, but that the Lord is the One who fulfills His word and finishes it.

Give thanks for the grace by which He has left a seed

Finally, let us read verse 29. *"And as Isaiah said before: 'Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah'" (Romans 9:29)*. This word reveals that the fact that there is a remnant cannot be explained by human excellence. The One who left the seed is the LORD of Sabaoth; had He not left it, nothing would have remained for us but that judgment which Sodom and Gomorrah received. That we now hear the word of salvation and live believing in God is not a natural right but the grace the Lord has left for us.

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Who is the seed God has left? First, it is Jesus, who came to this earth to save sinners—that is, He who had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. And the people who have received and believed that salvation are also the seed of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has left on this earth. Even if those who do not believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit are as many as the sand, God leaves believers among them and has this word preached on through them. What we should boast of here is not some strength by which we ourselves are holding up the world, but the mercy of the Lord, who gave salvation to us who were to perish and left us as people who would preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Since we, too, heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit from someone and received the remission of sins, we must not let the grace we received end with ourselves. We must preach the remission of sins already accomplished to those who are still afraid because of their own sins, and we must make known the salvation prepared in Christ to those who think that they must have been destined to perish. What we must preach is not a way to become righteous by ourselves, but what Jesus has done for sinners. When we treasure this seed God has left, that grace is conveyed to other souls as well.

We began with the question that argues why people are rebuked by God for their faults, but as we have followed the word, what we needed to see first was the salvation He has bestowed on us. We are not people who judge the Creator, but people who have been delivered from sin and called children, and God has left us by grace, we who would have vanished under judgment. Therefore, do not turn your back on the Lord while guessing at a hidden fate, but believe now with your heart the

gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus, who received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again from death. Before that grace, which has left the seed of salvation for us, the lips that used to complain come to offer thanksgiving and praise. ✉

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Sermon 11 by Paul C. Jong

A life that relies not on works but on faith

< Romans 9:23–33 >

“And that He might make known the riches of His glory on the vessels of mercy, which He had prepared beforehand for glory, even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles? As He says also in Hosea: ‘I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved.’ ‘And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, “You are not My people,” There they shall be called sons of the living God.’ Isaiah also cries out concerning Israel: ‘Though the number of the children of Israel be as the sand of the sea, The remnant will be saved. For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth.’ And as Isaiah said before: ‘Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah.’ What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’”

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The vessels of mercy and the seed He has left

Today's word, too, as with Jacob and Esau earlier, contrasts these two things: the vessels of mercy and the vessels of wrath. And concerning the vessels of mercy, it says, *"Even us whom He called, not of the Jews only, but also of the Gentiles?" (Romans 9:24)*. It means that God called, even from among the Jews, those who rely on God. It means that for us today, who are Gentiles, too, God has loved and called those who live relying on God rather than trying to live only by their own strength. And so it means that He saved them through the water, the blood, and the Spirit. And so in the Old Testament, too, through the prophet Hosea, it says, *"I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved. And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God" (Romans 9:25–26)*. God accomplishes this and finishes it. *"For He will finish the work and cut it short in righteousness, Because the LORD will make a short work upon the earth" (Romans 9:28)*. It means that He will surely finish it.

And God leaves a seed on this earth. The stump spoken of in the Book of Isaiah means that there was a great tree, and that great tree was cut right off. Since it had been cut down, people thought it was now finished, but new shoots come up from that stump. Just as it says, *"As a terebinth tree or as an oak, Whose stump remains when it is cut down. So the holy seed shall be its stump" (Isaiah 6:13)*, the people of faith who live believing in God from among the descendants of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and after them the people of Israel—those righteous people—come down from that root. And so it means that the line of those who believe in God is not cut off but continues. The New Testament speaks of this as follows. *"And as Isaiah said before:*

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'Unless the LORD of Sabaoth had left us a seed, We would have become like Sodom, And we would have been made like Gomorrah'" (Romans 9:29). Of course, the seed of salvation is Jesus Christ. He is Christ, who is God. Nevertheless, if He had not left righteous people on this earth, this world would have been like Sodom and like Gomorrah. It would have been completely finished. But it means that God has left a seed, that He has left believers. They are precisely you and me today, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Israel, which pursued the law of righteousness

Then the apostle Paul goes into the main point and, drawing his conclusion, speaks of the law. *"What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness" (Romans 9:30–31)*. This is extremely important. The righteousness spoken of here refers to the righteousness of the law. God gave the law to the people of Israel. He gave them the law, gave them the law of sacrifice, and gave them everything. God Himself also became their God. The people of Israel were God's people. But they left God. God gave them prophets and servants of God to lead them, but they said they did not want that. Saying, *"Make us a king to judge us like all the nations" (1 Samuel 8:5)*, they demanded that they, too, be allowed to be ruled by a king like the people of the world, pay taxes, and live enjoying themselves in the world, saying that from now on they would live not by God's servants or prophets or the law, but by the law of the world, by their own strength. Because the people of Israel demanded it so persistently, God

kept telling them through the prophet Samuel that they must not do so, and then, because they kept on being stubborn, He told them, "Then do so." From that time on, the nation of Israel went completely downhill. God had withdrawn His hand.

So they set up King Saul, but King Saul did not acknowledge God's law or God, and he even rushed in to offer sacrifices as he pleased, destroying everything. Seeing this, God let the Philistine army invade, and Saul could not win but was completely defeated in battle. After that, the people of Israel raised up David as king. David was one who believed in the living God and acknowledged both God's law and the law of sacrifice. So after becoming king, he served God and offered sacrifices according to the Old Testament law of sacrifice, and whenever sin was revealed by the law, he would bring a sacrificial offering to the tabernacle and offer a sacrifice. Then later, David's son Solomon became king, and in order to avoid war with the surrounding nations, Solomon took countless women of foreign nations as wives, as it says: *"And he had seven hundred wives, princesses, and three hundred concubines; and his wives turned away his heart" (1 Kings 11:3)*. Since seven hundred foreign women came in, seven hundred foreign gods came in, and as each of those women told him to bow down to the god she believed in, it eventually became easy for Solomon to serve all kinds of miscellaneous gods. So God decided to move the kingdom away, but because of the promise He had made to David, He did not do so in Solomon's time; in his son's time a man who had worked under Solomon, Jeroboam, rebelled, and the people of Israel followed him and set up a separate kingdom. After that, the nation of Israel became a nation that served idols.

Then why am I telling this story? It is to ask what God required of the people of Israel. It was that they should

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acknowledge God, return into God's law, and live offering sacrifices according to the law of sacrifice. The people of Israel also made great efforts. Through Ezra, Nehemiah, Jeremiah, and the prophet Daniel, God required everything, saying that the LORD God is the true God, that they should acknowledge the law, and that they should acknowledge the law of sacrifice, and they did so as well; but the abuse that arose this time was that, although they acknowledged God and kept the law, they tried to receive God's love by keeping the law. They tried to receive God's love only by keeping the law well. This is what the Book of Romans is now talking about. *"Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness" (Romans 9:31)*. God gave two laws: the law of the Spirit of life and the law of sin and death. *"For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made me free from the law of sin and death" (Romans 8:2)*. The law of sin and death is the law. For what purpose did God give the law to us mankind, to the people of Israel? He gave it to make them realize and know sin. It means that He gave the law to make us know our sins, to make us know how holy God is and how filthy people are. Without the law people do not know sin, and if there is no sin there is no punishment, so He gave the law; but it means that because they tried to serve God only by keeping this law, when Jesus, the very Savior, came, they rejected Jesus.

What God wanted was not formal sacrifices

Although I am saying it this way, because this is something that has all been accomplished in history, at that time there was not a single person who could know this. Even among pastors today, those who properly know this are rare. How could anyone

see several thousand years of history at a glance, and how could anyone know it by reading a single verse of the Bible? It means that they tried to please God by keeping the law, but it was formal. They did offer sacrifices, but they brought what was useless, what was sick, what was lame, and what had blemishes, laid their hands on them, killed them, and offered sacrifices. That was not what God wanted. It means that what God wanted, what He required, was this: that they would acknowledge how deficient they were and what weak human beings they were, unable to carry out His law, and would ask God for mercy, and would ask God to give them a new heart and a new spirit and save them. But it means that they tried to receive blessings before God by keeping the law. So as a result they did not attain to the law of the Spirit of life, did not receive the remission of sins before God, and did not receive the salvation and blessing that Jacob received.

But concerning us, who are Gentiles, it says, *"Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith" (Romans 9:30)*. Do we Gentiles offer sacrifices according to the law? Can we live according to the law? Our nature is a seed of evildoers. You and I were born with sin from the time we were born from our mothers' wombs. That is why we are a seed of evildoers. Everyone knows that.

"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness"

I, too, once lived hoping to live without shame toward heaven, and I strove to do so. But as I grew older, I came to know myself. I realized that even though I already believed in Jesus, there was lust within me—that although I believed in Jesus, this heart was there. I had thought it was not there. I, too, had thought

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I had been saved while living believing only in the blood of Jesus' Cross, but there was sin in my heart, and as time went on after I came to believe in Jesus, my sins became more and more exposed. They kept welling up from within. A person who has sin is not one of God's people. However much one may talk about the blood of the Cross, it was not something resolved by offering prayers of repentance either. So I prayed to God and prayed again, fasted and prayed, searched and searched again, read the Bible and read it again, and asked God and asked Him again. I asked what on earth this word was saying, looked up commentaries, and read through all the books of every denomination. There was not a day when a book left my hands all day long. Yet even though I believed in Jesus, there was still sin.

As I was praying to God like that, God made me realize what I had been wondering about when I looked at the word of God. There is something Jesus said to John the Baptist when Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist. *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. To fulfill all righteousness means to fulfill God's rightness, so I wondered why He told John the Baptist to give Him baptism and said that by doing so we fulfill the righteousness of God—what this was. I had also wondered about the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, and this word made me realize it, as if a fluorescent light had come on in my heart. It was a word I had seen dozens, hundreds, thousands of times. Ah, so this is it: by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, Jesus had the sin of mankind passed on to Him, and so sin disappears. By having that sin of the world passed on to Him, Jesus went bearing the sin of the world, shed His blood and died, and rose again to become our Savior. So that is what is meant by the word "*Behold! The Lamb of God who*

takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29). So that is what it means that He fulfilled all righteousness. Just as in the Old Testament there was the laying on of hands, and when offering a sacrifice one had to pass on one's own sins by laying on hands, so one representative of mankind was set up and the sin of mankind was passed on to Jesus. This was God's will. In that way the fluorescent light came on.

At that moment my heart stood still. As I was working absent-mindedly, a change took place in my heart. Just as ripples arise when one tiny little stone falls into a very calm, large lake, very calm, lingering ripples arose and began to spread through my heart. Ah, this is it. So this is how He bore the sin of mankind. He did not bear only my sins; Jesus bore the sin of all mankind like this. So He went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world. He was nailed, He shed His blood, He suffered, He died, and so He came to life again. So, just as it says, *"To them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name" (John 1:12)*, He has given to those who believe the right to become children of God. He has washed away sin as white as snow. Since He Himself bore sin and He Himself received the judgment for our sins, since He paid the price of sin—this is it, I realized.

Here the apostle Paul is now talking about this. *"Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith" (Romans 9:30)*. Dear fellow believers, it is the righteousness of faith. By faith we become righteous people, by faith we receive the remission of sins, by faith we become children of God, and by faith we become spiritual Jacobs. It comes about by faith. By faith we believe in Jesus in this way. If we believe in Jesus, what happens? We come to know and acknowledge everything: the God of creation, the work of creation, then the law, then the law of

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sacrifice, and then, coming to the New Testament age, that Jesus received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us.

How far does the role of the law extend?

But this does not mean that the law is unnecessary because we believe in Jesus. If you try to judge right and wrong, looking closely by the law, you can immediately know whether your deeds were good or wrong. When you shine the light of God's law on yourself—when you stand before God and reflect yourself before God's law—you can immediately know whether you are doing well or doing wrong now; if you stand not before the law of the world but before the law, you can know it immediately. Yet although we know it that way, what is it to believe in Jesus and obtain salvation? By the law—however well you keep the law after believing in Jesus, you will break the law at least once before you die, and if you break it even once, you have broken the whole law, as it says: *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all" (James 2:10)*. Then what is the only role the law plays for us? It only teaches us sin. The Book of Romans says this: *"By the law is the knowledge of sin" (Romans 3:20)*. Through the law we come to realize and know, "I am a sinner; I am one going to hell." Then, since it cannot be done by the law, what do we do? Through the law we know sin; with this sin, to whom must we go? We must go to Jesus. When we go before Jesus, we find that Jesus received baptism from John for our sins. Who is Jesus? Jesus is Christ, who is God. Christ, who is God—that Christ is Jesus. It means that in the name Jesus are all His attributes and titles. Originally He is God, but to save human beings from sin,

He obeyed the Father's will and was born as a human being, borrowing the body of a woman, Mary. And at the age of thirty He received baptism from John and bore the sin of mankind. And He was hung on the Cross and died. And having died, He came to life again. He is fundamentally God. It means that Christ, who is God, came as our Savior, bore our sins, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and now lives and has become God our Savior.

Through the law we come to realize and know sin; we do not receive salvation by keeping the law well. We receive salvation when we believe that Jesus is God, that He also carried out the role of Christ, and that He has become our Savior. It is then that we obtain the righteousness of God. To obtain the righteousness of God is to become children of God, to be without sin, and to have become a holy people. This is how we obtain salvation, and this is how we believe. Believing in Jesus is not obtaining salvation by keeping the law well, but that does not mean we should not keep the law well. We are not speaking of the uselessness of the law. In the law there is the law of sacrifice, and there are prophecies. In the law there is the word of prophecy that the Son of God would put on a human body, come to this earth in the form of a man, have the sins of you and me passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament had sin passed on to it through the laying on of hands, die hanging on the Cross, rise again from death, and save us. Therefore, we must not abolish the law. The law always teaches us our sins and teaches us that Jesus Christ comes and saves us in this way. It plays its role up to that point and fulfills its own mission. There is no one who will obtain salvation by keeping the law 100 percent. We obtain salvation by believing in Christ, who is God—by believing that Christ has saved you and me from sin. We become

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children of God and workers of God. This is extremely important. After we believe in Jesus, this is easy to get confused about, but it is absolutely important.

Those who stumbled at the stumbling stone

Let us continue reading the word. *"Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame'" (Romans 9:31–33).* It says that they stumbled at the stumbling stone. God the Father sent His Son into this world, and the Son had the sin of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, died, entered the tomb, and came to life again, removing all the sin of mankind. It means that God promised to give salvation and to give blessings to those who believe in that work—to those who believe in His Son, who is God, His Son, who is the Savior of mankind—to those who believe in what that Son did. But when He sent Jesus, some people, people who place importance on the law, say that one must believe in the blood of the Cross too, but that one obtains salvation by keeping the law well. Even today there are many denominationalists who do this while calling themselves orthodox. The law is by no means wrong. What we usually call love, namely *"You shall love your neighbor as yourself" (Matthew 22:39),* is also in the law. What did Jesus say? He said that horizontally all people should love one another as their own bodies, and vertically He said, *"You shall love the LORD your God" (Matthew 22:37).* This is the

cross. This is not wrong. But because they rely on the law, they do not obtain salvation even though they believe in Jesus. What Jesus did—coming to this earth in the flesh, receiving baptism from John and bearing our sins, being hung on the Cross and receiving the judgment for sin to save us, He who is God Himself becoming our Savior—is a hundred million times greater than the law, yet there are many who do not receive salvation because they rely on the law and do not properly know this.

Dear fellow believers, today people who believe in Jesus but believe only in the blood of the Cross say that they have their own sins washed away by offering prayers of repentance. That, too, is the law. The people of the Old Testament brought sacrificial offerings, laid their hands on them, killed them, and passed on their sins, but if it is done that way, it has to be done every day until death. But of what is everything in the Old Testament a shadow? It is a shadow of the New Testament. It is a promise that Jesus would in the future remove the sin of mankind once and for all in this way. But it means that if people do not actually accept Jesus, that God, as their own Savior, and rely only on the law of sacrifice, they cannot receive salvation. Then, by saying that they receive the washing away of sin just by offering prayers of repentance, or that they believe only in the blood of the Cross, does sin disappear? Sin does not disappear that way. It does not disappear through prayers of repentance, through any effort, or through good deeds. The Son of God came; that is, Jesus, who is God, bore sin, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us; Christ, who is God, saved us by playing the role of our Savior. When we believe in that God, in the fact that He, who is God, accomplished our salvation, we receive salvation. This may seem subtle, but it makes a tremendous difference.

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When people who believe in Jesus today go to church, they repent of their sins every day and turn from their sins every day, and that is not wrong. But it means that they turn only with their mouths. Saying, "Lord, I have committed such-and-such a sin," they dispose of the sins committed during the week with a few words, but sins do not disappear through what is done only with the mouth, for it says: *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22)*. The Son of God—Christ, who is God—must come to this earth clothed in a human body, receive baptism from John and bear the sin of mankind, and be hung on the Cross and shed His blood. It says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*. Just as it says, His being pierced and shedding blood was because of our transgressions, and His being bruised and suffering was because of our iniquities. It means that by having the price of all our sins passed on to Him and receiving the judgment for all our sins, by shedding His blood and giving His life to us, He remitted our sins. It means that we receive salvation by believing in that work in which the Son of God, who is God, came to this earth, received baptism from John for us, died on the Cross, rose again, saved us, and paid that price of blood, the price of life. It means that we attain to the righteousness of God. It means that we can become those without sin and become children of God. It means that this is a subtle but enormous difference.

The people of Israel now do not obtain salvation because they try to obtain salvation by keeping the law and because they reject Jesus. *"Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness" (Romans 9:31)*. It means that they did not become children of God. Then what about you and me? You and I, too, realize sin through the law; and through what Jesus did, by believing that He is fundamentally God and

that He is Christ, and believing in the work He did when He came to this earth carrying out the three offices of King, High Priest, and Prophet—by believing in the work in which He, who is God, loved us, removed all our sins, paid the price of sin, made us children of God, and made us righteous people—because He did what is right, we come by faith to bring that righteousness to ourselves. Therefore that righteousness comes to be in our hearts, and therefore we become children of God. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

If what the apostle Paul said so briefly is explained, it is enormous. But people do not know it. They know only that one verse, that the law is to make us realize and know sin, and because there is still sin in their hearts, they repeat it every day. It means that, like a squirrel running in a wheel, they attend church, offer prayers of repentance, and, thinking they should live a little according to God's will, quit drinking and quit smoking, and then say, "I have now become one of God's people," and then again drink and smoke and sin again, and say, "Oh dear, I must offer prayers of repentance. I am one of God's people; how can I go on like this?" Dear fellow believers, that is not it. When we believe in Christ Jesus, who is God, and in what He did, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts. At first we commit sin out of our old habits, and we also commit sin because we are deficient and weak, but when we believe in Christ Jesus, who is God, as our Savior, God has already given the Holy Spirit and a heart of righteousness into our hearts. So after being saved, as we come to church and listen to the word, the Holy Spirit stirs up in us a heart to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since He says, "You can do nothing, but unite your heart and do that work," a heart that wants to do that work of righteousness arises. A heart that wants to do what is right just wells up, as it says: *"Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for*

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righteousness, For they shall be filled" (Matthew 5:6). Even though one is a mess oneself, as one does that work, one gets pruned and is sometimes corrected for what is wrong, and later becomes a soldier of righteousness. Living a mess, having strayed completely onto a different path, is because one has not yet been born again, and it may also be because one is of the Esau type. The person who knows this fact and still does not accept it is Esau. Esau is a person who says, "I can hunt a lot with my arrows and bring you delicious food. I can do this, and I can do that. I can live well even without God," and such a person will not do. Such a person must repent. It must be a matter of truly living by the faith that believes in God while relying on God, of living a life that pleases God.

"Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense'" (Romans 9:32–33). God the Father sent Jesus to the people of Israel. They said they served God by keeping the law and by keeping the law of sacrifice, but when Jesus came, bore the sin of mankind through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, came to life again from death, did the work of saving mankind in this way, and said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, they rejected Jesus. They said, "He is Satan, He is arrogant, He is one who opposes God." So the people of Israel dropped out. Even now many are being stubborn. But they, too, will turn around in the future. They will come to accept Jesus. They kept only the law, did only according to the law of sacrifice, and believed only in the LORD God of the Old Testament, and the LORD God is the One who exists by Himself. But Christ, who is God and who came to this earth in the New Testament—He is the God of love. My shepherd is the King of kings. The word Christ means King, High Priest, and Prophet. He knows all

His people. He knows all their weaknesses, and without judging the sins of His people, He bore the sins of His people on His own body through the baptism He received from John, the representative of mankind; He Himself was judged, and He Himself rose again from death and saved His people from their sins. It is just as it says: *"He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. He is the King of love. He is the King of holiness and the King of justice. The King of justice did the work of saving His people not by words but by deeds. They, too, will accept it.

Do not try to wash away sin through prayers of repentance, but believe in His merit

Then, leaving the people of Israel aside, what about Christian believers all over the world today, or what about you? You, too, believe in Jesus, but this is confusing. You believe in Jesus, and then there is also the law and the law of sacrifice, and in the New Testament Jesus saved us in this way, but as we live, we do not keep this law well either, and when we have done wrong in our deeds, we say, "I did this wrong, and I did that wrong too." But first of all, we must go the other way around. In the past, the order was that we must believe in God, believe in the law, believe in the law of sacrifice, and believe in Jesus; but if we have received the remission of sins, we must go the other way around. Now, as those who have received salvation, we must know it by asking, "Should I live like this?" As those who have received the remission of sins, it is asking, "Should I live only for myself? There are many other souls, and God has told us to preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this is what is right, and God says He gives blessings to those who do this work;

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should I live like this? I can enjoy this, enjoy the world, and do everything, but should I live like this?" So it is not only by the law that we are rebuked; it is asking, "I am without sin and one of God's people; is it all right for me to live like this?" And so we must live for God. It is turning the heart around.

But it is not only the people of Israel; it means that today Christians who believe only in the blood of the Cross are similar to the people of Israel. Every day they believe in the blood of the Cross for the sins they have committed, and they think that they have become clean again by offering prayers of repentance every day for the sins they commit every day in their lives. But Jesus has already made them clean. God has saved us so that we would do what is right, and when we go wrong in our lives, we go back to what Jesus did and acknowledge and confess, "Lord, You removed even this sin, didn't You? I have committed such a sin again. But You removed even this, didn't You?" With the faith that says, "But did You not remove all of this too? I believe in You. I believe that You removed all my sins, that You removed all the sin of mankind. I believe that even this sin was passed on," we make our hearts clean again and can once again do what is right before God. Those who have received the remission of sins understand what I am saying. Those who have not received the remission of sins find it strange.

That is why people today who simply believe in Jesus, because they are not born-again people, sin and offer prayers of repentance, sin and offer prayers of repentance every day, like a squirrel running in a wheel; and since even that does not work, they go out as missionaries, and thinking that if they give their bodies to be burned God might perhaps take pity on them and save them, some people plant seven churches, some plant thirty, and some sell their houses, offer the money to God, and are devoted, thinking that if they do this, God might cancel all the

sins they have committed; but not even 0.1 percent of it is canceled. Our remission of sins—the removal of your sins and mine—is this: when we believe in the work Jesus, who is God and Christ, did when He came to this earth, that is, when we believe in Him who received baptism from John the Baptist in order to remove the sin of mankind, was hung on the Cross and said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, died, rose again from the tomb on the third day, and now lives—in Him who loved us and saved us—our sins are remitted as white as snow. When we believe in His merit, we receive the remission of sins. His merit comes upon our hearts by faith. It comes when we believe. This is a salvation that is accomplished not by works but only by faith. Works cannot enter into it, not even 0.1 percent, not even one hundred-millionth of a percent. It is a salvation that He—God, the King of love, our shepherd—came to this earth and accomplished flawlessly: He swept up your sins and mine perfectly through the baptism He received from John, swept up the sin of mankind once and for all, not only past sins but the sins until the day this universe ends, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood, died, and came to life again. He is your God and mine. He is your God and mine and also the Savior. He is your shepherd and mine. He loves you and me. The almighty God, who has loved forever, removed sin forever, and accomplished it once and for all—His name is Jesus Christ. He is fundamentally God. God came as the Savior and accomplished the work of salvation. After saying, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, He ascended and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. He is the One who will judge as the Judge. Now those who do not believe in what He—who is God, Christ, and Savior—has done, those who believe only 30 percent, and those who believe only 99 percent go to hell, and only those who believe 100 percent become children of God, obtain everlasting

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life, become workers of God's righteousness, and receive blessings like Jacob. He gives blessings on this earth as well.

"As it is written: 'Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame'" (Romans 9:33). Those who believe in Him are not put to shame. By faith they are not put to shame. I am a person who believes this way. You, too, are people who believe that way. For you to argue within the church over whether deeds are done well or poorly is idle talk. God knows all along that you are like that. What God looks at is not that, but, "Do you believe in Me? Do you believe that I am God?" Jesus Christ is God, who created all things in the universe. Just as it says, "*The world was made through Him" (John 1:10)*, He is the Creator. He looks at whether you believe or do not believe in the Creator, my Creator, my Savior, who is my Redeemer. That Savior came to this earth clothed in a human body, bore your sins through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved you. He looks at whether you believe in that merit or not. God blesses when He sees this, and if one does not believe this, He curses. So it becomes heaven and hell.

We become so by faith and live by faith

Then why can God do this? Among the spiritual beings God made are the angels, and a fallen angel, a part of them, challenged God and tried to seize His place. God is not One who can be robbed by force. It would have ended with a single word, but He did not do so; it means that He did this in order to show all created beings that those who receive God's love and the blessings God gives are only those who believe that God is this just, loving, righteous, holy, and perfect God, that He loved us

that perfectly, and that He is the God of love, the Savior, and the God of justice, righteousness, and holiness—that only such people can enter into God's glory. We do not obtain salvation by keeping the law. It means that if one says one obtains salvation by keeping the law, that is exactly the same as the fallen angels gathering their strength, opposing God, driving Him out, and trying to sit in His place. So God makes us His children not by the deeds of the law but by faith, through the righteousness that comes from faith. We become children of God by faith. And we have become so. It comes about by faith. And we live by faith. In all that is lacking in our lives, we acknowledge everything, saying, "I have been like this," and by faith we become people who are still without sin and can serve God.

By faith we receive blessings on this earth. I am nothing, but in my heart there is the conviction, and there is the faith, that God fills all that is needed to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To those who believe, to those who have become children of God and belong to the Jacob type, and to those who live according to God's will, God hears their prayers and gives them blessings even while they live on this earth. However, this was said taking faith as an example; what is important is that we must not stumble. If we believe in Jesus and try to obtain salvation by offering prayers of repentance, we stumble against God and Jesus. God says that He has removed even that, yet because people try to receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, they stumble. We must not stumble, but believe. We must believe in the righteousness of God, in Jesus Christ, who came by the water and the Spirit. That is the mystery of God contained in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since we have received it, I tell our brothers and sisters as well: if this has still not been settled well in your heart, look at which you belong to, the Jacob type or the Esau type. If you belong to the

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Esau type, you try to receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance every day. Then it will not work even if you do it forever. It is done by faith. If we just hold on to it today, hold on to it tomorrow, and hold on to it the day after, we become those without sin.

If only they looked up, those bitten by the fiery serpents were healed. God said to Moses, *"Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live. So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived" (Numbers 21:8–9)*. Why did God tell Moses to set a bronze serpent on a pole? It means that because He bore and paid in full the whole price of the serpent's curse—the price of which it says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*—that poison cannot be in you. It means, "I have resolved it all." It is speaking of this: He removed all the serpent's poison; Christ Jesus, who is God, removed our sins, removed the poison, and removed the judgment. Therefore we obtain salvation by faith, and we must settle our faith. Always rely on Him today, rely on Him tomorrow, rely on Him the day after, hold on to Him forever, and you must hold on to Him every time you go wrong. You must hold on both in good times and in bad times. That is what is meant by *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)*. It means to always hold on. He is our God.

Look at Christ, who is God—at what that God did. He carried out the three offices of King, High Priest, and Prophet, and He is still teaching us even now. It says, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ –ASV" (1 John 5:6)*. That very One is our God, our Savior, and the One who loved us. My shepherd, your shepherd, is the King of love. He is the true King, who did not do it by works, but who, when His people had fallen

into destruction because of sin, Himself bore the sins of those people, Himself received the judgment, and saved them justly and righteously. Is there such a king in this world? Jesus is such a King. He is the King of kings and the Lord of lords. I hope you will believe that way. I hope you will settle your hearts. ✉

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Sermon 12 by Paul C. Jong

We who have been saved not by works but by the righteousness of God

< Romans 9:30–33 >

“What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone. As it is written: ‘Behold, I lay in Zion a stumbling stone and rock of offense, And whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’”

Those who pursued the law and those who obtained righteousness by faith

Romans chapter 9 speaks of the fact that we obtain salvation by faith, and that those who are pitied, those who receive mercy before God, obtain salvation. It means that those who put forward only their own rightness before God do not receive God’s blessing. And so it says that before God, those who are

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not humanly perfect, clever, and outstanding find it easier to receive blessings than those who are.

This time, I would like to tell you that those who try to keep God's law do not obtain salvation, and that those who do not know God's law well but believe in God and in God's love can obtain salvation through that faith. As the apostle Paul concluded the word of chapter 9, after citing the writing of Hosea and the writing of the prophet Isaiah, he said as follows. *"What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone" (Romans 9:30–32).* It means that those who knew the righteousness of God and believed in the righteousness of God, even without pursuing the law, came to obtain the righteousness of God. It means that their faith, which believed in God's rightness, was approved by God, and such people came to receive salvation. The apostle Paul is telling us that the salvation they received is a salvation that comes from faith.

Those who know the law well and try to live according to the law do not obtain salvation. Because people know that it is right to live according to God's law, they strive to live by it, though they are deficient. But what is the result obtained by doing so? It means that they become those who oppose God's rightness with their own rightness. It is a truly strange thing.

The people of Israel knew what the law said, and everything the law said was right. Because the word God had spoken to them was right, they said, "That is right; we will keep it all," and followed the law. Then they fell and tumbled down, and yet, like a roly-poly doll, they kept getting up and strove to live according

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to the law and to keep it. But by that way they never attained to righteousness. On the other hand, it means that those who, even though they did not know God's law well, knew their own deficiencies and weaknesses, knew that God exists, and knew and believed in that righteousness of God received salvation. God's law and commandments number 613, and although such people cannot remember even ten of them, it means that they nevertheless know clearly that they are sinners and are destined for hell, that they are deficient before people and deficient before God, and that if it were done according to God's law, they would be people going to hell, people without hope. Therefore, it means that those who believe in the righteousness of God receive salvation.

What does it mean to believe in the righteousness of God? It means to believe in that God, that Savior, who loved me and, in order to save me, sent His Son to this earth, had all my sins passed on to His Son through the baptism He received from John, and, in order to save me from the judgment for my sins, had Him die hanging on the Cross and come to life again to become my Savior. It means, "Even if I do not know anything else, I know and believe that Jesus, the Son of God and God Himself, has become my Savior by the water and the blood." It means saying, "I am deficient before the law, and seen beside those who try to keep the law, I am a deficient person with nothing as outstanding as they are, a person who cannot help but go to hell; yet since it is said that God loved me and, to remove my sins, sent His Son and saved me by the truth of the water and the Spirit, I will believe that. Because I have no rightness of my own and nothing outstanding of my own, I will believe in the salvation God has accomplished." It means that such people were able to obtain salvation.

The law is a guide that teaches sin, and Jesus is the Savior

In fact, the law is a measuring rod that clearly teaches us right and wrong. The law was a guide that teaches us our sins. It means that the law was a guide that teaches right and wrong, and Jesus is the Savior who bore all our deficiencies and all our sins through the baptism He received and received all the judgment for all our sins, and so saved us. Therefore, whether we know the law well or not is not the only thing that matters. We must not be ignorant of the law, but it means that the function of the law is that it is the word of truth and the law of God that makes my sins clearly known. This much is all we need to know about the law. And if we are deficient before the law, we must believe that God sent His Son to this earth and saved me by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that we can obtain salvation by believing this: that Jesus received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross, and received the judgment for our sins and thus saved us. Those who believe this obtain salvation. God loved such people and saved such people. So it says, *"As He says also in Hosea: 'I will call them My people, who were not My people, And her beloved, who was not beloved'" (Romans 9:25)*, and next it says, *"And it shall come to pass in the place where it was said to them, 'You are not My people,' There they shall be called sons of the living God" (Romans 9:26)*. God is thus the God who wants to show mercy to us.

God is not the God of those who keep the law well and try to make their deeds upright. It means that He has become the God of truly worthless people of whom others say, "That person can never be called one of God's people; he is just right for being sent to hell." God wanted to become the God of those who could not become God's people by their deeds, and He has indeed

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become so. It means that God pitied and loved people who, in God's eyes, are so deficient, weak, and worthless that they cannot be loved. And so it means that God the Father sent His Son to this earth, transferred all the sins of all people to His Son, passing them on to Him, and had Him receive the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and in this way saved them and became their God. God did not want to become the God of people who are morally upright in this world. Why is that? Because, in God's eyes, all people had sin and had no choice but to go to hell. Even among such people, there are people more pitiable, of whom God, and people too, think, "That person is so worthless that, if left alone, he will surely go to hell." They are people who do not seem to have anything particularly outstanding, do not seem to have anything particularly right, do not seem to have anything particularly good, whose deeds are not just either, and who, being deficient and weak, are pushed around by people and are even swindled. It means that God loved such people all the more. God loved Jacob more than He loved Esau. And so, as we live in this world, because we are not perfect and have nothing outstanding, nothing clever, and nothing to show, at times we resent our physical parents, resent ourselves, and resent the world; but it means that very deficiency has become an advantage by which we can receive God's love. It means that very thing has become the ground of blessing by which we can receive God's special love.

Among the people of this world, God regarded as hypocrites those whose deeds are upright, who do good deeds generously, who speak humbly and well, and who live without doing evil. It means that God regarded such people as liars, as those who do good falsely. It means that when God looks into the heart of such a person, there is much evil in his heart, but because he behaves that way only on the outside, he is a hypocrite. But some people

cannot hide well what is in their hearts, so everything is exposed; they stammer when they speak, their behavior is not upright, they cannot disguise themselves well, and they have nothing outstanding. It means that God saved such people. It means that God wanted to hear from such people the words, "He is the God of salvation, the God of mercy, the God of blessing." It means that God wanted to hear it said that He had become the God of such people and had made such people His children.

"Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness"

Strangely, verse 30 says, *"What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith" (Romans 9:30)*. This is a strange thing. If we read verse 31, it says, *"But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness" (Romans 9:31)*, and the word of verse 31 speaks of those who hold on well to God's law, follow it, and put it into action, while the word of verse 30 speaks of those who, by the law, could not help but go to hell—those who were eliminated. This word is said from the apostle Paul's standpoint, looking at the Gentiles. The word "we" is said with reference to the Gentiles. Did we know God's law well? Did we keep the law well from long ago? Did we memorize the law? Do we know the contents of the law well? Do we offer sacrifices well according to the law? We do nothing according to the law. If we were to do it according to the law, we would have to know all of the law of sacrifice, live according to the law of sacrifice, and also offer sacrifices. We would have to do what we must do before people and also do what we must do before God.

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But we have done nothing. We did not even pursue the law, which is God's commandment. And yet it means that we Gentiles obtained the righteousness of God, which God declares right, and obtained salvation. The apostle Paul said that the Gentiles obtained righteousness by believing in the righteousness of God. It means that those who said, "Ah, God is alive. God the Father sent His Son, had Him receive baptism from John the Baptist, had Him take all our sins passed on to Him, and He died hanging on the Cross and came to life again to become our Savior. This was the will of God the Father and the will of our Lord Jesus Christ. Then I will believe. Because I have nothing outstanding at all, I would rather gratefully accept what God has done and hold on to it. I believe in the righteousness of God," obtained salvation. How did such people obtain salvation? The apostle Paul says it is *"the righteousness of faith" (Romans 9:30)*. It means that we obtained salvation by faith. By believing what in our hearts did we obtain salvation? It means that we obtained salvation by believing the righteousness of God in our hearts. Then what is the righteousness of God? It is God's rightness; it is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel that has saved us. So what saved us is that God loved us so much that He sent His Son to this earth, had His Son take our sins passed on to Him through John the Baptist, had Him hung on the Cross, and had Him die in our place and come to life again to become our Savior.

God the Father appointed His Son as our Savior, and that Son fulfilled that role completely by the water and the blood. It means that God thus set up Jesus Christ as our Savior, and we believe it. And so it means that we have obtained salvation. Therefore, our salvation came from faith, and it is the grace of God and a gift God has given. How great a blessing of God this is! But the people of Israel learn the law from the time they are

born, and they walk about wearing phylacteries with the word of God written on them bound on their foreheads and arms, looking at that law as they go. So they strive to live according to that law, but unfairly, it means that such people could not obtain salvation. Such people think like this: "I have lived so faithfully and well, so if I do not obtain salvation, who will?" But in reality, it means that they put forward not the righteousness of God but their own rightness. It means that God rebuked them like this: "There is no one among you who can become righteous by keeping the law. Through the law you only come to realize your sins; what you say about keeping that law is a lie. You are putting on a show of hypocrisy. You are doing good falsely." And so, instead, God gave salvation to the person who says, "I am nothing before God. If God has saved someone like me, then I have received salvation, and if God has not saved me, I go to hell." Therefore, those who are deficient before God obtained salvation and became children of God by believing in that righteousness of God, and God is pleased to be called the God of such people. We have become those who have been blessed through the faith that believes in such a God of mercy, the God of truth who has become our Savior. We praise such a God.

Do we obtain salvation if we both keep the law and believe in Jesus?

This is truly a remarkable thing. It means that Christian believers today live their life of faith well according to God's law, but such people do not receive salvation. *"But Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness" (Romans 9:31)*. Who is there who can keep all the law? If we both keep the law and believe in Jesus, do we

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obtain salvation? We obtain salvation only when we know the righteousness of Jesus. God the Father gave His Son to us and is proving to us how much He loves us, and that through His Son He has truly saved us perfectly. Only when we know and believe this do we obtain salvation. Otherwise, with what could we obtain salvation? Could we obtain salvation just by believing in Jesus blindly? It means that we could not.

So if Christian believers today believe in Jesus and also keep the law well, they cannot obtain salvation that way. People offer prayers of repentance when they sin and strive to obtain salvation that way, but it means that such people, on the contrary, die saying at their death, "Receive this sinner," and go to hell. On the other hand, some people neither know God's law well nor keep it well. And even if they know the law, they know that they are people who can never do the law well. Such people have no choice but to obtain salvation by simply believing the righteousness of God. Because they are deficient, they believe in the righteousness of God. When they are told that God has saved them in this way by the water and the blood, they believe it. The one and only thing they can do is to believe what God has done, and such people obtain salvation. This is truly a remarkable thing. There are truly many people in this world who believe in Jesus. Yet some believe in Jesus, keep the law well, and live godly lives, but do not obtain salvation and are not born again. But some say, "I am by temperament and by nature simply not suited to the law. Someone like me cannot live a life of faith." Yet it means that God, from His side, has saved such people by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that such people hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit from those who have the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe it, and receive salvation.

It means that God the Father sent His Son to this earth, passed on our sins to His Son through John the Baptist, put His Son to death in place of our sins, raised Him again, and set Him up as our Savior. So there is only one thing we can do, and that is to believe this with our hearts. Relying on God, holding on to Him, and believing—there is nothing but this. It means that only those who, because they are deficient, believe in this work God has done have obtained salvation.

People who wage a battle of wills with God

If, as a result, we go back to the starting point and look, in Genesis God told Adam and Eve that they could eat the fruit of every tree, but not the fruit of the tree that gives the knowledge of good and evil. This, as a result, is a battle of wills between us human beings and God over whether God is more righteous, more good, and more right, or whether human beings are more righteous, more good, and kinder than God. That is to say, it is about who is more outstanding. It means that people wage a battle of wills with God like this: is God more outstanding, or are human beings more outstanding? Some people say before God that they are unclean, but they wage a battle of wills with God, saying, "Still, what I lack is lacking only in this little part; the rest is fine." They do not say, "If I make just a little more effort, I can become as good as God," but it means that they never submit. It means that they cannot bow their hearts completely to God and say, "If it is Your will, if it is Your word, You are unconditionally 100 percent right." It means that they wage a battle of wills with God, saying, "Before the word, I will surrender on this part. But on other parts, I too have something

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to offer." But God sends to hell people who wage a battle of wills with God, who hate to lose to God.

Those who show off before God all go to hell, without exception. Whoever does not submit unconditionally and 100 percent before the word is one who wages a battle of wills before God. It is saying, "I am this outstanding. I want to deliver myself from this filthy place and try to reach the realm of a god." That is to say, it is saying, "I will become a god." How arrogant these words are! All such arrogant people go to hell.

There are people who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and these people preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to others. Then some people hear the word preached and believe it just as it is. There are people who accept it into their hearts and believe. Such people are the ones who receive salvation. It means that in God's sight, between a person who sits facing a wall in the mountains cultivating spiritual discipline and a person who, being deficient, has gone bankrupt in business and, just when he is about to take his own life, hears the word of God, hears of the righteousness of Jesus, hears of the love of Jesus, and believes it just as it is, God says that the one who hears the word like this and believes is the one worthy to enter the kingdom of heaven.

If a preacher preaches this gospel of the water and the Spirit to people who have long learned and taught within religion and to ordinary neighborhood people, those who have learned for a long time hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit and say, "It seems right in theory. It is different from what I have heard until now," and do not believe it completely. But people whose own strength has been broken and who know their own deficiency hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit and accept that word purely. They say, "Ah, if the Lord has truly saved me like this, if He has made me without sin, I believe." It means that such

people obtain salvation. These two kinds of people can be compared to Esau and Jacob. If we add together all the people today who say they believe in Jesus, there are truly many. But what is truly strange and sad is that so many of them are still piling up their own outstandingness before God. There are also many who devote their whole lives to piling up their own outstandingness. But it means that they do not obtain salvation that way. It means that, quite simply, those who heard and believed in their hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that God the Father sent His Son to this earth, had Him take our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, had Him hung on the Cross, had Him rise again from death, and saved us—such people obtained salvation. They neither know all the law nor keep it well, and because their lives are far removed from the word of God's law, they do not even try to keep the law at all. Yet it means that such people obtain salvation, and those who seem to people to be living sincerely and well do not obtain salvation.

Not even 1 percent of our deeds is contained in salvation

There are many outstanding people in this world who wage a battle of wills with God, and there are also many who are not like that and so long only for the salvation accomplished from God's side. Obtaining salvation is a simple thing. *"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)*. It means that God simply loved us this much, had His Son receive our sins passed on to Him, had that Son receive the judgment on us in our place and die, and raised Him

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again to become our Savior. Therefore, it means that we were able to obtain salvation by believing in that right work, that right love, which Jesus, the Son of God the Father, accomplished. We obtain salvation this simply. We obtain salvation by believing in what God has done, in the right work God carried out to save us; it is not that even 1 percent of our deeds is contained in that salvation.

Did we receive salvation by adding our own character in obtaining salvation? Were we saved by our own efforts? That is to say, in obtaining salvation, what of ours was submitted before God the Father? All such things of ours are garbage. It means that all of this is garbage: "Before I received the remission of sins, I attended seminary. Before I received the remission of sins, I did this and did that; I did good deeds." It means that such garbage must be torn up and thrown away. Whether or not we ourselves have been registered in God's family register—this is what matters. It means that it is whether or not we have come before God and accepted into our hearts the word of truth of the water and the Spirit. It means that there is nothing else. It means that those who simply believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has carried out obtain salvation.

If there is anyone among us who, though in the Church of God, still does not believe this truth even now, that person is truly someone waging a battle of wills with God. If someone does not believe in the righteousness of God though he is in the church, it is because he still has much outstandingness of his own, and he is saying, "God, I have not yet shown You all the outstanding things within me. What I have shown You so far is only one third, and I have two thirds more to show You. God, I will show You my outstandingness every day, so watch." Such a person goes to hell in the meantime. Even if he shows all of the two thirds, it is nothing. Why do people, even after believing

in Jesus, not receive the remission of sins, not go to heaven, and become people who cannot do righteous work? It is because they do not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, because they do not know the righteousness of God. When we know the righteousness of God, our rightness is a filthy rag.

People only try to keep the law; have they kept it? They cannot keep it. That is to say, what is there for people to stand on their pride about before God, and what is there for them to show off about? There is nothing to show off about before God. After we have received the remission of sins, if we show off too much before God while serving the Lord, it is wearisome. When God says that it is so, saying unconditionally, "Yes, that is so," and when God says, "Let us do it this way," saying, "Yes, let us do so"—that is the best. Such a person is the one with the best faith.

Do not put forward your own rightness, but believe in the righteousness of God

Even while doing God's work, if we overdo it, we sometimes boil over and set up our own righteousness far too much. When that happens, only one's own rightness wells up much in one's heart, and it does not bring glory before God either. God is not pleased with such a person. Rather, He is more pleased when we ask Him for help. While doing our utmost with the ability God has given us, praying much to God for help and relying much on God, even though we are deficient, in order to fulfill God's will, is the way to receive more of God's love and more of God's blessings. We must become such people. We must not boil over too much and pretend before God to be outstanding, to be clever, or to have much. That is wearisome. God grows weary when He

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sees such a person. God wants to reveal His righteousness, God's love, and God's outstandingness. If, after we have received salvation, we want to reveal our outstanding things before God and do it as something to boast of, God is not pleased. God wants to receive glory alone. Therefore, as we live our life of faith, we must not clash with God when we face the word of God. When we clash before the word of God, it is because we too have rightness of our own.

If, while living a life of faith, someone keeps clashing with those who are ahead of him, it is because he has much rightness of his own and wants to put forward his own rightness. At the time, he thinks, "I am not like that," but if he looks into his own heart after some time has passed, he can know, "At that time I did this in order to assert my rightness." He can feel it in his own heart. But God is not pleased with our asserting our own rightness.

It is so with receiving the remission of sins, it is so with living a life of faith after receiving the remission of sins, and it is so with serving the Lord. What we must do before we receive salvation is precisely to hear the righteousness of God with our ears, see it with our eyes, and believe it. And what God did was to send His Son in order to save us, pass on our sins to His Son through the baptism He received from John, have Him die hanging on the Cross, and raise Him again after He had died. What we must do is to believe that God has saved us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit. After receiving salvation in this way, since God has said that He is pleased to have the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached to the whole world, we rejoice together in that work and unite with that will. Whether I can do it well or not, my ability is not what matters; if God's will is so, and I pray, saying, "I too will unite with that will," and ask for help, God makes that work come to pass. That we Gentiles,

who did not pursue righteousness, obtained righteousness was not because of our deeds but because of the righteousness that comes from faith. Therefore, we should not put forward human righteousness but believe in the righteousness of God, and become people who know God's will, obey in keeping with that will, and ask for help. ✉

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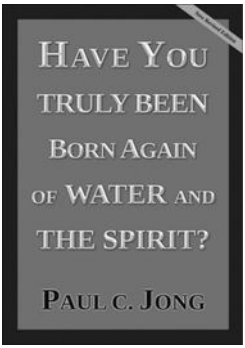
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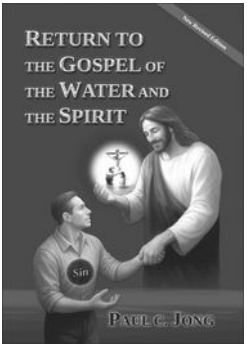
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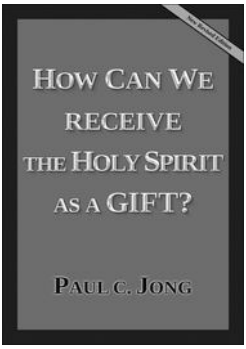
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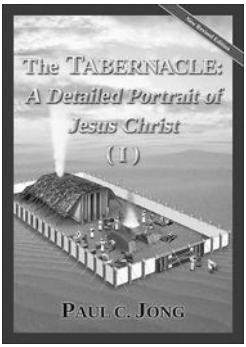
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Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]

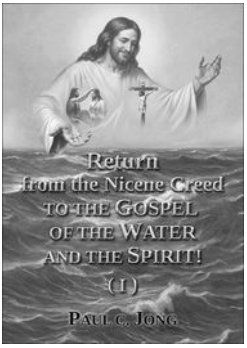


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

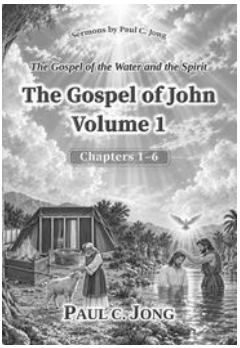
Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit?
The early church preached that Jesus took upon Himself and washed away the sin of the world through His baptism by John, fulfilling the sacrificial law of the laying on of hands.

Yet this truth was omitted from the Nicene Creed and has remained obscured for about 1,700 years. Many believers still struggle with guilt, unaware of when their sins were transferred to Jesus. This book calls us back to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which we can receive the removal of our sins and find assurance of salvation.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of John (3-Volume Series)

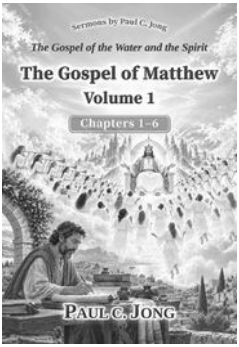


"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

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.

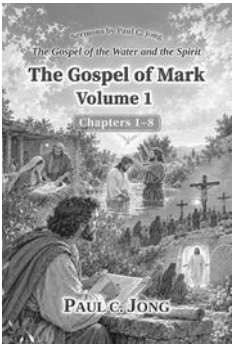
Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

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.

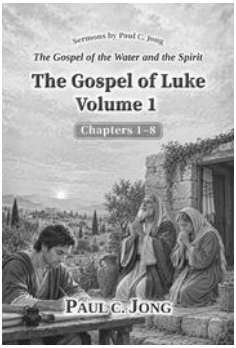
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Mark (2-Volume Series)



Mark chapters 1–8 lead us to the confession, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). Christ means 'the Anointed One.' Jesus is the King who rules over us, the High Priest who remits sins, and the Prophet who preaches the truth of salvation. Jesus, the High Priest, had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, thereby receiving the judgment for sin in our place, and He rose again from death. I hope that, through the word of the Gospel of Mark, you will accept Jesus Christ, the Savior who is the King of kings, into your hearts.

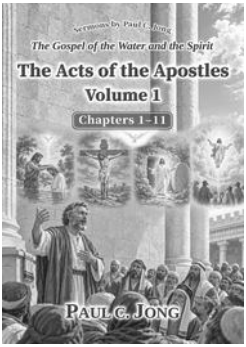
Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Luke (3-Volume Series)



Where does the assurance that we have received the remission of sins come from? This book, which follows Luke chapters 1–8, looks at the birth of the Savior and the beginning of His work, and finds the answer in the written word. Jesus, who called sinners, is the One who came to take those sins upon Himself. Because all the sins of the world were passed on once and for all to the body that received baptism from John, Jesus received the judgment for our sins on the Cross by shedding His blood, overcame death, rose again, and accomplished salvation. When we know and believe this work He did for us, the assurance that wavered according to the state of our hearts becomes grounded in the word.

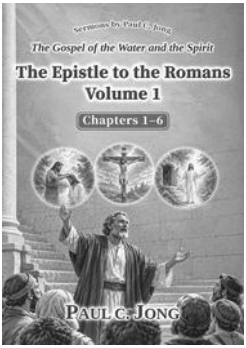
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Acts of the Apostles (2-Volume Series)



"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) Acts chapters 1–11 trace the spread of the gospel, beginning with the promise given by the risen Jesus to His disciples, His ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and continuing through the healing of the lame man at the temple gate, the martyrdom of Stephen, the great joy in Samaria, the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus, and the household of Cornelius. What the apostles preached was the fact that Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, received its judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again. And the Holy Spirit came upon those who believed in this salvation and received the remission of sins. The way of the witnesses that continued to the end of the earth is the story of those who have received the remission of sins.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Epistle to the Romans (3-Volume Series)

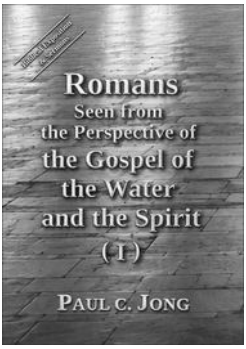


How do we, who became sinners through the disobedience of one man, Adam, become righteous? Romans chapters 1–6 show us the person who, while judging others, came to realize his own sin before the law; Abraham, who believed the God who had promised; and the person who was baptized into Christ. These chapters reveal the answer in the obedience of Jesus accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who believes in his heart in the Lord, who received baptism from John and thereby had even our sins passed on to Him as the sin of the world, who shed His blood on the Cross and was judged in our place because of that sin, and who rose again from death, receives the remission of his lifelong sins and becomes righteous freely. Because the grace of the Lord is greater than the sin and death that came from Adam, even our faults cannot bring down the righteousness of God accomplished through the obedience of One.

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,

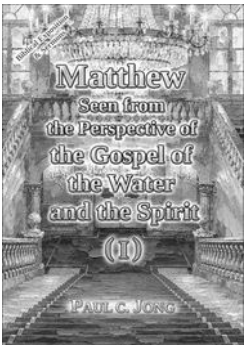
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)



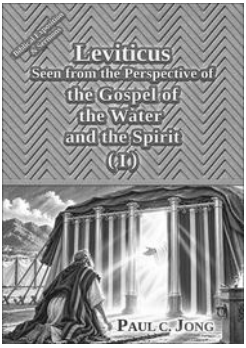
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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)

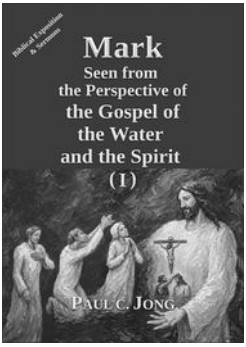


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the 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)



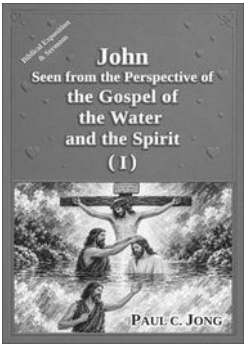
Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

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)

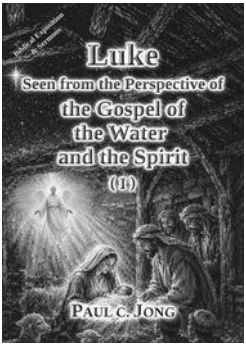


John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

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)

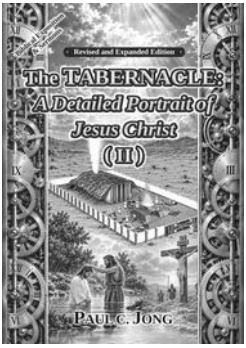


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central 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!

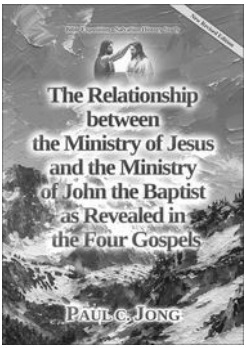
The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (3-Volume Series)



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.

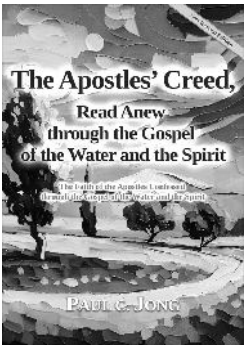
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through 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



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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Our The New Life Mission is distributing Pastor Paul C. Jong's spiritual books in 'printed book' form through coworkers who have been born again by water and the Spirit.

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THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he had long been suffering because the problem of his sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this suffering, he came to believe that Jesus, by being baptized by John the Baptist, had the sin of the world passed on to Him once for all, received its judgment in our place through His blood on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

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.

How can we, who are weak, call God Father?

"For you did not receive the spirit of bondage again to fear, but you received the Spirit of adoption by whom we cry out, 'Abba, Father'" (Romans 8:15)

God has made us, who were afraid of the judgment for sin, His children. The sin that kept us from coming to the Father was passed on to the Lord once and for all through the baptism Jesus received from John; all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, were passed on to Him. Jesus, who shed His blood and died on the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place and rose again from death. The Holy Spirit dwells in us, who have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and bears witness that we are children of God.

Even after we have become children, the body is weak, and there are times when we groan in the midst of suffering. The Holy Spirit Himself helps that very weakness and makes intercession for us according to the will of God. We who wait for the redemption of our body and the glory we will receive in the future do not stand before the Father to prove that we are perfect. Because the salvation by which He made us His children is perfect, we can call God Father and ask for His help even now, while we are weak.

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