Sermons by Paul C. Jong

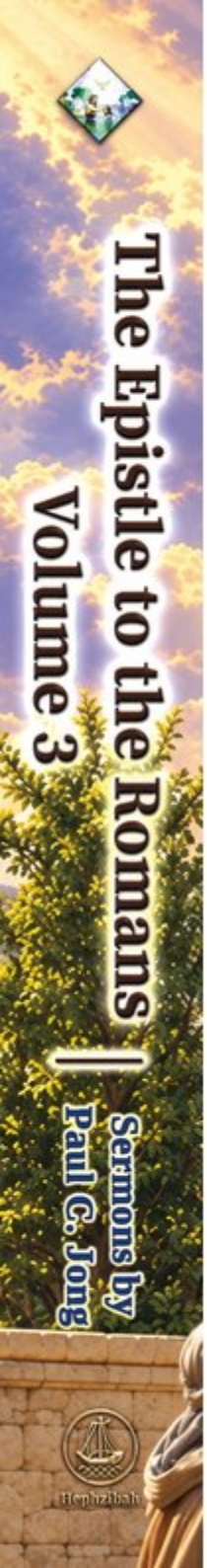
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Epistle to the Romans
Volume 3

Chapters 10–16



PAUL C. JONG



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

Faith does not arise from making the heart fervent. What we must hear is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which makes clear how Jesus removed our sins.

Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, passed on to Him once and for all. Because of all those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment in our place, and He rose again from death. Faith is hearing this news and accepting it as my salvation.

Because the basis of the remission of sins lies in what the Lord has accomplished, we become righteous by believing with our hearts the word of Christ we have now heard, without waiting for a special feeling.

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 3

Chapters 10–16

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 3

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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 has become the end of the law

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4).

The law reveals sin to us and demands death as the price of that sin. Because the judgment for sins already committed cannot be removed by human zeal, Jesus came to deliver us from this sin and judgment. Jesus, who had all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism of water He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross while bearing all those sins, and thus received the judgment in our place; and He rose again from death and became our eternal Savior. Because He paid once and for all the price of sin that the law demanded, Christ has become the end of the law, giving righteousness to everyone who believes.

Sin does not disappear, nor can a person become righteous, just because he sets his conduct right and strives to keep the law. Because Jesus had all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, finished even their judgment on the Cross, and rose again from death, the person who believes in that salvation with his heart is justified freely. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who has received the remission of sins in this way. The assurance of salvation does not lie in how deeply moved we feel or how well we have acted, but in believing with the heart the fact that Jesus has actually removed my sin.

This is also the reason Paul prayed for the salvation of Israel. They had a zeal for God, but they did not know the righteousness

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of God and tried to establish their own righteousness; and a heart that seeks to put forward its own faithfulness before God keeps a person from accepting even the salvation already given. Believing in the salvation Christ has accomplished is not adding a final help to one's own labor, but acknowledging that one cannot remove sin by oneself and entrusting one's heart to the Savior.

So Paul makes clear that the word of faith that is preached is near us, in our mouth and in our heart. God did not leave to us the task of bringing the Savior down from heaven or bringing Him up from death; rather, He made known through the word the salvation He has accomplished, so that we can hear it and believe it now.

"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10).

Confessing with the mouth does not mean paying the price of salvation with a voice that calls on the name of the Lord; it means acknowledging that He is my Savior because I believe with my heart in Jesus, who remitted my sins through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Paul asks how people can call on Him in whom they have not believed and how they can believe in Him of whom they have not heard; so what is to be believed must be clearly conveyed. What we who have received the remission of sins should let other souls hear is also not ourselves, but this word of salvation.

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Worship offered with a body that has received mercy

What, then, does a person who has received this salvation now live for?

"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service –ASV" (Romans 12:1).

Before the exhortation to present our bodies, there is the mercy of God. Because neither Israel nor the Gentiles obtain righteousness by their own works, God had compassion on sinners who could not obey and saved them. The reason Paul said earlier that if it is by grace, it is not of works, is that Jesus has already completely removed, on God's side, all the sins of the world, including our sins, through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Since a person is only chosen as a child of God by believing in this salvation, if we add the service we offer as the price of the remission of sins, the grace given freely can no longer be grace.

A living sacrifice does not mean that we go on to complete the atonement that Jesus accomplished by receiving baptism from John, shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again; it means that a person whom the Lord has already made alive serves the will of God with a living body. A heart that is grateful upon hearing the word leads to a life that offers time, thoughts, hands, and feet. The labor of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the labor of preparing so that others may hear the word, and the work of praying for weary workers also come from valuing the salvation we have received.

The gifts and offices entrusted to us were also received by grace. Just as the members of one body do not all do the same work, different labors are needed in the church as well, so we

cannot exalt our own work while making light of a brother's service. When we fill up what other members lack and are thankful for their labor, the worship of serving the Lord with bodies that have received mercy is accomplished together.

Yet even after we have received the remission of sins, our hearts easily turn toward our own benefit alone, so the exhortation to renew our minds and discern the will of God is needed. Renewing the mind is not an effort to become a righteous person by making the flesh perfect; it is believing again in the salvation that made me alive and turning around, before the word, the thoughts and plans we are holding on to now. Because the Holy Spirit who dwells in us leads us to turn from the path of putting our own desires first and to work for the salvation of other souls, we can serve the Lord even with a weak body when we rely on the grace we have received.

Build up together the brother whom the Lord has received

Even among people who believe in the same salvation, there are differences in the measure of faith and in their way of life, and in the church in Rome there were people who judged one another over eating food and over esteeming certain days. Paul tells them to receive the weak person, and he lets them know that God has already received that person. The salvation Jesus Christ accomplished for him comes before the differences we used as the standard of judgment.

For that brother, too, Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross and received the judgment for sin in his place. This is because my sin and that brother's sin were both contained in all the sins of the world that the Lord had passed on to Him once

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and for all through the baptism He received from John. Christ, who rose again from death, has made us who believe in this salvation the Lord's own. Because the Lord who received me has received him as well, we who believe in the same Savior cannot pick out only those who suit our own tastes and regard them as one family.

"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7).

This exhortation does not mean that we should call every wrong right; it means that we should explain the word to a brother who does not know it well so that he can understand it, and that we should bear the burden together with those who hesitate in the face of difficulties. The standard for accepting a brother does not lie in whether he can do as much as I can, but in how Christ received us when we were weak.

If we have received strong faith, we must use that strength to bear the burdens of weak brothers together with them, and building up a brother's faith is more precious than exercising our own freedom to the very end. Since the Holy Spirit, who has made us one body, has given us righteousness, peace, and joy, we must not tear down that fellowship by contending over who is right. When Paul urged us to live owing the debt of love, he also meant that we should share the love we first received; this is to look after a brother's needs and help his soul enjoy the grace of the Lord.

Preach the salvation you have received and stand firm together

This love does not end among the brothers who already believe. Paul was entrusted with the work of preaching the

gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles who had not yet heard the news of the Lord and offering them to God as people made holy in the Holy Spirit; yet the One who makes people holy is not the preacher but Jesus Christ. We serve by letting people hear the salvation the Lord has accomplished, so that they may believe that their own sins, too, have already been remitted and may stand before God.

In that work there were people who prayed together, supplied what was needed, and welcomed the workers. Paul commended Phoebe as a sister and asked them to help her, and he told them to greet Priscilla and Aquila, who had risked even their own necks for Paul's life. The names at the end of the Book of Romans are not greetings attached like an appendix; they show people bound together by the same remission of sins serving the Lord together, each in his own place. So the brothers and sisters beside us, too, are fellow workers whom we should value in the same way.

Because the fellowship in which we accept one another stands on the truth of the same salvation, embracing a weak brother is different from accepting a teaching that blurs the remission of sins given by Jesus. Paul warned them to keep away from those who go against the doctrine of the Lord and serve only their own belly. If the work by which Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John is separated from the Cross, where He was judged for that sin in our place, and from the resurrection, we cannot clearly preach what we believed in when we escaped from sin. So only when we hold on to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which first gave us life, just as it is, can we also keep the fellowship of serving together.

At the end, Paul gives glory to God, who is able to establish us by this word of salvation. The One who makes us stand is that

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very God who has made sinners righteous from the beginning; so even when your weakness is revealed or your service is hard, do not try to prepare your own righteousness again, but look to the salvation He has already accomplished. Our righteousness is in Jesus, 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, shed His blood and died on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and then rose again from death. I hope that, as you read the word in this volume, you will receive that salvation in your heart, and that, standing firm in that grace and taking your brothers by the hand, we will live together a life of preaching the same remission of sins to souls that have not yet heard it. ✉

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CHAPTER

10

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The reason zeal for God becomes a tragedy instead

< Romans 10:1–4 >

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes.”

Romans chapter 10 is a word that clearly reveals how our salvation is conveyed to people and how it is received. It is also a chapter that clearly shows why God’s way of salvation cannot help but clash with man’s religious zeal. Paul points out that although Israel did have zeal for God, they did not follow that knowledge, and the knowledge spoken of here means the realization of how God Himself actually fulfilled His righteousness. Israel’s tragedy never lay in atheism; rather, it lay in the fact that their religious zeal to establish their own righteousness blocked the righteousness of God.

Christ became the end of the law in order to fulfill righteousness for everyone who believes, and the actual historical way in which this was completed is 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 rose

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again from death; and the matter is whether one believes in this Jesus Christ as one's own Savior. The resolution of all the punishment that the law demanded depended on faith in the work of the Lord, in which Jesus Christ received baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed in A.D. 1–33, is being testified of even now in the twenty-first century

"For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them.' But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, '"Who will descend into the abyss?"' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach)" (Romans 10:5–8).

Quoting the word of Deuteronomy, Paul clearly proclaims that we do not need to ascend into heaven or descend into the deep abyss in order to be saved from the sin of the world. The reason is that our salvation is not the result of any human effort or of pursuing an ideal, but has already been accomplished through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit fulfilled in Jesus Christ. There is absolutely no need for people to practice asceticism, trying to wash away their own sins by their own strength. Rather, hearing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has already been completed and believing it with the heart was the only way for us to reach salvation. In other words, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received

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from John, hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death, and He has now granted eternal remission of sins to those who believe.

With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation

"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9–10).

The content of the faith that God speaks of in this passage by no means stops at mere emotional agreement; rather, it is that we should make a clear confession that acknowledges all the work of Jesus Christ as historical fact. What we must know in order to confess Jesus as Savior is that Jesus 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, so that from now on whoever accepts the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith is saved from all his sins. Being saved from all the sins of the world is determined by the faith that believes in Jesus Christ as one's own Savior—Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death.

Whoever calls on the name of the Lord and believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit will be saved

"For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved'" (Romans 10:11–13).

Paul repeatedly proclaims that whoever calls on the name of the Lord, without distinction between Jew and Greek, will at last be saved. Here the phrase "calling on the name of the Lord" means believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which was completed through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection, and it was a word saying that salvation comes upon such a person.

As it is written, "How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, who bring glad tidings of good things!"

"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'" (Romans 10:14–15).

The apostle Paul says that in order to call on Jesus Christ, one must first believe in Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the

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world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross and poured out His precious blood, and rose again from death to become the Savior of sinners. In order for us to be saved from our sins, we must first hear the word concerning the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In order for us to hear that gospel with our ears, there must be someone who preaches it to us. Paul presents the fact that in order for us to preach the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others, we ourselves must first have the faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, the beautiful feet of those who bring good news are by no means a mouth that strings together many flowery words; rather, they must first rest on the faith that believes in Jesus Christ as Savior—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 shed His blood, and rose again from death.

Faith comes from hearing the word of Christ

"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?' So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:16–17).

True faith comes from hearing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart and the ears, and that hearing must be the hearing of the truth that consists only of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the word of Christ. What is meant here by the word of Christ is that one can be saved by hearing with one's ears and believing the work of Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John at the Jordan River and thereby Himself had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death. This

word says that true saving faith arises naturally in the human heart when one hears with one's ears the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord accomplished. It is not that man strives to produce the faith of being born again by his own strength; rather, it is when one hears with one's ears the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has already been completed, as it is preached, and believes it in one's heart that one at last reaches true salvation.

Why did Israel not obey the gospel of salvation that they had heard?

"But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.' But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: 'I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.' But Isaiah is very bold and says: 'I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.' But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people'" (Romans 10:18–21).

The reason Israel finally failed to reach the gospel of the water and the Spirit was by no means that they had not heard, but rather that even after hearing, they did not obey the righteousness of God. True obedience means laying down the religious zeal that tries to pile up one's own righteousness, and accepting by faith in one's heart the righteousness of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God Himself has accomplished. But, still bound by zeal for the law, they ultimately refused to submit by faith to Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He

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received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. God Himself called them, stretching out His hands all day long, but because they ultimately refused, the Gentiles, who had not sought God, came to believe that word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit first; and Paul clearly testifies that this too was the course of history that had already been prophesied from the beginning.

Romans chapter 10 declares that salvation is the work of hearing and believing the event that has been completed

Romans chapter 10 clearly declares that our salvation is by no means something that man wins and obtains by ascending into heaven or descending into the abyss, but rather is hearing and believing in one's heart the completed event of salvation that has already appeared in history. The substance of that completion is the faith that believes in Jesus as one's own Savior—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. By that faith we were able to be saved. However, religious zeal that lacks true knowledge ultimately only flows into the pride of trying to establish one's own righteousness; but, on the contrary, the faith that hears and believes in the heart the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has already been completed becomes the power of God that gives life to all people without distinction. Now, through chapter 11, the Book of Romans at last goes on to complete the whole picture of God's final plan of salvation toward Israel. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Jews who did not acknowledge Jesus Christ as the Messiah

< Romans 10:1–10 >

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, ‘“Who will descend into the abyss?”’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.”

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Verses 2 and 3 of Romans chapter 10 are a passage that points out very painfully the problem of why man's religious zeal can ultimately fail to reach salvation. While acknowledging the fervent faith of Israel itself, Paul says that they missed one decisive thing and so ended up disobeying.

Israel lacked the knowledge of the truth of the gospel of salvation

Israel was a nation whose zeal for God was hotter than that of any other nation. They fasted and prayed, and they strove to keep even the detailed provisions of the law at the risk of their lives. But what they lacked was the right knowledge of the truth that knows the way of salvation that God approves.

First, we must examine the result of their history. Israel was a people who, without knowing about Jesus Christ, the only channel through which God saves sinners from sin, strove instead to please God according to the way of Judaism in which they believed.

We must also examine the error of their faith. Their zeal, lacking the right knowledge of salvation, is like a car racing at full speed in the exact opposite direction from its destination. The harder it runs, the farther it only gets from salvation. No matter how sincere and full of passion one may be, if one's direction is not toward 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, one can never reach true salvation.

The fundamental difference between one's own righteousness and the righteousness of God

Paul sharply contrasts and explains the two kinds of righteousness that mankind holds on to.

First, in the case of one's own righteousness, its subject is man himself. That is, my own efforts and deeds become my own righteousness. Its methods appear as various religious acts such as keeping the law, doing religious good deeds, fasting, and the sacrament of confession. Its characteristic is that it constantly wavers depending on circumstances and can never reach a perfect level. Its result is that one ultimately falls into pride or becomes trapped in condemnation, and finally reaches death.

On the other hand, in the case of the righteousness of God, its subject is God. That is, the redemptive work of Christ becomes its subject. The way of salvation that God gives is faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ—His having the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, the blood He shed hanging on the Cross, and His resurrection from death. Because Jesus Christ made this truth of salvation for us, it is the truth of salvation that never changes. Those who believe this truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit are those who have put on the garment of salvation with which God Himself clothes them. As a result, they enjoy salvation from sin and peace through true faith, and they at last become those who stand on the path that reaches eternal life through the eternal remission of sins.

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The righteousness of God seen through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

The righteousness of God is the truth of salvation that we human beings cannot produce by ourselves, and it is the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit of that salvation, in which Jesus Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him, hung on the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death. This word of the gospel is the gift of salvation that Jesus Christ Himself accomplished and completed.

Man can never wash away his own sins by his own strength. Therefore, Jesus had to have the sin of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. This very work of the baptism Jesus received from John becomes the righteousness of God. And the fact that Jesus was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and received the judgment for our sins, and rose again from death, paying the price of our sins so that we may obtain new life, also became the righteousness of God. At last the righteousness of God was completed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so it was able to save those who believe.

But rather than kneeling before this perfect righteousness of God and accepting it, Israel was a people who insisted on having their own righteousness recognized by keeping the law better themselves. In order to establish their own righteousness, they stubbornly persisted to the end in refusing to believe in Jesus Christ as their Savior. This was precisely what became the sin of pride, the sin of not submitting to God.

What can we conclude when we think it over?

Salvation from sin was by no means a process of building up human righteousness; rather, we had to give up human righteousness completely and be clothed with salvation through faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Himself accomplished. Today we must examine what we are presenting before God. We must think deeply about whether we might be patching together scraps of our own righteousness here and there, such as how holy I lived yesterday or how much I prayed. God never wants our own righteousness, which is like rags. Rather, we must be saved from all sins by accepting in our hearts the righteousness of Jesus Christ, who has already completed our salvation through the baptism Jesus received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection. We must put on by faith the robe of salvation that Jesus Christ Himself completed through the water and the Spirit. Only the righteousness of God can save us from the sin of the world and from the judgment for our sins and lead us into the way of eternal new life. We must become those who entrust ourselves to the righteousness of God.

Verse 4 of Romans chapter 10 is a key word that defines very clearly the relationship between the law and the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This declaration that Christ became the end of the law can be called a revolutionary word that completely moves the paradigm of faith from works to faith.

The meaning of Christ becoming the end of the law

The word *"end"* used in the text is a rich word that does not merely mean that something has stopped, but also carries the

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meaning of having fully reached a destination, or of having been completed.

First, we must look at this from the aspect that He perfectly carried out the demands of the law. The law constantly demands of man, "Do this, and you will live," but man has no ability at all to live up to that demand. Jesus Himself came to this earth and not only perfectly fulfilled all the demands of the law, but also, in order to Himself bear even the punishment for sin that the law had set, namely death, 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 so He satisfied all the righteous demands of the law that God had given.

Viewed from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this means that 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, thereby carrying out and completing the verdict the law had declared, namely that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, and so He saved those who believe from their sins. As a result, because Jesus Himself received the righteous judgment, the law no longer had anything more to demand of sinners, and the word of the truth of salvation fulfilled in Jesus Christ became the word that has enabled those who believe to be saved.

The way He fulfills the righteousness of salvation for everyone who believes

The way this amazing result applies to us today is by no means through the deeds of our flesh; it is accomplished only

through the channel of faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

First, we must look at how our status changes. When we remained under the law, we could not help but be constantly ruled by condemnation and death. But now those who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit escape from that rule and are moved to become those who belong to the grace of God.

We must also look at the aspect that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is salvation that has already been completed. It is by no means that we produce salvation by keeping the law ourselves. Rather, we are saved from all our sins through faith that believes the word of the truth of salvation that Jesus has already completed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God treats me, who believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as a righteous person, the same as one who has fully kept all of God's law.

And we must engrave in our hearts, together with the righteousness of Jesus, the truth that the grace of salvation is applied to those who believe this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit applies equally to all of them without distinction, whether they are Jews or Gentiles, moral people or vicious sinners. It became the righteousness of God that is given only to those who believe the word, "My sins were washed away once and for all by the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross."

Being set free from the condemnation of the law

The law has finished its role of condemning us and at last driving us into the righteousness of Christ, and Christ, by perfectly fulfilling the demands of the law through the word of

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit, has at last become the One who saved us, who believe in the work of Jesus, from all the sins of the world once and for all.

Because Christ became the end of the law, we no longer need to be anxious, wondering, "What more must I do to be saved?" That period at the end of the law has become the starting point of our salvation. If there are still people today who live striving under the demands of the law that have already ended, they must engrave deeply in their hearts and believe the fact that a period has been put to the law through the faith that believes in Jesus Christ as Savior—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. Now we must be those who accept by faith the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in which our salvation has been completed, and who enjoy peace of heart.

Verses 6 through 10 of Romans chapter 10 clearly teach that our salvation is by no means the result of efforts that man can hardly attain, but rather is accomplished through faith that believes the word of salvation that has already come near to us. When we interpret this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, its meaning becomes even clearer to us.

The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart

Paul clearly says that in order to be saved from our sins, we neither need to strive to ascend into heaven to bring Christ down, nor need to descend into the abyss to bring Christ up from the dead.

First, we must look at this word from the aspect of the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has already been fulfilled. On this earth Jesus Christ 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 died, and rose again from death to give salvation to those who believe.

We must also look at the nearness of the word. There is by no means any asceticism or suffering left that we must bear anymore. The way of salvation has come near, into our mouths and hearts, through the word of the water and the Spirit that has already been written. That is, hearing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and understanding it in one's heart is itself like being one who already stands before the door of salvation.

The faith of the heart and confessing with the mouth

Paul explains reaching the righteousness of God and reaching salvation by dividing them into two stages. These are by no means separate events; rather, they can be said to be two aspects of one truth.

First, we must look at the stage of believing with the heart unto righteousness, that is, the substance of faith. The content of this faith is not merely believing that Jesus was a historical figure who actually existed. Rather, it is that all the sins of the world were transferred to the body of Jesus Christ through the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River, and that our salvation has already been completed through His death and resurrection.

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We must also look at the stage of confessing with the mouth unto salvation, that is, the confirmation of the faith that has been saved from sin. The content of confessing our salvation is the faith that agrees with and confesses the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God Himself accomplished. That is, it is to say, "I was originally a sinner, but I believe that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and that by the blood He shed on the Cross and His resurrection from death He has now accomplished and completed our salvation." As a result, the faith of the heart is clearly proven outwardly through the confession of the mouth, and the confession of faith made before people and before God becomes the holy period that confirms that one has at last been completely separated from the power of sin and moved into the kingdom of God.

The grace of salvation led by the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Salvation is not the work of ascending to God by our own strength, but rather the work of believing in and receiving as our Savior Jesus Christ, who Himself came into our hearts through faith in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The reason Paul quoted the word of Deuteronomy was to emphasize that this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not some distant philosophy or advanced knowledge.

The baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from death are being heard by our ears even at this very moment, and they have come near, right up to our lips. There is no need to analyze this word in complicated ways or to strive to supplement it with one's own deeds. Why is that?

When we believe in our hearts and confess with our mouths, "The Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for sin by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood, and rose again from death, and so He has fully resolved all our sins, the sins of the world," we become those who have entered the ark of salvation. Through faith that believes this simple yet powerful word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we obtain eternal remission of sins and become those who walk the path of blessing and everlasting life.

Verse 13 of Romans chapter 10 is one of the words that most concisely shows the universality and the method of our salvation. When we interpret this verse from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we come to see that the tremendous work of salvation contained in the name of the Lord we call on is revealed even more deeply.

The universality of salvation that the expression *"whoever"* gives

This expression declares that the door of our salvation is wide open to all mankind who were sinners, regardless of race, class, or gender, and above all regardless of the depth of their sins.

First, we must look at this from the aspect of the grace of salvation without distinction. Whether one has the law like the Jews or does not know the law like the Gentiles, there is no distinction for anyone. This is because God, being the Lord of all people, wants to become the Savior to all who call on Him.

We must also look at this in terms of the qualification of sinners. The word *"whoever"* contains a powerful comfort: even

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one who committed vicious sins in the past will not be excluded from the grace of being saved from his sins, if only he believes in his heart that the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is salvation. The reason is that the basis of our salvation by no means depends on man, but is contained only in the word of God's covenant promise.

The true meaning of calling on the name of the Lord

One can never be saved merely by crying out "Lord, Lord" aloud. The "calling on the name of the Lord" that the Bible speaks of always presupposes faith that believes the following word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

First, one must call on the name of the Lord with faith that knows and believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit by which the Lord Himself saved us from all sins. To call Jesus one's own Lord means that one has become someone who calls on that Lord, believing that He had the sin of the world, including my sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death to become the Savior of sinners like me. That is, it refers to the one who believes that when Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River, He Himself bore all the sins of the world on His own body, received the judgment for sin on the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death to become my Savior now.

Second, it is one who calls having completely given up his own righteousness. Calling on the name of the Lord is a sign of total surrender, saying, "Only the salvation that the Lord has given through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

is my salvation." One who tries to mix even a little of his own deeds into the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot be said to be one who calls on the name of the Lord.

Third, it is calling in the assurance of the relationship. This is the confident cry of one who has received the remission of all his sins by faith through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and so has at last become a child of God, calling on his own Father. It is an exceedingly bold confession of faith that only a righteous person who has been set free from the guilt of sin can make.

The agreement between faith and the confession of faith

To "call on the name of the Lord" is to be assured, through the faith that believes it, of the work of the Lord who perfectly washed away my sins through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and to seek His help. In the following verse 14 Paul asks, *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed?" (Romans 10:14)*. That is, in order to call on the name of the Lord, one must first firmly believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in order to believe the word of the gospel of salvation, one must first hear that word of the gospel with one's ears.

Today we must look back deeply on what kind of heart we are calling on the name of the Lord with. Are you perhaps still in the state of a sinner, begging Him to wash away your sins? That is a cry full of fear. Or is your cry a confident cry, calling with gratitude for the merit of the Lord who resolved all your sins once and for all through faith that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit? The one who boldly calls on

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the name of the Lord with a heart that believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is one who has obtained complete salvation. If you are calling on the name of Jesus in the manner of worldly religion, you must call on Him desiring to be saved, truly knowing who Jesus Christ is and why He is necessary for you.

Verses 14 through 17 of Romans chapter 10 are a passage that explains the channel of the gospel of the water and the Spirit through which the grace of salvation reaches man, tracing it in reverse order. Paul says that our salvation is by no means a vague feeling or a thought one has devised oneself, but is obtained by wholly believing and relying on the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has accomplished.

The chain of salvation shows the necessity of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Paul explains the process of reaching salvation as five steps of cause and effect, clearly showing that if any one of these steps is missing, our salvation can never be established.

The first step is “sending.” This whole process begins only when God Himself sends those who know the gospel of the water and the Spirit into the world. The second step is “preaching.” Those who have been sent open their mouths and proclaim the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The third step is “hearing.” The sinner hears with his ears the sound of that preaching. The fourth step is “faith.” He accepts in his heart that the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which he has heard with his ears, is the truth of salvation, and he reaches salvation. The fifth step is “calling.” Based on the faith that believes this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit,

he acknowledges Jesus Christ as his Lord and calls on Him, and so he at last reaches the assurance of salvation.

The core message that the apostle Paul teaches us is the fact that without preachers of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, no one can be saved from his sins. This is because the gospel of the water and the Spirit is by no means a truth that man can realize by himself through meditation or asceticism. Only when someone clearly tells the fact, "The sin of the world was transferred to the body of Jesus through the baptism Jesus received from John; by hanging on the Cross and shedding His blood He received the judgment for sin, so that our sins came to an end; and He rose again from death and became our Savior," does the door of the blessing of salvation at last open.

Faith comes by hearing—the source of faith

In this passage Paul concludes very clearly about the source of faith. That is, our faith is by no means something squeezed out and made from within me or cultivated through training; rather, faith arises from hearing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our ears.

First, we must look at this from the aspect of passive faith. True faith is by no means the result of my zeal, but rather a natural response to the word of the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that is heard. It is not that I come to believe through zeal because I first want to believe; rather, because the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is so certain a truth of salvation, the heart comes to believe at the very moment the ears hear it.

We must also look at the aspect of the word of Christ. Here, the object of hearing is by no means worldly morality or human

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philosophy, but rather only the word of Jesus Christ. When we interpret this from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is by no means at the level of a slogan simply saying, "Believe in Jesus." Rather, it is hearing and believing the word about the concrete righteousness of God that Jesus completed to wash away the sin of mankind—His receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River and having the sin of the world transferred to Him, the blood He shed on the Cross as the judgment for sin, and His resurrection from death. When we hear this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit Himself works in our hearts and bestows on us as a gift the faith by which we can be saved.

The beautiful feet of those who are sent

The miracle of salvation from sin is an amazing event that takes place only when lips that preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and ears that hear it meet each other. In verse 15 of Romans chapter 10, Paul praises the feet of those who preach the gospel as beautiful. The reason is that those footsteps are the only way of conveying the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives new life, to souls trapped under the law of death.

Today we must look back deeply on where our faith actually began. That is, we must clearly examine whether it began from my own thoughts or experiences, or rather from having heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached. If we have heard the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our ears and believed it in our hearts, that faith is a rock-like faith standing on the firmest foundation, the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Also, for those who have not yet heard this gospel

of the water and the Spirit, our footsteps can become the only hope that will give them life. This simple truth that *"faith comes by hearing" (Romans 10:17)* not only enriches our souls but also becomes the driving force for preaching this blessed news of salvation to others. Hallelujah! ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Cast away your own righteousness and attain righteousness through the word of faith

< Romans 10:1–15 >

"Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them.' But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, '"Who will descend into the abyss?"' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For

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the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'"

Do we draw that much closer to salvation the more zeal we show toward God? If we pour out our hearts in prayer and become familiar with the word, yet do not know how our sins disappear, that zeal alone cannot resolve the sin that remains in our hearts. Because Paul loved Israel, he was not satisfied with saying that they were showing zeal. What he asked of God was their salvation. We, too, before counting up the effort we have put into our faith, must know how God made sinners righteous.

Examine where your zeal is directed

Paul testifies that Israel has a zeal toward God, yet he says that this zeal is not according to knowledge. What is lacking here is not the amount of information about religion. The problem was that they sought to establish their own righteousness without knowing the righteousness that God fulfilled through Jesus Christ. *"For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:3)*. Those who

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establish their own righteousness try to stand before God by relying on how faithful they have been. However, the righteousness of God does not come from the faithfulness that sinners have built up; it comes from the work that God accomplished to save sinners. That work is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death.

When people mix their own faithfulness with the work God has accomplished, the more zeal they show, the more they cling to their own conduct. This is because on the days when they think they have done well, they are sure of their salvation, but when their faults are exposed, they again judge that they are sinners. Since the standard of their hearts lies not in the work of the Lord but in themselves, they speak of faith with the same mouth and yet cannot submit to the righteousness of God. This is also the reason Paul prayed for them. He wanted them not to remain in the place of boasting of their own righteousness, but to accept the salvation God has bestowed.

This word is near to us as well. A record of having heard the word for a long time or an evaluation that we have done our assigned work well cannot remove our sins. If we make such things the grounds of our righteousness, then even while saying that we seek the grace of God, we fill the place where grace should enter with our own efforts. Only when we acknowledge ourselves as people who cannot resolve sin can we rely on the righteousness the Lord has fulfilled. Examining ourselves is not an attempt to find a better condition for salvation; rather, it is necessary for letting go of the false things we rely on and accepting the salvation of God.

Christ has fulfilled the requirements of the law

The law reveals what sin is and exposes us, who cannot keep all of its words, as sinners; therefore, it does not open a way for people to become righteous through their own efforts. Yet Paul points the sinner who has been exposed before the law to Christ. *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4)*. The word that Christ has become the end of the law does not mean that we may take sin lightly. It means that because the Lord Himself bore the sin the law exposed and the judgment that sin must receive, He gives righteousness to those who believe.

By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all. In that sin are included not only the sins we have already committed but also all the sins we commit throughout our lives. The Lord bore that sin, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and thereby received in our place the judgment we should have received, and by rising again from death, He accomplished the salvation of the remission of sins. Therefore, the basis on which God justifies us lies not in how well we have kept the law, but in the fact that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him and paid their price in full.

"For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them'" (Romans 10:5). The righteousness of the law promises life only to those who do it, and when we honestly look back on our lives in the light of this word, we have nothing to present as having done it perfectly. Yesterday's efforts cannot erase today's sins, nor can a resolution to do better tomorrow remove the judgment for sins already committed. It is at this dead end that we hear of the righteousness Christ has fulfilled. Because the Lord has

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finished what we could not do, those who believe do not leave the final share of salvation to their own deeds.

This is how knowing the law that exposes sin and believing in the Lord who delivered us from sin are connected. If we have come to realize our sin through the law, we must not let that realization end with confirming our own despair. The reason sin has been exposed is to make us abandon the thought that we are righteous on our own and come to the Savior. Therefore, the word that Christ has become the end of the law becomes a clear hope for those who acknowledge their sins rather than for those who hide them. It is precisely the person who has no righteousness to present before God who needs the Lord's righteousness.

The word we are to believe is near us

Unlike the righteousness of the law, which looks for those who do it, the righteousness of faith first stops the heart that tries to achieve something. Paul tells us not to ask in our hearts who will ascend into heaven or who will descend into the abyss. This is because salvation is not accomplished by our bringing Christ down or bringing Him up from the dead. It is God who sent the Savior, and it is also God who caused death to be overcome. A faith that tries to obtain salvation by pleasing God with its own strength is, in the end, like trying to move Christ according to one's own will, and so it becomes unable to see the salvation that has already been given.

Therefore, Paul turns the heart that searches far away toward the word that is now being preached. *"But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach)" (Romans 10:8)*. The nearness

of the word does not mean that those who hear it can easily produce salvation. It means that God has made known what He accomplished so that we can hear and believe it. Since God has let us know through the word that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death, we do not need to wander through unseen places to find the basis of salvation.

Nor should we read the word that it is near, in our mouth and in our heart, as merely meaning that there are familiar religious expressions. The word of faith that Paul preached contains the actual work of Christ, who saved sinners. If we do not hear that content and only repeat the words that we believe, our hearts remain bound to our own thoughts. On the other hand, if we accept what the Lord has done as the word says, salvation does not remain a distant story outside of us. It means coming to believe the fact that my sin, too, was included in the sin of the world that He bore.

We believe with the heart and confess with the mouth

Then how do we respond to the word that has come near? Paul speaks of the faith of the heart and the confession of the mouth together. *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9–10).* Confessing Jesus as Lord does not mean obtaining salvation by pronouncing His name accurately. Because I believe that Jesus, who bore my sin and

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rose again from death, is my Savior, I acknowledge with my mouth the fact I have received in my heart.

In particular, in the word about believing in the resurrection, we must not detach from it the reason the Lord died. The Lord did not die without reason; because He had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross, received our judgment, and then rose again. A heart that believes in His resurrection does not exclude its own sin from the sin that He bore. Because I believe that the judgment for my sin, too, has already been finished, I confess the living Lord as the Savior who has given me the remission of sins.

The word that one believes with the heart unto righteousness also does not mean that one becomes righteous by adding a fine deed called faith. It means accepting the righteousness that God has fulfilled through Christ. The confession of the lips cannot be a separate payment for obtaining that righteousness, either. We cannot respond to this word by crying out with our mouths alone that we have been saved while our hearts still regard sin as remaining. The faith that the Lord's work has actually removed my sin goes together with the confession that reveals that faith. Therefore, the confession we make with our mouths is not a statement that brings out the memory of having believed once long ago, but a confession that we now believe in our hearts the work the Lord has accomplished.

Paul adds God's promise to such faith. *"For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame'" (Romans 10:11).* Unlike the shame that is exposed when people boast of themselves before others, faith that leans on the Lord stands on the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Even when faults of the flesh are discovered, we do not try to hide those faults to look righteous; instead, we can return to the word that

the Lord has borne even that sin. Because it is a faith that makes us lay down our boasting, the basis of our salvation is, on the contrary, not shaken.

Such a confession is also needed when sin is exposed in our lives. It is acknowledging our wrongdoing without saying that, because of that wrongdoing, even the salvation the Lord has accomplished has become incomplete. Our conduct must be corrected, but we cannot add anything to the price of sin that Christ has paid. If we miss this distinction, we will either hide our wrongdoing or try to rebuild salvation with our own efforts. On the other hand, if we stand on the Lord's righteousness, we can serve the Lord with thanksgiving while honestly acknowledging our faults.

There is the same Lord for everyone

Paul does not confine this promise of salvation to Israel alone. He says that there is no distinction between Jews and Greeks and that one Lord is Lord over all people. Just as there is no difference in being sinners before God, there is no difference in the righteousness that sinners need. That righteousness was fulfilled by Jesus Christ having the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and paying the price of that sin, and rising again from death. No lineage or familiar religious life can take the place of that righteousness, nor is the door of salvation closed to anyone because he lacks such a background. The Lord richly bestows the grace of salvation on all who call upon Him.

This richness is not a promise put off as something to be received someday, but the remission of sins that those who call on the Lord have already received and enjoy. This is because the

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center of the word that continues from the preceding verses lies in sinners being justified and obtaining salvation. *"Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13)*. This is a promise that the Lord does not withhold the grace of salvation from those who call on the name of the Lord. Therefore, we have no reason to hesitate, thinking that we can call on Him only when we have qualifications more favorable than those of others. Because the Lord has already fulfilled the righteousness sinners need, we can come forward relying on Him.

At the same time, this promise is not a word telling us to attach power to the very sound of calling on the name of the Lord. The verses just before speak of believing with the heart, and the verse that follows asks how they will call on Him in whom they have not believed. Calling comes from faith, and that faith arises from hearing what the Lord has done. Therefore, what is needed both for us and for others is not weighing people's circumstances to pick out suitable people, but clearly preaching the Lord's salvation so that anyone can believe and call on Him.

People who preach are needed so that others may hear and believe

Paul's questions lead from the heart that seeks salvation to the place of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14)*. When we see the reality that someone cannot believe in the Lord, we cannot answer these questions merely by saying that this person's zeal is lacking. Someone is needed to preach so that this person may hear of the salvation the Lord has

accomplished. Since we, too, came to believe because the word of the Lord was preached to us, the grace we have received must lead to a heart for those who have not yet heard.

In these questions, Paul placed the one who preaches in the position of causing people to hear, not in the position of causing them to believe or of saving them. This is because faith arises when the one who has heard accepts that word in his heart, and Jesus has already finished the work of removing that person's sins. Therefore, those who preach cannot aim at showing off their eloquence or at moving the emotions of the listeners. They must make clear the content that the listeners are to believe. That content is where sin is revealed, and the fact that Jesus had that sin passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received its judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Because we, who could not stand by our own righteousness, have been saved by the Lord's righteousness, we preach the same Savior to others as well.

This work begins with being sent. *"And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'" (Romans 10:15)*. The word "apostle" means "one who has been sent," and God sends those who have believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit into the world through the church. Since those who are sent are people who have believed first, those who preach can tell others the salvation they themselves have received just as it is. Beautiful feet do not refer only to the feet of those who receive attention before many people. A life that moves to preach the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit and serves together so that this work may be accomplished is precious. When we carry out by faith the work of preaching the word and the work of helping its spread, the

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glad news of the salvation we have received is heard by others as well.

At the beginning, we asked whether we draw closer to salvation by showing zeal. Now we come to know the place where that zeal should stand. It is the place where we come down from trying to obtain salvation by building up our own righteousness, believe with our hearts the word of faith that has come near and so attain righteousness, and preach that word to those who have not yet heard it. Just as Paul desired the salvation of Israel, let us also pray and serve, desiring the salvation of people. Jesus has already accomplished salvation for us by having our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and paying their price, and rising again from death, and the work of letting others hear of that grace lies before us today. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

What we must believe in order to obtain true salvation

< Romans 10:1–13 >

“Brethren, my heart’s desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, “Who will ascend into heaven?”’ (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, ‘“Who will descend into the abyss?”’ (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? ‘The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (that is, the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek,

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for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.'"

God changed the law

What must we believe in order to obtain true salvation, and whom must the Jews believe in order to be saved from sin? This passage speaks to us about these matters. In Romans chapter 10, the apostle Paul wrote these words holding the salvation of the nation of Israel as his own heart's desire.

"For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:2–4). If we are to receive true salvation, we must have true knowledge, we must know the true truth, and we must know Jesus Christ. We must know how Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us, how He bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, and also that He bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross, and was nailed there. But the people of Israel do not believe in Jesus Christ. As for the Bible, too, they acknowledge only the Old Testament and do not acknowledge the New Testament. This means that they do not believe in Jesus as the Son of God. So, if they are to obtain salvation, they must know and believe that Jesus was born on this earth as the Savior of mankind and has removed the sin of mankind.

If the people of Israel are to be saved from sin, they must know that God changed the law. At first God gave the people of Israel the law and established a law, saying, "If you live according to this word, I will bless you." But because the people

of Israel could not do it, God said, just as He had originally intended to do, "I will change the law." If we look at the word Jesus spoke at the Lord's Supper, He said, *"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins'" (Matthew 26:26–28)*. When the Lord, giving the cup here, said that this wine was His blood which is shed for many, that is, the blood of the covenant, He was speaking of the fact that Jesus was born on this earth, bore the sin of mankind on His own body, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again, and so became our Savior, in order to fulfill that word of prophecy just as God had promised to remove people's sins through a new covenant. It means that everyone, whether Gentile or Jew, must know, meet, and believe in that Savior, Jesus Christ, whom God newly promised. And so it means that they must be saved.

Many Jews still do not believe in Jesus Himself, so it is difficult for them to be saved. They do not think of Jesus as the Savior. That is why they are not saved before God.

The new covenant was promised from the beginning

It means that, for the Jews to obtain salvation, God has made a new promise. This new promise is new only in name; from God's side, He had already spoken of it back when Adam and Eve sinned and covered their shameful parts with fig leaves, and God slaughtered an animal as a sacrificial offering, made clothes from its skin, and clothed Adam and Eve. He showed that when

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man sinned, it was God's will to say, "The Savior will remove your sins and save you." And through the sacrifices of Cain and Abel, He showed that He is the God who accepts not the produce of the ground but the offering of a lamb. He showed it to Abraham as well. He said, "The people who have received circumcision are My people. The people whose sin has been cut off are My people." So God told us everything: that we are saved by faith, and that salvation is obtained not by deeds but by heeding and believing the word God has spoken.

But because the people of Israel did not know this, God gave them the law to teach them their sins and once made a covenant with them through the law. When He made that promise, saying, "If you cannot live according to this, if you cannot keep this, you will be put to death," He put the blood of the sacrificial offering in a bowl and asked, "Will you keep it as it is written?" and they answered, "Yes, we will keep it." When He said, "If you do not keep it as it is written, you will be put to death," they boasted, "Yes, that is so. Just as the offering was put to death, we too will keep it, prepared to die." But when they actually lived it, they could not do it. They could not help but fail. Having inherited the sin of Adam and Eve, how could they keep it? So they came to find it bothersome. They had to offer sacrifices morning and evening, offer the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement, and bring and offer an offering every time they sinned, day after day, so they said it was tiresome; yet they did believe the word of prophecy in the Old Testament that their Savior would come. Even now that nation keeps the feasts of the law and the Day of Atonement. Not the whole nation does it; only those who believe do so. If they are to be saved, they need Jesus, and Jesus is the Messiah they are waiting for.

It means that the Messiah has already come. "*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. Just as He said that a virgin would conceive and bear a Son, Jesus is born through the body of Mary. And at the age of thirty He receives baptism from John and bears the sin of mankind. Then He goes to the Cross and dies, and He rises again from death and saves us. What the sacrifice of the Day of Atonement and the sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament showed, and the fact that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John at the age of thirty, died on the Cross, rose again, and became our Savior—these are exactly the same thing.

But they do not believe. They are still waiting for the Messiah, and because they do not believe, they will come to accept Jesus as the Savior only after going through great hardship. But before that, we must teach them this. Even in the old days, whenever Israel faced difficulty, it relied on nations such as Egypt and Assyria, but that was barking up the wrong tree and grabbing hold of a rotten rope. It means that they must not stake their lives on people and nations, but must take hold of Jesus Christ, heed His word, and believe.

Their own God, the LORD, while saying that He would send them the Messiah, said, *"Behold, I will send you Elijah the prophet Before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the LORD" (Malachi 4:5)*. God had promised that He would send John the Baptist, saying that whoever does not accept Elijah will be destroyed. John the Baptist was born before Jesus was born on this earth, and Jesus was born six months later. Jesus said, *"If you are willing to receive it, he is Elijah who is to come" (Matthew 11:14)*. It means that John plays the role of Elijah. But the nation of Israel does not believe this New Testament. It means that they do not believe in Jesus. Because they do not believe, they still go to the Wailing Wall to pray, and they still do, in their own way, everything that was done in the Old

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Testament times. They think this way: since they are the chosen nation and are still striving to keep the law in order to live according to the word of God, would God not protect them and save them?

"Being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness"

But it means that this is not so. That is why the apostle Paul said, *"For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2–3)*. It means that their zeal for God is very great, but they do not follow knowledge. They must know the word of God, the word of prophecy that the prophet Daniel spoke to the people of Israel, and they must know that God promised to send the Savior through the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel. And He said that He would change the law. Until then it had been done by the law, but He said that He would now abolish the law and promise a new law, and Jesus, who fulfills that promise, said at the Lord's Supper, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins" (Matthew 26:28)*. In the past, people received the remission of sins by offering sacrificial offerings, but because that did not work, He said, "Did I not promise? I will become your God, and I will engrave on the tablets of your hearts that I have become your God." To let us feel this firsthand, the Son of God was sent by God the Father and came to this earth, had all the sin of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and died for us, and, having died, rose again

and saved us, so that we believe it and Jesus Christ comes to be planted in our hearts. He is planted in our flesh, in our hearts, in our consciences, and in our faith. So it was a promise that He would let us know that God is with us. But it means that they do not believe.

The Gentiles believe in Jesus, but they believe wrongly. Because they believe according to the sacrificial law of the Old Testament and try to receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance every day, they do not receive the remission of sins; and as for the people of Israel, it means that they have zeal but do not follow the right knowledge. We must know and then believe; if we believe without knowing, it is nothing. That is why they became those who have not submitted to the righteousness of God.

Christ is the end of the law

In verse 4 the apostle Paul said, *"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4)*. It means that Jesus came to this earth and ended all the curses of the law. What the law demands is death, according to the word *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, but it means that Jesus became the end of the law by receiving baptism from John and having all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, being nailed to the Cross, shedding His blood and dying, and then rising again, and so paying the whole price of sin for us. It means that He ended it. It means that He ended all the curses for us. He ended the curse upon sin for us—that is what this word means.

Yet even now people keep the rituals of the law, offer sacrifices, and offer prayers of repentance. What Christian theologians say is this: if you believe in Jesus, you have received

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salvation legally, and you have now been saved legally; after that, the sins you commit every day are to be resolved as you strive to live a holy life as one who has become one of God's people; and so you must be led by the Holy Spirit. But the Bible says that Jesus bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and died, rose again, and accomplished eternal atonement. It means that He bore all sins forever, received all the judgment for them and died, rose again, and saved us from sin forever. It means that the word says that those who believe in Him are those who have received the eternal remission of sins. It means that we must not do the stale thing of saying, by our narrow human opinion, that original sin is remitted but that for actual sins we receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance every day.

What kind of being is God? We live seventy or eighty years at most, and a little over a hundred years at the longest, and then it is over, is it not? That is the world we live in. But God is eternal. He says, "I am the Alpha and the Omega." The span from the beginning until the day it passes away is called the world, and scientists sometimes even speak of billions of years. God is living even now. He lives forever. The living God, who has eternal power, sent His own Son to this earth, passed the sin of the world on to His own Son, had His own Son nailed to the Cross to shed His blood and die, raised Him, who had died, back to life, and accomplished our eternal salvation. He saved us from all sins forever. This is what the word is saying, yet for us to say with our own heads that original sin is remitted and that actual sins are removed by offering prayers of repentance is like a mayfly, which lives for one day and passes away, discussing the world it saw during that one day. We must look at our salvation from God's standpoint. Since God has removed sin forever, we are saved by believing in Jesus Christ, who bore our sins and

removed them. We are saved by accepting with our hearts the salvation that God has given us from His dimension. The heart can accept what is eternal. Thoughts find it hard to accept what is eternal. Actions can never carry on what is eternal, because we cannot know what will happen to us tomorrow. That is why it says that He is the end of the law.

Because it cannot be done by the law, it is by faith

"For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, 'The man who does those things shall live by them'" (Romans 10:5). In Leviticus it says, *"You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the LORD" (Leviticus 18:5)*. Moses said that those who keep the law of God will live. But put the other way around, it means that those who do not keep it will die. Moses was the one who handed down the law to us people, and he told the people of Israel, "If you do the law, you will live. But if you do not keep the law, you will be cursed."

That is why the apostle Paul says the following: *"But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, 'Do not say in your heart, "Who will ascend into heaven?"' (that is, to bring Christ down from above) or, '"Who will descend into the abyss?"' (that is, to bring Christ up from the dead). But what does it say? 'The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart' (that is, the word of faith which we preach)" (Romans 10:6–8)*. It means that you must not say in your heart who will ascend into heaven. Who is there that can keep the law? There is no one. Asking who will ascend means bringing Christ down; that is, it means that they would keep the law well, ascend into heaven, pull Jesus Christ down, and so be saved. Also, there are people who ask who will

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descend into the abyss, and it means that they must not say such a thing. Saying such a thing is bringing Christ up from the dead, and it means that it is exactly the same as trying to be saved by their own strength. So it means that it cannot be done by the law. It means that you cannot do it because your strength is weak, and that you cannot keep the law either. The law is the 613 laws that God established, and it means that if one keeps 612 of them 100 percent perfectly and fails to keep one, the keeping of the 612 is all void. All law is like that.

Believing with the heart unto righteousness and confessing with the mouth unto salvation

So what the apostle Paul is saying is this: *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9–10)*. It means that we must believe in Jesus, that we must believe in Jesus Christ. We are now believing in Jesus. At the very least, we believe in Jesus as our Savior, we believe that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, and we believe that He was nailed on the Cross in our place, that He shed His blood, and that He died and rose again. It means that this faith is a great faith and the faith that believes in the Savior. Through whom are Gentiles and Jews alike saved? We are saved through the righteousness of Jesus Christ. It means that we have become those who have received salvation by believing in that right work by which Jesus came to this earth and saved us from sin.

So our believing in Jesus now is a great faith. Other religions of this world are useless no matter how much one believes in

them; but while we do believe in Jesus, we must know the righteousness of Jesus. We must believe that Jesus received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again in order to save us. It means that Jesus was born through the body of Mary in order to come to this earth clothed in human flesh, that He came just as it was said, *"For He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*, and that God has prepared salvation completely so that we would believe in Jesus and be saved. It means that He has completed our salvation entirely through the Son of God. It means that we have become those who have obtained salvation by believing in that Jesus Christ. How happy we are, then!

But people do not know this. First, the Jews do not know it. And second, Christians who say that they believe in Jesus do not know this truth. We obtain salvation by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, not by merely believing in Jesus. The name Jesus means Savior. They believe that He came as the Savior, but they must know how He removed our sins and how He saved us from all sins forever; and that is precisely Jesus' receiving baptism from John, His bearing the sin of the world and going to the Cross to be nailed there, His death, and His resurrection. That is why Jesus became our Savior. It means that we have become those who have obtained salvation by believing in the right work Jesus did to save us, that is, the fact that He bore all our sins on His own body, died on the Cross, rose again, and saved us. This is extremely important.

"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). This means that a person believes in the righteousness of God with the heart. It is with the heart that we can believe that Jesus removed our sins; we cannot believe it by deeds. It cannot be done by deeds. The Savior is Jesus, not us. Even when Jesus

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came, we had already fallen into sin. Therefore, we had no choice but to go to hell, but it means that Jesus was born through the body of Mary, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and bore all our sins, and bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross, and was nailed there and died. And it means that He rose again from death and became our eternal Savior. Why is He the eternal Savior? It is because He is the One who lives forever.

It is truth only when the cause and the effect are clear

In verses 11 through 13 the apostle Paul said, *"For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved'" (Romans 10:11–13)*. Since Jesus received baptism from John and had all our sins passed on to Him, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us, that Jesus is the One who saves me and is my Savior. This means that if you say, "I believe in You. I believe in You and in what You have done," you are saved.

When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must know precisely what the apostle Paul is now saying and preach it precisely. People simply tell others unconditionally to believe in Jesus, and they say that He was nailed on the Cross and saved us. Why was Jesus nailed on the Cross to save us? The Cross is the conclusion, and before it there is a cause. It means that, in order to save us, He was born on this earth through the body of Mary, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age

of thirty and had all our sins passed on to Him and so did the right work, bore our sins, was nailed on the Cross in our place, shed His blood, paid the price, and rose again from death and became our Savior. In this way, the cause and the effect must be clearly present. He said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. It is truth only when there are a clear cause and effect; what has no cause and has only an effect is not truth. That is deception.

There have been famous preachers who shouted, "If you believe in Jesus, you will be saved, you will receive the Holy Spirit, you will receive tongues." I too can say as much as I like, "Christ shed His precious blood on the Cross, and so the Lord saved us." Such things are called not faith but eloquence. Is there any evidence that those preachers said that Jesus bore all the sin of mankind through the baptism He received? Is there a book? The words "He saved us with His precious blood on the Cross" sound good when you hear them, but if you write them down and analyze them, something is missing here. What is missing? What is missing is that Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins. Therefore, no matter how much we believe in and confess Jesus, who hung on the Cross, there is sin in our hearts. Why is that? It is because we do not hold in our hearts, with the conscience of faith, the fact that Jesus took away our sins. The Bible says, *"Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13)*. But the Bible cannot put everything into a single sentence. So the one who preaches must preach clearly from beginning to end.

Why has Christianity throughout the whole world become like this today? It means that it is because they learned wrongly from theologians. Theology is something people wrote while trying to understand the Bible with their human heads. The word of the Bible was written by the servants of God as they were

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moved by the Holy Spirit; the Spirit of God, who lives forever, taught people and had them record it. But theology is what people taught after looking at the Bible and thinking, "Ah, this must mean this. Jesus did indeed remove all sins, but if we preach exactly that He removed them at one time, people will become dissolute. So when they believe in Jesus, they are legally saved, and for the sins they commit every day, they must reach sanctification by offering prayers of repentance. Only then can those who believe in Jesus live well in the world without deliberately sinning." Jesus says that He removed all sins once and for all and forever, but theology says that sins are removed gradually. If you throw away your theology books, gather together to read the Bible, discuss it, and find the answers in the Bible, you will be born again and obtain everlasting life. And you can become true pastors.

To believe with the heart unto righteousness means to believe in the righteousness of Jesus with the heart. It is to believe with the heart that Jesus is the Savior and to believe in His birth on this earth through the body of Mary, His receiving baptism from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection, and so to reach righteousness. Jesus did the righteous work for us, and by believing in that righteous work He did, we too become righteous and become people without sin. Jesus removed our sins, and we become people without sin by believing in that Jesus—that is the truth. To confess with the mouth unto salvation means to confess what one believes, saying, "Jesus has become my Savior. I believe." That is salvation.

What eventually becomes of pastors who have not been saved? Since there is sin in their hearts, demons enter their hearts even after they have believed in Jesus, and so they come to regard the work of driving out sin and demons every day through prayer with the laying on of hands as spiritual work. That is only

religion. But those who believe that Jesus has become the Savior have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. The Bible says that demons cannot even touch a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. The Holy Spirit within our hearts is the One who has the power to remove demons.

I too, while reading the word, came to wonder what Jesus' receiving baptism from John was, so I searched through all the commentaries and sermon collections, but there was no answer. Yet the Bible tells us exactly that, when Jesus was receiving baptism from John, He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. It means that in this way, that is, through the baptism He received from John, Jesus fulfilled all righteousness and removed our sins. After I realized this word, I preached this gospel of the water and the Spirit to everyone I met. When people whose faces had been dark hear the word, their faces become bright. They say that because the sin that had been there is gone, their hearts feel so good. But those who do not accept this gospel of the water and the Spirit are sinners before believing in Jesus and sinners after believing in Jesus as well. Their hope is that when they die they will be sanctified and receive the remission of sins completely, that they will become perfect one second before they breathe their last. But I, by believing in Jesus Christ, who came by water and the Spirit, became a righteous person and a perfect one from that very moment. It means only that those who have been saved are people who must be led by the Holy Spirit and must obey the word of God, not people who worry because of sin. The Jews too must believe in this way and receive the remission of sins. Christian believers too must believe in this way.

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We have become righteous by believing in the rightness of God

The apostle Paul said, *"For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For they being ignorant of God's righteousness, and seeking to establish their own righteousness, have not submitted to the righteousness of God" (Romans 10:2–3)*. It says that they seek to put forward their own rightness; what is their own rightness? Is it not religion? "Have I not been this faithful, paid my tithes faithfully, served, and even sold my house and sold my fields and rice paddies and given the money to build a church building? Did I not establish as many as thirty pioneer churches?" Is that not the righteousness of religion, one's own righteousness? No matter how much one does that, it is useless.

We must believe in the righteousness of God. God has removed our sins. Through His own Son, through that Son's receiving baptism from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and dying, and rising again, He has saved us. That is the rightness of God. That He saved us is the rightness of God. We too become righteous by believing in the rightness of God. We become righteous people. We must not put forward our own rightness, but must accept the rightness of God and praise Him by faith, saying, "We give thanks before the Lord, who removed our sins." We must testify. That is why we are now preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit and are preaching it to the whole world. He said, *"Those who are wise shall shine Like the brightness of the firmament, And those who turn many to righteousness Like the stars forever and ever" (Daniel 12:3)*. But this work must not become our righteousness. Because of the righteousness of God, we are immersed in it and swimming in it, and that is why we are praising. True salvation lies in

believing in the righteousness of God, that is, in Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again. We give glory to our God. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Salvation is not a feeling

< Romans 10:9–12 >

“That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation. For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him.”

The biggest problem in a life of faith is feelings

In living a life of faith, and also in receiving salvation, what is the biggest problem? It is people’s feelings. Feelings, that is, the greed for emotional feelings, are the biggest problem in living a life of faith. The point is that the biggest problem in receiving salvation and in believing in Jesus is feelings. People say that they believe in Jesus and do know Him, but they have no feeling; that having no feeling is the problem; that they do understand, but somehow there is no faith in their hearts and no feeling.

We must not wait for feelings. If we wait for some feeling to come in faith and salvation, it can cause a tremendous misconception. Feeling is usually a word used in shamanism and superstition. People who believe in superstitions have many feelings. For example, when you watch what shamans do, can’t

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you see their hands trembling and their bodies shaking? That is a feeling. They act that way because the emotions of their hearts are stirred up and a feeling comes over them.

However, the point is that we absolutely do not need feelings to receive salvation, that is, to receive the remission of sins. Not needing feelings means that it is not the case that we received salvation because a great feeling came over us when we believed in Jesus, or that we received salvation because we had some experience, or that we did not receive salvation if we had no experience. For example, when people who believe in Jesus speak in tongues, pray in tongues, and have experiences, others sometimes say, "That person has received the Holy Spirit." However, those who have spoken in tongues are all sinners. They all have sin. Those who have seen visions, those who have spoken in tongues, and those who heal diseases and cast out demons through prayer with the laying on of hands are all sinners. Those feelings did not come from God. God does not give such feelings. For us human beings to receive salvation, it is enough to believe in Jesus Christ, that is, to confess with my mouth that Jesus is my Lord and my Savior. *"That if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:9–10)*. We simply have to believe with our hearts. This is different from feelings. It is different from any thoughts or emotional feelings.

Even if we have no feeling in being saved by believing in Jesus Christ, what is certain is that Jesus is the Son of God and also the God of salvation and the Savior, who came to save us. And just as He had all sin passed on through sheep, through sacrificial offerings, and made those who had sin sinless, as He Himself had spoken and promised in the Old Testament, God,

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who made us, became a man, came to this earth, and bore all our sins. If we believe that He bore all this sin—that is, even if we have no emotion, if we acknowledge and believe that Jesus bore all our sins by receiving baptism from John, and if we only believe with our hearts that our Lord had all the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross, and received the judgment for sin there on our behalf—if we only acknowledge that fact, we are saved. This is different from a feeling coming to our emotions.

Satan the devil takes advantage when we demand feelings

What is the biggest misconception in our being saved? When we believe in Jesus, if we demand some emotional feeling, such as our body trembling, or joy overflowing abundantly, or feeling as if our feet are not touching the ground and we are walking on clouds—when we demand this feeling, it is easiest for Satan the devil to take advantage of us. The point is that when we come to demand some feeling in this faith by which we are saved, then even if we know and believe with our hearts that Jesus took away all our own sins, if no feeling comes, we come to rely on our emotions in foolishness, under the misconception, "Have we not all been saved? Have we not received it?" and even though we have been saved, it becomes as if we had not been saved. The point is that, as a result, we do not stand firm in faith, we do not stand firmly on the rock of faith that believes the word, and we do not stand firmly in the faith that believes in God, and because we rely on those emotions, we end up losing that much faith. That is why we must not rely on our emotions in believing in

Jesus and receiving salvation. Rather than relying on emotions, what matters most is this part: whether or not the Lord actually took away my sin, and whether or not Jesus is God.

"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10). It means that God, who made us, the Creator, came to this earth as Jesus, putting on a human body to save us; that this Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River about 2,000 years ago and so had all our sins transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross, and received the judgment for our sins in our place; and that He went into the tomb, rose again in three days, and is seated at the right hand of God and is alive. If we simply acknowledge this, it is salvation. The word that a person believes with the heart and confesses with the mouth and so reaches salvation—how simple a word this is! Does it demand some feeling from us here? The point is that it does not. Our God did not demand such things as, "When you believe in Me, your chest will grow hot and your heart will feel strange."

What our Lord has demanded of us is this: "Do you believe that I saved you? Do you believe that I bore all your sins by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River? Do you believe that I became a man to save you? Do you believe that I bore the sin of the world to save you, that I bore all the sins you commit in this world? Do you believe that I shed My blood on the Cross and was judged for you? Do you believe that I died in your place for you and rose again to give you life? Do you believe that I am seated at the right hand of the throne of God and will come again in the future?" If we believe this word, it is salvation. If we acknowledge this word, it is salvation.

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Facts are more important than feelings

Do not rely on your emotions. I hope you will know the fact that even after receiving the remission of sins, the greed for feelings becomes the greatest enemy of our life of faith. Having a great greed for feelings, trying to feel something and trying to have many feelings—this itself becomes the greatest barrier before God and the greatest obstacle in living a life of faith. If people demand feelings, they end up spending their whole lives demanding feelings and falling into superstition. They end up being taken captive by demons. Facts are more important than feelings. I hope you will know and believe the fact that these feelings hinder the life of faith and become the greatest enemy in seeking the truth. When we have just received the remission of sins, when we have heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit, people believe. But there is one thing: they wait for some feeling to come. Because of that, a great deal of loss comes to their faith, and if things go wrong, they end up letting go of the pearl they had held in their hand while demanding feelings.

That is why those who have received the remission of sins must not demand feelings. If the word says so, it is so, and if the word says that He bore the sin of the world, He bore it. If it says that the Lord saved us, He saved us. If it says that the Lord made us children of God, we have become children of God. If it says that God gave us everlasting life, we have obtained everlasting life. We have everlasting life. If it says that God has blessed us, we have received blessings. We come to receive everything by faith. Whether we hear the word of God for one hour or for two hours, if the word we heard is the word written in the Bible and we heard that written word and believed it with our hearts, all the blessings written in the word become ours. That is why the apostle Paul is saying that faith is not something difficult.

In verses 11–12 it is written, *"For the Scripture says, 'Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.' For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him" (Romans 10:11–12).* That whoever believes in Him will not be put to shame means that whoever believes in our Lord obtains salvation. The Bible simply demands faith. It speaks of believing. It does not demand feelings. We must know that God is not demanding feelings from us. If we hear the word of God and believe this word in our hearts, it is salvation. Even without a special emotion coming so that tears pour out and joy wells up, if we just hear the word with our ears and believe it, it is salvation. That is how it is for all of us.

When we were first saved, what was the biggest problem? Our habit of judging everything by feelings and settling everything by feelings was the biggest problem. Not by feelings—if we just believe with our hearts, it is salvation. Whoever just believes that Jesus is God, the Lord who saved us from sin, and the Savior God, is saved. If we just believe that the Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John for us, died on the Cross for us, and after dying rose again and so removed all sin—that the Lord, who will come again, removed all our sins—we come to receive salvation. The greatest enemy to all people is feelings. Satan the devil has bound people with feelings.

There was sin in my heart even after I had experiences

Long ago, when I believed in Jesus before I was born again, I was sitting in the church sanctuary. Suddenly my tongue became twisted, and I began to speak in tongues. While speaking

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in tongues, I was praying prayers of repentance for the sins I had committed. When I heard the sound of my speaking in tongues, I was so ashamed that I bit my tongue. But it did not stop. I bit my tongue again. When I had bitten it three times, it stopped. The senior pastor who was beside me looked at me, tapped on the desk, and stood up, saying, "That's it." I suppose he meant that I had now received the Holy Spirit. I have had such an experience, and I have also had an even greater experience than that. Once, while I was sitting in a revival meeting being held in the church sanctuary, something hot passed through me once from my head to the tips of my toes. Something unbearably hot came down from my head to my chest and swept all the way down to the tips of my toes. At that time I quit smoking. I had been suffering because I could not quit smoking, but at that time I quit completely.

When I came out after the meeting ended, I cannot tell you how good I felt; a joy that had nothing to do with the feeling of being drunk overflowed in me. I came to have a heart that could love everyone. I felt so good that I could hardly keep my mouth still. However, even though I had such experiences, saw a vision of a waterfall pouring down from heaven, saw the face of Jesus, and experienced all kinds of things, in fact there was sin in my heart. I had tremendous feelings. But if one has sin, one is a sinner, and because I did not know the truth, sin was still there. Even if one has some feeling, if one has sin, one is a sinner, and if one has sin, one is a child of destruction. One is a child of the devil. A full ten years or so after that, I received the remission of sins through the word. The point is that when I received the remission of sins—when I came to know through the word the fact that the Lord bore all my sins when He received baptism from John, and that the Lord bore the sin of the world in my place, went to the Cross, died there, and after dying rose again—

there was no emotion in my heart. My heart was simply like this: "He just took them away. He took them away, so they are gone." The point is that there was no feeling like when my tongue suddenly became twisted as I spoke in tongues, or like when something hot passed from the top of my head to the tips of my toes at the time it was said that I had received the fire of the Holy Spirit, or like when my chest overflowed with rapture and joy.

The point is that, rather, when I had not received the remission of sins, there was more of that hot feeling in my heart. I am someone who has gone through both periods of believing in Jesus: the time after receiving the remission of sins and the time before receiving it. The apostle Paul was also a person who believed in God. Because he had many experiences, he probably took the lead in persecuting those who believed in Jesus in the old days. But on the road to Damascus he heard directly the words of Jesus, who said, *"Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?" (Acts 9:4)*. In the apostolic age, the age when the Bible was being written, God spoke to people directly. But after this Bible had all been written, in the last part of the last chapter of the Book of Revelation, He said, *"If anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part from the Book of Life, from the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book" (Revelation 22:19)*. It means that if anyone adds or takes away, He will take away his part. After saying so, God gave us the word of the Old and New Testaments, and from the age after the apostles had passed, He arranged it so that all people would meet God and believe in God through this written word, and through this word come to know the fact that Jesus has removed their own sins—the fact that He removed them with the water and the blood—and simply believe it with their hearts and be saved.

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Whoever just believes is saved

So, I cannot tell you how easy it is to believe in Jesus. Our Lord desired to become the Lord of all people. It is written, *"There is no distinction between Jew and Greek" (Romans 10:12)*. He desired to remain as the Lord who removed the sins of all people, both those who believe in Jesus and those who do not, and as the Lord who became the Savior to all people. Therefore, God determined that if all people in the whole world, all mankind, all people from Adam until this earth comes to an end, just believe the fact that Jesus is God and the Son of God; that the Son of God came to this earth in a human body to save us; and that this Jesus, who came as the Savior, bore all the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John, bore the sin of the world, received the judgment on the Cross for us, shed His blood for us, and received the judgment for the sin of mankind in place of sinners—if anyone, whoever he may be, just believes, He would become the Savior and the God of salvation of the one who believes; and He has become the God of salvation.

Up to now, among mankind, to those who believe in what Jesus Christ has done, those who believe in the water, the blood, and the Spirit, whoever they may be, our Lord Himself has become the Savior, has become God, has become the shepherd, and has given everlasting life. God has made those who believe in Him His own people. The point is that whatever nation people are from, whether they have much money or little, whoever they may be, if they just know and believe what the Lord has done by hearing it through the Bible, through their ears, He has become the God of such people. He has become the God of those who believe. That is why our Lord is still waiting even now for those who believe in Him. Whoever just believes is saved. If we just believe what Jesus has done—if we just believe that Jesus is God,

that Jesus is the God of our salvation, and that He removed all our sins; if we just believe that He bore our sins by receiving baptism from John and received the judgment on the Cross for us and so ended the judgment for our sins—our God gives the gift of salvation to the one who believes and gives the Holy Spirit to that one who believes.

He gives the Spirit of God as a gift. God the Father gives the Spirit of His Son to those who believe. He gives the Holy Spirit, that is, the Spirit who is holy, and so gives them the faith that believes in God in their hearts, gives them understanding through this Holy Spirit, keeps them from rejecting what they hear with their ears, gives them joyful hearts, and gives them the Spirit of God and so has made them His people forever. That is why the word is saying that when we believe in Jesus, what we need is truly not feelings but faith. I hope you will know the fact that feelings are absolutely not faith. Feelings are not faith.

God is a personal God

There are people who pray in order to fall into ecstasy, that is, who pray in order to have feelings, but that is not right. Long ago, when I was attending school, one of the professors was a revival speaker, and a student asked him, “Pastor, don’t you have some feeling when you pray?” “I do.” “What kind of feeling do you have?” “I get a feeling as if something makes my hair stand on end and I am drawn up all at once.” Since such feelings did not come easily to the students, they asked, “Then what should we do?” and he said, “If you go to a mountain and pray, then when your prayer reaches God, you get a feeling of being pulled up.” So he led the students astray.

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When Jesus receives our prayers, does He give us a thrilling sensation? Does He set off an electric spark? No, He does not. If we simply say, “God the Father, I am having a very hard time. Please help me and give me health. And please help God’s people who have become my brothers and sisters,” then our God the Father, because He is a personal God, is One who listens to our story just as we people do. He is One who listens to the story and says, “Is that so? I understand. I will do it for you.” He is not a God who hears only when we pray while struggling noisily and does not hear when we just quietly say, “God the Father.” God is thousands of times more personal than we human beings are. He is an eternal personal Being forever and ever. Therefore, just as the apostle Paul said that a person believes with the heart and confesses with the mouth and so reaches salvation, we simply believe what the Lord has done. If we just believe that the Lord is God and our Savior; that Jesus bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, was judged and died on the Cross in our place, and after dying rose again; and that He is our God who will come again, it is salvation. It is not something difficult.

“Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man”

The Gospel of John speaks of this part. *“Who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God” (John 1:13)*. Receiving the right to become children of God—a negative expression is used here—does not come about through blood. It means that it does not come about through the bloodline of people, the bloodline of a family, the line of blood, or the bloodline of the flesh. Then what does this word mean? It

means that a righteous person is not born just because someone is a pastor's child or was born to a righteous person; rather, a sinner is born and becomes a righteous person by personally believing in Jesus. It means that it does not come about through blood. Next, it means that it does not come about through the will of the flesh, that is, through the affections and feelings of the flesh. Becoming children of God does not come about through blood, through the will of the flesh, or through feelings; it means that feelings are not necessary.

Our becoming children of God does not come about through feelings. And the word says that they were born not of the will of man. Is it salvation because a person says it is salvation? No. If we believe the word of God, that is, what the record of this word says, "Jesus took away all your sins," it is salvation. Not being born of the will of man means that even if a doctor of theology says, "This is salvation; this is not salvation," it does not thereby become salvation or not salvation. It means that this has nothing to do with it. It means that the doctor's words have nothing to do with it and make no difference at all.

In this world, how many people believe and rely on what someone says, saying, "A certain doctor said this"! In the Bible, the apostle John clearly says this: a person is not born of the will of man; becoming a child of God does not come about through the will of man; it does not come about by people saying that it is salvation or that it is not salvation; only those who are born of God, that is, those who believe the fact that God came to this earth putting on a human body to save us and saved us by shedding water and blood, are saved; those who believe in God are saved, and those who believe by the will of man are not saved.

What is the stumbling block to our becoming children of God? It is the idea that it comes about through human lineage, that is, saying, "I am a saint from my mother's womb." Saying, "I have

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been going to church since I was in my mother's womb," is what makes a churchgoer from the womb. Even being a churchgoer from the womb for generations does not work. When people ask, "Since when have you believed in Jesus?" such a person says, "I am a churchgoer from the womb. My mother always went to church, prayed, and sang hymns while she was carrying me. So I am a churchgoer from the womb; don't say anything more." But people say that churchgoers from the womb are neither hot nor cold but lukewarm, and that, rather, those who came to believe partway through life, not from the womb, are very fervent. Both of these get a zero. Who says that someone is saved because he is a churchgoer from the womb? Who calls him a child of God? It means that because such a person was born through man, he does not become one of God's people. Many people are overwhelmed by the words, "I am a churchgoer from the womb," and think, "Oh my, his record is considerable. He is my senior. I have nothing to say." Such people pour out words like, "My father is a pastor and my grandfather is an elder, and in our family there are five pastors, seven elders, and several evangelists." When a person with such a good background is in the church, even though he has no faith at all, does not believe the word of God at all, and does not know the truth, he is lifted up high. People say, "Wow, what an impressive family!" and those who have daughters think how greatly God will bless that family if they marry their daughters into a family with roots of faith, and they try to give their daughters to such families. It is of no use at all.

Have a one-on-one relationship with God

We do not receive the remission of sins through doctrine, nor through feelings, nor through lineage. Whoever believes that Jesus is our God, the God who made us, and also that Jesus is our Savior and the God of salvation, who saved us with the water and the blood—whoever believes this has become a child of God. It must be a matter of relating me to God; it must not be a matter of relating person to person. We must relate it in this way: How did God save me? Did He love me? Did He remove my sin? We must have a one-on-one relationship with God. Even if someone says, "I declare that you are saved," that is not salvation. Of course, one can tell someone so, but true assurance of salvation comes when I look squarely at the written word of God and acknowledge this word, that is, when I accept and believe in my heart what God has said: that this word has saved me, and that God has removed all my sins and saved me. Then we are those who have received salvation and have become sinless. That is why the apostle Paul said, *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10)*.

Do you believe in Jesus with your heart? And do you confess Him with your mouth? Do you believe that Jesus is our Savior God? If anyone just believes in Jesus, that is, if he just believes that Jesus saved us with the water and the blood, that person also becomes a child of God just as we are. The apostle Paul is saying, concerning this salvation, that salvation is absolutely not a feeling but faith. Knowing this, we must preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to many people and help many people disregard those feelings. The devil places great emphasis on feelings with people. If you go to the meetings of those who are not born again, you can feel it. People shed tears, and right after

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crying they feel good and shout "Hallelujah"; it stirs up emotions. False people stir up people's emotions and do so without even realizing it themselves. When they are not born again, they make people cry a great deal. Satan the devil brings emotions to people. And he makes them have the assurance of salvation through that. That is the work of Satan the devil. Satan the devil brings feelings to people, and Satan the devil demands feelings.

But what does God demand? The word of God demands believing. If you believe, it is salvation; if you do not believe, it is hell. However much someone may see visions, cast out demons, speak in tongues, perform many works of power, and act as a prophet—however powerful a servant he may be, even if he has such power that when he prays with the laying on of hands for someone who is blind, that person's eyes are opened, and even if he has such feelings—the one who does not believe this word is headed for hell. How amazing a truth is what the apostle Paul is saying in this Scripture! *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10)*. A person believes with the heart—believes what? It is believing the word of our God. By believing the word of God with the heart, one reaches righteousness and becomes a righteous person. If the word of Jesus says that He took away my sin, then when we believe this word, even though there was sin in our hearts, we come to have no sin. We reach righteousness, and by confessing with the mouth, "Jesus is my Savior," we reach complete salvation. All people can believe in this way and be saved. This is what the apostle Paul spoke of. I hope that we, too, will know that we were saved by believing in Jesus and were not saved because a feeling came, that we will give thanks before our God, and that, as we live a life of faith from now on, we will cast away the greed for feelings. I hope you will have faith. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Those who believe in the righteousness of God do the work of preaching the good news

< Romans 10:11–15 >

“For the Scripture says, ‘Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.’ For there is no distinction between Jew and Greek, for the same Lord over all is rich to all who call upon Him. For ‘whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.’ How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: ‘How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!’”

Just as the Lord’s word says, those who believe in the righteousness of God are not put to shame. Those who believe in the righteousness of God the Father that our Lord came to this earth and fulfilled, that is, in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that accomplished our salvation, are precisely such people. Also, those who believe in the Lord’s righteousness and do the

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Lord's work have already become rich. Since we have been saved from all sins and have received all the heavenly blessings and all the earthly blessings that God promised us, you and I have already become rich.

Whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved

Therefore, the apostle Paul says the following: "*Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13)*. Then how will people call on Him in whom they do not believe? How will they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? How will they hear without someone who preaches? And if they have not been sent, how will they preach? Then the apostle Paul quotes the word of Isaiah 52:7 and declares the following: "*How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15)*.

In other words, those who have believed in the righteousness of God and received the remission of sins become people who preach the good news. Such people preach the righteousness of God. They preach this gospel to those who have not yet heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They also preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who want to call on the name of the Lord and receive the remission of sins. This is the very core of what the apostle Paul wanted to say in this passage. The good news they preach is that Jesus had the sin of the world, in which our sins are included, transferred to Him once and for all 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 remit all our sins.

Those who believe in the righteousness of God
do the work of preaching the good news

The gospel can be heard even on the deathbed

Yesterday evening, news came that the father of a certain pastor was in critical condition, so we went up there. Today, word came that he had passed away a little before one o'clock in the afternoon. I was told that in the meantime the brothers and sisters had preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to him patiently, step by step, speaking into his ear.

Even when people are unconscious, their ears stay alive to the very end. Because the ears are the last to close, they can hear until the end. They can hear sounds and believe those sounds in their hearts. Until life departs, it is a state in which the mind is clear and only the body cannot move.

Not long ago, the mother who had been living with one of our brothers also passed away. She was someone who had often heard and believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit in ordinary times. But before she passed away, she completely lost consciousness. She was in such a state that she could not recognize anyone who came. At that time, brothers and sisters from the church went and preached the gospel to her again patiently, step by step, speaking into her ear. Later, when she briefly regained consciousness, she said that her heart had felt so good because the church people had preached the gospel into her ear. To our eyes, she was in a state of complete unconsciousness, having entirely lost her senses, unable to speak or recognize anything, but she herself was aware. When you speak into a person's ear, the soul is alive and hears everything. That is why I heard her say that it had felt so good in her heart that people from the church had come and preached the gospel to her.

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The deathbed is a golden opportunity to preach the gospel

The place where we send off our family members, that is, the deathbed, may perhaps be the best opportunity to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since they have no strength to refuse, they can no longer resist. How could they resist in the face of death? At that moment, they come to feel the fact that they are going to hell because they have sin—not as a theory, but as their own souls actually going down to hell. It is a state about which they can do nothing by their own strength.

Fortunately, however, if a preacher comes at that very time and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the righteousness of God, the one facing death receives it with thanks. There are many cases in which such people lay down the stubbornness they had harbored in their hearts, repent of their unbelieving hearts, believe this gospel, and receive the remission of sins. We must discern such times well and preach this gospel. Even at the very last moment, we must patiently, step by step, let them hear this news, speaking into their ears: that Jesus had the sin of the world, in which our sins are included, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to receive its judgment in our place, and rose again from death to remit all our sins.

In ordinary times, there are many cases in which hearts are stubborn and confused, so the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not easily get in. But when consciousness is fading in the face of death, preaching the gospel at that time can be the most certain. We should let them hear the gospel in advance in ordinary times, and even if the results seem slow, we must not be discouraged but pray and wait.

One generation goes and another generation comes

Truly, there are many people who are going to pass away. Many of our parents, who gave birth to us and raised us, have now reached the age at which they will pass away. One generation goes and another generation comes, and again one generation goes and another generation comes; this keeps repeating.

I know that one of our brothers must feel sad after sending off his mother. But do not worry too much. You did not send her away because you hated her; you sent her away with love. It would have been good if she could have worked with us, but those who are to go will go, and will we not also go before long? Those of you who are young will live a little longer, and those of my age will go one after another. Going before the world becomes even harsher may rather be a blessing.

However, before we leave, we must finish well the work entrusted to us and then go. Regarding the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not have the attitude, “I do believe it, but I cannot do it this way.” The closer the end draws, the better we must carry out the responsibilities given to us.

Those who gather only for themselves are poor instead

Recently, the president of a certain country donated a large sum from his own wealth to establish a scholarship foundation and decided to help many students. I hear that it did not stop at a promise but has actually entered the stage of implementation. Hearing such news is truly heartwarming. When people earn a lot of money, it is right for them to help others. Those who spend

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it all on themselves alone are not upright people. I hear that a famous singer who passed away not long ago also gave a great deal to an organization for poor children while still alive.

It is said that the president was keeping a promise he had made to his mother. While his mother was alive, she urged him, "If you earn a lot of money, donate it to the poor," and he promised to do so; he said that his heart felt refreshed now that he had kept that promise.

Donating money is never easy. If you had a very large fortune, could you donate a third of it? When people with a large fortune donate a third of it, their fortune shrinks greatly and their business becomes difficult. Usually, people with large fortunes run businesses three times the size of their fortune, and they bring in loans and invest them in pursuit of even greater wealth. So people with large fortunes are always short of funds. They have a lot of debt and always say that they are poor. The richer people are, the poorer they are in heart instead, and so they are stingy in spending money. In that respect, putting out such a large sum is truly remarkable. However, true richness does not lie in stored-up wealth; it lies in the faith that believes that Jesus, who is God, had the sin of the world, in which our sins are included, 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 save us from all sins.

Through the work of serving, we let the gospel flow to the whole world

But we, too, are by no means doing small work. How much we are sharing with people throughout the world through the

work of serving! Seen in that light, we, too, are in fact people who are doing great work. Is that not so?

Not making only our own church big, but giving out beyond ourselves in that way, is by no means a small thing. On the road I travel, there is the old building of a certain church, and I see that a very large new building has been built next to it. It looks as though a great deal of money went into it. They probably also took out many loans to build it. They built that building only for themselves. That is not right. Because of such things, the church today is receiving the criticism of the world.

What people generally criticize is this: churches pay hardly any taxes, yet they gather up all the money of the local people and use it only among themselves. That is why anti-Christian sentiment has grown and the number of people who oppose Christians has increased. Why is that? It is because, although churches ought either to help those who have not received the remission of sins with the money they have gathered or to preach the gospel to them, they do not do such things but gather it only among themselves and live enjoying it only among themselves. Churches have five or six buses each, and the cars their staff and pastors ride in are all luxury cars. That is why people criticize them. It is truly something to be thankful for that we are not like that.

If there is no one to preach, people cannot hear

If there is no one to preach, how will people hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit? If we do not preach this gospel, how will the people of the whole world hear it? There is no way for them to hear. This news, too—that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, bore all the sins of the world through the baptism He received

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from John, paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death to remit our sins—no one can know unless someone preaches it.

If this gospel of the water and the Spirit had already been spread throughout the whole world, I would never have kept carrying out this work with you so persistently in this way. After working to some extent, we, too, might have built a large church and lived enjoying it only among ourselves. But there is no organization anywhere in the world that preaches this gospel as we do. That is why God is pleased and causes this gospel to be preached through us—through you and me.

We who have faith are already rich

We are also carrying out the work of serving. Perhaps some of you find it too hard or have worried hearts. But do not worry too much. God Himself will take care of it and bless us. If we just prepare our vessels well, He fills them. So do not worry too much; just believe, pray, and move forward, taking on challenges.

What we do is merely the work we are able to carry out in part. The Lord is the One who Himself does far more work than we do. Therefore, in fact, you and I are rich. We are truly rich. That is because we are people who have faith. Therefore, all we can do is give thanks and give thanks again before God.

I hope that you will keep thinking about joyful things in your hearts and meditate on the blessings the Lord has given us. Do not think only about the things that are not going well. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord's gospel through which one becomes righteous by believing with the heart

< Romans 10:13–21 >

"For 'whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved.' How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!' But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?' So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.' But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: 'I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.' But Isaiah is very bold and says: 'I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.' But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.'"

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"Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved"

The word says, "*Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13)*. Truly, whoever calls on the name of the Lord is saved. Who would call on the name of the Lord? I believe that, naturally, it is sinners who call on the name of the Lord because they want to be saved.

Truly, there are many things for which we must give thanks before Jesus. Having received the remission of sins and being in the church is a blessing. The Lord has already given us many riches. He has given us faith, and He has given us all the blessings of both spirit and flesh that He wants to give us. We have already become those who have received. For people who live an ordinary religious life, all this is theory. Having received the remission of sins, receiving it, and going to receive it in the future; having been saved, being saved, and going to be saved in the future—it is all theory. But we have already received, we are enjoying what we have received, and we are also obeying in the work of the Lord for the sake of others. We are living such a life.

The Lord has given you and me many things. It is only that we have not counted them; there are many. The Lord said that He "*is rich to all who call upon Him" (Romans 10:12)*, and truly the Lord has made us rich. In our hearts, in our lives, and in our future, the Lord has poured out every blessing on us. So we are already those who have. The people of the world are those who must seek and obtain for themselves, but we have already received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, have become children of God, are doing the righteous work of God, and are those who will enjoy all the blessings that God gives when the time comes. We are those who are to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit; it is not we

who save souls. The Lord has saved people's souls from sin. We are those who preach this; we are by no means those who save souls. Of course, we have the faith to save souls, and we also have such power. But since that power belongs to the Lord and is what the Lord has given us, we must become instruments for preaching it. That is why the apostle Paul said, *"How then shall they call on Him in whom they have not believed? And how shall they believe in Him of whom they have not heard? And how shall they hear without a preacher? And how shall they preach unless they are sent? As it is written: 'How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!'" (Romans 10:14–15).*

When people call on the name of the Lord, they are saved; but to call on the name of the Lord, they must know and believe before they can call. So if people are to believe, they must hear. They must hear with their ears and see with their eyes. This means: how can they call on Him and how can they believe if they have neither heard of God with their ears nor come to know Him through the word of God? Then, if people are to hear, there must be someone who preaches. If no one preaches to them, they cannot hear. That is why we are living the life of evangelists. If you are serving the Lord, whatever position you are in, you are living the life of an evangelist.

Whatever work we do, it is the work of preaching the gospel

As we preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit, people are being saved. Those who have heard and believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit have not become religious people in theory; rather, the Lord's power of salvation has

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actually come upon their hearts, so that there is no sin in their hearts, they have received a heart that wants to live as workers of God, and they have become those who will enjoy, just as we will, all the riches and glory that God gives in the kingdom of God in the future. They have received such blessings.

I am so very thankful, truly thankful. We have become the feet of those who bring such glad tidings, and we are serving this gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why I am truly thankful. Whatever work I do—whatever I make or whatever I repair—I have the heart and the faith that this itself is the work of preaching the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that through it people receive salvation. So I cannot express in words how joyful, rewarding, and good it is. That is so for you who work, and it is so for me as well. We are not people who simply work. For example, if the floor must be swept, we are not meaningless people who simply sweep the floor. We are not people who just work and only receive wages. I believe that because I sweep this floor and put things in order like this, people come here, hear the word of God, receive the remission of sins, and receive and enjoy the real blessings that God gives. That is why any work is good. There is no such thing as feeling ashamed because the work is lowly. It is very rewarding work, more rewarding and precious than any other work in this world. That is what I believe. If it is work that serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is no distinction between noble and lowly work.

"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God"

It is written, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*, and if we truly believe the word of Christ, it means believing that the Lord has saved all the people of the world through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then, whether Westerners or Easterners, who has been excluded? No one has been excluded. Yet people do not know this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Why is that? Because there are many famous theologians in the world, and people all believe under their influence. Among those famous theologians, who knows and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Not a single one. Then how would people come to know this gospel of the water and the Spirit? That is why we must preach it to them. Since the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is something that pleases God, God makes it go well and helps it. It is all God's work, and we are the Lord's instruments.

It is written, *"How beautiful are the feet of those who preach the gospel of peace, Who bring glad tidings of good things!" (Romans 10:15)*. Since we are evangelists, we have the duty to preach. It says, *"How shall they hear without a preacher?" (Romans 10:14)*, and it says that hearing comes by the word of Christ; if we know and believe the word of God and yet do not preach it, how will people come to know it? It says, *"Whoever calls on the name of the LORD shall be saved" (Romans 10:13)*; to call, one must believe, and to believe, one must know; but if people do not know, how can they believe, and how can they call? That is why I am saying that we are so very thankful to be doing this work now.

Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to our families weighs heavily on our hearts. Preaching the gospel of

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the water and the Spirit to acquaintances also weighs heavily on our hearts. We worry a great deal about what we will do if they do not accept it, but we can do it step by step. First, we ourselves must have faith; second, we must have the faith that God has saved this soul too; and third, we preach, little by little, the word of God, who has saved this soul. We are nothing more than those who preach; we cannot control that soul. We preach, believe, place our expectations in God, and believe God. And we only need to convey our own faith, that is, the faith that says, "I believed like this and was saved." Then people are saved. If the one who preaches hesitates, people cannot believe even if they want to. Truly, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to our families is hard.

We must also preach to our children and let them know, but preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not just a simple matter. Just as there are people who testify that, having left the church and lived in the world, they found that nothing worked out, came to know their own shortcomings, and from then on began to hear the word of God, it is important for people to know for themselves that they are really such people, not in theory; but it is also important for them to respond when what they know is proven through the word of God. How can people become righteous without becoming sinners themselves? If people say they are not sinners, if they say they are not bound for hell, then why would they need salvation? Also, if people say they are perfect, if they say they are good, what need would they have to believe in the Lord? There is such a natural order to receiving salvation. Among you and me, there are many people who encountered the gospel of the water and the Spirit early on, including many of our children. They heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit when they were young, but in reality, as they grow older, they come to do many bad things. No one told them

to—not even their parents told them to—yet they become that way. I am saying that this is exactly what you are like. As they grow older still, they do even more. And if they leave the church, they come to live completely like a filthy rag. That is what you are like, and that is what I am like.

Even though we are now well advanced in years, if we do not do the work of God even after receiving the remission of sins, we end up living a messed-up life. We are in no position to point fingers at the people of the world. Perhaps we may even be worse. That is why the Lord said, *"If the salt loses its flavor, how shall it be seasoned? It is then good for nothing" (Matthew 5:13)*. We must acknowledge what we ourselves are, and since we are evangelists who preach good news, we must preach the gospel. Preaching the gospel only with the mouth does not work well. We must also preach it in writing. And we must do it somewhat simply. We must preach it simply enough that even a child can understand. If we use learned words, then when the other person fails to understand even a single one of those words, the connection is lost. People's ears want to hear learned words, but if they do not understand, they have heard nothing. They have not heard with their hearts. That is why the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be simple.

From now on we must preach even more. After we preach, if they believe, they are saved and receive blessings, and if they do not believe, their own sin returns to them. It is simple. There are many people who disregard the righteousness of God, but what is so great about them that they disregard the righteousness of God? If a person who does nothing but commit sin and cannot help but go to hell, who is placed under the punishment for sin and is only waiting for the time of receiving punishment, does not accept the love with which God loved him and saved him, that right work that God did for you and me, then that remains

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as his own sin. That is why we must live the life of evangelists. But the word says the following about how many people throughout the whole world are: *"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?' So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:16–17).*

Saying "Believe in Jesus" is a greeting, not the gospel

This means that the people of Israel also did not all obey. It means that they did not believe. It means that they did not accept Jesus as the Savior. The Bible said of Jesus, *"As a root out of dry ground. He has no form or comeliness; And when we see Him, There is no beauty that we should desire Him" (Isaiah 53:2)*. If Jesus had come to this earth with something that people would find desirable to look at, it would have been hard for Him to carry out His work. So He came with nothing desirable in His outward appearance, but when He spoke, the words of life flowed out from Him, truly awakening hearts and bringing life. That is what I think.

Almost all the people of Israel did not receive Jesus. It was not 100 percent—there were some among them who believed—but they thought of Him only as the son of a carpenter, no more than that. Had He properly gone to school? Did He have anything to boast of? Did He have wealth? Did He have learning? Was He from a prestigious family? He had none of these. Yet when He opened His mouth and spoke, people were all drawn in, heard the words of life, and were saved. But those who believed like that were very few, and many people of the nation of Israel did not accept the fact that the Lord is the Savior. It

means that they did not believe that the Lord received baptism from John on this earth, hung on the Cross and died, rose again from death, and saved us. It means that they did not accept that He did that work to accomplish our salvation. And not only they but also many people in the whole world were the same. That is what the apostle Paul is talking about. So the apostle Paul keeps saying, *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. Where does faith come from? It comes from hearing. Where does hearing come from? It comes by the word of Christ. So when we say that we preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit, it does not mean saying, "Believe in Jesus." "Believe in Jesus" is just a greeting. We must preach the word of Christ, that is, the word of God that says God made such a promise to save us, saved the people of the Old Testament in this way, and, as for the people of the New Testament, saved them today as Jesus came to this earth and saved them through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"Believe in Jesus, and you will go to heaven"—there have been many people who believed in Jesus when it was preached to them like this. And so they say they have been saved. But that is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is just a greeting telling people to believe in Jesus; it is not the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel is the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the word of God is the gospel of the water and the Spirit; merely believing in Jesus is not the gospel. One may believe in Jesus, but how specifically did Jesus save us? He saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must know it like this and believe it like this. But people did not accept it like this. Then was this word not preached to people? Did people not hear? The apostle Paul says this: *"But I say, have they*

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not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world'" (Romans 10:18).

Do not make the excuse that you have not heard

It means that they cannot say they did not hear. I believe that this word that God spoke is a word clearly proven today. This is a word taken from the Psalms. Dear fellow believers, the word of God—this gospel of the water and the Spirit—has now spread all over the world. Then can people living in this age today say, "I could not believe because I did not hear"? They cannot. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is being spread everywhere, through books and through the Internet. Also, you ask what happens to people of old times, what happens to those who passed away without hearing this gospel of the water and the Spirit, but please do not do that. God will take care of all those people Himself. God is not unrighteous. Therefore God will take care of them as He sees fit, and we are now living in this age.

Living in this age, can the people now around the world say that they could not believe because they did not hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit and did not know it? It means that they cannot. If only they have a little interest, they can seek and encounter the word of this gospel of the water and the Spirit as much as they want. The Lord has spread it throughout the whole world. The Lord came to this earth, and in order to make you sinless, He had the sin of all mankind, all your sins, transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, bore that sin of the world, went to the Cross, was nailed to it, was judged, and died, and rose again from death, and so became the very Savior of you and me who believe—of you and me who desire to receive the remission of sins. No one can say that they do not

know this fact. Now God has spread the word of God throughout the whole earth. He has preached it everywhere.

The plan of God, who appeared to the Gentiles who had not sought Him

The apostle Paul then goes on to say this: *"But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: 'I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation'" (Romans 10:19)*. This is a word Moses spoke in Deuteronomy, and it means that long ago God had planned everything this way. It means that the people of Israel do not readily accept it and that many people do not accept the righteousness of God. First, the people of the nation of Israel treat Jesus only in a fleshly way and do not accept Him. So this gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to be preached to the Gentiles, throughout the whole world. That is why He said, *"I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation" (Romans 10:19)*.

God prophesied that many people among the Gentiles would hear this word of the truth of the water and the Spirit, be saved, and become children of God. He spoke of it this way in advance and planned it in advance. Therefore, today, by hearing the word of this gospel of the water and the Spirit, you and I have come to know the righteousness of Jesus and have come to know and believe that this Jesus has truly saved you and me from all sins, and so we have been able to become children of God. Since the people of Israel would not accept it, God the Father said that He would make them jealous by those who are not a people, and that He would save the Gentiles. What did He say He would do for the Gentiles? *"But Isaiah is very bold and says: 'I was found by*

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those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me'" (Romans 10:20). The Gentiles do not seek God. Since many people do not even know who Jesus is, they do not seek Him. Yet Jesus goes to them and reveals Himself, and as Jesus is introduced to them through the word and through evangelists, they come to know who Jesus is and believe. This means that God has determined to do so. So even though the people of Israel absolutely do not accept it, the Lord has always stretched out His hands. He said, *"All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people" (Romans 10:21)*. He waits for you to return, has given everyone in the whole world an equal opportunity, and is always stretching out His hands. This is the word of the Lord.

It is written, *"I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me" (Romans 10:20)*. Dear fellow believers, when did we ever ask the Lord? We went to fortune-tellers and asked them, but did we ask the Lord? When did the Gentiles ever ask the Lord, "Will I go to hell, or will I go to heaven?" They did not ask. They went to fortune-tellers and asked, "Will things go well for me or not?" Yet the Lord took an interest in all the people of the whole world, first established those who had received the remission of sins as His workers, and through these evangelists caused the Lord's righteousness—that the Lord made all mankind sinless through the gospel of the water and the Spirit—to be preached to all the people of the whole world. And so He has made it so that whoever wants to believe believes, receives the remission of sins, does righteous work, and receives all the blessings that God gives, living a rich life forever.

Salvation is not a theory but something accomplished in the heart

Dear fellow believers, having been saved before the Lord is not simply thinking, "Ah, I have been saved." It is something accomplished not in the head but in the heart. What is the difference between those who know it in theory and those who believe? Those who know it in theory know it by thinking, "Ah, so that is how it is," but this disappears as soon as they watch a single television program. Also, they must think before they can speak about it. But what one believes with the heart is here in the heart, and because salvation has been accomplished, one can speak of it anytime just by opening one's mouth, if only one decides to. If someone cannot speak about it very coherently, he can simply say, "The Lord saved me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So I have received the remission of sins." The Lord's salvation actually comes upon us. It is not a theory. Our going to live in the kingdom of heaven is not a theory. It has actually come upon us. It is only that the time has not yet fully come, so we cannot enjoy it yet; when the time comes, we will enjoy it. Having been saved is not a theory, and having become children of God is not a theory. Having become workers of God is not a theory. Having become servants of God is not a theory. Having received blessings from God is not a theory. Therefore, the reason we are not ashamed even while living in this world and suffering countless hardships and a great deal of contempt is that the Lord's blessing has already come upon us. It means that we can bear it because we have received blessings more than enough to shrug off their contempt and have been given love more than enough.

Dear fellow believers, faith is God's blessing coming upon the one who believes just as it is. If you believe, it becomes so.

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It is written, *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Hebrews 11:1)*. If you want to receive the remission of sins, become a child of God, become a worker of righteousness, and receive blessings from God, you must believe that the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist for you and me and bore our sins, hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us. Through faith we receive all the blessings that God wants to give us, every blessing by which we wish to live well. We make them our own.

Dear fellow believers, believing is very important. In becoming a sinner, too, it is important to become a sinner in the heart. As for going to hell as well, you must think in your heart, "Ah, I will really go to hell. If God judges according to His law, I will go to hell. I do not know it now because I am not dying right away, but whether I grow old and fall ill and die in the course of birth, aging, sickness, and death, or die in an accident, in the end I will go to hell." And you must believe with your heart. It says that the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins, the sin of mankind; it says that He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*; it says that He bore the sins of all people. Then you must believe in your heart, "Ah, it said all sins at that time, so my sin was passed on too." And if it says that He bore the sin of the world, hung on the Cross, and died, you must believe like this: "Ah, Jesus bore my sin and died like that. I also died at that time." If Jesus died and rose again, you must believe in your heart like this: "Since Jesus rose again, I also have come to life again."

Humble your heart and rely on the Lord

Dear fellow believers, believing with the heart is very important. It is written, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17),* and faith is like that. Faith is accepting with the heart, with the whole heart. It is accepting that something is so if the word of God says it is so. That is faith. It is just like reading a line of a beautiful poem. For example, suppose you went somewhere to get some fresh air and saw the phrase "Asking the way on the way" on a roadside signpost. Then some people just think, "'Asking the way on the way'—so there is such a sentence; it must mean such and such," and leave it at that. But people like us accept it with our hearts, thinking, "That could be so; that is right." We accept it with our hearts, thinking, "In living out their lives, people do not know how they should live or how they should live to be blessed, so do they not have to ask while they live?" If you accept those words with your heart, you will not forget them your whole life. It is like thinking, "Am I not also a person who has no choice but to do that? Born into this world, have I not also asked the way on the way?" I was like that too. Even though I believed in Jesus, I had sin, so it was so very hard, and since asking people did not resolve it, I opened the word of God and prayed, "Please give me understanding of what this word is saying," and read the Bible, asked God questions, and read the Bible again—and in the end, did God not teach me the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

We must accept the word of God with our hearts. If it says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23),* we must accept in our hearts, "So a person who has sin goes to hell." If we know it only in theory, it remains only theory; but if we accept it with our hearts, we come to accept it like this: "Ah, in the end a person who has sin goes to hell. Then do I have sin or not? I do. Then I

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am going to hell." Then we come to know that we are people bound for hell, and then we need a Savior. Then, if the Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, and bore our sins—if He fulfilled all righteousness—if His bearing all those sins of ours when He received baptism is the right work that God did for us, then, if we believe with our hearts, the sins of you and me were also passed on there. Our sins were also passed on to Jesus. Your sins were passed on, my sin was passed on, and the sin of all mankind was passed on. If you believe with your heart, then do you have sin? No. It is written, *"For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10)*. One attains righteousness by believing with the heart. Dear fellow believers, even though it is the word of God, if you do not believe with your heart, you cannot become a righteous person. You must believe with your heart. If you believe with your heart, you become a righteous person. Even if you were a sinner five minutes ago and a sinner one minute ago, if you believe with your heart, you are a righteous person one minute later. You have no sin. Believing with the heart is simple. If you humble your heart, you can believe with your heart. "I know nothing. I must rely on someone. There is no one worth relying on in this world. So I must rely on God. Since God is invisible, I must rely on Jesus Christ, the only Son of God the Father." Because God loves you and me, and because He sent His Son to this earth to give you and me blessings and gave you and me love and blessings, we rely on that. Faith is relying. It is leaning.

Dear fellow believers, must we not lean on someone? Born into this world, can you get along well all alone and at ease? Is life about living as if you are great on your own and then passing away? If people are born, they must know that they are lacking. They must know that they are weak. They must not act as if they

are great. They are not great. They are lacking. They must rely on someone, but since human beings are always deceivers, they cannot rely on human beings; they must rely on Jesus Christ, the Son of God the Father, the Savior who loved you and me. Then He is the One who gives blessings on top of everything we rely on. That is why He is worth relying on. The Lord never once told a lie and never once committed a sin, yet He knows all our weaknesses and has experienced them all. Except for committing sin, He experienced all human weaknesses. Why did the Lord pray with fasting? Right after receiving baptism from John, He went into fasting prayer—why did He do it? He fasted in order to actually experience everything—where human beings are most often led astray, and what state human beings come to when they go without food. Since He bore the sins of human beings, He had to feel concretely what a human being is; if He did not feel what it is to be human, it would be too one-sided. When we accept with our hearts that Jesus has become the Savior of you and me, that He has removed the sins of you and me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive all the blessings that the Lord promised to give us. We received them the moment we believed. Only the time remains; we have received them all. I cannot tell you how blessed this is.

Dear fellow believers, time keeps passing. It flows by like a flowing river. Even if we stay still, time flows by. Even if we just lie still, time flows by and it becomes tomorrow morning. Even if you do not move, time keeps flowing. Then later your hair turns white. That is how it goes. So you must believe with your heart. We attain righteousness by believing with the heart, and we attain salvation by confessing with the mouth. Even if you believe with your heart, you must confess with your mouth. Why is that? When you confess, “I believe like this,” by saying those words you confirm to yourself, “Ah, I do believe.” But if

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you do not speak—if you say you believe in your heart but never say it out loud—you yourself do not really know whether you are a believer or not. Do you know why we must pray out loud? The Lord said, *"When you pray, do not use vain repetitions as the heathen do" (Matthew 6:7)*, and He said not to pray on the main streets to be seen by people; so why do we pray out loud? Some people say that praying out loud is a foolish thing. But praying out loud is a good thing to do. Why is that? Since we are human, if we pray only in our hearts, idle thoughts soon come in and it does not go well. So we simply pray out loud, "Father God." Only then do our thoughts go before God and our hearts go before God, and we move further and further forward. Prayer can go well even without speaking out loud, but if we do not make a habit of praying out loud, we forget to pray, become lazy in prayer, and do not pray well. I hope that you will confess with your mouth what you have believed with your heart and pray out loud, and that, according to this word that whoever calls on the name of the Lord will be saved, you will enjoy the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which one becomes righteous by believing with the heart. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The hands stretched out all day long to those who hear yet do not believe

< Romans 10:16–21 >

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘LORD, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: ‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.’ But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: ‘I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.’ But Isaiah is very bold and says: ‘I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.’ But to Israel he says: ‘All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.’”

Even when people hear the same word, there are those who accept it in their hearts and those who reject it. Then, when the hearers do not believe, is it because God did not make salvation known sufficiently? While speaking of Israel’s unbelief, Paul does not conclude that they had no way to hear the word. Rather, he makes clear what one must hear for faith to arise, and he lets us hear the heart of God, who is stretching out His hands toward

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those who go against Him. Before we judge the unbelief of others, this word makes us examine our own hearts as we hear it today.

Obeying the gospel is believing the word

Paul says that even though the good news was preached, not everyone accepted it. *"But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, 'LORD, who has believed our report?'" (Romans 10:16)*. We must not stretch this word to mean that no one among the people of Israel believed. Paul himself, as an Israelite, believed in Christ, and here he is speaking of the reality that, looking at the nation as a whole, only a very few believed and most rejected it. Also, we must not turn the words that they did not obey into words that they merely failed to live upright lives. Since Paul explains faith right after this, this obedience is believing and accepting the word of salvation that was preached. What they rejected was what the Savior they had been waiting for had already come and accomplished for them, namely, that Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death.

Nodding one's head while hearing the word and believing that one's own sins have disappeared just as that word says may not be the same thing. If someone explains the work of Jesus to others yet judges that sin remains in his own heart, he has not accepted for himself the salvation that the Lord accomplished. Therefore, rather than boasting about how familiar we are with hearing the word, we must set our hearts on the salvation that the word conveys. In the light of the fact that the Lord bore sin, we

need a faith that does not set one's own sins apart as the only ones left behind.

The place where faith arises is the word of Christ

The mere wish to have faith does not by itself produce the content of faith. Paul clearly says where that content comes from. *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. When the word of Christ is heard by the ears, a person first comes to know what kind of sinner he is, and just as a hungry person looks for food, he comes to feel that salvation is absolutely necessary. And in the same word he hears of the righteousness of God revealed apart from the law, that is, what the Lord accomplished for that sinner, and comes to believe it. If a person hears an interpretation that people have pieced together with their own thoughts as though it were the will of God, then even if conviction arises in his heart, it may not be faith based on what Christ has done; therefore, what we must hear is the word of Christ exactly as the Bible says it.

The word of Christ is not a word that demands that sinners muster their own strength and remove their sins. Just as in the sacrifices of the Old Testament the sin of the people passed on to the sacrificial offering when the priest laid his hands on it, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John, and because of the sin thus passed on to Him, He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment, and rose again from death. The sins we commit throughout our lives are also included in that sin of the world. When I hear and believe this word, I am freed from the thought that the responsibility to resolve my sin still remains with me,

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and I come to rely on the righteousness that the Lord accomplished.

Therefore, there is no need to wait, thinking that we must first obtain dreams, visions, or special experiences that shake our hearts before we can believe the word. Such things do not prove the remission of sins, and the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit lies in having received the remission of sins by believing in the salvation that the Lord accomplished. The word does not tell us to look into our own emotions; instead, it makes us look to the Savior, who bore our sins and finished the judgment. Even when we feel that our faith has grown weak, what we need is not to look for new experiences but to hear again what He has done and accept it in our hearts.

Do not treat the grace He has let you hear as someone else's matter

Paul asks whether Israel did not hear and answers that this is not so. "*But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world'" (Romans 10:18)*. They did not fail to believe because they did not hear; they all heard and yet did not believe, so the excuse that the news of salvation had been hidden has no ground to stand on. The word spread throughout the whole earth from mouth to mouth, and what was blocked was not ears that the word had not reached but hearts that did not accept what they had heard. Even so, this word does not mean that the work of preaching should stop. Since Paul said just before this that there must be someone who preaches for people to hear, this word awakens those who have already heard to the need to respond to that word.

In the word that follows, God says that He will provoke Israel to jealousy by those who are not a people. This was a plan that He had spoken of beforehand through Moses. When Israel did not accept the righteousness of God, God sent the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles, who had not known God, and made them God's people, so that Israel, seeing this, would also become jealous and return. Therefore, this cannot be read as an assessment that one nation is more excellent than another. This is because salvation is not obtained through the superiority of one lineage over another, and the Gentiles, too, are not people who found salvation by their own wisdom or godliness.

God made salvation known even to people who were not seeking Him. *"But Isaiah is very bold and says: 'I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me'" (Romans 10:20)*. We who were Gentiles did not even try to know God, and if there was anything we wished for, it was the blessing of living well on this earth, being at peace, and having our descendants prosper; it was not being saved from sin and living as children of God. To us, who neither sought nor asked in this way, God came first and let us hear the word. This is how we came to know the news that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Therefore, we cannot boast as though we were better than others because we knew first; we can only give thanks before this grace that we have only received.

The fact that Gentiles receive salvation also becomes an opportunity for those who have heard the word for a long time to examine themselves. This is because, out of familiarity, they may skim past the content of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and take lightly the faith of those who are hearing it for

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the first time. However, a heart that rejoices in the Lord's salvation is not determined by the length of time one has heard the word. What matters is whether one now accepts in one's heart what the Lord has accomplished. Seeing the faith that appears in others, we too can reflect once more on the grace of the remission of sins that we first received.

Respond to God, who has stretched out His hands

In the last word, God's long-suffering toward those who do not believe is revealed. *"But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people'" (Romans 10:21)*. In the light of the word that God stretched out His hands, no one can say that there was no way to come to the Lord. God tells even those who go against Him to come to Him, and He lets them hear the word of salvation that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment, and then rose again from death, and so He makes them return. Therefore, we must not take that patience to mean that it is all right not to believe. This is because His stretching out His hands is the grace that allows us to respond to that calling now.

Those hands have not been withdrawn even today. God is still stretching out His hands to those who go against the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He is stretching out the same hands to us, who have heard the word for a long time. Therefore, if our hearts are going down a path that is at odds with the will of God, I must first look back on whether I am now believing this word with my heart. When we consider the Lord's long-suffering, we cannot easily give up even on those who reject the

gospel of the water and the Spirit, but we cannot add promises that are not in the word in order to move them. Since faith comes by hearing the word of Christ, what we must let them hear is only the fact that the Lord bore not only that person's sins but also all the sins of the world.

The heart that asked why the responses differ even when people hear the same word now stands before the word that has come to its own ears. God has not hidden salvation; rather, He is making known through the word what His Son Jesus Christ did—how He received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death—and He is stretching out His hands all day long. There is no reason to insist on one's own thoughts before those hands. Believing with one's heart the word one has heard, just as it is, is the response that takes hold of those outstretched hands. ✉

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Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

True faith comes from hearing the word of Christ

< Romans 10:16–21 >

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘LORD, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: ‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.’ But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: ‘I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.’ But Isaiah is very bold and says: ‘I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.’ But to Israel he says: ‘All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.’”

Not everyone believes just because the gospel is preached

In the preceding passage, the apostle Paul sang of the chain of salvation that runs from being sent to preaching, to hearing, and to believing, and now he honestly points out its cold reality: *“They have not all obeyed the gospel” (Romans 10:16)*. This means that even though the gospel of the water and the Spirit has been preached, not everyone who hears it accepts it.

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The words that follow are a quotation of Isaiah 53:1. The prophet Isaiah was a man who lived seven hundred years before Jesus came, and while prophesying the suffering of the Messiah, he already lamented as follows: *"LORD, who has believed our report?" (Romans 10:16)*. It asks who would believe in the Savior who, it had been promised, would be sent. It means that people would not believe. In the time of Isaiah, those who believed what was preached were few; it was the same in Paul's time, and it is no different today.

But there is something we must hold on to clearly here. When people do not believe the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is not because the gospel is lacking in anything. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is perfect. This is because Jesus, who is God, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him once and for all 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, and rose again from death and has already remitted all the sins of those who believe. The problem always lies in the heart of the one who hears. That was exactly the case with Israel, over whom Paul grieved throughout chapters 9 and 10. Their zeal toward God was more fervent than anyone's, but they were people who, not knowing the righteousness of God, strove only to establish their own righteousness and so drifted away from salvation. The problem lay in their closing their hearts even after hearing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit; it was not that they had no way to hear, did not hear, and so could not believe.

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Faith that brings salvation from sin is not something made up but comes from hearing

Then where on earth does the faith that enables people to be saved from all their sins come from? In verse 17, Paul puts forward the great proposition that is the core of this passage: *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*.

This one verse sums up how salvation takes its place in a person's heart. First, the source of faith is hearing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What we must know well is the fact that saving faith is not something a person squeezes out and produces by his own will. Faith does not arise because one's resolve is deep, nor does faith spring up because one's religious efforts have piled up. Only when the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, heard from outside, touches the heart is saving faith born in the heart.

Think about it. How did we originally come to know God? Has God ever been seen by the eyes of our flesh? When did we ever fear God? And did we know what kind of sinners we ourselves were before God? No. The Bible says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one; There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God" (Romans 3:10–11)*. We were by nature people who did not know God, and people who did not know our own sins either. But by hearing the written word that says, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth" (Genesis 1:1)*, we came to know that God exists, and only by hearing the word of the law did we come to know that we ourselves are sinners. If we had not been able to hear the word of God with our ears, we would not have known anything at all about God.

Therefore, the same is true of the faith that leads to salvation. Without hearing with our ears, we cannot believe in our hearts. That is why God sends us the news of His righteous work through the mouths of preachers and also through the words of the Bible. All we did was simply submit our hearts to the word we heard. The beginning of salvation, its process, and its completion all came from God and the word of God; they did not originate from us at all.

It is possible only when the word we hear is the word of Jesus Christ

But Paul does not stop here; he drives home one more point. That hearing does not come from just any word, but from *"the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. Right here lies a truly important distinction.

There are many preachers in this world and many people who speak well. There are also many ethically good exhortations and many religious lectures that move people's hearts. But however plausible such words may be, people cannot reach salvation by hearing words that a person has understood this way and that by his own thoughts and logically pieced together. What we must hear with our ears is not the doctrines of man or the thoughts of man, but the word about who Christ is and what He has done, that is, the word of Christ.

At this point, we must check this clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Today, countless Christians hear an incomplete gospel that emphasizes only the blood of the Cross and consider themselves to have received salvation. But the word heard in that way is no more than half of the word of Christ. Why is that so? It is because, without

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knowing the event in which Jesus had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River before He went to the Cross, no one can know exactly whose sin the blood He shed on the Cross was for.

This is made clear in 1 John 5:6: *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood –ASV" (1 John 5:6)*. It is saying that He came not by water only, but by water and blood. Therefore, the word of Christ that brings about true faith of salvation in a person's heart must be the word of the complete work of salvation, joined into one, in which Jesus 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 who believe in that work from all sins by rising again from death. Otherwise, those who hear only half cannot but stop at half a faith. What we must hear is this complete word of Christ.

The excuse that they did not hear does not hold

At this point, someone might argue in their defense like this: "Was it not because they did not hear that Israel failed to accept the gospel?" Paul firmly cuts off this possible excuse: *"Have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world'" (Romans 10:18)*.

This is a quotation of Psalm 19:4. That psalm originally sang of the glory of God revealed through all things in the universe, but Paul applies it to the universal spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is, the sound of the gospel is not shut

up in any one place but has already spread widely, and so the excuse that they did not hear does not stand.

The same principle applies today. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is being preached to the ends of the earth. This is an age in which anyone who sets his heart on seeking it can come across this gospel. Therefore, the excuse that one could not believe because one did not hear the gospel holds even less for people living in our time. The problem is always the same. It is not that there is no way to hear, but that people close their hearts even after hearing.

Paul goes a step further and quotes Deuteronomy 32:21: *"I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation" (Romans 10:19)*. It means that God had already foretold through Moses that Israel would reject His righteousness and that, by calling the Gentiles, He would provoke Israel to jealousy and anger. This shows that God's salvation is never bound to the privilege of the lineage of one nation, but was directed toward all peoples from the beginning. Even though those who were regarded as Gentiles hear the truth and become rich, those who remained only in religious zeal fail to look back on their own condition; thus this foretelling is being fulfilled exactly today.

God, who stretches out His hands all day long to those who do not seek Him

Paul finally concludes this passage by quoting Isaiah 65:1–2: *"I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me" (Romans 10:20)*.

The Gentiles were originally those who neither sought God nor inquired of Him. They were those who bowed down to idols,

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sought out fortune-tellers, and relied on vain things. Yet God Himself went to them and Himself appeared to them. This is the mystery of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It was not we who found Him, but He who came looking for us; it was not we who pursued righteousness, but He who brought that righteousness to us.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the beginning of our salvation, from first to last, is the result of God's sovereign grace. We were dead in sin and could neither seek God nor call on Him by our own strength. But God sent His Son Jesus Christ and had Him take the sin of mankind upon Himself through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, shed His blood on the Cross and receive the judgment for that sin, and rise again from death. And He sent us the news of that righteous work through the mouths of preachers and through books and writings. All we did was simply submit our hearts to the word of Christ that we heard. So what can we boast of?

Next, verse 21 depicts God's heartache toward Israel: *"All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people" (Romans 10:21)*. The expression that He stretches out His hands all day long brings to mind the image of a parent opening both arms toward a child and waiting. God never gave up on Israel to the end. But the people of Israel strove to establish their own righteousness and turned away from the hands God had stretched out.

Become those who enter into the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that has reached your ears

Therefore, before this passage, we come to set our hearts on one truth: the fact that true faith is not something people produce but comes from hearing, and that this hearing comes not from any other word but from the complete word of Christ. We did not receive salvation because we were smart, or because our will was strong, or because our religious zeal was exceptional. It was only because the word of Christ, which is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, came to our ears and we surrendered our hearts to that word.

Even now, God is stretching out both His arms all day long toward all sinners with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He is not waiting for our devotion or merits. He is waiting for the faith that simply accepts the righteousness He has already fully accomplished. 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. Believe in that Jesus as your Savior and receive the remission of sins. The one who does not turn away from those hands but enters into those open arms is the one who will not be put to shame and will become rich.

And so that the chain of faith that comes from hearing this word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit may not be broken, we must become channels that preach to others that accurate word of Christ we have received. Just as we heard this gospel through someone's mouth, someone else, too, must hear this gospel through our mouths in order to come to faith. I pray in the name of the Lord that you will not be those who have much

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religious zeal but do not know the righteousness of God, but will become beautiful feet that hear the word of Christ, believe it with your hearts, and preach that word. ✉

Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

We are saved by believing the word of the Lord, not human thoughts

< Romans 10:16–21 >

“But they have not all obeyed the gospel. For Isaiah says, ‘LORD, who has believed our report?’ So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: ‘Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world.’ But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: ‘I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation.’ But Isaiah is very bold and says: ‘I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to those who did not ask for Me.’ But to Israel he says: ‘All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people.’”

Israel did not obey the gospel

In the heart of the apostle Paul there was a belief that, when the last days came, some of the people of Israel too, though not all of them, would concretely believe in Jesus and receive salvation. So he poured out the anguish in his heart just as it was. The reason Paul was so distressed was that even though Jesus,

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who is God, came to this earth, took the sin of the world, which includes our sins, upon Himself once and for all through the baptism He received from John, hung on the Cross and shed His blood and paid the full price of that sin, and rose again from death and accomplished salvation, his fellow countrymen, the people of Israel, did not believe in that gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Verse 16 says, *"But they have not all obeyed the gospel" (Romans 10:16)*. Except for a very small number of people, the people of Israel did not accept Jesus. That is why the apostle Paul quoted the words of the prophet Isaiah and said this: *"LORD, who has believed our report?" (Romans 10:16)*. The prophet Isaiah was a man who lived seven hundred years before Jesus came, yet even then people did not believe the word that God would send the Savior.

Therefore, in the time of the apostle Paul, too, people still did not believe. Exactly as the word of the Old Testament had been fulfilled, the same thing was repeated in the time in which the apostle Paul lived. But the apostle Paul asks here, "Then where does true faith come from? If the people of Israel are to believe in Jesus and be saved, where can they get that faith?" The answer is recorded precisely in verse 17.

Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God

Let us read verse 17 together. *"So then faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. Faith comes by hearing. It means that faith arises through hearing.

Then, in order for people to hear, there must be someone who preaches it to them. This is exactly why today we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in written form and also in audio form. Faith comes by hearing. A person's hearing and his coming to believe go together. That is why it says, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).*

But here there is something we must clearly know. People do hear the gospel, but what they must hear is precisely *"the word of God."* If people understand the word with their own thoughts and hear content that they have digested themselves and logically pieced together, salvation is not accomplished by that.

There are many preachers and many people who speak well in this world, but even though such words may look plausible on the outside, salvation is not accomplished even if one hears them for a thousand days. What we must hear with our ears is only the word of Christ. When the word of God is preached just as it is, those who hear and believe that word receive salvation.

The word of Christ is the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Then what is the word of Christ that we must hear? It is none other than the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel in which Jesus bore the sin of all the sinners of this world once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, paid the price of sin by being nailed to the Cross, shedding His blood, and dying with all those sins upon Him, and completed our salvation by rising again in three days—this is precisely the word of Christ.

This is the reason why, when I preach from the pulpit, I open the passage and preach centering on that word. Only then do

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those who hear come to hear the word of Christ, that is, the word of God. Only when people hear the word just as it is—how the word of God has saved us and what the truth is that we were saved through the water and the Spirit—is faith born in their hearts and is salvation accomplished.

Therefore, faith comes by hearing, and what is heard must be the word of God. It must be the word of God just as it is written in the Bible, not the doctrines of man or the thoughts of man.

Believe the Bible as it is, not the doctrines of man

A man named Calvin of France read the Bible and established his own doctrines. These are the so-called five points of Calvinism. According to those doctrines, God chose some people in advance and did not choose others. When he taught people this way, those who heard accepted them as plausible doctrines. But they are all wrong.

God did not choose only some people and leave others unchosen. God wanted all people to be saved, and He chose all people. And He removed all the sins of all people. God sent His Son Jesus to this earth, and Jesus came into the world, bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death, and so removed all sins. Now, whether one receives salvation or not is determined by whether one believes this or not.

Therefore, anyone who believes things like the doctrine of election or the doctrines of some theologian just as they are goes to hell. We must not go down such a path. Because such people develop their story by adding very philosophical words and human thoughts, while you listen to their words you do not realize that they are lies.

But when we look at the Bible, it is not so. John 3:16 clearly says, *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16)*. It says that God loved the whole world; it does not say that He loved only some people and did not love others. Did God say that He loved some nations and did not love other nations? Did He say that He loved some people and hated others? No, He did not. God said that He so loved the world. It means that He loved all people.

When it says that God loved the world, it is a word spoken about people and also a word spoken about all things, but in the end it means that He loved all of us. Because He loved us, He sent His own Son and made Him our Savior, and He saved us through that Son, Jesus.

Therefore, we only need to believe the Bible just as it is. Then we receive salvation. Yet some theologians say, "The meaning of the word that God loved the world is not that," and teach, "God loved some people and did not love others."

They say that from the time Jacob and Esau were in the womb of Rebekah, Isaac's wife, God loved the younger brother and hated the older brother—that He thus chose one and rejected the other from the womb. They teach the Bible by forcing it to fit in that way. But that is not right.

Jacob and Esau—one who inherited the faith of his parents and one who relied on his own strength

Why would God have hated Esau? And why would He have loved Jacob? If we examine the Bible closely, we can know the reason. Jacob was a man who was cunning, lied readily, and was powerless and weak, but he believed the words of his parents just as they were.

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His parents passed on to their children the very faith they themselves had received. They passed on to their children, just as it was, that way of salvation of God, who had made garments of animal skins for Adam and Eve to wear and had a sacrificial offering die in their place—that is, the truth that they had been saved by transferring their own sins to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands and by that offering dying in their place. "I have been saved in this way, so you too must receive salvation in the same way." They taught that one is saved not by human boasting, human zeal, or cleverness, but only by faith. That truth, in which sins were passed on through the laying on of hands and the offering died in the sinner's place, was later completely fulfilled when Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and shed His blood and died on the Cross.

Jacob inherited his parents' faith just as it was. He believed his parents' words, and he believed his parents' faith. But Esau was not so. How can we know that Esau did not believe it?

Esau looked down on what his younger brother did. Jacob appeared to him to be someone who only lied well, clung to his mother's apron strings, helped in the kitchen, and helped with the household chores. But what is wrong with helping one's parents well with their work? What is wrong with such a child, who sweeps the yard when his mother washes the dishes, and when his mother is busy, cleans the room, sets the table, and lays out the spoons and chopsticks?

True children consult well with their parents, receive instructions from their parents, honor their parents' wishes, and inherit their faith. Moreover, in a family of faith, inheriting the faith of one's parents is a very precious thing. Just as the old saying goes that good things come even while you sleep if you

listen well to your elders, God adds great blessings to children who inherit the faith of their parents.

Jacob accepted all of his parents' heart and faith. But Esau boasted only of his own strength. Since he was good at shooting a bow and had physical strength, he was in the end a man who relied on his own strength, not a man who relied on God. Jacob was a man who relied on God and relied on his parents because he himself was weak. But Esau was a man who relied neither on his parents nor on God, but trusted only in his own strength. God does not take pleasure in such a person. The Scripture passage is speaking of exactly that fact.

But theologians point to this and insist, "See, did God not choose from the womb?" That is not right. If you asked those who say so, "Can you know whether or not God has chosen you?" they would have no choice but to answer, "How could I know that?" They say that they themselves do not even know whether they will go to heaven or to hell.

It is said that there was a famous theologian. As a doctor of theology, he taught students as a professor at a theological seminary, and it is said that one graduate student raised his hand and asked, "Doctor, then how can we know whether we have been chosen or not? Is there a way to know whether we will go to heaven or to hell?" It is said that the doctor answered, "We cannot know." So the student asked again, "Then, Doctor, do you know whether you will go to heaven or to hell?" The doctor answered, "How would I know that? I will only know once I get there." It is said that this was the answer he gave in front of his own students.

Dear fellow believers, if I could not clearly judge and teach you from this place, "This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit; if you believe this, you will be saved, receive eternal life, and go to heaven, and if you do not believe it, you will go to

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hell," how could you believe in Jesus? By what means could you believe? That is why the word of Christ is so important. That word clearly testifies that Jesus took the sin of the world, which includes our sins, upon Himself once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross and so received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

Receive the pure word that contains no leaven

We must not believe, just as it is, what theologians make up plausibly by adding human thoughts while claiming to preach the word of God. If we believe it just as it is, we will be in serious trouble. The Bible called such a thing "leaven." Leaven makes dough swell up greatly. Dough rises when baking soda is put in it, and when leaven is put in, it rises even more. But when God said to eat bread without leaven, what He meant was that we should receive and eat the pure word just as it is.

We obtain salvation by hearing that pure word, that is, the word of Christ, and accepting it by faith. But the people of Israel did not believe that word. Then whose fault was it that they did not believe, and what responsibility do they bear? The answer to this question follows in verse 18.

Their sound went out to all the earth, but Israel heard and did not believe

Let us read verse 18 together. *"But I say, have they not heard? Yes indeed: 'Their sound has gone out to all the earth, And their words to the ends of the world'" (Romans 10:18)*. It means that

the word of God spread throughout the whole world. People preached that word from mouth to mouth, but the people of Israel did not believe it. The sound that they heard and yet did not believe was the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus bore the sin of the whole world, which includes our sins, through the baptism He received from John, received all that judgment by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood, and rose again from death and removed all the sins of the world.

Because the people of Israel did not believe to the end, the apostle Paul asks again in verse 19: *"But I say, did Israel not know? First Moses says: 'I will provoke you to jealousy by those who are not a nation, I will move you to anger by a foolish nation'" (Romans 10:19).*

God provoked them to jealousy through the Gentile nations

This is a truly amazing word. Because the people of Israel did not believe, God would send this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentile nations. So the Gentile nations would believe this gospel and obtain salvation, and God would make them His people. By this, He would provoke the people of Israel to jealousy.

Originally, the Israelites were the descendants of Abraham and the people of God. But now, not they themselves but the many Gentile nations that had been outside of them—that is, people like us—have come to believe in Jesus as the Savior and obtain salvation. So how could the Israelites not become jealous? God had already spoken of this beforehand in the Old Testament.

Verse 20 says, *"But Isaiah is very bold and says: 'I was found by those who did not seek Me; I was made manifest to*

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those who did not ask for Me'" (Romans 10:20). It means that God Himself appeared to those who neither sought God, nor clung to Him, nor looked for Him, and caused them to believe, and that He also showed Himself to those who did not even ask God and taught them.

This is a word spoken precisely to us. It is a word spoken about you and me today. When did we ever seek God? When did we ever ask God anything? Instead, we went to fortune-tellers and asked, "Will my fortune be good this year or not? Should I be careful of the east, or should I be careful of the west?" We were people who read fortune books, had our fortunes told, and looked into which direction—east, west, south, or north—we should be careful of. How great a grace it is that God Himself came to such people as us, let us hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and caused us to believe that word and reach salvation!

We, who neither sought God nor asked God anything, have come to hear and believe the word that Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin for us with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

God, who stretches out His hands all day long and waits

The apostle Paul says in verse 21: *"But to Israel he says: 'All day long I have stretched out My hands To a disobedient and contrary people'" (Romans 10:21)*. It means that God stretched out His hands all day long and waited for us.

Even today, both within this church and toward all the people of this world, God is still stretching out His hands and waiting,

saying, “Come into My arms; come in by faith.” But there are many who do not return. There are many who do not believe.

The word says that with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth one confesses unto salvation, and it also clearly says that faith comes by hearing and that hearing comes by the word of Christ. How easy a thing this is! Yet people do not believe this and do not accept the word of Christ. God said that He stretches out His hands all day long. Although He stretches out His hands and waits until the end of the age, until the day a person finishes his whole life, there are people who do not believe to the end. How grieved God must be!

I hope that we will not become such people. Dear fellow believers, if we keep going down a path that departs from the will of God, and our thoughts and hearts are flowing down the wrong path, what should we check? We must examine, “Am I now believing the word of God, or am I going down this kind of path because I do not believe it?” We must also check, “Am I not serving some other idol besides God?”

Believe through the word of Christ, not through visions or miracles

Then what is it for us to believe in Jesus? It is to believe the word of God with our hearts and obtain salvation. It is not believing because we have seen some vision, experienced some sign, or gone through some miracle. That is not it. It is absolutely not that.

Even if you saw something appear in a dream and say, “You are my son; I have loved you,” you will never be saved by that. It does not work even if you heard a voice saying, “You are going to heaven,” and it does not work even if you saw a vision

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saying, “You have been saved.” Only when you hear the word of Christ with your ears, see the word with your eyes, and believe that word with your heart are you saved.

There is a certain organization founded by one man. There are no crosses in its church buildings. Originally there were crosses, but before he died, he ordered that the red crosses of all the church buildings be painted over and covered with white paint.

There, instead of crosses, they made figures of doves and set them up. They say these symbolize the dove of the Holy Spirit. He claimed, “The Holy Spirit taught me and told me to paint over all the crosses.” Also, when he held meetings, he deceived people with false things, such as saying, “The dew of the Holy Spirit is falling,” while sprinkling water with sprinklers from the top of a tall building. He also called the water in which he had washed his feet “living water” and made people drink it, teaching that if they drank it, their illnesses would be healed. It is said that even after he died, that “living water” kept being sprinkled on his grave on the claim that if it was sprinkled there, he would come back to life.

Such a man was once rumored to have “good faith.” But even if Jesus appeared in a dream and said, “I love you,” it is all empty. Any voice or vision saying, “You are going to heaven,” is all empty. Only when we hear the word of Christ with our ears, see the word of the Bible with our eyes, and believe that word with our hearts are we saved. Not dreams or voices, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit saves us: the gospel that Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

The word of Christ is preached through preachers

Then why would He have said that we obtain salvation by hearing? It means that a messenger who explains it is absolutely necessary. Anyone who is not blind can see the word of God with his eyes, but seeing it does not mean that one obtains salvation right away. Only when a person hears the voice of someone who explains what that word means and inherits, just as it is, the faith that the messenger has does that truth become his own.

That is why it says, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. It means that a messenger is needed. Through that messenger the word of Christ is spread. Therefore, even though I am lacking, I preach to you, just as it is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that I received when I met the Lord.

I do not change. Even if I were to live five thousand more years, I would still take the word of God just as it is and preach it in this way. I do not try to capture people's hearts with some entertaining stories meant only to amuse, nor do I go off on tangents with stories that stray from the passage. Only preaching the word of God just as it is so that those who hear and believe that word may obtain salvation—that is the place of a preacher. Therefore, the one who preaches must first have faith.

In saving us, God let us hear that truth through the faith of the preacher and the word of Christ that he preaches, and caused us to reach salvation by the faith that comes from that hearing. Let us remember the fact that He has caused those who hear to believe with their hearts and obtain salvation through the faith of one who has already been saved and through the preacher who preaches the word with that faith. And let us believe that word just as it is. ✉

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CHAPTER

11

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The grace of the Lord, who did not cast away Israel

< Romans 11:1–12 >

"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 'LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life'? But what does the divine response say to him? 'I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.' And David says: 'Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always.' I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world,

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and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!"

Paul did not hide the unbelief of Israel, but neither did he say that God had cast away His people. This is because the fact that many people before our eyes do not believe is not the same as the judgment that God has abandoned the promise of salvation. Paul shows the people whom God left by grace, makes clear the warning that comes upon the heart that does not believe, and explains how, even in their fall, salvation was brought to other people. Following this word, we must look first at the grace God has bestowed rather than at the hardness of people.

Paul's faith testifies that God has not cast away His people

To the question of whether God has cast away His people, Paul answers by pointing to himself. *"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Romans 11:1)*. This does not mean that Paul was saved merely by the fact that he was an Israelite. The fact that he, an Israelite, believed in Christ and obtained the righteousness of God shows that God has not closed the way of salvation to Israel. Against the heart that tries to bind the whole nation together under a single unbelief and judge it, one person who has been saved stands as clear evidence.

We, too, while preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, can easily think, after meeting rejection many times, that no one will believe from now on either. Especially if someone

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we have been close to does not open his heart for a long time, we may accept that person's unbelief as though it were God's final judgment. However, Paul did not judge the grace of God only by the unbelief visible at the time. Holding on to the fact that God had saved him, he looked toward the way of salvation that others needed as well. We, too, need to look back on how we were saved before we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others. What did we believe in order to be saved? We believed the word that Jesus received baptism from John and so had our sins passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and received judgment because of those sins, and rose again from death. Paul, too, obtained the righteousness of God by believing in this very word.

The word that God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew also makes us look at the will of God before the present state of man. The promise God made to Israel did not disappear because of their unbelief. That does not mean, however, that they are saved by lineage alone even if they do not believe. Since Paul himself is evidence of being saved by faith, this word shows that there is still a way to come to Christ. Instead of hastily concluding that God has cast away His people, we must preach the word of salvation that the Lord has given.

Listen to God's answer rather than to the judgment that you alone are left

Paul recalls the time when Elijah pleaded with God against Israel. Elijah spoke of the reality that the Lord's prophets had been killed and the altars torn down, and he thought that he alone was left. What appeared before his eyes were the people who opposed God and the threat to his own life. But God spoke of a

people whom Elijah did not know. *"But what does the divine response say to him? 'I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal'" (Romans 11:4)*. The number of people Elijah could confirm around him was not the whole of the people whom God had left.

Looking at this word, we must not take Elijah's fear lightly. The threat to his life was real, and the opposition to God was also real. However, that reality could not show the whole of God's work. God had reserved people for Himself, and only when Elijah heard that answer could he escape from the judgment that he alone was left. Faith is not saying that difficult realities do not exist; it is accepting, according to the word, what God is doing even in the midst of those realities.

Paul connects that answer to his own time. *"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5)*. The fact that there is a remnant does not speak of the merit of people who held out to the end by their own strength. The ground Paul gave when describing those people is the election of grace, and the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal were also people whom God had first reserved. It means that even now there are those who have obtained salvation by believing in the righteousness God has bestowed. That righteousness is what Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, receiving its judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. The elect are not people better than others, but people who know their own insufficiency and have no strength to live without relying on God; therefore, we must not regard grace as small just because those who believe seem few, nor must we regard ourselves as stronger than others because we are among them. When we look

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to the Lord, who has reserved us, we can lay down both discouragement and boasting together.

No price of works can be added to grace

Paul soon makes clear what the grace that explains the remnant is. *"And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work" (Romans 11:6)*. If God first accomplished salvation and gave it as a gift, but man could receive it only after adding works and paying its price, then it could no longer be called grace. Faith, too, is not a merit that completes some lacking part of the salvation God prepared. Because faith is accepting with the heart what the Lord has accomplished, what remains in those who have been saved is thanksgiving rather than self-boasting.

This grace does not mean that God sees sin and overlooks it as though He had not seen it. When Jesus, the Son of God, received baptism from John, He had all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, transferred to Him once and for all. The Lord, who bore those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross and so received in our place the judgment that we sinners should have received, and by rising from the dead, He accomplished the salvation of the remission of sins. God did not speak of grace while leaving the judgment of sin in place; rather, He gave us righteousness because Jesus Christ paid that price of sin in full.

For this reason, while saying that we have been saved by grace, we cannot again look for the price of salvation in our own conduct. We came to the Lord because we could not prepare our own righteousness; if we think that after being saved we must

present our own works for the Lord to accept us, we end up changing the ground we relied on at first. We must acknowledge our faults and correct our wrong conduct, but by doing so we cannot add anything to the price of sin He has already paid. The life of the righteous is not a life of trying to become righteous by repaying grace, but a life of serving the work of God while giving thanks for the righteousness we have received.

Being able to do the work of God also lies within this grace. Those who had no merit by which to obtain salvation can now serve by preaching the salvation the Lord has accomplished so that others may hear it; so even the opportunity to work is a gift. If, whenever it is hard, we regard that service as the price of maintaining our salvation, the grace we have received feels like a burden. But when we think of the Lord, who has already remitted our sins, we can carry out with thanksgiving the work He has entrusted even to us, who are lacking. The salvation we received as a gift continues all the way to the place of service we have received as a gift.

One can reject grace even while seeking salvation

Paul sets salvation obtained by grace against the heart that rejects that grace. *"What then? that which Israel seeketh for, that he obtained not; but the election obtained it, and the rest were hardened –ASV" (Romans 11:7)*. The statement that Israel has not obtained what it seeks does not mean that they had no interest at all in salvation. Because they tried to obtain it by the way of keeping the law and establishing their own righteousness, they could not accept the righteousness Christ has accomplished. The word that the elect have obtained it is connected with the

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grace mentioned before, namely, that those who believe in the righteousness God has given are saved.

The heart that tries to obtain salvation in its own way can become hardened even while staying close to the Bible. It may seem that knowing much of the word would make it easy to accept what the Lord has accomplished, but if one uses that knowledge to guard one's own righteousness, it instead pushes grace away. That is to lean on oneself, who has no power to resolve sin, while rejecting the word that the Lord has already removed sin. A hardened heart is a heart that knows the will of God and yet does not accept it but refuses it, and this problem is not found only in a particular nation. Today, too, when people say that they believe in Jesus and yet do not accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is because their hearts are hardened. When we push away this word that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and when we make the thoughts we consider right the ground of salvation, we, too, come to stand before the same warning.

That is why Paul testifies through the Scriptures to the state of not seeing and not hearing. *"Just as it is written: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day'" (Romans 11:8)*. Here the eyes and ears are not the eyes and ears of the body; connected with the hardness mentioned before, they refer to the heart that does not accept the righteousness of God. Even when the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached before their eyes and they hear its content with their ears, if they do not let go of the righteousness they have established, they cannot accept that grace of salvation.

God's keeping some of Israel in hardness is connected with salvation being brought to the Gentiles later on. Therefore, we cannot immediately conclude from this that God has forever removed the possibility of salvation from them. At the same time, neither can we say that, using that will of God as an excuse, it is all right to leave an unbelieving heart as it is. The reason Paul revealed grace and hardness together is to make us examine what righteousness we are believing in. Before weighing people's qualifications, we must accept the righteousness Christ has given.

The table becomes a snare that blocks the word of salvation

The warning concerning the hardened heart is revealed more concretely in the quotation of David's psalm. *"And David says: 'Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always'" (Romans 11:9–10)*. David offered this prayer at a time when he was being pursued by his adversaries and suffering hardship, and because opposing him was the same as opposing God, David could pray this way for the glory of God. Here the table refers to food, clothing, and shelter, by which people eat, dress, and live. This word does not mean that the things of life needed every day are themselves evil. It means that when people make those things alone the purpose of life and, because of them, reject the righteousness of God, food, clothing, and shelter instead become a snare that holds people fast. What is needed in order to live becomes a master that keeps them from accepting the word of salvation.

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When we accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we may fear that we will lose the recognition or the material benefits we have relied on until now. That gospel of the water and the Spirit is the news of salvation that Jesus accomplished by having our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paying the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. If, despite this, people know this salvation and yet do not accept it because of that fear, what they thought would protect them becomes a trap that blocks the way of salvation. Even in places where we must preach the righteousness of God, if we think only about the matter of making a living, we end up speaking only words that suit people's wishes. This word solemnly warns that such a heart, which tries to hold on to its own livelihood, leads toward rejecting the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The word that their eyes will be darkened and their backs always bowed down also shows the heavy outcome of such a life. If people work like slaves until their backs are bent, without seeing the grace of God, trying to hold on to their livelihood only by their own strength, then even though they seem to live well at first, when that strength is all gone they are ruined, and that toil does not save their souls either. This is because, in the end, they cannot escape God's judgment by presenting their own righteousness or their food, clothing, and shelter. The recompense is not some inconvenience of life that will pass lightly, but the judgment of hell received by those who knew the righteousness of God and yet did not believe. Therefore, even the fact that one's livelihood is plentiful cannot be evidence of salvation.

That does not mean, however, that difficult circumstances are a sign of having rejected the gospel of the water and the Spirit; believers, too, live and toil while having the flesh. What we must

examine is not whether our circumstances are high or low, but the heart, that is, what we live for. Unlike those who live only for their own food, clothing, and shelter, those who live serving the righteousness of God are helped by God when their strength is all gone and they are in danger. Therefore, we who have received the remission of sins, while taking care of our livelihood, have no reason to exalt that livelihood above the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and when we think first of the life the Lord has given us, we can handle even the matter of making a living within a life that serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Look toward salvation even after the fall

Even after giving such a solemn warning, Paul does not close the story of Israel with destruction. *"I say then, have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles" (Romans 11:11)*. It means that their unbelief does not end in a fall from which they can never turn back. The news of salvation they did not accept was preached to the Gentiles. Hearing this news that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, the Gentiles believed in the righteousness of God and received the remission of sins. Through that salvation, God provokes Israel to jealousy so that they, too, may return to the Lord.

Here, we cannot regard the salvation that came upon the Gentiles as a reward they received because they were better than Israel. The Gentiles, too, were sinners and could not obtain

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righteousness by works, so they needed exactly the same grace, and that very grace was brought to them through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore, we must not look at the unbelief of others and boast, thinking that we have taken their place. Rather, while giving thanks for the salvation that has come to us, we must hope that those people, too, will come to believe in the same righteousness.

Paul widens that expectation further with the word fullness. *"Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!" (Romans 11:12)*. The riches for the Gentiles do not mean that their material possessions increased, but that the blessing of salvation came to them. Then how joyful will that fullness be, in which Israel returns and obtains the remission of sins! It means that God's promise will be fulfilled, so that they, too, will believe in Christ and praise the grace of the Lord together. We must not judge that event by confining it to the number of people or the reactions before our eyes, but must put our hope in God, who has spoken.

What Paul first denied was the judgment that God had cast away His people. Now a clear reason for that denial can be seen. It is because God has left those who believe by grace, and the salvation preached to the Gentiles also continues on toward the salvation of Israel. Let us, too, give thanks for the grace by which the Lord has reserved us, and let us examine our hearts so that worries about our livelihood do not become a snare that blocks that word. Even toward those who are rejecting it now, let us hold the hope of salvation and keep preaching the righteousness of the Lord, who saved us, that is, the work in which Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Even in this age there is a remnant according to the election of God's grace

< Romans 11:1–8 >

"I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, 'LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life'? But what does the divine response say to him? 'I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.' Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.'"

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The seven thousand reserved in the time of Elijah

In the word of Romans 11:1–8, the apostle Paul said that there are many people in this world, and that among them there is a remnant chosen through God's grace of salvation. While saying that there is a remnant chosen by the grace of God, he mentioned that he himself was an Israelite, and he brought up what happened in the time of King Ahab, one of the kings among his forefathers of old. King Ahab seized and killed the people who believed in God. He also seized and killed the prophets. At that time God allowed a drought for three years and six months, and Elijah took refuge and went about fleeing. And even when Elijah said, "They have seized and killed everyone, and I alone am left of those who believe in God," the Lord said that He had still reserved seven thousand men who had not bowed the knee to Baal. Just so, the apostle Paul said that even in this age there is a remnant according to election through the grace of salvation that God has given. At that time, the people who believed in and followed the LORD God faithfully were all seized and killed. Ahab's wife was Jezebel, and she was a Gentile woman. And that woman brought in Baal, the god of her own country, and brought along the prophets and priests of Baal; she killed and persecuted the prophets of the LORD God in Israel, and she established Baal, the false god her own people believed in, as the state religion of Israel. Everyone who did not go along with Baal was seized and killed, yet even then God said that He had reserved seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal. It is the same now as well.

"*Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work.*

What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Romans 11:5–7). When King Ahab of the Old Testament was alive, he seized and killed all the prophets, and Elijah, saying that he alone was left and that Jezebel was even seeking to take his life, prayed to God, *"I alone am left, and they seek my life" (Romans 11:3)*. Just as God said at that time, *"I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Romans 11:4)*, so also in this age there is likewise a remnant according to the election of God's grace. Even now there is a remnant according to election.

In the Old Testament age, God gave Moses the Five Books of Moses—He gave the law of God and the law of sacrifice—and saved those who believed that fact. Then what about this present age? Now it is not the Old Testament age but the New Testament age; what kind of age is it now? It is an age in which there is a remnant according to God's election. There are still those who will be saved according to election by the grace of God. What is that grace of God? In this present age, one can be saved and can be chosen through the grace of God. In the Old Testament age God said to Elijah, "I have reserved seven thousand who have not yet bowed the knee," but as Elijah saw it, there was no one besides himself. However, God had prepared, among the people of Israel, such people as did not bow the knee to Baal but, keeping their hearts steadfast, were enduring and hoping only that the wicked king would die and that this time would pass. In that age God put such a heart within them and gave them faith, and so He reserved those who would not bow the knee to the god Baal. Just so, it is the same even now.

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The suffocation of a soul blocked by sin

Many people live in this world, and among them there are people who are chosen by God's grace of salvation. Although many people are living, not many are saved. It says that we receive election through God's grace of salvation; this is easy to say, but let us think about it once in this way and share it together.

When something is blocked, it is so stifling that we cannot bear it. We tend not to think much of how precious it is that we have been saved, that we have been saved from sin, but truly this salvation is a tremendous grace of God, a gift of God, and the gift of salvation. If what is blocking our hearts is sin, then living with our sins remaining just as they are is so suffocating that words cannot describe that suffocation. Is it not so suffocating that we can hardly breathe?

If there had been no grace of God's salvation in our hearts—if God had not given us this grace of salvation as a gift—how suffocating it would be! Today people who have sin go on living with that sin, but in truth, those who look closely into their own hearts cannot bear to live because of the suffocation caused by that sin. They cannot live because it is stifling, and they cannot live because it is suffocating. Just as, when what has been blocking is cleared away, light comes in, it becomes bright, and the air also circulates so that it feels good, so it is with our souls: we can live, breathing like this, because the Lord came to this earth, did that work Himself, and removed all our sins; if He had not removed our sins, we would die, spiritually suffocated. Truly the grace of salvation God has given us is amazing.

He first removed all sins and chooses those who believe

"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5). In the Old Testament, when all the people met a wicked king, they were all put to death if they said they believed in God, yet God still reserved many people who had not bowed the knee to Baal. He gave them such a heart and made them resist, and He reserved them. In the same way, today we too were all born as sinners and should have lived in sin and then gone to hell, yet even so God came to us, first removed our sins—first removed them by the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—gave us this gospel of the water and the Spirit, our salvation, as a gift, and is choosing those who believe and making them His own children so that they may live. It is by the grace of God that we have been saved. God has removed all our sins. Jesus came to this earth beforehand, received baptism from John the Baptist and had all our sins transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross and received the judgment for us, rose again from death, and removed our sins; that is how our sins have disappeared. And yet the word says that there is a remnant according to the election of God's grace.

God has removed all our sins and has removed all the sins of the people of the whole world. But the question is whether one believes this or not. On God's side, in order to make us God's people, Jesus came to this earth, bore our sins on His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and did the work of saving us. He has given as a gift that grace of removing all our sins, and those who believe are saved. And those who believe are chosen by God. They are chosen in this way: "You are My child; you are My people." But what happens to those who do

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not believe? Those who do not believe are destroyed. That is what the apostle Paul is now talking about. Even now there is a remnant according to the election of grace.

Billions of people are living on this globe. And God has removed the sins of these billions of people, without leaving out a single person. People will go on having children and living in this world and then passing on, but the Lord came to this earth and removed all the sins of all those people too, through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. And those who believe this are chosen by God. Saying, "You are My child," God chooses those who believe and makes them God's children. On God's side He has removed all our sins, and He chooses those who believe and makes them God's people and God's workers. This is what the apostle Paul is now saying here. So verses 6–7 say, *"And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded" (Romans 11:6–7).*

The people of Israel did not accept Jesus Christ and the works that Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth. Because they did not accept them, they did not obtain salvation, did not become children of God, and did not become a kingdom of priests living as God's children and workers. But today the elect have become those who have obtained this love of God and the blessings of God. What kind of people does God choose? Those who are lacking. Those who rely on the righteousness of God, those who believe in the righteousness of God—such people are saved and receive the love of God. So we say that they have been chosen. God has removed the sins of all people. God sent His Son to this earth, had Him receive baptism from John and be hung on the Cross, and so removed the sins of all people; then

He chooses as His children those who believe in God's love and God's righteousness, and He casts away those who do not believe in God's righteousness and God's love. Do you understand what this means? God chooses us; if God, without removing our sins, unconditionally said, "I choose you as My child. I choose. I do not choose so-and-so," that would be wrong. But God the Father has removed the sins of all people through His Son Jesus, through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and chooses people as His children; He chooses those who believe as His children. God has determined it this way: that He will choose as His children those who believe, those who believe in the righteousness of God. So those who believe in the righteousness of God are chosen by God, become God's children and workers, and also become those who have obtained all the blessings God gives. Then what happens to the rest of the people? It says that their hearts were hardened. So, as for what became of these people, verse 8 says, *"Just as it is written: 'God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day'" (Romans 11:8)*.

A spirit of stupor, eyes that they should not see, and ears that they should not hear

Today there are many people who believe in Jesus and many who have other religions. But those who truly seek God believe right away when they meet the righteousness of God. They believe, saying, "So Jesus has removed all our sins in this way. That is why He tells us to believe." When they hear that the Lord already bore my sin when He received baptism from John the Baptist, and that at that time, saying, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, He had all sins passed

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on to Him, they believe, saying, "Then my sin was passed on too." And because Jesus was hung on the Cross and said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, they believe in this way: "He received all our judgment. He received all our punishment. That is how He saved us." By believing in this way they become children of God, become people without sin, become God's workers, and also come to receive all the blessings God has promised. But as for those who are not like this, even when we preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to them, their hearts are in a spirit of stupor.

Their hearts are confused, and they do not know what is what. A spirit of stupor and eyes that they should not see—it means that although they do have eyes, they cannot see. Even though the word of God is written like this, they look at it and yet do not see it. And ears that they should not hear—they hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet do not hear it. Why is it that they hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet do not hear it? It is because God has made it that way. God has made it so that no one obtains salvation if he is not upright in heart, if he is not honest when he comes before God. So their eyes look but do not see, their ears hear but do not hear, and their hearts are confused and in a stupor, so that their hearts are not settled. God has blocked the way so that no one obtains salvation except those who honestly confess their own shortcomings before God, who, wanting to be saved before God, take hold of God's salvation, believe it, and accept it, saying, "Thank You," and who have a pure heart like that of little children. So today there are countless people, and countless people who believe in Jesus, yet those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit look and do not see, even though we preach it to them and also preach it through books. They hear with their ears and do not hear. Because their hearts are confused, because their hearts are not

right before God, and because they do not stand on God's side, God has cursed them. That is why, though there are countless people on this globe, they are not saved. Some people meet this gospel of the water and the Spirit and say, "I have met such a precious truth for the first time. I am a pastor and a doctor of theology, but I have met such a pure word of truth for the first time," while others see the very same word with their eyes, but because their hearts are confused and their spiritual eyes are closed, they do not know what it means even when they look at the letters. Such people are cast away by God.

Those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have been cast away. Do you understand what being cast away means? When we use something and then throw it away, don't we take it to an incinerator and burn it? God made people resembling the image of God, and through His Son He removed all the sins of the people He had made. Having done so, He chose those who believe and made them His children so that they enjoy God's riches and glory, and those who do not believe He burns up in His presence. That is hell. There are many people on this globe who do not believe, and we find them strange. We wonder how those people can fail to believe, how they cannot believe when the gospel of the water and the Spirit is this easy and this clear, how they can fail to believe when, if we look closely, they calculate well and do well in social life; so we find it all the more strange. But we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit because we have found favor in God's heart. It is because our hearts are right before God, because we acknowledge that we are people who sin every day and are bound for hell, and also because we have received the remission of sins by gratefully accepting by faith, with gratitude, that the Lord came to this earth and removed all our sins with the water and the blood—it is because we have no sin that God makes us His children. But

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those who are not like this—those who hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit and still do not believe, those who put forward their own rightness even before this gospel of the water and the Spirit—say, "I am lacking in this area, but how well I do in other things! I do far better than you. I pray well and do many good deeds, I am strong, I earn a lot of money and help many people, and I do nothing particularly wicked to others. I am a person who does only many good things." Even if the gospel of the water and the Spirit is brought to such people, they do not look at it. They do not understand it. Because of this they are cast away. They come to go to hell and to be cursed.

God is the One who chose us

If we have believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can know that we are those who have been chosen before God. This means that God loved us, removed our sins, made us righteous people, made us God's children, and chose us as those who will live with Him forever in His kingdom and enjoy everlasting life. Not only did He save us from sin, but He also chose us as those who will live together with Him in the kingdom of God, enjoying riches and glory forever. God chooses us; it is not that we choose God. Therefore those who have received the remission of sins are blessed people. Even though we may possess nothing in this world, God has given to us who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit the blessing of living in His kingdom while enjoying glory. Therefore we must know that those who have been chosen by God are people who have received blessing. We are those who have received blessing.

We have not only received the remission of sins but have also become those who can receive the blessing of being able to live

forever in the kingdom of God. To have been chosen by God, to hear, know, and believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit—although after receiving the remission of sins we have weaknesses and often stumble, those who nevertheless know how to bring their shortcomings before God, how to hold on to the righteousness of God, and how to believe and give thanks are blessed people. Those who know how to be thankful for God's love, those who know how to be grateful that God has saved us, those who believe, and those who rely on Him are people who receive blessing. But those who call on God's love and God's righteousness and yet say, "Well, I will believe, as a favor. But I have a lot to be proud of," will find it hard to be chosen. This is because choosing is God's choosing of us. God does not choose those who have much of their own righteousness. He does not choose people like Esau. He does not choose people like King Ahab or Jezebel. Absalom was one of the people of Israel and a prince; he had long, fine hair, was taller than ordinary people, and was handsome and good-looking, but he rebelled in order to seize his father's throne. To show that he was the king of this country, he lay with his father's concubines in the sight of all Israel. But what happened? He went out to war, and as he was fleeing because it was dangerous, his hair caught in a hanging tree branch; the mule he was riding went out from under him, and he was left hanging in the air and died, pierced by spears.

What does that tell us? It tells of a person who was cursed because he had much of his own rightness. In a word, what do we have much of that is right? What do we have much of to be proud of, and what do we have that is clever? We know nothing. We are people who do not even know what is behind that wall—whether there is a snake or something else there. Yet, though there is hardly any difference among us, human beings compare

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themselves with one another and exalt themselves as better. We must not become people who are cursed.

It is only natural that very few are chosen

There are many people on this globe who believe in Jesus, but how many of them believe when they come across the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the righteousness of God? There are so many who come across the gospel of the water and the Spirit and still do not believe. Among the people of Israel too, people like Paul and the many who followed Paul received the remission of sins. But the countless other Israelites besides them all failed to receive the remission of sins.

Even in this present age there are many religions that claim to believe in God. These people are not chosen by God. Why is that? It is because their hearts are in a stupor, because they cannot understand the words of the Bible even when they see them with their eyes, and because they do not believe what they hear even when they hear it with their ears. That is why those who have been chosen by God are very few. Even though countless people go on the broad way, the word says, *"Narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it" (Matthew 7:14)*. Only a very small minority of people are saved. Only that very small minority are those who have been chosen by God. So we need not wonder at this in the least. Among the countless people, those who have received God's love and been chosen are those who accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the countless others did not accept it. Because of this, the result turned out that way.

Of the billions of people on this globe, how many will receive the remission of sins and go to the kingdom of heaven?

Extremely few. And after receiving the remission of sins, what percentage make up their minds, saying, "This gospel is real," believe in this way, and live for this gospel of the water and the Spirit? That too is very few.

Today, as we think about this, if we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I hope you will know that you are those who have been chosen by God out of so many people, and give thanks. I am happy. I am very happy and glad. I am glad that I can preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and I am glad because I am very happy. Whatever work we do, it is all the work of God, isn't it? Among the Israelites too, only an extremely small number received the remission of sins, and among the people living in this age too, only a very, very small number—a few from that nation, a few from that family—have received the remission of sins in that way. They have been chosen. Nevertheless, we are preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit for those people. We must pray, "Grant ears that can hear," and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Many people, even when they hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit and come across the gospel of the water and the Spirit, do not understand and are confused; confused into thinking that what they believed in the past is right and that their own thoughts are right, they are not receiving the salvation God has given. So it is heartbreaking.

Give thanks that we are included in this word

Let us give thanks that we have received the remission of sins, that we have become the elect, and that we are included in this word: *"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5)*. I am

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included here. What about you? Are you included here? If you are not included, accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit even now. For apart from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one can never receive the remission of sins. If someone says that one can receive the remission of sins even without the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that person is someone trying to be saved by his own deeds. He is someone now exerting himself through his own deeds. I hope such people will repent. No matter how hard one strives by deeds, one cannot be saved. Why is that? It is because one does more bad things than right things.

Please know this fact and give thanks to God. The apostle Paul spoke about this part, because if we did not know this fact, we might think, "Why have only we, a small number, received the remission of sins, and why are only we living like this, fretting anxiously to spread this gospel? It is too hard. Isn't something wrong here?" But God has delivered us even from among people who all should go to hell. During the rainy season, when a river floods, an enormous torrent of muddy water rushes by. Whoever falls into it is swept away completely. There is no one who can get out. In the midst of that, He has saved us one by one. That is how we have been saved. Please know that fact; know that we were people who truly would have been destroyed forever if there had been no grace of God's salvation, but that God had pity on us and saved us, and give thanks. Please believe this. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The grace of God, who never casts away the people He foreknew

< Romans 11:1–12 >

“I say then, has God cast away His people? Certainly not! For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin. God has not cast away His people whom He foreknew. Or do you not know what the Scripture says of Elijah, how he pleads with God against Israel, saying, ‘LORD, they have killed Your prophets and torn down Your altars, and I alone am left, and they seek my life’? But what does the divine response say to him? ‘I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal.’ Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace. And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work. What then? Israel has not obtained what it seeks; but the elect have obtained it, and the rest were blinded. Just as it is written: ‘God has given them a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should not see And ears that they should not hear, To this very day.’ And David says: ‘Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always.’ I say then,

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have they stumbled that they should fall? Certainly not! But through their fall, to provoke them to jealousy, salvation has come to the Gentiles. Now if their fall is riches for the world, and their failure riches for the Gentiles, how much more their fullness!"

Dear beloved saints, Romans chapter 11, which we have opened together today, is the place where the apostle Paul ties the final knot of the heavy story he has unfolded through chapters 9 and 10. In the two preceding chapters, Paul painfully laid out the fact that Israel, trying to establish righteousness by the works of the law, met Christ as a stumbling stone and fell. But now, coming to chapter 11, he shows in one large picture that God's greater and deeper providence flows above that whole course of failure. It is that God has by no means cast away Israel, but rather has always kept a remnant according to the election of grace, and that His decree to show mercy at last to all people, whether Gentiles or Israel, is fully accomplished.

Has God cast away His people? Certainly not!

First, in verse 1, Paul throws out one weighty question. *"Has God cast away His people?" (Romans 11:1)*. And immediately he answers firmly, *"Certainly not!" (Romans 11:1)*. The first evidence Paul presents was none other than himself. *"I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin" (Romans 11:1)*. The event in which Saul, who had once persecuted the church, met the Lord on the road to Damascus and turned around was not because of his own righteousness or effort. It was only because of God's decree of grace. That is why

Paul, pointing to his own existence, testified that God had not abolished the whole of Israel, but was Himself keeping within it the people He foreknew.

Here we must deeply take to heart the words *"His people whom He foreknew" (Romans 11:2)*. This word means that God decreed before the foundation of the world whom He would save, and calls them by the grace of redemption He would accomplish in Jesus Christ. It does not depend on people's works or lineage. The One who reserves a people on the basis of God's foreknowledge and election alone is none other than our Lord. Therefore, this promise that God does not cast away the people He foreknew is the guarantee of unchanging love toward all who believe in the righteousness that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Because Jesus had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, completely bore the price of that sin on the Cross, and established our righteousness permanently by rising again on the third day, those who have accepted this gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts do not fall away from God's people in any circumstances.

God, who Himself reserved the seven thousand who had not bowed the knee to Baal

To prove this fact, Paul brings in the story of Elijah. It was the time when King Ahab and his wife Jezebel set up Baal, a foreign god, as the state religion of Israel and persecuted the prophets and altars of the LORD. Even after winning a great victory over the four hundred and fifty prophets of Baal on Mount Carmel, Elijah fled all the way to Mount Horeb in the

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face of Jezebel's threat. The plea Elijah offered there was as follows: *"I alone am left, and they seek my life" (Romans 11:3)*. In his own eyes, the whole of Israel had submitted before Baal, and he alone was left serving the LORD.

But God's answer reveals an entirely different truth. *"I have reserved for Myself seven thousand men who have not bowed the knee to Baal" (Romans 11:4)*. Here there is a word we must not miss: "I have reserved for Myself." The faithfulness of those seven thousand was not produced by their own will or effort. From beginning to end, it was the result of God Himself holding and preserving their hearts. Though they were not visible within Elijah's sight, God Himself placed steadfastness in the hearts of the seven thousand and kept them from yielding to idols.

Of whom would these seven thousand be a type? They are the born-again people whose hearts God Himself opened and whom He caused to accept the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth. People cannot reject idols and stand upright before God by their own religiosity or morality. Only when God pours into our hearts the truth of salvation—that Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and accomplished salvation through the blood of the Cross and the resurrection—can we at last turn our backs on idols and be preserved as a righteous people. Even in a dark age in which it seems there is not a single born-again righteous person, God, according to His decree, leaves people here and there who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He Himself holds their hearts so that they do not depart from the way of truth.

At this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace

Now Paul does not stay with the old story. In verse 5, with the single expression *"at this present time,"* he connects that promise directly to our own time. *"Even so then, at this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5)*. It means that God, who in Old Testament times gave the law and the sacrificial system through Moses and saved those who believed in them, is in New Testament times calling His people through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which He accomplished by Himself sending His Son Jesus Christ. Therefore, even today, among countless people, there certainly are those who have relied on the grace of God, accepted the truth, and received the remission of sins. These are none other than *"a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5)*.

Grace and works can never coexist

And in verse 6, Paul makes one very important thing clear. *"And if by grace, then it is no longer of works; otherwise grace is no longer grace. But if it is of works, it is no longer grace; otherwise work is no longer work" (Romans 11:6)*. If salvation is a gift given by grace, not even a single grain of human effort or merit must be added to it. The moment even a single grain of works is added, it is no longer grace but becomes a transaction, and the righteousness God Himself prepared is degraded into something man boasts of. That is why grace and works can never coexist in one place.

Here lies a decisive turning point that we must clearly discern. A faith that emphasizes only the blood of the Cross and

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considers that salvation is completed only when one adds one's own repentance, good deeds, and religious devotion to it has already departed from the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the gospel of grace. Our salvation consists of the event in which Jesus had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River; the event in which, with that sin passed on to Him, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died, and so completely bore the price of sin; and the event in which He guaranteed righteousness by rising again on the third day—that is all. Through these three events, Jesus remitted once and for all the sin of the world, including our sins. Only those who accept this truth in their hearts are called to be the remnant of whom the word says, *"At this present time there is a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5)*.

The election obtained it, and the rest were hardened

So verse 7 shows Israel divided into two groups: the majority, who tried to establish righteousness by the works of the law but in the end did not attain righteousness, and the minority, who received God's election and obtained righteousness in Christ. The reason they did not obtain what they sought through the law was not that they were lazy. It was because they tried to build the way of righteousness on their own works. On the other hand, the reason the elect could obtain it was that they accepted in their hearts not their own works but the righteousness of Christ, which God Himself prepared.

Verse 8 depicts the state that came upon those who had become so hardened as *"a spirit of stupor, Eyes that they should*

not see And ears that they should not hear" (Romans 11:8). Their eyes are clearly open, and their ears are hearing. But when they face the truth God has prepared, their sight instead grows dark and their hearing is shut. For those who approach the truth without laying down their own righteousness and while still holding on to their religious pride, even when they hear the same gospel of the water and the Spirit, everything grows dark as though covered by a thick black cloth, and they cannot recognize the truth. But the hearts of those who honestly confess that they are lacking beings who cannot but go to hell because of sin, and who fall prostrate before the gospel of the water and the Spirit with a pure heart like little children, are opened wide, and they accept that gospel. Such people are truly the ones Paul refers to as *"the elect" (Romans 11:7)*.

A life in which the table becomes a snare, and a life in which the back is straightened

In verses 9 and 10, Paul brings in David's prayer. *"Let their table become a snare and a trap, A stumbling block and a recompense to them. Let their eyes be darkened, so that they do not see, And bow down their back always" (Romans 11:9–10)*. Here the word *"table"* refers to people's daily provisions, that is, what they eat, what they wear, and where they dwell. Those whose hearts are hardened and who cannot accept the truth do not set the purpose of their lives on the righteousness of Christ, who is above, but become bound only to food, clothing, and shelter. Therefore, those provisions instead end up becoming a snare. Some people, even after encountering the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the truth, turn their backs on the truth so as not to lose their position and comfort. That bent back

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shows exactly the miserable state of man, who, crushed all his life under his own greed and fear, cannot straighten up. But those who have accepted in their hearts the truth that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, completely bore the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and established righteousness permanently through His resurrection live with their backs straightened, looking to the enduring riches and glory that are above.

Israel's fall, which instead became riches for the Gentiles

And finally, in verses 11 and 12, Paul asks again in exactly the same form of speech he used in verse 1. *"Have they stumbled that they should fall?" (Romans 11:11)*. And again he firmly denies it: *"Certainly not!" (Romans 11:11)*. Israel's fall was not the end by which God meant to cast them away forever. Rather, it was placed within God's greater decree to let salvation flow to the Gentiles. It means that Israel met Christ as a stumbling stone and fell, and as salvation came upon the Gentiles through that fall, God instead provokes Israel to jealousy so that in the end they, too, return to the truth.

Paul compresses all of this with the words *"how much more."* That is, if Israel's fall and failure have already brought such riches to the Gentiles, how much greater riches will come on the day when that Israel returns to Christ again and is made full! The riches spoken of here are not simply material abundance. They are a spiritual abundance that includes the remission of sins, the garment of righteousness, the right of God's children, and even the glory of heaven. The moment we, too, who had lived without

knowing the law, accept this gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts, we are saved from sin and become righteous, are adopted as children of God, and become rich people who inherit all the promises of heaven.

We are the very remnant according to the election of grace

Dear beloved saints, the reason Paul firmly answered twice that it could not be so is clear. God never casts away His people whom He foreknew. And that salvation, whether for Gentiles or for Israel, whether in the past or today, always comes by one and the same way. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the whole world, including even our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and through the blood of the Cross and the resurrection. If we have accepted this gospel in our hearts, we are the very ones who are *"a remnant according to the election of grace" (Romans 11:5)*. So I pray in the name of the Lord that all of us may become people who straighten our backs, look to the glory that is above, and preach this blessed truth all the more diligently to the souls who do not yet know these riches. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The branch that has been grafted in cannot boast

< Romans 11:13–24 >

“For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, ‘Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.’ Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you

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were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

If someone who has received the grace of salvation looks down on those who do not yet believe, he has forgotten how he himself was saved. While rejoicing in the salvation that has come to the Gentiles, Paul keeps that joy from turning into boasting toward Israel. What he shows us is the branch that has been grafted in. Just as a branch did not come to life by making a root for itself, we too did not become God's people by preparing our own righteousness. The heart fitting for those who stand by grace is not conceit but gratitude.

Seeking the salvation of others through the ministry received

Paul values his own ministry of having been sent to the Gentiles. *"For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry" (Romans 11:13)*. That he regards as glorious the work of salvation reaching the Gentiles does not mean that he has lost interest in the salvation of his own flesh and blood. He says that through the salvation of the Gentiles he seeks to provoke his own flesh and blood to jealousy and to save some of them. Therefore, in his joy over his ministry there is also a heart that longs for those who do not yet believe to return to the Lord as well.

When we Gentiles hear this word too, we must look in the same direction. The fact that God has saved us is not grounds for

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confirming our superiority in comparison with those who do not yet believe; rather, it is a grace that leads us, as those who have received the remission of sins, to preach the righteousness of God and to long for the salvation of others. We have received the remission of sins because Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment, and rose again from death—not because we are better than others. Paul valued their salvation so highly that he posed his question by likening God's accepting Israel to life from the dead. For us too, a person's being saved must look far greater than the fact that his unbelief has lasted a long time.

It is the root that supports the branch

Paul explains the hope of salvation toward Israel by citing the firstfruit of grain flour and the lump, and the root and the branches. *"For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches" (Romans 11:16)*. The firstfruit of grain flour refers to what was set apart as holy and offered to God. Israel, too, as the descendants of Abraham, is a people who received God's promise. Because Paul places their root in Abraham, the father of faith, he does not look only at their present unbelief and say that there is no longer any way of salvation for them. Just as Abraham believed the word and obtained righteousness, there is for them too the way of salvation obtained by faith.

In the word that follows, some of the branches are broken off, and the Gentiles, being a wild olive tree, are grafted in among them. The Gentiles were originally not God's people, but by believing in the righteousness of God they came to partake of

the same grace of salvation. They did not obtain that place by growing a qualification of righteousness out of their own root. This is precisely why Paul tells the branch that has been grafted in not to boast. *"Do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you" (Romans 11:18)*. One who stands by the grace received from the root cannot exalt himself against the root and the other branches.

God's promise did not come into being when we began to believe. God, who spoke ahead of us, fulfilled that promise, and we obtained salvation by believing in the righteousness He gave. That righteousness is not something we produced. It is the righteousness of God that Jesus fulfilled by having the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and paying the price of that sin, and rising again from death. Therefore we cannot take the fact that faith has arisen in us as evidence that our own wisdom or ability is superior to that of others. If we remember what it means to have received grace, what we have to present to others is not our own boasting but the Lord, who is the Savior. The deeper our thankfulness grows, the more we come to long for others also to receive the same grace.

Stand by faith in the goodness of God

To the heart that, looking at the branches that were broken off, would say that the place was made because of itself, Paul makes the reason clear. Israel was broken off because they did not believe, and the Gentiles stand because they believe. It is not that the places were exchanged by comparing the excellence of nations or individuals; it is a matter of whether one believes in

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the righteousness God has fulfilled. Therefore we must take to heart the warning not to be haughty but to fear. In the light of the word that God did not spare even the natural branches, no one can regard himself as safe on the strength of his background alone, and believers too must fear uniting their hearts with those who do not believe in the Lord's salvation and standing together with them in that place.

Since what Paul distinguishes is not the size of one's deeds but unbelief and belief, we must not take this fear as an anxiety that we must make our conduct perfect in order not to have our salvation taken away. The broken-off branches were broken off because they did not believe, and the branches that stand stand only because they believed; it is not a word telling believers to tremble, not knowing when they might lose their salvation. That is why the next word also continues in the direction of continuing in God's goodness. *"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off" (Romans 11:22)*. The goodness of God is the grace by which He had pity on sinners and accomplished complete salvation for them. God has made the whole of that salvation for us so that we obtain salvation if we only believe, so continuing in that goodness does not mean building up more of my own qualifications; it means remaining in a heart that believes in the righteousness He has given.

Jesus received baptism from John in order to establish us in that grace. At that time He had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all. The Lord, who bore those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross and thereby received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and He rose again from death and accomplished the salvation of the remission of sins. Because the basis for

making us righteous lies in the Lord in this way, there is no reason, even when the shortcomings of our flesh are visible, to make our own deeds the prop of salvation again.

On the contrary, if one does not believe in the Lord's righteousness, one's background or religious life cannot shield one from judgment. The severity of God does not allow that fact to be passed over lightly. The word telling us to consider goodness and severity together teaches how important it is to believe in the salvation Christ has accomplished. One cannot push away the word that the Lord has removed all sins and then say that he is all right because he has lived a life of faith for a long time. The branch that stands by grace must rely, today as well, on the Lord who gave that grace.

Look to God's power to graft them in again

In the last word toward the broken-off branches, the way of restoration lies open. *"And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again" (Romans 11:23)*. What they need again is not to make righteousness on their own and present it before God. It is not to continue in unbelief but to accept the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Jesus had not only their sins but all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in their place, and rose again from death. Since Paul makes clear that the power to graft in belongs to God, we cannot judge a person's salvation to be impossible merely because of his unbelief up to now.

God, who grafted the Gentiles, who were a wild olive tree, into a cultivated olive tree, can also graft Israel, the natural

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branches, into their own olive tree. Having this hope does not mean that they obtain salvation automatically by lineage alone. Just before this, Paul spoke of not continuing in unbelief. What both the Gentiles and Israel need is a heart that believes in the same righteousness of Christ, and the power to make them His people belongs to the same God. However lacking one's deeds may be, one becomes one of God's people simply by believing in that righteousness, so it is not that Israel obtains salvation by a way different from ours.

This word also changes our attitude when we meet again someone who used to reject the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even if we remember how he responded before, we must not limit the Lord's power by that memory. For we too were not righteous branches of ourselves, yet the Lord grafted us in. Therefore, rather than putting forward our own experience or record of faith to lower the other person, we must let him hear the fact that the Lord bore not only that person's sins but all the sin of mankind. Holding on to the hope of salvation is not taking unbelief lightly but seeing the Lord's grace and power as great.

A heart that looks down on those who do not yet believe does not befit a branch that has been grafted in. The reason we stand lies not in a righteousness we achieved ourselves but in the goodness the Lord has bestowed. Let us give thanks for that grace, stand by faith, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, hoping that God will graft in even those who do not yet believe. What a branch has to boast of is not its own strength but the salvation of the Lord who gave it life. Since Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death, we, who were a wild olive tree, have come to life through this work. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Do not boast of the grace of being grafted into the cultivated olive tree, but continue in the root with a fearful heart

< Romans 11:13–24 >

"For I speak to you Gentiles; inasmuch as I am an apostle to the Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them. For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead? For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches. And if some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches. But if you do boast, remember that you do not support the root, but the root supports you. You will say then, 'Branches were broken off that I might be grafted in.' Well said. Because of unbelief they were broken off, and you stand by faith. Do not be haughty, but fear. For if God did not spare the natural branches, He may not spare you either. Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God: on

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those who fell, severity; but toward you, goodness, if you continue in His goodness. Otherwise you also will be cut off. And they also, if they do not continue in unbelief, will be grafted in, for God is able to graft them in again. For if you were cut out of the olive tree which is wild by nature, and were grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree, how much more will these, who are natural branches, be grafted into their own olive tree?"

Dear beloved saints, earlier, in chapter 11, verses 11 and 12, the apostle Paul said that the fall of Israel had instead become riches for the Gentiles. Then, from verse 13, he confesses concerning the ministry he received, that of being the apostle to the Gentiles, that he regards it as glorious. And next, he unfolds that famous parable of the olive tree. Dear fellow believers, how did we Gentiles come to be grafted into the tree of promise? And with what kind of heart must we hold on to the grace we have received in this way? Today's word clearly shows us how we have been grafted into the salvation that Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, paying the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death, and also what the reason is that we must never boast of that grace.

The apostle's mission of saving his kinsmen by provoking them to jealousy

In verses 13 and 14 the apostle Paul confesses as follows concerning his ministry: *"Inasmuch as I am an apostle to the*

Gentiles, I magnify my ministry, if by any means I may provoke to jealousy those who are my flesh and save some of them" (Romans 11:13–14). Dear fellow believers, did the work of the apostle Paul going out into the Gentile world and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit simply end with saving the Gentiles? No. It came from that deep motive of love, which sought through that work to provoke his own people Israel to jealousy so that at least some among them might come back into the place of salvation.

Dear fellow believers, where does the expression *"provoke to jealousy"* come from here? It is God's method that had already been foretold in the song of Moses in Deuteronomy chapter 32. Israel tried to establish righteousness by their own deeds and failed to accept the righteousness that is in Christ. But to cause Israel, on seeing the Gentiles, who had not even known the law, instead being clothed with the righteousness of Christ and becoming children of God, to realize only then what they themselves had lost—this is the providence of God. The apostle Paul placed his glory as an apostle in the very fact that his ministry was the instrument that stirred up that holy jealousy.

Dear fellow believers, what does this show us? It clearly shows us where the mission of the born-again righteous lies. Would a person who has received in his heart the truth of the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and has been born again, stop at the remission of his own sins alone? That is not so. He must live the life of a worker who lets the riches of that salvation flow to those who have not yet met the truth. Just as the apostle Paul sought, through his ministry as the apostle to the Gentiles, to provoke even Israel, his kinsmen, to jealousy and lead them to salvation, we too today, as those who have received this gospel of the water

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and the Spirit, must live carrying that holy burden of seeking to save even one more soul.

Branches connected to the holy root

And in verse 15 the apostle Paul says as follows: *"For if their being cast away is the reconciling of the world, what will their acceptance be but life from the dead?" (Romans 11:15)*. Dear fellow believers, Israel's being placed, by rejecting Christ, in that position where they seemed to be cast away for a time instead became the way for the Gentiles to be reconciled to God. Then how great a glory it will be when that Israel later returns to Christ again and is accepted! The apostle Paul describes that event with the strong expression *"life from the dead."* It means that it is an event comparable to the power of the resurrection, in which those who had been spiritually dead come alive again.

And in verse 16 the apostle Paul emphasizes the same truth again with two pictures from the Old Testament: *"For if the firstfruit is holy, the lump is also holy; and if the root is holy, so are the branches" (Romans 11:16)*. Dear fellow believers, the first is the offering of the firstfruits of grain flour found in Numbers chapter 15. When the firstfruits of grain flour are offered as a holy offering, is not that whole lump of bread set apart as holy? In the same way, the whole nation of Israel, which came from the holy root of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, is connected to the holiness of that root. The second is the parable of the olive tree. According to that natural principle that if the root is holy, the branches are also holy, the sap and holiness of that root flow into the branches that have grown from the root of promise.

Dear fellow believers, then what would that "holy root" the apostle speaks of be? It refers to the promise given to Abraham, and to Jesus Christ, who is the fulfillment of that promise. The salvation in which Jesus had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, fully bore the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and guaranteed righteousness through His resurrection is the very root of all holiness. Only those who are connected to this root in their hearts become holy branches and are formed into a part of the holy lump. Dear fellow believers, therefore, whoever wishes to enjoy that life of resurrection, the life of living from among the dead, must be grafted into this holy root in his heart, not by his own deeds.

The wild olive tree grafted into the cultivated olive tree

So in verses 17 and 18 the apostle Paul unfolds that parable of the olive tree more concretely. *"If some of the branches were broken off, and you, being a wild olive tree, were grafted in among them, and with them became a partaker of the root and fatness of the olive tree, do not boast against the branches" (Romans 11:17–18)*. Dear fellow believers, what is the cultivated olive tree here? It is the whole nation of Israel, which grew from the root of promise. What are the branches that were broken off? They are the Israel of unbelief, which was cut off by rejecting Christ. Then what is the wild olive tree? It is we Gentiles, who originally had no promise at all. Dear fellow believers, how amazing an event of grace it is that the branches of that wild olive tree, which originally had no promise at all, were grafted into the very place where the natural branches had

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been cut off and became partakers of the sap of the root of the cultivated olive tree!

That is why the apostle Paul firmly warns the Gentile saints, *"Do not boast against the branches" (Romans 11:18)*. Dear fellow believers, did we Gentiles come to be grafted in because we ourselves were so great? No. Rather, we only came to enter that empty place where the original branches had been broken off. Moreover, do the branches support the root? No. The root supports the branches. Exactly according to that natural principle, it is not the Gentile saints who give life to the root of promise, but the root of promise that gives life to the Gentile saints. So the attitude of us Gentile saints having a sense of superiority toward Israel or regarding God's grace as our own right is the very pride of which we must repent immediately.

Dear fellow believers, this parable awakens us to two truths at the same time. What is the first? It is that our having been grafted into this gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, into the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, is entirely the grace of God. It never came from one's own religious efforts or moral superiority. What is the second? It is that all the spiritual vitality of the born-again righteous is not in themselves, but in Jesus Christ, who is the root of promise. So the very moment we fall away from His righteousness and try to establish our own righteousness again, our spiritual vitality dries up, just as a branch loses its sap.

Do not be haughty, but fear

Dear fellow believers, however, Gentile saints may hold this kind of shallow logic of boasting. The apostle Paul draws it out in advance and confronts it. This is verse 19. *"Branches were*

broken off that I might be grafted in" (Romans 11:19). Dear fellow believers, at first glance such a thought seems right. But the apostle points out precisely the danger hidden within it. The apostle first agrees, saying, *"Well said."* Yet he immediately defines its essence anew. Were the natural branches broken off because their lineage was lacking? No. They were broken off *"because of unbelief."* Did the Gentile branches come to stand because they themselves were superior? No. They stood *"by faith."*

So the apostle firmly commands, *"Do not be haughty, but fear" (Romans 11:20)*. Dear fellow believers, what kind of fear is this fear? It is not anxiety over losing salvation. It is the fear of holy reverence. It is a warning that every attitude of conceit—putting forward one's own righteousness, regarding the grace once received as one's own right, or turning one's heart away from Jesus Christ, the root of promise, and trying to establish righteousness again by one's own deeds—is no different from that unbelief which caused the natural branches to be broken off. And verse 21 adds weight to this warning. If God did not spare even the original branches, how would He spare the grafted branches when they fall into the same unbelief?

Dear fellow believers, what does this word make clear to us? First, it makes clear that there is only one reason the righteous became righteous: the faith that accepts in the heart this truth, that Jesus had the sin of the world, which contains even our sins, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death. Second, it makes clear that the born-again righteous must not regard their salvation as a right held in their own hands, but must always live bound to Christ, the root of promise, in holy fear. The moment they fill their hearts with their own religious boasting or the

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righteousness of deeds, even born-again people become empty branches that spiritually do not enjoy those riches.

Consider the goodness and severity of God

So in verse 22 the apostle Paul gives the central command of this entire passage: *"Therefore consider the goodness and severity of God" (Romans 11:22)*. Dear fellow believers, the apostle Paul is asking us to place the two aspects of faith in one place and look at them at the same time. The severity of God comes upon those who rejected the truth and fell, and to those who continue in His goodness, that goodness flows unceasingly. But one condition is attached to this promise: *"If you continue in His goodness" (Romans 11:22)*. Dear fellow believers, does this mean that the goodness of God is fickle? Never. It is an exhortation that you should not turn your heart away from that goodness and turn back to your own righteousness. The goodness of God in which we must continue is revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which 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 for us with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

And in verses 23 and 24 the apostle turns his gaze back to Israel. Though Israel is now broken off in unbelief, they will be grafted in again if only they do not remain in that unbelief. What does the apostle confess about that possibility? *"For God is able to graft them in again" (Romans 11:23)*. Dear fellow believers, even such a thing as a wild olive tree being grafted contrary to nature into a cultivated olive tree has happened. Then how much more natural it will be for branches that originally belonged to

that tree to be grafted again into their own original tree! Dear fellow believers, God is the One who can give life again even to a branch that was once broken off, if only that person casts away unbelief and opens his heart before the truth.

A life that continues in God's goodness and is lived toward each soul

Dear beloved saints, the truth that today's word from chapter 11, verses 13 through 24, teaches us is clear. What kind of people were we originally? We were branches of a wild olive tree that had no promise at all. But in the place where the natural branches had been broken off, we were grafted in entirely by the grace of God and became partakers of the sap of the root of the cultivated olive tree. Who is that root? It is Jesus Christ, the fulfillment of that promise, who had all our sins transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, fully bore the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and guaranteed righteousness through His resurrection.

Dear fellow believers, so what must we be careful about? We must not boast. Our standing in this place is not because we are so great, but only because that root is keeping us alive. There is only one way for us to continue in that goodness: the faith that holds on to this gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts. The moment we turn our hearts away from that root in order to establish our own righteousness again, we too end up becoming empty branches. So we must not be haughty, but rather live firmly bound to Christ, the root of that promise, in holy fear.

Dear fellow believers, can we also carelessly conclude about those who have not yet met the truth, "That person is beyond

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hope"? We cannot. For the power to graft them in again does not lie with man, but with God, who Himself prepared the root of promise. So I pray in the name of the Lord that we may all become such blessed born-again righteous people, who, just as the apostle Paul sought to save even one more soul by provoking his kinsmen to jealousy, continue in that goodness with holy fear and at the same time live carrying that holy burden of seeking to lead even one more soul before this gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

God's purpose in confining all in disobedience lies in mercy

< Romans 11:25–32 >

"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.' Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all."

When we see someone who has rejected the gospel of the water and the Spirit for a long time, we feel like withdrawing even our hope for him. Toward such a heart, Paul makes known

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to the believers who are Gentiles God's will toward Israel, and he even reveals the reason God has confined all people in disobedience. The salvation that came to us was not obtained because we were wiser, but is the result of God's having pity on us, who were unable to obey; therefore, we cannot block by our own judgment that mercy which He will also show to others.

It is not a salvation we obtained by our own wisdom

The mystery Paul makes known keeps believers from considering themselves wise. *"For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Romans 11:25)*. This means that salvation was brought to the Gentiles in the midst of the reality that part of Israel had been blinded, and that there is a will of God that this should be so until the full number of the Gentiles has come in. Here we must not read it as saying that all of Israel rejected Christ. Paul says that it is a part, and he himself is preaching this word as an Israelite who believed in Christ.

Therefore, the fact that the Gentiles obtained salvation is not evidence that they are wiser than Israel. According to the will of God, the gospel of the water and the Spirit was preached, and through that word they came to know the righteousness of the Lord and believed. That word was the news that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, received that judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. We did not find the way of salvation and present it to God; rather, we received it because God let us

hear of this work He had accomplished. If we remember this order, we cannot mock the unbelief of others, and we come to give thanks to the Lord, who made grace known to us.

Nor do we need to try to calculate in advance the full number of the Gentiles. Since it is a matter of their coming in fully as God sees it, that time cannot be set by the responses before our eyes or by human guesses. The work entrusted to us is not fitting God's plan to our own schedule, but preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit at the opportunity given to us now. The faith that knows His will toward Israel does not make us stop that work, but makes us rely all the more on the Lord, who gives salvation.

There is a promise that He will turn Israel around

After speaking of the salvation brought to the Gentiles, Paul reveals the promise toward Israel. *"And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: 'The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins'" (Romans 11:26–27).* The word that the Deliverer will turn away ungodliness does not mean that Israel will receive salvation even if they never believe to the end. It means that the Lord will turn their hardened hearts around and cause them to accept Christ as the Savior and to believe in the righteousness of God. The word that all Israel will be saved also does not mean that all people of the same blood will automatically be saved, but that all who believe in the righteousness of God, including the people of Israel, will be saved by the same mercy; therefore, the faith we need and the faith they need are not different from each other.

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Nor does the covenant that He will take away sin speak of a separate salvation accomplished apart from Christ. The way He takes away sin lies in Jesus' having the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. God keeps the promise He made to be God to the descendants of Abraham, and He causes them too to believe in the Lord, who has remitted sin in this way, and to be saved. Because of this promise, we cannot judge the end of Israel by their present unbelief alone. We can rejoice by faith in what will happen in the future, when they too will praise the grace of the remission of sins together with us.

The word that follows shows together both their present state as they stand before the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the promise of God. That they are enemies concerning the gospel of the water and the Spirit reveals their situation of not accepting Christ and rejecting the righteousness of God. But it says that concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. Speaking of this love does not make their present unbelief right, and speaking of their unbelief does not make the promise He gave to the fathers disappear. We must see together that God keeps His promise and will save them through faith.

The Lord does not regret the calling He has made

Paul reveals in God's gifts and calling the reason He will fulfill His own promise. *"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29)*. These gifts are presents that God gives, and here we must think of the gift of salvation. God did not give that gift only to perfect people. Because He had pity on weak sinners, saved them, and called them as His own people,

He does not regard His first grace as a mistake just because the shortcomings of such a person were revealed later.

This word gives us strength also when we look at our own faults. The Lord is not One who called us without knowing us and belatedly learned what we are really like. He gave us the righteousness of salvation knowing everything from the beginning. Because Jesus had even the sins we will commit throughout our lives passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, we must not conclude that the Lord will regret having saved us just because the weakness of our flesh has been discovered. While acknowledging our faults, we can rely on the grace of the Lord, who has made us righteous. There is no reason to think differently even of the Lord's will out of a heart disappointed in ourselves.

We can think of the same grace in His calling us, who have been saved, as workers. We do not serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit because we have perfect qualifications to boast of before others, but because the Lord remitted our sins and entrusted even to us, who are lacking, the work of preaching salvation. It is the wisdom of God to call and use people who are lacking, for only then do they become unable to put forward their own righteousness and give the glory to God. Therefore, rather than giving up serving while looking only at our own shortcomings, we must look to the Lord whenever the weakness of our flesh is revealed and carry out the work He has entrusted to us. When we see the faults of other brothers and sisters, too, we must not easily despise them, but must remember the Lord, who called all of us knowing everything about us.

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Pray that they may receive the same mercy

Paul makes the Gentiles look back on what they were before. *"For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience" (Romans 11:30)*. We too were once those who did not obey God, but we received pity and obtained salvation. We cannot think of Israel as a different kind of people from us from the beginning just because they do not obey. Since there is the will of God to let them also obtain mercy through the mercy He has shown us, the grace we have received must lead to a heart that longs for the salvation of others.

The reason is that all people have the same weakness. *"For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all" (Romans 11:32)*. People are born as descendants of Adam and do not have the ability to obey the will of God perfectly by their own strength. In this respect, the flesh of Israel and the flesh of the Gentiles are no different. God places such weak people in a situation where they cannot obtain salvation by their own righteousness, and He Himself shows them mercy and makes them His children. It is not because He found in us qualifications worthy of being saved, but because He had pity on us.

That mercy was revealed in the work accomplished by Jesus Christ, the Son of God. Because Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, the sins each of us commits throughout our lives were also passed on to the Lord. The sinless Lord's bearing that sin and shedding His blood and dying on the Cross was His receiving judgment in place of sinners, and His rising again from death was His accomplishing for us the salvation of the remission of sins. Since we have become righteous by believing

in that salvation, what we must present to others too is not our own qualifications, but this Lord, who gave life to sinners.

Believing in His will to show mercy to all people does not mean that we can say that all will obtain salvation even without faith. His turning Israel around was also explained as His causing them to believe in Christ. Therefore, we must not remain silent, regarding the salvation of those who do not believe as a matter of course, but must pray and preach so that they may hear and believe in the righteousness of the Lord. Even when we see the hardness of others, we must not forget that because of that sin, they need salvation all the more.

The heart that wanted to withdraw even its hope while looking at people who have long been rejecting the gospel changes when we know the purpose for which God confined all people. Since the reason He placed us, who were unable to obey, in that condition lay in His desire to show mercy, and since He has also given the promise to show that grace to Israel, we must think of that mercy before our own judgment. Let us give thanks for the salvation we have received and look forward to their believing in the same Lord too. Let us ask for mercy also for those who are now rejecting the gospel of the water and the Spirit beside us. And let us preach to the end Christ, who bore not only that person's sin but all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

The unsearchable wisdom of God, who seeks to have mercy on all people

< Romans 11:25–36 >

“For I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion, that blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved, as it is written: ‘The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins.’ Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers. For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable. For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! ‘For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?’ ‘Or who has first given to Him And it shall be

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repaid to him?' For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen."

Dear beloved saints, from Romans chapters 9 through 11, the apostle Paul has been unfolding the heavy story of Israel's disobedience and fall. And finally, reaching the very end of chapter 11, he spreads out as one vast picture where that whole course had been heading. In a word, it is that God seeks to have mercy on all people, whether Gentiles or Israel. This passage that we have opened together today shows how the wisdom of God, which the human mind can never fully fathom, converges into the one way of calling all people with mercy, and it finally brings us to the place where the apostle shuts his mouth and bows down in a doxology of worship.

Avoid being wise in your own opinion, and know this mystery

As he begins this last passage, the apostle Paul gives the Gentile saints one weighty warning. *"I do not desire, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, lest you should be wise in your own opinion" (Romans 11:25)*. It means that just because the Gentiles have received salvation, they must not misunderstand it as if they obtained it because they were wiser than Israel or superior to them. Man by nature tends to make even a little grace he receives into his own boast right away. So, to cut off that sprout of conceit from the start, the apostle reveals without hiding it one deep mystery of how God deals with His people.

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What is that mystery? *"That blindness in part has happened to Israel until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in. And so all Israel will be saved" (Romans 11:25–26)*. That is, until the full number of the Gentiles has all come in, part of Israel remains in a state of blindness, and when that fullness is completely filled, finally all Israel will also come to salvation. In other words, the way Israel now stands, having rejected Christ, is not an accidental mishap. It is something that is taking place within God's elaborate decree, which He prepared from beginning to end for the salvation of the Gentiles. When we realize this mystery, we come to know at last that our salvation was never the result of our wisdom, but only the result of God's decree and mercy. That mercy came to us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which 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 for us with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

The Deliverer will come out of Zion and take away their sins

Next, the apostle clearly reveals through the word of the prophet how the restoration of Israel is accomplished. *"The Deliverer will come out of Zion, And He will turn away ungodliness from Jacob; For this is My covenant with them, When I take away their sins" (Romans 11:26–27)*. This word is a quotation that brings together the writings of the prophet Isaiah. Here there is something we must see clearly: the fact that the restoration of Israel is not accomplished by their religious efforts or moral exertion. Rather, it is accomplished only through the

work in which the Deliverer who comes out of Zion, that is, Jesus Christ, Himself turns away their ungodliness and Himself takes away their sins.

Dear beloved saints, this single phrase, *"when I take away their sins" (Romans 11:27)*, is the heart of the entire text. There is no way anywhere in this world for a person to cut out his sins by his own repentance or deeds. Only the salvation in which Jesus had the sin of all mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, paid the price of sin in full by being nailed to the Cross with that sin passed on to Him, shedding His blood, and dying, and established our righteousness permanently by rising again in three days, takes away people's sins once and for all. Just as the salvation the Gentiles enjoy came from the faith that accepts this truth in the heart, the restoration that will come to Israel in the future will likewise come from this truth. Therefore, the born-again righteous who have realized this mystery must leave the conceit of regarding their own salvation as their own wisdom and live connected to the mission of leading even one more soul before this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable

The apostle now explains the present position of Israel in two dimensions at once. *"Concerning the gospel they are enemies for your sake, but concerning the election they are beloved for the sake of the fathers" (Romans 11:28)*. One dimension is the viewpoint of *"concerning the gospel."* Since a way was opened wide for the Gentiles precisely by Israel's rejecting the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Christ accomplished, from the eyes of the Gentile saints, Israel can appear to be *"enemies."* The

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other dimension is the viewpoint of *"concerning the election."* In that they are a nation still bearing the promise of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob just as it is, they are still those who are beloved by God for the sake of the fathers. Only when we look at these two dimensions at the same time is God's heart toward Israel fully understood.

And the apostle drives in a nail that firmly binds these two dimensions together. *"For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable" (Romans 11:29)*. An amazing truth is hidden in this word. God did not call perfect people from the beginning. Rather, He called those who are lacking and rebellious with only one heart, that of simply having pity on them. And even though He called them in that way, He never regrets that calling. Therefore, whether Gentiles or Israel, anyone who has once been connected to His calling remains in God's unchanging love.

What does this word teach us? It teaches that we became children of God not because of our qualifications or righteousness. It is only because the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection came to us. Once this truth has taken deep root in a person's heart, that love is not shaken in any circumstances. At the same time, this word gives us great comfort. It is the fact that, for our family members and neighbors who have not yet entered the truth, and even for Israel, the apostle's kinsmen, the possibility is alive that they will at last be called within God's love that has no regret.

The reason He confined all people in disobedience

The apostle Paul now unravels the curious arrangement in which the Gentiles and Israel stand facing each other like mirrors.

"For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience" (Romans 11:30). The Gentiles once lived under idols with their backs turned to God. But because of Israel's coming to disobey the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Gentiles instead came to obtain mercy. By the same principle, now, in Israel's situation of disobedience, the mercy the Gentiles received becomes, in turn, a channel flowing into Israel as well. The conflict between the two camps, which from the human perspective seemed as though it would never be resolved, becomes in God's hands a single picture in which He calls both camps with mercy.

And verse 32 reveals the deepest bottom of this mystery. *"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all –ASV" (Romans 11:32)*. Man is by nature a being who never stretches out his hand to God unless he honestly acknowledges his own deficiency and rebellious nature and submits. So God confines all people, whether Gentiles or Israel, once in their own helplessness and sinfulness just as they are, and thereby makes them at last long for the mercy of God. Seen from God's side, this confining is not a sentence of despair. Rather, it is the hand of love that opens wide the channel of mercy.

This text points out precisely the essence of the salvation we have received. The reason we came to receive the remission of sins was not that we had anything in us worth saving. Rather, it was because, when we honestly confessed our deficiency, God had pity on us and poured into our hearts the truth that Jesus accomplished by bearing the sin of the world, which includes our sins, through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, paying the price of that sin in full by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. Therefore, the born-again righteous must never stop, all their lives, praying for their

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families, neighbors, and fellow countrymen who still remain outside the truth, that God would have pity on them once more and lead them before the truth.

Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God

At the place where the providence of God's salvation, which he has unfolded from chapters 9 through 11, is completed as one vast picture, the apostle Paul finally shuts his own mouth and turns to a doxology of worship. *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33)*. It is a confession that beyond the limits human reason can reach, the wisdom and knowledge of God are spread out like a deep sea. The hand that uses the hardness of one nation as a channel of salvation for another nation, and also restores that nation again through that channel, cannot be explained by any human logic. Therefore, the apostle declares that His judgments are unsearchable and His ways cannot be found out.

The three questions that follow clearly reveal the absolute sovereignty of God. *"'For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?' 'Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?'" (Romans 11:34–35)*. These three questions all point to the same truth: that God is not One who works on the basis of any person's help, advice, or debt of merit. Rather, all things flow from beginning to end within the sovereignty of Him alone. Therefore, there is no way anywhere for man to come bringing his own righteousness or deeds and to claim before God, "I have done this much, so repay me this much."

This doxology firmly engraves two truths on the hearts of the born-again righteous. First, it is the fact that the salvation we have received is not the product of any counsel or merit of ours, but entirely a gift of grace flowing from the truth Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins, is something we received without having first given anything to the Lord. Second, it is the fact that the wisdom and ways of God, which we cannot fully fathom, instead become the greatest comfort to us. For even in the circumstances of our family members or neighbors, which from our perspective seem impossible to resolve, His unsearchable wisdom is continually preparing a way to lead them before the truth.

All things come from the Lord and return to the Lord

The apostle Paul concludes this whole doxology with one sentence. *"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:36)*. Our salvation, the riches of the Gentiles, and the restoration of all Israel—all of these came from God, were accomplished through God, and finally return to God. He is the beginning, He is the process, and He is the end. Therefore, there is no place for any glory to go to man. All glory must rightly go only to Him, and that forever and ever.

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Dear beloved saints, what we who stand before the unsearchable wisdom of God must hold on to is clear. The salvation we have received was, from beginning to end, the work of God's mercy. It was not because we had the qualifications to be saved, but because God had pity on us and poured into our hearts that gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, that we received the remission of sins and became righteous. So we who are enjoying these riches must, first, know that all of this is not our merit but entirely a gift of grace and always give thanks, and second, live the life of workers who diligently preach this gospel to the souls who have not yet met the truth. I pray in the name of the Lord that we may all become people who believe that His unsearchable wisdom is calling all those souls with mercy and who give all glory only to Him. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

The mercy of God

< Romans 11:30–36 >

“For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy. For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! ‘For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?’ ‘Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?’ For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.”

Mercy that came upon those who were disobedient

“For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience” (Romans 11:30). God speaks here by comparing us, who are Gentiles, with the people of Israel. We too were disobedient to God, and the people of Israel were also disobedient. However, although the people of Israel believed in God, they did not accept Jesus, the Savior whom God the Father had sent, while we Gentiles were fundamentally and instinctively those who were disobedient to God. But God had such great pity on us, who were going to go to hell and be destroyed, that He sent His own Son and saved us,

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and we obtained salvation by believing that. This is what the word is saying.

Then in what respect were we Gentiles disobedient to God? Let us take a look. We are born into this world as human beings through our parents. What do we inherit at that time? First, we inherit physical heredity. Each family has a history of some part of the body being weak, so that, for example, if a person is born with a constitution of weak lungs, he easily contracts lung disease no matter how hard he tries. In the same way, what about us spiritually? We were born as the descendants of Adam. Because Adam and Eve, after they sinned and became distant from God, bore children and handed that sin down to them, we are born with our hearts and minds stained by sin.

This is called the instinct of the flesh. The lusts of the flesh, that is, desires such as the greed to eat, the desire for fame, and sexual desire, can be broadly divided into three kinds, and we were born with them. This is instinct, and there is no one who can overcome this instinct. Because we were born with it from birth, if we have only instinct, we cannot help but rebel against God. God says, *"You shall have no other gods before Me" (Exodus 20:3)*. But what about instinct? When people are hungry, they must eat at once, and following instinct is something that comes naturally to people. So the words *"you were once disobedient to God" (Romans 11:30)* mean that because we were born with the instinct of sin, even if we wanted to obey God, we did not manage to obey, nor were we able to obey.

So according to the law of God, as it says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*, the wrath of God comes upon us and we come to judgment, so we cannot help but be cursed and go to hell. However, God had made us in His own image, and it was not God's will that we should go to hell and be destroyed. So He pitied us very much. So He, who is God who made the universe,

Himself became a man, bore all the sins we commit by instinct, received the judgment for them Himself, rose again from death and gave us life again, and made it so that we obtain salvation if we only believe in our hearts. This is exactly what is meant by the word that we obtain salvation by faith.

He who is God came to this earth as the Christ, as Jesus our Savior, and not only was He born with exactly the same flesh as ours, but He also had our sins and the sin of the whole world transferred to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Next, He gave His body over to the Cross and received the judgment for sin, and next He rose again from death and gave us salvation. That was the will of God. So we have received salvation by faith. If we believe in our hearts that God loved us, bore our sins, received the judgment for them, rose again from death, and saved us, we receive salvation.

But what about the people of Israel? They were born as the descendants of Abraham, the father of faith. Some were born in the land of Canaan, and some were born in the age under Roman rule, but they were born in an environment of believing in the LORD God, worshiping Him, and offering sacrifices according to the law of sacrifice. Up to that point it was good, but they too had a weakness. Because they were born with the instinct of sin, they did not want to live according to the law, nor did they want to offer sacrifices according to the law of sacrifice, so there were many times when they only kept up the form. So that, too, did not pass the test. Moreover, because they could not live according to the law, God Himself came to this earth as the Savior, clothed in human flesh, and saved them too, but they did not believe in Him who is God, Jesus who is the Christ, as their own Savior. Because they did not believe, they did not receive salvation.

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On the other hand, we Gentiles were born of ancestors who did not know God, and our way of life was wretched, our circumstances were hard, and the religions we believed in were not perfect, so we also had many sins. But the Son of God came to this earth, bore our sins through baptism, hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us. He became our Savior and removed all our sins. So we are grateful. Since we are grateful, how could we not believe, unless we set our hearts on evil? So we Gentiles believed because we were grateful, and salvation came upon us, while salvation has not yet come upon the nation of Israel.

The words *"you were once disobedient to God" (Romans 11:30)* are words spoken with us in view. We are people who were born with the instinct of sin and so could not obey. If you too try to obtain salvation through deeds, not even a single person will obtain salvation.

So that Israel too may obtain mercy

"Yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience" (Romans 11:30). God made Abraham and the people of Israel, his descendants, His own people, but they did not obey God. They only had to believe the word of God as Abraham did, but they did not believe. Two thousand years ago, Jesus Christ came to this earth, bore the sin of all mankind, hung on the Cross and died, rose again from death, and saved all mankind, and He delivered them from sin too; they only had to believe, but they did not believe. In the Old Testament age God promised, "I will save you in this way," and in the New Testament age He fulfilled it just as He had said, but even when that word of God is preached to them, they do not believe. Because they do not

believe, He leaves them as they are, and only we who believe have received salvation before God. *"But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name: who were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God" (John 1:12–13)*. This means that they are those who have been born again by taking hold, by faith, of the word that God has spoken.

Then what is God's will for Israel? *"Even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy" (Romans 11:31)*. It means that just as God pitied us, He also pities the people of Israel. But when will that be? It means that they will not receive salvation *"until the fullness of the Gentiles has come in" (Romans 11:25)*. It means that when we Gentiles become full through faith and reach the point where God, looking on, says, "That is enough now," God will turn them around too and give them understanding as well, just as He removed our sins. Only, for now, because they were born as the descendants of Abraham and yet did not believe in the Savior but rebelled against Him, He leaves them as they are.

What is mercy?

The word that appears most often in this passage is *"mercy."* The word mercy means caring for someone because he is so pitiful. Even though he is not someone who can be loved, if he is left alone he will surely be destroyed, be cursed, and fail, so one embraces him. Having pity means saying, "Don't do that! Please don't do that! If you do that, won't you only harm your body and only harm your soul, and won't you be ruined?" God also sees us in that way. By instinct we are not people who would love God and keep His law well. We human beings, the

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descendants of Adam, are fundamentally a seed of evildoers and do only what we ourselves like. When it comes to not listening, we are the foremost in the whole world. But while animals are finished when they die, what about us? We were made in the image of God and live as souls. So there is such a thing as hell. That must not happen. We are so pitiful. That is how God saved us.

So the apostle Paul says as follows: *"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32)*. It says that God has shut all people up in disobedience. What does that mean? It is said this way as a literary expression, and what it actually means is that because we were born as the descendants of Adam, we were born with instinct. We were born with an evil heart, a heart to murder, a heart to commit adultery, and a heart to steal, and on top of that there are the three kinds of greed. Since these have been combined, we are perfectly fit for committing sin and iniquity. Because we were born spiritually with the seed of sin, committing sin, doing evil, murdering, and committing adultery grow up in us on their own. Both our flesh and our hearts were born with such material.

God knew that Adam and Eve would eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, and He let them eat it. After Eve was enticed by the devil and ate it, and Adam also ate it, God said, *"Where are you?" (Genesis 3:9)*, and he said, *"I heard Your voice in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; and I hid myself" (Genesis 3:10)*. When God asked again, he shifted all the blame onto Eve, saying, *"The woman whom You gave to be with me, she gave me of the tree, and I ate" (Genesis 3:12)*. That was because it was in fact so. God judged the serpent and said, *"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). The serpent catches and eats other things, but it also eats dust. Spiritually speaking, the devil lives by feeding on people's sin. He incites and induces people to commit sin, and when people commit sin, the devil is satisfied.

We were born that way. Adam and Eve sinned and became distant from God, so they are under a curse in which they cannot follow God, and what is more, we were born as the descendants of such people. The words *"God has committed them all to disobedience" (Romans 11:32)* mean that because we were born of parents who had a seed that wants to obey but cannot obey, we cannot help but disobey. That is fate. From such a fate, God pitied us, came to save us, and saved us, and not only did He save us, but He also made us children of God and granted us a life in which He takes us into His kingdom, and we enjoy everlasting life and enjoy glory, riches, and honor, just as He Himself lives forever. This is the will of God.

Who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?

So the apostle Paul says, *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 'For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?' 'Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?' For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33–36)*.

"Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?" (Romans 11:35). Can we live perfectly well according to the will of God, as God desires, and so make it impossible for God not

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to bless us? This is a word He speaks equally to us Gentiles and to the nation of Israel. Even now, among the nation of Israel there are many people who revere the LORD God through the law and who, every day, wear phylacteries with Bible verses written on them on their foreheads and arms, binding them with straps and looking at them, trying to serve God just as we memorize key Bible verses. That is why the apostle Paul asks who could first give and be repaid, that is, whether we could first satisfy God. We cannot satisfy God. We are beings who are not able to do so. This is speaking not about our serving the Lord now, but about salvation. It is impossible for either the nation of Israel or us to first please God and so change anything.

The will God determined in Christ before the foundation of the world

"For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:36). God predestined us, just as it says, *"He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world" (Ephesians 1:4)*. To choose means to select, whether picking one out of two or picking one out of many. Before God made this universe, before Adam and Eve were made, before there was the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden, before they ate that fruit and were driven out, before everything came to pass, God decided in Christ, in His own Son, to make us children of God. He permitted all these things in order to clothe us with the glory of God and let us live enjoying everlasting life. He made us lower than the angels for a while and let us live as imperfect human beings who are born with sin, as human beings who live with instinct.

Therefore, the will of God is holiness and rightness, but we cannot fulfill that will. So God sent His own Son; He who is God came to this earth in human flesh by borrowing the body of Mary, and when He was thirty years old, as He received baptism from John, He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. So Jesus had all our sins passed on to Him once and for all through John the Baptist, hung on the Cross, and became *"the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. And He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. He accomplished everything through His birth, His baptism, His hanging on the Cross, and His resurrection from death. So He gave those who believe the right to become children of God, and so we who believe become children of God, become God's workers, and gain the strength to live according to the will of God.

However, even now our flesh is not perfect. So it is only when we live united with one another that we can at least live according to the will of God; we must not go off on our own. Because we are gathered together like this, we join our strength and do the work of the Lord.

All things come from God. Our salvation also came from God. God gave us salvation, and all we did was believe. So we receive salvation by faith. By faith we become children of God, by faith we become God's workers, and by faith we serve the Lord and cause other souls to receive salvation too. By faith we go to the kingdom of heaven, and by faith we receive blessings. Abraham also lived that way. When God said, *"Get out of your country, From your family And from your father's house, To a land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1)*, Abraham did not see the form of God but only heard the word, yet he said, "God, I believe," and obeyed and went. There were many difficulties wherever he went, but God helped him with everything, and he

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became the father of faith. We too, as the descendants of Abraham, are those who have the faith that follows Abraham. Since God tells us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, we are now serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith. But by our deeds we are not perfect. If we are left alone, we will be completely finished. So we do not set a goal and run alone, but form a team with many others and run together.

The basis of faith is what God has done

We obtain salvation by faith, and the word says, *"Faith is the substance of things hoped for" (Hebrews 11:1)*; the substance here means fact. *"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)*. This says that God sent His Son, loved us, and saved us, but when, where, what, and how He did it must be stated precisely; it is not that we simply need to believe. The reason simply believing does not work is that in our hearts there is the scale of conscience that God has given us. Only when it is clear that our sins were passed on to God and that someone was judged in our place because of our sins can we escape from that state; otherwise, we cannot escape from it.

Fundamentally, we were lumps of sin that did not obey, that could not obey. We were born with such a heart, just as it says, *"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)*. And we were also born with a flesh that

can carry out that heart. This flesh is completely selfish. It has the desire for food, the desire for fame, and sexual desire, and among them the desire for food is the strongest. Because He knows that, God has had mercy on us. Do you understand what the mercy of God means?

So the apostle Paul said, *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!" (Romans 11:33)*. Only those who have received the remission of sins can know the heart of God and know how God has opened the way of everlasting life.

The shutting up was in order to show mercy

"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32). That He has shut them up means that we have no ability to do what God wants and were not even born with such an ability. Such people as we cannot help but be sinners and go to hell, but God has saved us. It does not mean that God put up a partition and shut us in; it means that we are fundamentally people who cannot do the will of God. We are people who cannot live for others, and even if we do not want to commit sin, we cannot help committing it. Just as bean sprouts come up where beans are planted and red bean sprouts come up where red beans are planted, sprouts of sin come up from us. And the word says, *"The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. God pitied such people as us, and He who is God came to this earth, and by resolving all our sins Himself, by saving us with the water and the blood, and by giving us the faith to believe, He gave us the right to become children of God. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

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In the Book of Romans, the expressions “chosen” and “predestined” appear often. God knew beforehand all about the situation in which we could not help but be born through our parents as the descendants of Adam, and He left as it was the fact that we could not help but be born as a frail, weak, and rebellious seed that cannot live according to God’s will even if we want to. So He made it so that we obtain salvation only by believing in the work the Savior accomplished when He came. Because He who is God came to this earth and removed all our sins by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, we believe because it is worthy of belief; we do not believe without a basis. If we believe without a basis, that is religion. All religions are the same. But as it says, *“You shall know the truth” (John 8:32)*, if we know the truth and believe, that is not religion but faith; it is true faith, the same faith as Abraham’s.

And to those who live by faith, God gives blessings, as He did to Abraham. He makes things go well for them on this earth too. This flesh is originally a flesh that cannot live in a way that pleases God, but even so, when a person who knows and believes the will of God disciplines this flesh, brings it into subjection, and lives according to God’s will, God gives blessings and gives grace in due season. By filling us in this way, though we have such flesh, He uses us as instruments of righteousness and enables us to live according to God’s will.

In any case, we were lumps of sin that could not obey, but God pitied us, had mercy on us, and made us His people, sinless children of God, and God’s workers. It is something to be thankful for. That is why we endure for a long, long time even when our brothers and sisters act harshly and behave childishly. If we wait for them for a long time, they come to set their feet on the foothold of faith, and though they are still weak, they are not as weak as they were in the past. They can overcome, live

according to God's will, and, while living to some extent a life that pleases God, be united and receive blessings. While we live on this earth, we cannot live by our own strength alone. We must live by God's blessings, and that is when we use faith. God has made us such people and has given us blessings. We are those who know this and have obtained mercy.

"For God hath shut up all unto disobedience, that he might have mercy upon all" (Romans 11:32). You and I are included among those "all." How amazing God's plan is! However, in order to enter this rank of mercy, we must belong to the line of Jacob. We must know who God is, and we must know how weak and evil we ourselves are and know how to rely on God. Only then do we belong to the line of Jacob. Those who try to live only by their own strength belong to the line of Esau, become the adversaries of God, and come to belong to the line of the fallen angels. Their end is destruction. They do not receive blessings on this earth either, and when they go to the other world, they live in the eternal pit of fire.

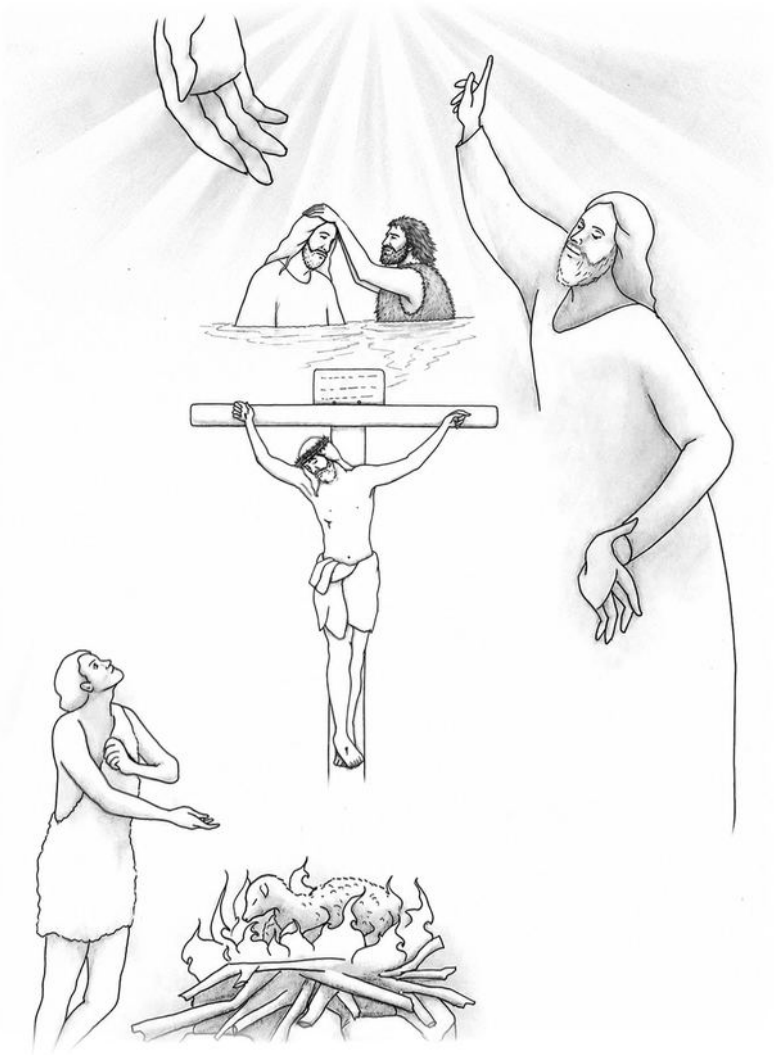
God acts according to His own will. *"Of Him and through Him and to Him are all things" (Romans 11:36)*. All things, whether in the visible world or in the invisible world, come from the Lord and return to God. So God pitied us, who were born with flesh and hearts that could not help but go to hell, came to us, and saved us from sin; by believing in what Jesus Christ, who is that God, has done, we praise God and give thanks to Him, and also, by living by faith, we can become blessed people who receive the blessings God gives on this earth too and receive and enjoy them forever in the eternal kingdom of God. ✉

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CHAPTER

12

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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 worship and life of those who have received mercy

< Romans 12:1–2 >

“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. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God.”

An exhortation that begins with the mercies of God

When we scatter after listening to the word and praying together, it is easy to think that the worship we offer to God has also ended there. We think, “From now on it is my own life, and when we gather again next time, I will serve the Lord then.” However, Paul speaks of the worship we are to offer to God with our living bodies. Because the heart that praised and listened to the word cannot go separately from the life that follows, today’s word makes us know anew, first of all, the mercy that God has bestowed on us.

Let us read verse 1. *“I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service –ASV” (Romans 12:1)*. Paul did not urge us in order to obtain something from us; he said that he urges us by all the mercies of God. Up

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to the previous chapter, Paul spoke of how people who had all been under sin, whether Jews or Gentiles, are saved by believing in the righteousness of God, and he concluded by saying, *"For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all" (Romans 11:32)*. Paul addresses the people who have received that mercy with the words "therefore, brethren," so we who receive this word are people who have already received grace. It is not an order in which we present our bodies to God and obtain the remission of sins in return.

When we could not provide the price of salvation, God sent His Son Jesus Christ to us. Jesus, who received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and died. Because He rose again from death and so remitted our sins and gave us new life, we have become righteous before God by believing in the salvation that the Lord has completed. Since the sin of the world includes all the sins we will commit throughout our lives, today's weakness does not go beyond the scope of that grace.

When we know these mercies, the meaning of worship also changes. We become, not people who try to persuade God by showing their self-sacrifice, but people who respond with thanks to God, who first saved them. Paul calling us brethren and exhorting us is also something he says to people who will live together within that grace. Therefore, when we hear the word to present our bodies, we have no need to calculate that a price for salvation still remains for us. It is time to make up our minds as to what we will use the life the Lord has given us for.

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Worship offered with a living body

How did Paul say to present our bodies? He said to present them as a holy, living sacrifice that is pleasing to God. Using our hearts, thoughts, and time for the Lord's work while we are alive is the living sacrifice. Because God does not merely receive resolutions that have nothing to do with our actual lives, the faith that holds the Lord precious must also be revealed in the service we carry out with our bodies.

In the Old Testament there were sacrificial offerings that had sins passed on to them through the laying on of hands and that shed their blood and died, but presenting our bodies today is not redoing Christ's atonement. The true offering to which those offerings pointed is Jesus. Because Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him, already received its judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, it is not that our remaining sins disappear only when we suffer in our bodies. Rather, living people who have received the remission of sins give themselves to God and serve the work that pleases the Lord. Only when we distinguish the place of the Lord who saved us from our place as those who serve will worship not turn into an act of piling up our own righteousness.

Nor do we need to seek some special experience separated from the body just because it is called spiritual worship. Hearing and believing the word must be connected with a life of actually acting according to that word. A person who has been praying that the gospel of the water and the Spirit would be preached may also take on the labor needed for that work, and may also devote his own time and wisdom so that other people can hear the word. What matters more than whether that labor stands out is for whom we serve while holding precious the salvation the

Lord has given us. In this way, worship continues from the place where we gather into our daily lives.

Yet we must not take the word to present our bodies only as pressure to keep accomplishing more work without rest. Since each person's circumstances and strength differ, it is not a matter of boasting by comparing one's own labor with that of others, or of closing one's heart because it is less than that of others. We take part by faith in the work we can do and seek the Lord's help; we do not buy the qualification to be closer to God with the amount of our labor.

When we try to present our bodies, there are times when a heart that wants to look after its own benefit first stands in the way. At such times we must overcome by faith rather than holding out by our own will. Paul said, *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*. Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, and we are people of God who died with that Lord on the Cross and came alive together with Him. So we believe that there is no reason to draw back from the Lord's work in order to protect our own benefit. When we believe in the grace we have already received in this way and serve together, we can carry out even small tasks with thanksgiving.

Renew your mind and do not be conformed to this world

However, the heart that wants to present the body to the Lord does not continue by itself. Let us read verse 2. *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2)*. The word telling us not

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to be conformed was spoken in the knowledge that we, too, can be conformed. Because we also live in the world with the flesh, we are influenced by thinking that seeks self-satisfaction and immediate profit first. Rather than speaking only of the fact that we have received the remission of sins and pretending that we are not influenced in this way at all, we must examine before the word what we are being conformed to.

The word not to be conformed to this world does not mean to live apart from people. It means not to make the current of living by following what the flesh desires the standard of one's own life. If, even while knowing that other souls need the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we value only the work that brings immediate profit back to us, our hearts come to keep away from the work the Lord has entrusted to us. Leaving such a heart as it is and only keeping the body busy does not make the worship offered to God complete.

That is why Paul said to renew the mind. Renewing the mind means, before making some great new resolution, believing again the word that the Lord has already remitted all our sins and that we are people of God. When Jesus received baptism from John, He had all our sins passed on to Him, and with the blood He shed on the Cross He has already paid their price. If we look only at our own weakness, we become trapped in the thought, "I cannot follow the Lord," but when we look to this salvation accomplished by the Lord, who rose again from death, we can serve again with thanksgiving. Because the Holy Spirit dwells within us, makes us believe the word, and leads us to think of the Lord's work, it is not that we must cling only to our own will and hold out to the end.

Renewing the mind does not mean telling oneself only pleasant words in order to think lightly of sin. It means acknowledging wrong thoughts while not denying the salvation

of Jesus, who remitted those sins. Even if we believed the word and were thankful yesterday, we may be caught by other thoughts today, so today, too, we must believe in that salvation and renew our minds. When we think again in this way of the grace we have received, we can turn the heart that was bound to its own desires toward the Lord's will.

A life of knowing the Lord's will and serving

What must the renewed mind examine? Paul exhorts us to discern what the good and acceptable and perfect will of God is. To discern the will of God is not to decide first what I want and then add that God also wants it. It is to learn from the word what the Lord who saved us is pleased with and to fit our hearts and lives to that will.

The Lord does not want only us to escape from sin and enjoy self-satisfaction; He wants other souls also to obtain salvation. Therefore, a person who knows the good and perfect will of God holds precious the work through which the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached. This is because it is the work of letting other souls also receive the remission of sins that Jesus gave by bearing the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and paying the price of that sin, and rising again from death. It is a change from a heart that asked only about the profit that would come back to me into a heart that thinks about whether other people can hear of the remission of sins. This is not hating one's own livelihood or regarding the things needed for life as sin; it is not losing the purpose the Lord has given even in the midst of all that life.

Discerning His will is not separated from actual service. When we believe the word and serve the gospel of the water and

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the Spirit, we see what work is needed, and we also come to know the difficulties of those who labor together with us. At such times, rather than insisting, "Only my thinking is right," we must consult together and carry out the work by examining the way that fits the Lord's word. Since it is renewing the mind to know the Lord's will and following it with the body, we also cannot keep our hearts far from the Lord and boast only of the results of our work. The grace received from the Lord must be present at the beginning of our service and throughout its process.

Also, we must not turn the words that the mind is renewed into the meaning that our flesh gradually changes so that we become sinless people and complete our salvation. Jesus has already accomplished our righteousness by having our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and by receiving their judgment in our place, shedding His blood on the Cross; the present change concerns the direction in which those who believe in that salvation are to live. As 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)*, even when our weakness is exposed, we can rely on the righteousness we have already received, correct our thinking, and follow the Lord's will, so there is no need to give up serving because we are disappointed in ourselves. The Lord, who bestowed mercy, has given us a way to live by faith every day.

At the beginning we thought about the time when we scatter after worshiping together. From that time, it is not a life unrelated to the Lord that begins; rather, the living sacrifice we are to offer according to the word we have heard continues. Let us serve the work that pleases the Lord with the body and time given to us today. When the thoughts of the world pull our hearts away, let us believe again in the salvation He has already

bestowed, examine the Lord's will, and turn back. Living in this way, thankful for the mercies that first had compassion on us, is the worship that offers both the place where we gather and the life in which we are scattered to God together. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Present our bodies as a holy, living sacrifice

< Romans 12:1–13 >

"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. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing

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steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality."

The unsearchable wisdom and mercies of God

The apostle Paul explained through the word the reason why God had left the nation of Israel cast away like that, and he also spoke of how the Gentiles received the grace of God. In Romans chapter 11, which comes right before this passage, the apostle Paul said, *"For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all" (Romans 11:32)* and stated that God had committed us to disobedience in order to bestow His merciful love on us and ultimately give us salvation. Then he also says, *"Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! 'For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?' 'Or who has first given to Him And it shall be repaid to him?' For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen" (Romans 11:33–36).*

As this word says, all things have come from God. Not only the remission of our sins but also all things in this world came from God, and he said that the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God and His judgments are unsearchable. *"For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor?" (Romans 11:34).* That is right. No one knew God's thoughts and will. No one knew the deep will behind why God made mankind and placed the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and the tree of life in the Garden of Eden. Paul also said that man cannot dare to fathom any of this will: why God caused us human beings to be born on this earth with flesh that is weak,

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powerless, and lacking, and why, for such mankind, He sent Jesus Christ, had Him receive baptism from John, die on the Cross, and rise again from death, and so saved those who believe from sin.

And while saying that the unsearchable wisdom of God is hidden in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the apostle Paul says, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service" (Romans 12:1)*. In other words, the apostle Paul asks us, "Were we not saved because of God's merciful love?" and then immediately urges, *"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God."*

A person who says he loves God but does not present himself before God is a person who does not love God. Also, a person who says he wants to serve God but does not present his whole self before God is also one who does not love God. If we truly want to become workers who please God, we come to go forward to God, presenting this body along with our hearts before the Lord. And presenting this body before the Lord and being used for God's holy work is precisely offering a living sacrifice before God.

Presenting the body is spiritual worship

When we speak of a sacrifice offered before God, we can see that a sacrificial offering is needed, as we commonly see in the Old Testament. But in this word, the words to present ourselves as a living sacrifice mean to present the living body we have wholly before God. This word tells you to live a life of presenting your bodies so that they may be used for holy work.

It says, *"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service" (Romans 12:1).*

We have been saved from sin through the merciful love of God. But if we really believe that God is our Master and that He has saved us from all the sins of the world, we must know what the Lord wants from us. What the Lord wants is that you present your bodies and I present my body to the Lord's work, that is, to the work of preaching this holy gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is the right life and the spiritual worship offered to God.

Those who are thankful for the grace they have received before God come to present themselves willingly before God, like the many disciples who appear in the Bible. However God may use me and however He may use you, it means presenting oneself before God as a living sacrifice. It means presenting our living bodies to God wherever God may use them. This is the spiritual worship that we, born-again people, offer to God. If we love the Lord, it is natural that we come to the Lord. For example, coming to church when it is time for the worship service can be an expression of loving the Lord. This is because listening to the word before God, knowing what God says, and accepting it in our hearts is truly loving Him. After that, obeying with the body and doing the work of serving the Lord in daily life is presenting one's body. That is the spiritual worship of doing what pleases the Lord and the right worship before God.

Do not be conformed to this world

Continuing, the Lord says, *"And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2).* After first saying to present our bodies

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as a living sacrifice, the second thing the apostle Paul said is not to be conformed to this generation. Usually in the Bible, one generation was reckoned as forty years. But today, about thirty years is usually called one generation.

It says, *"Do not be conformed to this world" (Romans 12:2),* and this generation today is truly not a generation worth imitating. Sin spreads like a fashion and is becoming more and more fashionable. We can see that this age is becoming an age of sin. In the generation of the apostle Paul at that time, too, people served idols. Just as there was nothing to imitate in that generation, there is nothing to imitate in this generation either. Then what saints must do is only to be transformed by the renewing of their minds and to live anew. This is what the apostle Paul said. Then how do saints renew their minds and become transformed? For saints to be transformed in their hearts, they must fear God and devote themselves to preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit for the remission of sins that God has given us.

In other words, it means that God is your Master, and that we must diligently do the work of preaching with thankful hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and removed all those sins with the blood of the Cross. When we accept with thankful hearts that we have been saved from all sins by the grace of salvation that God gives, our hearts are transformed by that grace and we come to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Those who believe in and live by the gospel of the water and the Spirit can no longer live for something other than God. Rather, it is right that they feel they are lacking even while living for God. Because the grace of salvation that God has given is so great, a heart has arisen in them that gives up the things of the

world and wants to live following God's love with a heart thankful for that love. This is a transformed heart; how does the heart change? It means that because the heart that keeps wanting to do God's work and is satisfied with it grows bigger as time passes, they become people who serve the Lord more.

In this way, being transformed in our hearts, we come to discern what is the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. God commanded us to discern what God's goodness is, what the work God is pleased with is, and what His perfect will is. Discerning that and first doing the work that pleases God is what we must do.

God is most pleased with the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in this age. He is pleased with the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. That is, the perfect will of God is the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God wants most of all for this gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which He saved us from sin through the water and the Spirit, to be preached to the ends of the earth. Just as we have been saved from sin through this gospel of the water and the Spirit, those who were saved first must do the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that all people also may receive the remission of sins. This is knowing the perfect will of God, and it is the purpose for which we present to God our material possessions, our hearts, our thoughts, and our very selves, that is, our souls and bodies, for this work. Giving all, not only the strength of our flesh but also our thoughts, character, and hearts, for the Lord is the will of God that is pleasing and perfect. We born-again saints should understand this well and live our lives of faith with the right goal.

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The members that make up the body of Christ

If we look at the word of verses 3–4, it says, *"For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function" (Romans 12:3–4).*

Jesus Christ is our Head, and the church is His body. And we are the members of that body. Members refer to everything attached to the body. The hands and fingers, the feet and toes, the fingernails and toenails, and even wrinkles can be included, and the ears, eyes, nose, mouth, and blood vessels are all things that can be called members. And just like these, you and I have become members who are related to one another, not people who have nothing to do with one another.

When one member suffers, the whole body suffers, and when one gets better, the other members also get better because of it. That is because we have become one body and one member in Christ. So, when any among us is not doing well in his life of faith and is struggling, all the members worry and look after that person in their hearts. It is because we are members of one another and are related. If one finger, a part of our body, were injured and bleeding, all our nerves, mind, and strength would be concentrated on the finger to treat it so that it would stop bleeding. In the meantime, when some time has passed, the other parts of the body may perhaps have become weakened. Likewise, if any one member in the church is having a hard time at heart and is about to give up his life of faith, all the brothers and sisters cannot help but pay attention. That is how it actually is.

Be faithful with your different gifts

The apostle Paul said, *"Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:6)*. This word means that God called us as members of the same body of Jesus Christ, but the roles each of us performs are all different. It is just as in the body the hand has a role, the arm has a separate role, and the legs, ears, and head have separate roles. Even belly fat, which looks completely useless, brings out the strength it had stored up when the flesh has no strength and gives it energy. In this way, the members of the whole body each have their own roles. Then let us look at the word to see what gifts God has given each of us in the church, how the roles each of us has been entrusted with differ, and what He has given us as gifts so that we can work according to the roles entrusted to us.

First, it says, *"If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith" (Romans 12:6)*. In this age, God does not speak in the way His word came specially and intermittently to His servants of God in Old Testament times; rather, we can prophesy by faith through the Bible. That is why He said, *"If prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith."* Those who prophesy, as servants of God, must truly have a great measure of faith that realizes, knows, and believes the word of God. They must think deeply about such matters: "What does this word really mean, and is it most appropriate to proclaim this word now? And is the Holy Spirit speaking now because it is truly necessary for this church?"

Therefore, the servants of God in this age must preach the word in proportion to their faith. They must not speak the word of God without faith, just because it is written in the word. It is different for a person who has faith to say, "The time of the Lord's coming is near, so let us come to our senses and preach

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith," and for a person who has no faith to say, "The time of the Lord's coming is near, so let us all quit our jobs, sell our houses and our land, and give everything to the church." Prophecy is saying, while truly believing the word of God, "Such things will happen in the future, so we must do this." We, too, can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit because we clearly know and believe what will become of this world in the future. When someone prophesies, some people do not believe, saying, "We will only know when the time comes." But if the word of God is right and a person of faith has prophesied in proportion to his faith, we must believe now that it will come to pass exactly as said, rather than believing only when the time comes and circumstances allow.

Second, we must know by faith the ability God has given us and use that ability in the right place. If one has ability in serving, he must be faithful in serving. If God has given him ability in serving, he must not long for the work of prophesying and try to serve in that work. Also, he who teaches must be faithful in teaching. If there are those who have the ability to teach easily and well, it is right for them to do the work of teaching very faithfully as teachers in that area. Also, he who exhorts must, as one who exhorts and comforts, do the work of caring for and serving the flock very faithfully before God.

And he who gives to the needy must do it with faithfulness. A person who gives to the needy and helps others must not be lazy. Those who serve the Lord must be diligent, have faith, and be faithful. A lazy person cannot help others. Only when one is faithful and diligent can he help others. That is why He said, *"He who leads, with diligence."* To give work to others and to lead the members of the church, one must first set an example himself. He must be very diligent. To entrust work to workers, the one

entrusting it must first think ahead about what needs to be done and prepare it. Only then can he entrust the work and can the work proceed. If the one who entrusts the work does not first know the work as a whole, he cannot lead people and entrust work to them, so he must think more and work more diligently. That is why, in the church, those who have gone ahead by receiving the remission of sins first cannot help but be more diligent and busier than anyone else.

Then He said, *"He who shows mercy, with cheerfulness" (Romans 12:8)*. It means that those who have compassion on others should do it with a very joyful heart. If one shows mercy reluctantly, the one receiving it will also be uncomfortable, and the heart of the one giving will not be good either. So it is important to do good deeds with a glad heart, with a joyful heart.

As the gifts God has given us, seven gifts thus appear in the Bible: prophecy, serving, teaching, exhorting, giving, leading, and showing mercy. God has given these seven abilities of service to the Church of God. Where do you and I belong? Are we all teachers? Or are we all prophets, or all leaders? Are we all servers, or all exhorters? Are we givers? Are we those who show mercy? One person may become several of these depending on the situation, but we must not forget the fact that I can do all things with the ability God has given me. I can do all things within what God has given me. On the other hand, if God does not give it, I cannot do anything. According to the gifts God has given us, we can do in the church the works that God has us do through the church. Even while doing some work, we may stop it and suddenly do another work. Because all are needed, we must know this well and serve by faith. And because it is the Lord's work, we do it in blessing. We should know well the fact that all this is because God has given us the ability to serve the Lord, and we should serve with the strength the Lord gives. The

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reason we serve the Lord like this is that the Lord first delivered us from sin. Since Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and then rose again from death, we serve with the gifts we have received, thankful for this remission of sins.

Love without hypocrisy and brotherly affection

The apostle Paul also said, *"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9)*. That is right. There is no hypocrisy in love. Love is caring for others honestly and without hypocrisy. The servants of God lead us with good love without hypocrisy. Love is the opposite of evil. True love is good. But to know what is good and what is evil, we must first know what God requires of us and what He wants and is pleased with. Examining the perfect will of God and obeying it is good, and what God dislikes and does not want is evil. The love of God is goodness without hypocrisy.

The Lord said, *"Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9)*. Therefore, if a person does the work that pleases God in union with the church and receives guidance, that person becomes one who does good; on the contrary, if he does things according to his own stubbornness without regard to the church, he becomes one who does evil. All born-again saints should become those who abhor evil and cling to what is good according to the word of God.

It says, *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans*

12:10). In Christ we are all brothers and sisters to one another. Even so, there are offices in this church. He told the brothers and sisters who are in a horizontal relationship, even within the offices, to be kindly affectionate to one another. It means to cherish and love one another like one's own family in the flesh.

And He said, *"In honor giving preference to one another."* Only when we have a heart that cherishes and honors our brothers can it finally be called love. When a brother or sister does not understand some matter well and is going down a wrong path, if you want to teach him that matter well so that he truly comes to know the world of faith, and you want him to be blessed before God, you must go beneath his feet with a heart lower than that brother or sister. So, by cherishing and serving him from the heart, you must make the other person feel, "This person truly cares for me." Only then can we love one another. If there is a hostile heart that says, "He pretends to care for me in words, but he cannot wait to tear me apart," we cannot love one another or be affectionate to one another, and we cannot truly understand one another. We must let the other person know that sincerity: "That person really has a heart that wants to help me; he has a heart that wishes me well." That is why He said to be affectionate to brothers, to love them, and to give preference to one another in honor.

Truly, even if the other person is lacking compared to me in some area, if you look closely, there is also a precious side. Among the things the other person has, there is surely something more precious than what I have. The Lord is telling us that at such times, if we acknowledge one another, saying, "That brother, that sister, is truly precious in this area; this is really good; I truly respect this; I am not good at that," and fill up for one another where we fall short and lack, we can love one another.

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Rejoice in hope and be patient in tribulation

It says, *"Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11)*. In serving the Lord, being fervent is very important. Being fervent means having passion. If God has entrusted some work to each of us through the church, it is very important to do it fervently, with passion. A person with passion does his best to be faithful in the work he has been given and is not lazy. He cannot but be diligent in the work he has been entrusted with.

If we look at verses 12 and 13, He said, *"Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality" (Romans 12:12–13)*. It means that with the faith that believes in God, we must look to and wait for that kingdom and that time, saying, "When this world perishes, our Lord will come; when the Lord comes, we will live with the Lord for a thousand years, enter the new heaven and the new earth, and live reigning forever," and so live the present joyfully in hope.

There were times when I was very irritated as I looked at this world. In fact, anyone is irritated when looking at a world that is perishing. The word tells us that Jesus, too, wept as He looked at the city of Jerusalem. He said, *"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, the one who kills the prophets and stones those who are sent to her! How often I wanted to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, but you were not willing! See! Your house is left to you desolate" (Matthew 23:37–38)*, and He also said, *"They will not leave in you one stone upon another" (Luke 19:44)*. At this time Jesus foresaw that Roman soldiers would come, kill the people of Israel, and destroy the nation of Israel, and He grieved.

We born-again saints, too, sometimes become sad at heart when we look at this world. When we come across bad reports in the news, our hearts become depressed and irritated. Especially in this age, there are always more of these bad incidents: stories of fraud, stories of some company going bankrupt, stories of people taking their own lives, stories of an earthquake somewhere, stories of a fire. To the saints living in such an age, the apostle Paul said in the Book of Romans, concerning their faith and lives, to rejoice in hope. It means, "When this world perishes, will we not enter the kingdom of God and live there? For us, is not the perishing of this world the kingdom of God coming nearer? So endure, think of hope, and rejoice." Especially in these last days, hope is extremely important to us. I believe we must not lose hope but have faith in it and live serving the Lord with all our strength.

And He said, *"Patient in tribulation" (Romans 12:12)*. It also says, *"Knowing that tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character; and character, hope" (Romans 5:3–4)*. Usually, when difficulties become very severe, perseverance arises. Perseverance is a heart that endures and bears up. It means that when things are very hard, the strength to endure and keep holding out arises within us. In this way, difficulties keep refining our hearts. When we have been tempered once, twice, and three times, the Lord will then come. Looking toward that day, no matter what the people of the world may do to us born-again saints with the power of the flesh, let us be patient in tribulation and continue steadfastly in prayer with the faith that the Lord will come soon. Let us remember well the word to be patient, to pray, and to live in hope, and let us live the time that remains.

It says, *"Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13)*. What would the needs of the saints

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be? At the time when the apostle Paul wrote the letter to Rome and preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the saints were in great hardship. So those who had property brought all their property before the church, and the church managed the saints' property and distributed it. This is what is meant by the word, *"now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need" (Acts 2:44–45)*. After people were born again and brought their material possessions to the church, the apostles distributed them to each as anyone had need. In this age, what does this word, *"distributing to the needs of the saints,"* mean? The Church of God must supply what is needed for the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We must first think about what the church needs in preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit: "Is prayer needed? Are material things needed? Is my body needed? Is my mouth needed?" And we must take a practical interest. So we must supply it. I, too, must supply it, and you, too, should serve the Lord for the Lord's work. We should follow the Lord. This is what the apostle Paul said to the saints.

And there are people who do harm to us righteous people and speak ill of us. The Lord said not to try to take revenge on such people directly but to leave it to God. It says, *"'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19)*. We just need to leave it entirely to the Lord. Rather, He said that leaving judgment to God on the last day and doing good to them and praying for them is the right life of saints and of the servants of God.

Let us have this faith and live this life of saints, this way of life as saints. Let us live well by faith and then meet the Lord. And there are so many prayer topics as we live by faith. Please

pray for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, for the safety of the servants of God, for material needs, and for workers to rise up in each nation. There is so much to pray for that even praying all day long is not enough. People working on the front lines cannot pray much. Those who throw themselves directly into the work only pray as much as they can and cannot pray well for the whole. Therefore, brothers and sisters who cannot work directly in some area must pray for the spread of this gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must pray that the servants, God's people, and the work of God may go well. We must pray without ceasing until the Lord fulfills all His own will. I hope you will keep on praying. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Presenting your bodies a living sacrifice is your spiritual service

< Romans 12:1–21 >

"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. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God. For I say, through the grace given to me, to everyone who is among you, not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith. For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another. Having then gifts differing according to the grace that is given to us, let us use them: if prophecy, let us prophesy in proportion to our faith; or ministry, let us use it in our ministering; he who teaches, in teaching; he who exhorts, in exhortation; he who gives, with liberality; he who leads, with diligence; he who shows mercy, with cheerfulness. Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another;

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not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality. Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord. Therefore 'If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.' Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good."

Dear beloved saints, from Romans chapter 1 through chapter 11, the apostle Paul has explained in turn the sinful nature of mankind, the limits of the law, the gift of righteousness given in Christ, and the unsearchable wisdom of God, who calls both the Gentiles and Israel together in mercy. And finally, when he reaches chapter 12, he brings that vast love of mercy down into the daily lives of the born-again righteous. This one chapter that we have opened together today is the passage that shows most clearly into what kind of holy flow a person's whole lifetime is shaped when the salvation that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection comes into that person's heart.

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An exhortation built upon the single word "therefore"

Chapter 12 begins with the single word "*therefore.*" Without taking the weight of this single word to heart, we can never understand chapter 12 correctly. Upon the full stop of all the grace he has unfolded from chapter 1 through chapter 11, the apostle marks one exhortation: *"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God" (Romans 12:1)*. The reason the apostle deliberately says, *"I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God" (Romans 12:1)*, is that this exhortation is not a compulsion of the law but a natural response to the love of mercy that we have already received.

Here the essence of the true life of faith is condensed. The sacrifices of the Old Testament were sacrifices in which animals were slaughtered and offered in death, but the spiritual worship of the New Testament is a life in which that living body is offered just as it is to the work of God and used day by day for holy work. It is not a religious ritual of one hour, but a lifelong sacrifice in which every breath, from the time one wakes from sleep until the time one goes back to bed, is offered to Him. And the apostle defines this living sacrifice in a word, saying that it is the sacrifice *"which is your spiritual service" (Romans 12:1)*. The true worship of the born-again righteous is not limited to a gathering of one hour; it is one whole canvas of holy worship in which their entire lifetime is offered before Him.

However, this living sacrifice is not possible for just anyone. The body of a person in whose heart sin still remains can never become a holy living sacrifice. As the sacrificial law of the Old Testament clearly teaches, every offering presented before Him had to be unblemished. Only those who have received the remission of sins by accepting in their hearts the truth that Jesus

had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, completely bore the price of that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and guaranteed righteousness by rising again from death, at last become bodies worthy of being offered as a holy living sacrifice.

Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind

The apostle carries the exhortation of verse 1 straight on into verse 2. *"Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2)*. What the phrase *"this world"* refers to here is the current of an age that forgets the soul and lives pursuing only the pleasures of the flesh and the satisfaction of food, clothing, and shelter. The direction toward which the lifetime of the born-again righteous is headed and the direction toward which the current of this world is headed are exactly opposite from the start. Therefore, the apostle does not merely tell us to keep away from it, but resolutely commands, "Do not be conformed." For it is never possible to keep one foot in the truth and the other foot in this world.

What is meant here by *"the renewing of your mind" (Romans 12:2)* is not some vague mental discipline. It means that because the old nature and the habits of committing sin still remain throughout the hearts of even born-again people, they must reshape their hearts every day in the light of the word of God and the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And it is significant that the passage expresses this as *"be transformed" (Romans 12:2)*. This transformation is not a transformation that one squeezes out by one's own strength, but the act of accepting,

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just as it is, the transformation by which He Himself shapes us. When we honestly lay out our own shortcomings before the Holy Spirit, who dwells in our hearts, He Himself reshapes those hearts.

In a person whose heart is renewed in this way, one ability grows. It is the ability to discern *"what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God" (Romans 12:2)*. What is that will? It becomes clear when we look at it together with chapter 11, verse 32. That is, the will in which He delights most is the work of leading even one more soul before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, connected to His heart, which desires to have mercy on all people. To the extent that this discernment ripens over the lifetime of born-again people, their time, hands, mouths, and material possessions all line up naturally upon the flow toward the salvation of souls.

Think soberly according to the measure of faith

The apostle clearly reveals the trap into which a person offered as a living sacrifice is most likely to fall first: *"Not to think of himself more highly than he ought to think, but to think soberly, as God has dealt to each one a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3)*. The more the born-again righteous become aware of the richness of the grace they have received, the more easily a subtle pride grows that seeks, on the contrary, to place themselves one step higher than the other members. This trap is all the more cunning because outwardly it looks like religious zeal.

Here the weightiest expression is *"a measure of faith" (Romans 12:3)*. The faith of born-again people is not something they produced by their own effort, but a gift that He Himself has

distributed. That measure has not come equally to all people; it has been distributed appropriately to each person within His decree. Therefore, we must not inflate our own measure, nor must we think little of our own measure and bury the grace we have received. Acknowledging just as it is only as much as we have received, and thinking and acting soberly within that measure, is the proper attitude of a person offered as a living sacrifice. Whether that measure is large or small, the faith we have received is all faith in the one salvation that Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him 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; therefore, no one can put that faith forward to exalt himself above the other members.

Many members who have become one body in Christ

The apostle puts this exhortation into a single picture: *"For as we have many members in one body, but all the members do not have the same function, so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and individually members of one another" (Romans 12:4–5)*. The apostle applies to the church, just as it is, the natural principle that hands and feet, eyes and ears, blood vessels and bones are joined together in one person's body, and yet all those members do not have the same function.

Within this metaphor, two truths are clearly revealed together. First, all born-again people who are in Christ are not separate individuals, but members of one body who touch one another's flesh and share the same blood. When one member

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suffers, the whole body suffers together, and when one member is honored, the whole body is honored together. Second, for that reason, no member can boast of its own function to the other members or think lightly of another member's function. The bond that ties us into one body is not human friendship or organizational unity; it flows only from the salvation that Jesus Christ, the one Head, accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Serve with the proper attitude according to the gifts you have received

Upon the metaphor of one body, the apostle lists seven gifts. They are prophecy and ministering, teaching and exhorting, giving and leading, and showing mercy. Beside each gift, the proper attitude with which that gift is to be exercised is paired together with it. He who gives must carry out that work with sincerity rather than reluctance; he who leads, with the diligence of setting an example first himself; and he who shows mercy, with a joyful heart, so that even the heart of the person receiving help may become light.

All these gifts flow from a single root. They have been received *"according to the grace that is given to us" (Romans 12:6)*. The reason one is capable of teaching, the reason one is suited to serving, and the reason one has a heart of mercy are all because He Himself has distributed that measure. Therefore, no gift can become something to boast of, and also no gift is something one has the right to decline. When we carry out exactly the measure we have received with the attitude that has been given along with it, all the members within the one body grow together, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit flows

to more people, even one more soul. So those who teach with their mouths, those who serve with their hands, and those who give with their material possessions together come to preach, to souls who have not yet received the remission of sins, the truth that Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred 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 and remitted our sins.

Love without hypocrisy, from our brothers even to those who persecute us

The apostle now explains with what kind of love that living sacrifice must be revealed in daily relationships. Its first word is *"let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9)*. The love in this passage is not a transactional love that seeks to gain one's own profit, but a pure love that contains no hidden motive whatsoever. And that pure love is not indiscriminate leniency, but a love that resolutely keeps its distance from the evil that ruins the other person and joins the heart to the good that gives the other person life.

Among brothers and sisters, this love unfolds in the form that the word describes: *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:10)*. If two people stand facing each other with the attitude of "If you acknowledge me first, then I will acknowledge you too," love can never sprout. A born-again righteous person is one who reaches out his hand first and honors the other members. And this love extends into the realm of hands and material things, flowing even to supplying the needs of the saints and devoting oneself to showing hospitality. The holy

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hospitality of welcoming with sincerity one soul who has come from far away and engraving warmth on that heart is one aspect of the daily life of a person offered as a living sacrifice.

Furthermore, this love deepens even to this: *"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep" (Romans 12:15)*. It means not envying the joy of other members but enjoying it as our own joy, and placing our own hearts together with the sorrow of other members. Just as the whole body feels the pain together when one finger is injured and bleeds, the members of one body breathe one another's joys and sorrows together. And at last this love flows even to a level that human nature can never follow: *"Bless those who persecute you" (Romans 12:14)*.

Do not repay evil for evil, but overcome evil with good

At the end, the apostle clearly reveals the highest level that this love must reach: *"Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men" (Romans 12:17)*. This is because the moment the hands of a born-again person are used as tools for doing evil, even he himself, though righteous, ends up being swept into the same current of evil. Therefore, the apostle exhorts: *"If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men" (Romans 12:18)*. This does not mean going so far as to go against the truth, but pursuing peace first in every area in which we can yield.

And the apostle puts down his most resolute full stop: *"Do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19)*. Taking vengeance is not our domain but His

domain. Only when we entrust our burdens into His hands does peace come into our hearts and do our daily lives become connected again to His work. Going further, the passage commands: *"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink" (Romans 12:20)*. When a person who hated us receives food from us instead, the coals of fire heaped on that person's head are not a fire that destroys him, but a holy fire that melts his heart and causes him to return to the path of repentance.

The final full stop of all these exhortations is verse 21: *"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21)*. If the born-again righteous fight on the same level as evil, they have lost even if they win. The victory to which the passage points is a victory on a different level. That is, it is a victory that covers evil with good and cuts off the chain of evil itself. The final weapon of the born-again righteous is not a sword, a fist, or harsh words, but a single act of good that flows from His love, which dwells within their hearts. Such love can never be obtained by one's own moral will. Only those who have engraved the following fact on their hearts can live out this love on a different level: even though they themselves were once enemies who opposed God, Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and through the salvation He accomplished by rising again from death, He Himself tore down that enmity and made us children of peace.

A lifetime offered as a living sacrifice, that is, spiritual worship that serves the gospel

Dear beloved saints, the message that the exhortation of

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chapter 12 to present our bodies as a living sacrifice conveys to us is clear. Those who have accepted in their hearts that vast love of mercy unfolded from chapter 1 through chapter 11 come to live a lifetime of presenting their own bodies, alive just as they are, to God as a holy living sacrifice. That lifetime is a flow of not being conformed to this world and of renewing the heart day after day; a flow of accurately acknowledging the measure of faith one has received and, as one member of the one body, carrying out the gifts one has received with the proper attitude; and a flow of letting love without hypocrisy stream out from brothers and sisters to those who persecute, and at last even to one's own enemies.

At the very center of all these flows, one purpose is firmly set. That is, it is the work of leading even one more soul before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, connected to His heart, which desires to have mercy on all people. Every encounter with each person that comes into our daily lives, the work of sharing that truth with our mouths, and the work of offering our hands, time, and material possessions to the spread of that truth are all equally a part of the spiritual worship offered to Him. In the time of a born-again person, there is not a single hour that is not connected to His glory and the salvation of souls. I pray in the name of the Lord that we may all believe that the whole lifetime of thus presenting our bodies, hearts, hands, and time as a living sacrifice and diligently serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the very spiritual worship that chapter 12, verse 1 defines, and the most proper response that the born-again righteous can offer to Him, and that we may all live as that holy living sacrifice. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Let love be without hypocrisy

< Romans 12:9–13 >

“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another; not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.”

There is no hypocrisy in God’s love

The apostle Paul first said, *“Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good” (Romans 12:9)*. That is, there is no hypocrisy in love. What does this mean? The love spoken of here is not our human love; it is speaking of the love of God. There is no hypocrisy in God’s love. In other words, there is no hypocrisy in the love with which God loved us. That Jesus had the sin of the world, which contains even our sins, transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, bore that sin and shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from death, and remitted our sins—that is the love with which God loved us, and it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have received the remission of sins and become children of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is that love. It means that there is no hypocrisy when those who have received that love and the remission of sins, and who have the Holy Spirit

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dwelling in their hearts, unite with one another, care for one another, and love one another while living on this earth.

To say that there is no hypocrisy means that it is pure. There is purity in love. It is not a love that begins in selfishness, in which I love that person because I want to gain some benefit, or love him because there is something I can squeeze out of him. It means that in the true love of God there is purity. It means that when we love our brothers and sisters just as God loved us, there is that kind of love as well. It is never a love that has some other purpose. It means that just as God loved us, just as we have received the love of God, those who have received the love of God love purely in that way. It has no purpose whatsoever.

Those who think only of their own interests may think of using that person to gain nothing but benefit for themselves, but when people who have truly received salvation before God and live by it love their brothers and sisters, there is no reason or condition. It is beautiful because they simply love and care for one another for love's own sake. If we think of the love we first received, we can understand why we care for one another without calculation. Because Jesus had not only our selfish sins but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and gave us life; so we love one another in gratitude for that grace.

"Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good"

When it says, *"Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9)*, it means that because we believe that God loved us, and because the Holy Spirit dwells in us, we also love one

another, and therefore we hate evil. That we love one another among ourselves also means that we hate evil. The apostle Paul spoke this word in that sense. If someone says he loves another person while trying to trap that person, torment him, and keep him from doing his work, and still claims to love him, that is not true love, nor is it pure love. It is love driven by his own selfishness.

Those who love their brothers and sisters love, first of all, with a love that hates evil. A love that hates evil and does not try to unite with what is evil—that is true love. A love that does not harbor an evil heart that would ruin the other person is what it means to love a brother and to love a sister. Evil must be hated and resisted. It makes no sense to say that one loves God while loving evil. If one looks only at the literal words, it is easy to think that covering for people who do evil is love, but that is absolutely not so. If we unite our hearts with people who do evil, we also become evil. Then, if a person who does evil says he loves someone, it amounts to saying that he will draw that person into it so that they may do evil in the same way.

So those who love God, those who love their brothers and sisters with the love of God, hate evil. We must hate evil. If someone says to a person doing evil things, "Yes, I love you. I will overlook everything you do. I believe that God also overlooks it all," and claims to love him, he has united with him and entered into evil together. That is absolutely not right. It is a truly outrageous thing. It is exactly the same as the fallen angel opposing God. It is exactly the same as that angel ignoring the blessing God had given him—to live forever enjoying riches and glory—and challenging and obstructing God. That is why we must hate evil. And we must cling to what is good. If what that brother or that sister is doing seems to be something that pleases God, we must look at it purely from the viewpoint of "Is there

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anything I can help with? Is there anything I can do for them?" and approach them and care for them from that viewpoint.

Dear fellow believers, in love there is no hypocrisy, only purity. The crystallization of that purity is God, and it is the love of God. No one has loved us as purely as God has. Would God have sought to gain some benefit from us? God's purpose is to live together with those He loves. And He intended to give them riches and glory as well, so that just as God lives in glory, and just as He lives forever, He might allow them that same kind of life too. So how pure that is! That is why we praise God, thank Him, and rejoice, because we are grateful. God's pure love is also clearly revealed in His having removed sin. Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had not only the sins that came out of my evil heart and yours but also all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and because of those sins He shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, rose again from death, and delivered us from sin.

We can love only when we believe in what God has done

I can see that my heart changed after I met the Lord. I came to realize that before I met the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, although I said with my words that I loved people and cared for them, in reality there was also in my heart a desire to do evil to that person, a distrust of that person, and a wish to obstruct by any means whatever that person was doing. But after I was born again, my personal selfishness disappeared completely. I can see that I now have a heart that wants to approach a person purely, help him purely, and wait for him, without expecting anything to come back to me, thinking that

although that person is lacking, he is someone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that although he is lacking, he too can live by faith if I guide him rightly just a little, and that if that happens, God will give him blessings and he will be able to live receiving God's blessings. I think, and I believe, that this did not come about through me, but through the love of God, the salvation God gave me, and the Holy Spirit God gave to those who are saved. If God were not in me, how could I possibly be like this?

Originally, human beings are a seed of evildoers, so this is impossible. When people who are not born again say they love God, they do so out of selfishness. They do it to receive blessings. Because their focus is fixed only on that, they do it by any means and methods. The result is that in the end they come to oppose God. That is why we must acknowledge our evil and accept into our hearts God's love and the salvation He has given. Only then can we love God and serve God. Because the work of God is something only those who have been saved by God can do, we must believe in what God has done. We must affirm and accept entirely that God loved you and removed your sins. Otherwise, the love that comes from human beings is like a snake harboring venom. It is like a viper giving birth to young and making them do evil again. Human beings are beings who absolutely cannot do good, who cannot love. In order to give us the salvation that we are to accept in our hearts, Jesus bore once and for all not only the sins that came out of us but also all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John. Only when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus paid the price of those sins He bore with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death—can we turn from a heart that sought only its own benefit and love and serve God.

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People must be born again. For that, we must unconditionally say "Yes" to God's love and to the salvation God has given, and we must believe unconditionally. There is no hypocrisy in the love with which He loved us, so what do we have to say? Are you saying we do not have to believe? Where on this earth is there anyone who does not need to believe? Everyone must believe. And we must cling to what is good. To say that we must cling to what is good means that after being born again, we must unite with the work that pleases God and take part in that work together. To belong somewhere, one must be together with those people; how can one belong while having a different heart from them? If only your body is there with them, do you belong? You belong only when you are with them in heart. By all means, let us cling to what is good.

Love goes back and forth between one another

Then it says, *"Be kindly affectionate to one another with brotherly love, in honor giving preference to one another" (Romans 12:10)*. What this means is that love is not one-sided. Love is loving one another. As those who have been saved, as those who have become children of God, we love the other person with the love of God and the other person also loves us—that is true love. In love there is no such thing as one-sided love. One-sided love makes you sad and angry, but love goes back and forth between people. When people hear the word love, they think only of love toward the opposite sex, pleasure-seeking love, but there are very many kinds of love. Pleasure-seeking love is very simple. But the love in which people love and care for one another, giving and receiving from heart to heart, is very deep and has many varieties. A great many indeed.

In loving the brethren, we must love one another. It must not be that someone, thinking, "I am high in position; I am the guide here; I am the one in charge here," only receives one-sided love, and even while receiving love does not know how to be thankful, thinking, "That is only natural; you all ought to take care of me." Dear fellow believers, we must be grateful even when someone does just a little for us and see one another as equals. It is not, "I am high and you are low, so you have to do this and I don't have to," but a relationship of equals. We have all received salvation equally before God. In a relationship of equals, we say, "Thank you. Is there anything I can do for you?" I, too, when I see a brother who has taken on all kinds of work and labors hard, say, "What can I do for him? Should I boil some eggs and bring them to him?" and when I eat something delicious, I say, "Wrap some of this up so I can take it to him," and I take it to him. Brothers loving one another—this is love. Love is not one person alone loving one-sidedly. It is not pleasure-seeking love toward the opposite sex, but loving with brotherly love. We love the sisters with that same kind of love too. This is true love. Love one another with brotherly love, and take the lead in honoring one another. That is exactly the meaning of this word in the original text. Before thinking of whether we are high or low, consider the fact that Jesus had not only the sins of our brothers and sisters but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Because Jesus shed His blood on the Cross because of those sins, received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death, we who have received the same grace value and serve one another.

Take the lead in honoring one another. Honor, too, must not come from one side only. We must honor one another. If someone tells me I am precious, I say, "What is so precious about me? You are the precious one," and, "What you are doing

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is the great work," and when we do this for one another, love begins to sprout. Because God loved us with the love of God, we who have received that love love one another and honor one another with the love of God. It is something we must do for one another. It is not one-sided. If God loves us but we do not love God, that is the end of it. When God loves us, if we also affirm and accept that love and say, "I love God too. Since He loves me like this, I cannot help but love God. God has done such a precious thing for me, so I want to do what pleases God too," the Holy Spirit within us is pleased. The Holy Spirit within us is pleased and says, "Thank you; My heart is so glad. What shall I do for you? How shall I help you? Ask Me for what you need." When the Holy Spirit is pleased in our hearts and answers us when we pray, things go well, and things become good with our brothers and sisters as well. The apostle Paul is telling us to live with this kind of love.

The apostle Paul's word is truly remarkable. This is not an obligatory love; we love because we have received love, and we receive honor because we honor one another. If you do evil to another person, evil comes back. Because the Lord has told us to live this way in the last days, we must live this way. By all means, let us brothers and sisters live caring for and honoring one another.

"Fervent in spirit, serving the Lord"

It says, "*Not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord" (Romans 12:11)*. The original meaning of this word is not to grow slack in being zealous. It means that we must be zealous for the work of God, so we must not grow slack, saying, "I don't know whether it works out or not," nor stop or give up

being zealous for the work of God, but must be diligent and serve the Lord with a heart burning with the Holy Spirit. Those who have received the remission of sins have the Holy Spirit within them. Although the work of God is hard and at times also a burden, when it is difficult we pray and ask for help, and we must do it because it is work that pleases God. No matter how difficult it is, if we do it, the Lord gives us new strength. Even when we ask for strength to serve the Lord, we first believe in the love that gave us life. Because Jesus had not only the sins of us who are lacking but also all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death; therefore, we do not strive to obtain salvation, but do the Lord's work in gratitude for the love we have received.

It says, *"Not lagging in diligence" (Romans 12:11)*. If you are lazy, nothing gets done. This does not mean that you must do it unconditionally to the point of death. But if we are lazy in doing the work of God, that precious work is not accomplished. Yet being only overly zealous is not right either. We must accomplish that work while pacing ourselves, thinking, "Since my body is in this condition, this much should be enough while I ask God for help," or, "If I am going to concentrate on this task, I must put my strength into this task." We must serve the Lord with the heart of the Holy Spirit that God gives, with a burning heart. Without passion, one cannot do the work of God. The Lord saved me, and although I cannot fully repay that love through the work of God, if I am someone who responds to the love of God, I must first of all not be lazy. If you are lazy, you cannot accomplish anything. People say they have dreams and that they are moving toward those dreams, but those dreams come true when they are diligent, when they have prayed

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earnestly to God, when they do what pleases God, and when they have done it in union with the church. No matter how diligently you dream alone, such dreams are often shattered at any time. But dreaming in union with God, and setting a goal in union with God, will surely come to pass. It will be fulfilled.

Those who have hope endure and pray

It says, *"Rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer" (Romans 12:12)*. Dear fellow believers, those who have hope are joyful. They are joyful because they will live with God. Remembering just this one thing—that God, who is the Christ, loved me and gave salvation to me and to you—makes our hearts joyful. We are joyful because God came to this earth and did the work of the Christ, because He did the work of saving me and you, because the One who saved us is God, because we will live together in the kingdom where He is, and because He will let us be together in the place where He is. Even this one thing alone enables us to overcome all tribulation and adversity. And we can rejoice. We can live up to the word that says, *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)*. We can live that way. What makes those who are saved different from those who are not saved is that the blessing coming from God dwells within their hearts, the gospel of the water and the Spirit is also in their hearts, and joy is always in their hearts because of the hope that comes from God—because what we long for will come to pass. That is why it is good, and that is why we can be patient and endure even in tribulation. The reason this hope is certain is that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, had not only 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 because of those sins He shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Because Jesus, who saved us, is alive, we look forward to living together in that kingdom and pray even in tribulation.

That is why we can devote ourselves steadily to prayer. Dear fellow believers, it is very good for us to pray together when we gather. God is pleased when we pray in unity, when all the people pray for one purpose, when we pray for that work. God is pleased when two people pray rather than one, and when many people pray with one accord rather than two. He is more pleased when many people praise together than when one person praises. God surely fulfills what we pray for. God fulfills everything you prayed for when you gathered at worship services, sometimes what you prayed for when you said grace at meals, and what you prayed for individually. It is so good. Devote yourselves to prayer. We must pray at all times. We must pray for what we long for that has not yet come to pass, we must pray for what we will accomplish, and we must pray for others and for our fellow members.

A community that shares with one another what is needed

Lastly, it says, "*Distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality" (Romans 12:13)*. Dear fellow believers, if we truly live a life of faith, if you and I have received the remission of sins and want to live in union with God, we must share with one another what is needed. Just because something is mine does not mean it is mine alone. Even if I have been using it, when I am not using it, or when it is not that useful even though I have

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it, I must share it, although I might need it and use it later. If we are truly God's people and one family of God, we must share what we need with one another. We must share with one another what is needed and strive to show hospitality to guests. We should strive to serve, but we must strive for one another mutually; it must not be that only one person strives one-sidedly. If we are truly one family, we should share with one another. Saying, "Don't you have that? Do you really need that? If you need it, I'll give it to you. If you don't use it later, give it to me," we pass things around and use them, and buy more and use them—God is already speaking of a communal life. The grace of becoming one family was given to us before we ever shared things with one another. Because Jesus bore once and for all not only the sins that came from our stinginess but also all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death and made us children of God, we look after one another's needs.

God does not say that only living together in one place is communal life. We who have become God's people scatter and do the work of God, unite and do the work of God, then gather again and worship as we are doing now, share with one another when there is something needed, and live showing hospitality to one another and caring for one another—this is the life God wants from us. This is the life of the early church. People misunderstand, thinking that in the time of the early church everyone gathered and lived together, but that is not so. They gathered at the church building and worshiped, then scattered and did the work assigned to each of them; then they gathered again, shared with one another what was needed, and showed hospitality to one another; then they parted again and diligently earned money, and they lived that way. The community the

Bible speaks of is living by sharing with one another what is needed, showing hospitality to one another, and serving. This is what God says to His people. We must live by sharing with one another what we need and by serving. Someone says, "Brother, please do this for me," and the brothers in turn ask the sisters whether they could do something for them; we help one another with what is needed, and though we are in different departments, we share with one another what is needed; if the other person needs something, I give it, and I also receive—how beautiful that is! Is it inferior to pleasure-seeking love? Pleasure-seeking love does not last long. If certain conditions are not met, it breaks. But true love in Christ does not break under any circumstances. Even when I am in difficulty, I can receive help. The world is getting harder. That is why such a community of faith, a community of God, is needed; when people hear of a community of God, they tend to think it is a place where people live together, but that is not so. After finishing worship, we each scatter and do all the work assigned to each of us. This is a true community.

The righteous cling to what is good and do the work of God

Let me sum it up once again. It says, *"Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good" (Romans 12:9)*. To speak of truly pure love, it is those who hate evil, and those who cling to what is good, who love with true love. If someone says that he loves God and loves souls while liking evil people, uniting with what they do, and saying he loves them, that person has already departed from the love of God. One should help the other person to do well by all means; if instead someone tries to exploit the other person and enjoy his own benefit, he is

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already someone from whom the love of God has departed. The Holy Spirit does not work in him. On the last day, God will call him to account for having lived on this earth only for his own benefit. He is like the servant who received one talent and buried it in the ground. Such a person will surely be judged. Where God is, there is love for one another, and love flows back and forth between people. This is the blessing God has bestowed on us. That is why the Church of God is not desolate but so beautiful. The praise is beautiful, life is beautiful, and the things we do all go well. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit with what He has blessed us with, God blesses us with even more. Then we enjoy even more.

We must not like evil. I hope you and I will examine whether we like evil or dislike it. There are those who fall in with evil people and like doing evil as a habit. That is a serious matter. The Holy Spirit is not pleased with that, and God is not with them either. Though we are lacking at times, if we say we are God's people and God's workers, we must not love evil. We must hate evil. This does not mean to hate people. It means to hate evil. "I dislike that behavior"—that is what hating means. Just as there is a saying, "Hate the evil, but do not hate the person," we must hate evil. Yet how many people there are, even among the righteous, who like even evil! They secretly siphon off what belongs to others, and not only do they do it themselves, but they even teach others that this is how to make money. I cannot tell you how stingy such people are. And I cannot tell you how kind they are to those who bring them benefit. They say, "I'm giving this especially just for you." We must hate that. I hate the behavior of those who do evil, but I do not hate their souls. I say, "Turn back. Do not live like that." If you live like that, you will be hated by God. Those who have received the remission of sins and do evil are like the servant who received

one talent and buried it in the ground. They have not done the work of God; they have received talents and not done the work of serving God. We must cling to what is good. I hope you will not become such people. The righteous are people who cling to what is good and do the work of God. Even when we turn from evil and cling to what is good, we must follow the Lord not with our own righteousness but with a heart that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus had not only the sins that show up in us but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, He paid the price of those sins with the blood He shed on the Cross and rose again from death; so we, who have received that love, do not exploit people but care for their souls.

If things are not going well for you on your own, follow those who go ahead of you. Then it will come naturally. But if the person who leads you is someone who lives only for himself, following him will make you the same kind of person. No matter who he may be, if he is someone who lives only for himself, do not follow him. That is wisdom. And unite with the work that pleases God. God will give you blessings. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Give up revenge and seek the benefit of the gospel

< Romans 12:14–21 >

“Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse. Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion. Repay no one evil for evil. Have regard for good things in the sight of all men. If it is possible, as much as depends on you, live peaceably with all men. Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, ‘Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,’ says the Lord. Therefore ‘If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head.’ Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.”

The salvation needed even by souls who persecute us

On a day when we come home after hearing unjust words, we cannot even put our hands to the work we must do, because we are busy thinking about how to pay those words back. It seems that our hearts will be relieved only if we bring the other person down, and if we stay quiet, it feels as though we are condoning that person’s wrongdoing. To us who are like this,

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the word that Paul lets us hear first is this: *"Bless those who persecute you; bless and do not curse" (Romans 12:14)*. If we read only this one verse, it sounds like a word that we can never keep with our flesh. Since even a sage of perfect virtue cannot do this, this is a word that lies beyond the realm of our flesh. But when we read on down to verse 21, it becomes clear why Paul says this, and also what we must keep in order to truly win.

This is not a word telling us to bless those who persecute us because they have done nothing wrong. There are people who hate us, revile us, and put us at a disadvantage for the sole reason that we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it was precisely about such people that Paul said to bless and not to curse. A curse is a word wishing that the person will come to ruin, and a blessing is a word wishing that he, too, will receive the remission of sins. Therefore, when our prayer asking the Lord to take vengeance on that person for us changes into a prayer asking Him to have pity on that person, we are blessing those who persecute us. For as long as curses come out of our mouths, we cannot preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to him with the same mouth.

Are we ourselves not people whom the Lord has patiently endured? It was not that we first became good people and went looking for the Lord; rather, the Lord saved us while we were held captive by sin and our own thoughts. Jesus received baptism from John in order to have all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all. Because He had the sin of the world passed on to Him in this way, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross, received that judgment in our place, and died, and by rising again from death He remitted our sins. That sin of the world includes not only the sins we commit throughout our lives, but also the sins of the very person who persecutes us. While He was on this earth, Jesus never once raised His fist

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against those who persecuted Him; rather, He bore that sin of the world, which included even their sins, and went to the Cross. What we, who have become righteous by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, have to give to other souls is also that salvation which we have received.

This does not mean, however, that after receiving the remission of sins we never become angry at all. Because we, too, are people who have flesh, there are times when our temper flares up; but at such times the Holy Spirit within us brings this word to mind, so we can believe that word and turn our hearts around. The evidence of having received the Holy Spirit does not lie in never once showing our emotions or in some special experience, but in the remission of sins received from the Lord. Herein lies the reason why blessing those who persecute us is impossible with our flesh, yet possible for those who have received the remission of sins and with whom the Holy Spirit dwells. When we rely on the salvation we have already received, we can step back from acting as our anger dictates.

Be of the same mind in your brother's joy and sorrow

Paul, who has been examining the heart we should have toward our enemies, exhorts us to cast away a self-centered heart among the brothers and sisters who believe together as well: *"Rejoice with those who rejoice, and weep with those who weep. Be of the same mind toward one another. Do not set your mind on high things, but associate with the humble. Do not be wise in your own opinion" (Romans 12:15–16)*. This is a word spoken among the righteous. It means rejoicing together even when the other person's joy brings me no immediate benefit, and being of

the same mind even when the hardship he is going through is not my responsibility.

We can rejoice together and weep together because Jesus had all the sins of the world, including both that brother's sins and our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Since we are people who have received the same remission of sins and serve the same Lord, a brother's affairs cannot be something that has nothing to do with me. If someone faces hardship while serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must listen to his situation and pray together, and if joyful news is heard, we must give thanks as though things had gone well for ourselves. Even a brother who is far away and whose face we cannot see often is one of the same Lord's people, so we cannot leave his situation out of our prayers. If we think, "Why is only that person rejoicing when I am having a hard time?" we come to see a brother who has received the same grace as a competitor; on the other hand, if I press a weeping brother because I am at peace, his burden becomes heavier.

That is why Paul said to take a lowly place and not to act as though we are wise. For from a position of looking down on another person's shortcomings, we cannot understand his heart. If we have learned the faith first, we have the responsibility to lead a weak brother well and care for him, and to help him we need a lowly heart that can listen to his story. Rather than putting our own judgment first and ending the conversation, examining what is making him struggle and helping him believe the word together with us is the way to be of the same mind.

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Entrust judgment to the Lord

Humbling our hearts toward a brother and not taking revenge on an enemy share a common faith. It is the faith that my thoughts and feelings cannot be the standard for judging all people. Paul said not to repay anyone evil for evil, and to plan what is good in the sight of all people. If I strike back once just because the other person struck me once, it does not end there; instead, taking vengeance is repeated back and forth, and in the meantime the way to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit is blocked. Human history is a series of making enemies and taking vengeance on enemies, and if even people of God follow that path, the name of God is reviled.

That is why Paul said that, if it is possible, as far as it depends on us, we should live in peace with all people. To live in peace means, first of all, not to make enemies. Once we make an enemy, it takes far too much time to resolve it, and it does not resolve easily either. Therefore, rather than doing good only to those who treat me well or waiting for the other person to change, we must not first create any pretext for strife from our side. If that person seeks to gain his own benefit, we must give him benefit and be reconciled with him, even if we suffer a little loss.

There are times when we suffer fleshly loss while seeking peace, but recovering all our own interests can never come before serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That does not mean, however, that we should change the truth to please the other person. It means yielding in human matters while speaking clearly in matters of faith and truth; thus, while keeping the faith of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can yield what can be yielded in daily life and also give the help the other person needs. We should not merely count what we have given up, but also examine whether, because of that matter, we have even

closed our hearts to preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For that other person, too, is a soul who must hear of the remission of sins that Jesus gave by having the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rising again from death.

But what should we do if the other person keeps doing us harm even though we have strived for peace? *"Beloved, do not avenge yourselves, but rather give place to wrath; for it is written, 'Vengeance is Mine, I will repay,' says the Lord" (Romans 12:19)*. God has not abandoned us to resolve unjust things by ourselves. We who are born again have the One who will take vengeance on our enemies for us. Vengeance belongs to the Lord, not to us, and since the authority and power to judge belong to the Lord, we must trust Him and step out of the position of judging. For we are not the judge; God is the Judge.

If I insist that the other person must be punished at the time I want and as much as I have decided, I am still playing the role of judge. To entrust it to the Lord is to lay even that calculation before the Lord. Because God knows what we have suffered and judges evil rightly, our ceasing to retaliate does not make evil right. The Scripture says, *"The wrath of man does not produce the righteousness of God" (James 1:20)*. So, when it seems we cannot bear it any longer, we must tell God about it and think on the word; then we can turn the heart that was held captive by the sense of injustice to the work the Lord has entrusted to us.

Paul himself, who wrote this word, was a man who was beaten many times and suffered countless injustices because of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but he did not take vengeance with his own hands; he entrusted it to the Lord. The reason we, too, can entrust it to the Lord is clear. The Lord, who waited for us a long time and patiently endured us, had our sins

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passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and received that judgment in our place on the Cross; so if vengeance belongs to the Lord, we, too, can endure.

Do good to your enemy and overcome evil

If we have entrusted judgment to the Lord, then even when we meet an enemy, instead of being dragged along by our own emotions, we must act as the Lord has taught us: *"If your enemy is hungry, feed him; If he is thirsty, give him a drink; For in so doing you will heap coals of fire on his head" (Romans 12:20)*. Paul said that if we see our enemy's need, we should give him food and drink. If we attach the condition that we can help him only if he apologizes first, we are still remaining within the calculation of retaliation. Examining the needs we can help with right now is the good work we must do.

Heaping coals of fire on his head means that punishment on the last day is heaped up for the one who, even after receiving good, ultimately opposes the Lord. Even if we do not retaliate but do good, that does not mean that God's judgment on the evil that person has done disappears. Therefore, we must not try to hasten judgment by our own hands, but entrust it to God, while also considering what the Lord, who holds that authority, has commanded us. While the Lord delays judgment, there is time for that person, too, to turn back. Just as in the first word, to bless those who persecute us, we must give him real benefit, hoping that he will receive the remission of sins and escape judgment.

"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Romans 12:21). If we have brought the other person down by evil actions, it may look outwardly as though we have won, but since a person of God has done evil, we have already been

overcome by evil. Even if we win, we have lost, and if we lose, we have lost. What those who are not born again desire is only fleshly benefit, but people of God must gain spiritual benefit whether they win or lose in the flesh. For to Christians, good is seeking the benefit of the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To overcome with good does not mean becoming righteous by the merit of having endured our enemies. Since Jesus has already given the remission of sins by having the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rising again from death, it means that those who have received that remission of sins choose the way that benefits that gospel of the water and the Spirit. Trusting the Lord and ceasing to retaliate, caring for the hearts of our brothers, and not closing the way of salvation even to our enemies—this is overcoming with good.

On a day when we come home after hearing unjust words, what we must look for is not words to pay back. Let us tell the Lord about it, and let us spend the time we used to look for words to pay back on praying for that soul and serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since vengeance belongs to the Lord, we step out of the position of judging and do good, and overcoming evil in this way is the way in which people of God truly win. ✉

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CHAPTER

13

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Be subject to the governing authorities

< Romans 13:1–7 >

“Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience’ sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God’s ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor.”

The word that taught order within the church by citing the affairs of the world

I would like to share the word, focusing on the apostle Paul’s word to be subject to the governing authorities. As he was

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bringing the Book of Romans to a close, the apostle Paul sent a letter to the church in Rome, and in it he said, *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:1–2)*. Then, from verse 3 through verse 7, he spoke by citing the affairs of the world.

Concerning the rulers of the world, those who hold authority in the world, he is saying that God has given authority in this world, and that God has also set up such people for the sake of order, for the sake of good works, and to punish evil. So he said that as we live in this world, we should do good, and then we will receive praise. God has set up the authorities of this world, and of course there are unrighteous authorities, and there are also those who use their authority wickedly. But they are God's ministers, people whom God has set up for the order of this world and for the order of each nation. So the word says that we should be subject to them, not only because of their wrath, but also for the sake of our own conscience. And concerning taxes, too, he said, *"Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:7)*.

Why did he say this? Did the apostle Paul say this in order to establish order in the world, in order to speak about a theory of order? He did not intend to speak only about that. What the apostle Paul wants to do is to teach the saints the word in verses 1 and 2, and it was in order to do so that he spoke about this part. In verse 1 he said, *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1)*. Therefore, since he said, *"Whoever resists the authority resists*

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the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:2), he is saying this about the authorities within the church. God has established order in the church and given offices, and in order to establish order within the Church of God, He has given authority for the sake of that order both to those who are ahead and to those who are behind.

So those who resist this authority are resisting the ordinance of God. Having first drawn that conclusion, he is explaining it by citing the affairs of the world. When we refer to the church, we call it the kingdom of God. The church is the kingdom of Jesus Christ, a kingdom where the people of God gather, live in order, and live for God. So every kingdom must have order and must have a well-established system. Only then can that kingdom be run and dwell in peace, and only then can it carry out the commands of its king. That is why the word says that those who resist the authority God has set up within the Church of God are resisting the ordinance of God, and that those who resist will bring judgment on themselves.

"Whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God"

I am not saying this because I am ahead of you, nor must you be governed because you are behind; this is the will of God. What God has spoken can never be altered by man, no matter what happens. People may try to alter it, and they might even be able to, but afterward judgment follows. And in fact it never turns out that way. As I serve the church and the kingdom of God and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with God's people and workers in many countries, I have come to realize something. If those who are ahead were wicked people

who truly led you off in the wrong direction, kept you from serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and led you astray, then I know that you could not follow their will.

But if the one who says he is ahead also serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit, lives for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and lives upholding the will of God, then it is not the will of God to resist and despise his commands. As we look at these two verses of Romans chapter 13, we must accept in our hearts that this word is indeed the word of God, make it our lesson and our goal, meditate on it, believe it, and keep it in our hearts during our life of faith, and strive to live in it—and we must indeed live that way. Only then will there be peace and rest, will the will of God be fulfilled, and will there be blessings. Some people, while claiming to serve God, try to ignore spiritual order, that is, the authority held by those who are ahead. There is no need to say anything more; that is very wrong. It is not merely a matter of "You should not do that," the way people argue with each other over theories or one person admonishes another; it is very wrong. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we serve together is the news that Jesus 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 because of those sins, was judged in our place and died, and rose again from death and remitted our sins. Therefore, with faith in Jesus, who saved us, we must unite our hearts and serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The opposition of Korah and the Levites

In Numbers chapter 16 there is the account of Korah and the Levites forming a faction and opposing Aaron and Moses. Even

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without quoting that passage, and even if we do not know any other word, if we look only at this word: *"The authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1)*. *"There is no authority except from God" (Romans 13:1)*. *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1)*. Simply by dividing the word of verse 1 into pieces like this, we can know that it is wrong to resist the authority God has established.

The Levites formed a faction, and Korah was also a Levite. Why did they form a faction like that and oppose Moses and Aaron? *"They gathered together against Moses and Aaron, and said to them, 'You take too much upon yourselves, for all the congregation is holy, every one of them, and the LORD is among them. Why then do you exalt yourselves above the assembly of the LORD?'" (Numbers 16:3)*. "Are you our king? You and I are all holy, all priests before God, and all servants of God, so what is the difference? Looking closely, it seems that you are acting like a king over us. You are absolutely not our king." Saying that they could not stand the sight of it, they ended up opposing them. If you read it, there is nothing else to it. "Are you the only one who holds the office of high priest? Moses, are you the only one who receives the word of God directly? We are holy too, so if we pray, we can receive it too." This is what they are saying. To put it simply, they are challenging that authority. God appeared to them and poured out His wrath and brought punishment on them.

Dear fellow believers, did Moses really act like a king? Did Aaron act like a king? Aaron was a priest just like the others, but he was the high priest. God established him that way and gave him that authority. There was the nation of Israel, and there were the Levites, who helped with all the work of offering sacrifices and did all the work, but those who oversaw everything about offering sacrifices were Aaron and his descendants. God

established it that way and determined it that way. So Aaron was not acting like a king; Aaron was also serving God, and they themselves were also serving God. They were serving within the scope of the authority God had given them. God entrusted the Levites with duties related to the service of the tabernacle, but He reserved the priesthood for Aaron and his descendants. Therefore, not every Levite could become a priest, nor could anyone from the other tribes take up the priestly office at will. God had assigned different duties to each person.

Since God had set it up that way, they too had to serve within the office He had set up. The other tribes had the authority to go to war, and they could farm the land God had divided among them, eat well, and live well, and when He told them to bring burnt offerings, peace offerings, or thanksgiving offerings to the tabernacle and offer them, they only had to offer them. He had given them great authority as well. On the other hand, the Levites could not farm even if they wanted to. They did not have that authority. And look at Moses. Moses was the one who prayed before God, heard the word and commands of God, and proclaimed them to the people. From a human point of view, it looks as if he were acting like a king. Since he prayed before God, heard God's voice, and said, "The LORD has spoken this," it might look as if he were acting like a king, but it was hard for Moses too. In order to hear God's commands, Moses had to live more purely than ordinary people, and the duties entrusted to him were heavier and his burden was heavier. In fact, he was not acting like a king, but they misunderstood him as acting like a king and opposed him. As they did so, they received judgment before God, and the ground split open, and Korah and the people who belonged to him were buried in it.

Even without citing such words from the Old Testament as an example, the apostle Paul is now saying this: *"Let every soul*

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be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1). Therefore, *"whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:2)*. With this, the whole sermon has been given. There is no need for a long explanation; this word, just as it is, is fact and truth. But why did he say this? Wasn't it because there were people who did not do so? The church is noisy because there are such people. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not spread well, and people form factions, act as if they were superior, and are cursed. Even if we gather our strength for spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is not enough, let alone when people gather their own forces to challenge and oppose those who are ahead, so that those who are ahead are wounded in their hearts and become weary.

Although those who are ahead deal with them sincerely and before God, these people deal with them with completely twisted hearts, thinking, "Who are you? Are you our king? Are you our guide? Am I your sheep?" And they scatter the united heart for spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is a sin before God. It is more than just a sin; it is resisting the authority of God, the command of God. We say that people sinning against one another is something that can happen, but directly challenging and resisting the command of God is a fearful thing. There is judgment for it. That is why we must not do such things. To that end, the apostle Paul is exhorting the Church of God in Rome in this way.

He is saying that we must never oppose the ministers or officers in the church, and that we must not find fault with them by using schemes and tricks. He is exhorting us that if such a person upholds the command of God and lives for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not oppose him like that; only

if he does not understand God's gospel of the water and the Spirit and distorts, corrupts, and opposes the gospel, or leads the saints astray and leads them to live only for the things of the flesh, could we oppose him—but otherwise, we must not do so.

Two kinds of people who resist

Those who do such things are usually people who have not been born again. And among the born again as well, those who follow the things of the flesh do such things. They resist those who are ahead while pretending not to resist them, and they follow the flesh while pretending not to follow the flesh. To do so, they band together, form factions, inflict wounds, and throw the church into disorder. Those who have not been born again simply cannot accept commands. Every time they hear the word, every time a command is given, everything rubs them the wrong way. "Why should I? What is the reason? Why must it be done only that way? There are other ways, so why must it be done that way?" Such protests always rise up in their hearts.

Dear fellow believers, if we are true sheep, if you and I have believed in the true gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins, what then? The Lord had my sins and your sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, hung on the Cross, received the judgment for sin and died for us, and rose again from death and became our Savior. So if we have believed in Jesus Christ as our Savior and acknowledged all that He did as fact, and have died with Christ and live with Christ and put on new life, if we have become new creations, and if the Holy Spirit dwells in my heart and your heart, and if what the Church of God does in leading us this way and that way is done for the gospel of the water and

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the Spirit—even if there might be some mistakes, if it is done for the gospel of the water and the Spirit—then even if a resentful or rebellious heart rises up within us, we are governed by the Holy Spirit within us and come to comply with it.

The Holy Spirit within us makes us comply

This is because the word says, *"The Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10)*. Who knows whether God's servants who are ahead are truly leading the church rightly and leading it for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit or not? The Holy Spirit knows. The Holy Spirit within you knows, and the Holy Spirit within me knows. It may seem like human thoughts and methods, but in fact the Holy Spirit is in control moment by moment. But those who have not been born again do not have the Holy Spirit within them, so instead, evil hearts rise up within them.

Even within born-again people, we can feel two kinds of resisting hearts rising up. The first is when the Holy Spirit causes us to resist. When someone who has not been born again preaches, as we listen to that sermon, we discern within ourselves, "That is not right," and come to oppose it. The second is when the evil of the flesh rebels against what the Holy Spirit is doing. We object, saying, "I don't think so." This does not mean that an evil spirit is inside a born-again person, but that the evil of the flesh is inside. So even when someone leads us rightly in what is right, there are times when it momentarily rubs us the wrong way. But born-again people ultimately submit. Even if they themselves say no, the Holy Spirit within them says, "It is right, so what is not right about it?" and completely softens the heart that wants to rebel, gives them a quiet and gentle heart, and

gives them a heart that complies with the parts in which God's servants are leading rightly. He gives them a heart to obey, submit, and respond.

But those who have not been born again can never do so. Evil rises up in them in everything, unconditionally. The better the work of God goes, the more a resisting heart rises up in them. When we were in the world before we were born again, there was a saying that we feel sick with jealousy when others do well, and that is exactly what this is. Others must not do well, no matter what. Only they themselves and their own children must do well; it is not acceptable for even a distant relative to do well. That is the state of the heart when one has not been born again. Weren't you like that? I was like that, and so were you. When relatives gather, on the surface they seem warm and close, but in fact they boast and show off to one another about how much money they have made and what they have bought in the meantime, and as people who have not been born again, they envy one another in their hearts and feel sick with jealousy. But born-again people are not like that. Whatever others have bought, they simply say, "It is good that things are going well for you," and there is nothing to be jealous about. When a worldly person who was doing well fails, the only thought that comes to them is, "What a pity. Perhaps the time has come for him to believe in Jesus."

But there are two kinds of people in the church. There are those who oppose those who are ahead because they have not been born again, and there are those who resist even though they have been born again, because they follow the flesh, because they do not think about the work of God but think about the things of their own flesh. Either way, those who resist are not right, and they must turn their hearts around. This is because whoever resists the rule or the leadership of those who have

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authority is resisting the command of God. In Peter's epistle there is this word: *"Therefore, laying aside all malice, all deceit, hypocrisy, envy, and all evil speaking, as newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word" (1 Peter 2:1–2)*. And it says, *"Likewise you younger people, submit yourselves to your elders. Yes, all of you be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility, for 'God resists the proud, But gives grace to the humble.' Therefore humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time" (1 Peter 5:5–6)*.

"Fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor"

In the last verse, verse 7, the apostle Paul sums it up by saying, *"Fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor" (Romans 13:7)*. He is saying that although we are the same people on the foundation of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we should truly honor those who are to be honored. It means respecting those who live for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Is that a difficult thing? When we see those who live for the Lord and live by faith even in difficult situations, they are worthy of respect, whether their office is high or low. Also, when we see those who are ahead living that way, we feel fear as well. Not being afraid, making light of God's servants, is making light of God. If he is truly a servant of God, then making light of God's servant is not making light of that person but making light of God.

When God's servants preach the word in the church, there are times when they say, "It is good to do this sort of thing, and it is good not to do that sort of thing," but because it is not an ethics and morality class, they do not say everything in detail. It is only at the level of saying that it is good mainly to do what

pleases God and to refrain from what does not please Him, and they hardly ever speak about such things. This is because the church is not an ethical religion. A sermon speaks of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and of how we should live for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But if someone makes light of those in authority as if they were nothing, that is a big problem. Such a person must turn around. That is not opposing a person but opposing God. He must realize that. What will happen if one opposes God? It will be one of two things: either he will perish, or he will obtain mercy. When people do so without knowing, it is all right, but if they do so knowingly, God may overlook it once or twice, but once God becomes angry, it is the end. So neither I nor you despise one another when each of us serves in the part entrusted to us.

In any case, if there are such people in the Church of God, they must turn around. Even among those who say they live for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if they are not careful, there are people who live diligently for the gospel of the water and the Spirit but have their own selves mixed in, so they do not come under the authority or order of the church God has established, and show self-willed loyalty and zeal. Such people are very wrong, and if things go wrong, they will be destroyed. That is why He set up those who are ahead in the church and established order. There is no such thing as being ahead just because one believed from the beginning. In the church, whoever lives faithfully for the Lord is blessed, and such people are precious and worthy of respect. Whether one is ahead or behind, it is of no use if one does not follow the will of God. Will the gospel spread better if a few people live for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or will it spread better if all those who have received the remission of sins unite and serve with combined strength for the one purpose of spreading the gospel

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of the water and the Spirit? Of course, the second. What we must preach together is the fact that because Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in our place.

We must personally engrave this word we read today in our hearts. Being told that every soul should be subject to the governing authorities does not mean that we should submit like animals, nor does it mean that there are no relationships between people, but it means that it must be so at the center of our hearts. Let us take an example. It has now been many years since you and I received the remission of sins. Now suppose there are twelve people who came into the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins only about a year ago. If they despise and ignore your work of serving the Lord, do not readily accept your words, and push back from below as equals, saying, “Only you are smart, Brother,” “Only you are great, Sister,” is that right? If they are doing so because they do not know, they must learn. They must learn the order in the church, and because of their weakness, they should receive the guidance of those who are ahead, get out of that weakness, and receive help, and so learn order and learn authority very naturally and purely.

If they do so because they do not know, we must wait for them, but if those who have just received the remission of sins make light of those who have been there a long time while knowing everything, that is not right. Then will the gospel of the water and the Spirit spread well? Since God’s commands can neither be given nor received, the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not go well, and God is not pleased. If that goes on for a long time, it ends up resisting the command of God. That is why we must personally engrave this word in our

hearts and accept it with "Amen," because it is the word of God. And we must live that way. It is not that we must live in some special way; if we live by faith, everything is resolved naturally.

Despising what the Church of God does cannot be tolerated. That is treating what God does as nothing and directly opposing God. Unlike other matters that can simply be let go, saying, "People can sin, and they may not know," ignoring the work God is doing through His servants cannot simply be let go. It is surely addressed and surely resolved. This is because the rest of the people must live for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When Korah and his company, or the Levites, formed a faction and opposed Aaron and Moses, they either left or were cursed; it makes no sense that they would seize control and do something themselves. If that were left alone, it would not be the army of the LORD, the army of God.

Unite your will and serve the gospel

Such things can happen frequently, at any time, as long as the Church of God exists on this earth. That is why the church needs guides, needs those who are ahead, and needs order. That is why God established order. Saying "God's servants who are ahead" may sound grand, but in fact everyone who has been born again and lives for the Lord is a worker of God and a servant of God. A servant, just as the word says, is one who has no will of his own and no intention of his own but serves by upholding the will of the Lord. As a result, he himself dies. Even among friends, when one person upholds the will of the church and speaks spiritual words, if someone despises and makes light of those words, that is resisting and challenging the ordinance of God. Words spoken merely as a human may be disregarded, but if he

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speaks spiritual words and words of faith found in the word of God, those words must be listened to carefully and followed. It may be difficult to do that between friends, but spiritual order is clear.

Those who do not know must be gently taught, “That is not how it is,” and led, but if someone still behaves that way after being here a year, two years, or several years, that person can never remain in the church, and even if left alone, he cannot stay in the church. He leaves. Satan the devil snatches him away. Anyone who ignores the order in the church leaves. No matter how much you hold on to him, it is no use; he leaves. I do not often preach this kind of word, but today I have come to preach this word. If our church is to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world, we must unite our will. We must unite our hearts, unite our strength, and unite our prayers.

So we must pray in order to receive God’s command and carry it out, we must take on challenges by faith, and we must live for that. Then God will help us. God has told the Church of God to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world. This is the command of God. In order to carry out this command, all the members work in the parts each has been entrusted with. But if anyone despises and makes light of those who are working, it is destruction. If there are any who do that, they must humble their hearts as soon as possible and honor those workers.

If, while you serve God well, strive to live according to the will of God, unite your hearts, yield yourselves, and live for the Lord, I were to torment you and keep you from living a life of faith, I would be punished by God. That would be challenging God, and it is a fearful thing. We may sometimes be weak, but just as the word says, *“But you must continue in the things which*

you have learned and been assured of" (2 Timothy 3:14), first we must learn, and we must abide in what is certain. Although we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together, we must honor those who carry out God's commands and honor those who serve in unity. We must not show off our own strength on our own and try to form factions. In any case, we must become people who please God and receive blessings, survive as such people and live enjoying blessings on this earth like Abraham and Isaac, and when the Lord calls us, go to the Lord's kingdom and live enjoying happiness forever. I hope that God will give such faith to our church, to all the members, to all the saints, and to all the souls. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Be subject to the governing authorities, and live owing only the debt of love

< Romans 13:1–10 >

"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God. Therefore whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves. For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God's minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God's minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil. Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake. For because of this you also pay taxes, for they are God's ministers attending continually to this very thing. Render therefore to all their due: taxes to whom taxes are due, customs to whom customs, fear to whom fear, honor to whom honor. Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You

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shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law."

Dear beloved saints, in chapter 12 the apostle Paul said that the love of the born-again righteous must begin with their brothers and sisters, flow even to those who persecute them, and finally flow even to their enemies. But when he comes to chapter 13, he widens the sphere of that love one step further. Now he teaches what attitude born-again people must have toward the governing order of this world in which we live, that is, toward the governing authorities. And at the end of that, he exhorts us not to owe anyone anything, but to live repaying only one thing, the debt of love, throughout our whole lives. This one chapter today is a word that shows all at once how the salvation that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection newly shapes a person's conscience, daily life, and awareness of the times. That salvation comes into our hearts when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in 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, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rose again from death to remit our sins.

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All authority appointed by God

At the beginning of chapter 13, the apostle Paul says this: *"Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God" (Romans 13:1)*. Dear fellow believers, the phrase *"the governing authorities" (Romans 13:1)* spoken of here refers, in the setting of that time, to the rulers of the world, such as the emperor of the Roman Empire, the governors, and the local officials. It means that just because we have become the people of the kingdom of God, it does not mean that we may ignore the governing order of this land and defy it as we please.

There is one word that the passage makes clear with the greatest weight. It is that all authority has come from God and has been appointed by God. This one statement changes all at once the eyes with which the born-again righteous look at the authorities of the world. The rulers of this world may seem to have risen to their positions by their own power, but in truth, all of it took place within God's decree. Of course, in this world there are good rulers, and there are also unrighteous rulers. But whether they are good or evil, they are all alike being used as instruments within that great providence of God.

But dear fellow believers, did the apostle Paul say this word merely to teach a theory of worldly order? No, he did not. What the apostle Paul really wants to say is that we must not go against the order that God Himself has established. It means that God's sovereignty does not remain only in the realm of our souls, but reaches even to the realms of the politics and society of this land. The God who brought our souls to life once and for all through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection is holding even all the order of this world in His hand. So born-again people accept submitting

to rulers not merely as submitting to men, but as submitting to the order that God has appointed.

Those who resist the authority bring judgment on themselves

So verse 2 puts verse 1 the other way around and says this: *"Whoever resists the authority resists the ordinance of God, and those who resist will bring judgment on themselves" (Romans 13:2)*. If all authority has come from God, then going against legitimate order without cause is not a matter at the level of going against one ruler, but a matter of going against the ordinance of God, who Himself appointed that authority. It means that we must not do the foolish thing of bringing judgment upon ourselves with our own hands.

However, dear fellow believers, this word does not mean that we must unconditionally follow every command, whatever it may be. In Acts chapter 5, did not Peter and the apostles say, *"We ought to obey God rather than men" (Acts 5:29)*? When a ruler's command directly contradicts the clear truth of God, then at that time, following the truth is the right path. But apart from such exceptional cases, rebelling without cause against the legitimate rule of the rulers is not the courage of faith, but rather nothing but spiritual foolishness. A person who has accepted in his heart the love with which Jesus Himself bore the sin of the world, including our sins, is a person who knows how to entrust his heart to God, who rules over all things, rather than confronting others with his own hot temper.

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The ruler is one who becomes God's minister and brings about good

Then why would God have set up governing authorities in this world? Verses 3 and 4 explain that. *"Rulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil" (Romans 13:3)*. That is, the original duty entrusted to that authority is to give praise and protection to those who live righteously and to bring the retribution of wrath upon those who do evil. So the apostle Paul calls the ruler by a very weighty name. He calls the ruler *"God's minister" (Romans 13:4)*. This is a word that teaches that the ruler must know whose work he has been entrusted with, and at the same time, how we born-again citizens should look upon that ruler.

And in the latter part of verse 4, he says this: *"He does not bear the sword in vain" (Romans 13:4)*. Dear fellow believers, the sword that the ruler holds is not a sword given to him to satisfy his own lust for power. It is a holy sword that God has entrusted to him to suppress evil and protect good. So when we live righteously by following the truth, there is no reason at all for us to fear that sword. Rather, it is only when a person does evil himself that the sword comes down heavily upon him. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him; He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the wrath and judgment of God that we should have received; and He rose again from death. The righteous, who have been saved from sin through this salvation that He accomplished, are people who live enjoying the freedom to do good, so they have nothing to fear even before that governing authority. Rather, the governing authority becomes a fence that protects our righteous lives.

Submission not because of fear but for the sake of conscience

So verse 5 lifts the motive of our submission to authority to an even deeper place. *"Therefore you must be subject, not only because of wrath but also for conscience' sake" (Romans 13:5).* Dear fellow believers, the motive with which people who are not born again submit to authority is usually only one thing. It is fear. They submit reluctantly because they do not want to be punished. But the submission of the born-again righteous does not stop there. It means that they submit not only because of fear, but also because of conscience.

The *"conscience"* spoken of here is not simply man's moral judgment. It refers to the deep sense of the heart that has been shaped by the truth of God. The conscience of a born-again person knows that his ruler is within the order God has appointed, and knows that respecting that order is itself one form of love toward God. So whether anyone is watching or not, and whether there is punishment or not, he lives with the same attitude. Such a conscience is not something a person can produce through his own moral cultivation. When the salvation that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection comes into a person's heart, the sins he used to commit disappear once and for all, and a holy conscience is engraved in his heart. The awareness that he is no longer a slave of sin but has become a child of righteousness becomes the deep motive that makes him respect order beyond the fear of punishment.

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Become honest citizens who render to all their due

So in verses 6 and 7, the apostle Paul brings that teaching about conscience down to very concrete matters. The first of these is the matter of taxes. *"Because of this you also pay taxes" (Romans 13:6)*. Dear fellow believers, it means that for born-again citizens, paying taxes is not merely a duty performed reluctantly, but one form of faith that respects out of conscience the order God has appointed. The apostle goes one step further and even calls the rulers *"God's ministers" (Romans 13:6)*. It means that the administrative work of the rulers itself is connected to the work of God.

And in verse 7, he condenses this into a very general principle. *"Render therefore to all their due" (Romans 13:7)*. It means that if a person has received something from someone, the attitude of the born-again righteous is to return to that person a fitting repayment in proportion to what he received. It means to give taxes to those who are to receive taxes, customs to those who are to receive customs, to fear those who are to be feared, and to honor those who are to be honored. Dear fellow believers, just because we have become children of God does not mean that we have been exempted from all the duties of this land. Rather, we must live as even more honest and responsible citizens in the truth. The very sight of born-again people living while faithfully fulfilling even the smallest duties without letting them slip becomes a vivid testimony that reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit before people who have not yet met the truth. That is, Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to receive that judgment in our place, and rose again from death to remit all our

sins. Born-again people reveal this grace before the world through honest and responsible lives.

Owe no one anything except the debt of love

Now, from verse 8, the apostle Paul turns our eyes toward our neighbors. *"Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8)*. Dear fellow believers, born-again people must be honest people who leave no unpaid debt to anyone. But among all those responsibilities, there is only one thing that must continue without end. That is loving other people.

It is truly weighty that love is expressed here as something we *"owe."* A debt is something that must rightfully be repaid, and it is a burden that remains on me until I repay it. But this debt of love is not a debt that disappears once it is repaid; it is a holy debt that never comes to an end, even while it is repaid anew every day. We must become people who accept pouring out that love throughout our whole lives as our duty, and who do not stop and stand still, saying that we have done it all. And the apostle says this: *"He who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8)*. It means that love is not one part of the law, but the final conclusion to which the whole law points. It means that a person who sincerely loves one person is, rather, closer to the deep meaning of the law than a person who strives to keep the items of the law one by one separately.

But dear fellow believers, this debt of love does not begin from our own will. However much we resolve in our hearts, love squeezed out by our own will soon runs out. When the salvation that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection

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comes into our hearts, we at last become debtors who pour out love toward our neighbors, because His infinite love has first flowed to us. Only love that flows out from the love we have received from Him continues unceasingly throughout our whole lives, like water drawn up from a spring that never runs dry.

Love, which is the fulfillment of the law

So verses 9 and 10 explain more concretely the word *"he who loves another has fulfilled the law" (Romans 13:8)*. The apostle Paul quotes in order four of the commandments among the Ten Commandments that concern relationships between people: *"Thou shalt not commit adultery, Thou shalt not kill, Thou shalt not steal, Thou shalt not covet –ASV" (Romans 13:9)*. And then he says this: all these commandments, and any other commandment there may be, are all contained in the one saying, *"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself" (Romans 13:9)*.

Verse 10 shows this more clearly. *"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10)*. Dear fellow believers, love does not refer only to doing something more for our neighbors. It also contains a holy self-restraint that stops every act that harms those neighbors. If a person truly loves his neighbor, he does not break up that neighbor's family, does not harm that neighbor's life, does not aim at that neighbor's property, and does not even covet what belongs to that neighbor. Such a person has no need of a separate list of the items of the law that must be memorized one by one.

Dear fellow believers, those who try to keep all the items of the law one by one through their own deeds can never keep them all. Rather, only their own shortcomings are revealed. But Jesus had all the sin of the world, including our sins of breaking the

commandments, transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, paid in full with the blood He shed on the Cross the wages of sin that the law demands, and rose again from death. A person into whose heart this salvation that He accomplished has come becomes a channel through which the great love he has received flows out, and he comes to live in the one love that naturally embraces all the items of the law. For that person, love is itself the fulfillment of the law.

The daily life of the born-again righteous is itself a testimony of the gospel

Dear beloved saints, the exhortation that the apostle Paul gives us concerning the governing authorities and the debt of love is clear. It is to submit with our conscience to the order God has appointed, to live as honest citizens who render to all their due, and to owe no one anything, but to live repaying only the one debt of love throughout our whole lives. And all of this does not come from our moral efforts or resolutions.

Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, shed His blood and died on the Cross to bear the price of that sin completely, and rose again from death to remit our sins and establish our righteousness forever. When this truth comes into our hearts, then at last a holy conscience is engraved within us, a love that never runs dry flows out, and the strength to live in that love which is the fulfillment of the law arises. So I bless you in the name of the Lord that we, the born-again righteous, may live honestly and responsibly in this world, do no evil to our neighbors but rather pour out love to them, and, through our very daily lives lived in this way, become a vivid,

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living testimony that reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit before the souls who have not yet met the truth. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

People who are indebted to the love of salvation

< Romans 13:8–10 >

“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law. For the commandments, ‘You shall not commit adultery,’ ‘You shall not murder,’ ‘You shall not steal,’ ‘You shall not bear false witness,’ ‘You shall not covet,’ and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, ‘You shall love your neighbor as yourself.’ Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law.”

Remember the love you first received

Being told that we are in debt usually makes our hearts heavy, but Paul exhorts us to live owing one another the debt of love. This debt is not a demand to calculate who has given more and to repay accordingly. It is a word telling us to know the love of salvation that God first gave us, and to care for one another as people who have received that love. If, despite having received love, we first calculate the profit that will come back to ourselves, we are living contrary to the grace we have received.

Let us read verse 8. It says, *“Owe no one anything except to love one another, for he who loves another has fulfilled the law” (Romans 13:8)*. The words “one another” include both giving

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love and receiving love. We are neither people who have lived without the help of others, nor people who from now on need no one's care. Therefore, we must not be ashamed of receiving love, nor try to stand above the other person because we have given love. Since we have been told not to owe any debt except the debt of love, we must become people who work diligently and are of benefit to others in some way, rather than becoming a burden to them.

The reason we need this heart is that salvation came precisely from the Lord's love. Jesus did not save us after waiting until we first became good. Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Because the sins we will commit throughout our whole lives were also included in that sin of the world, the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished never again falls short because of our shortcomings.

Accept into your hearts and believe in this love revealed through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is not that we obtained salvation from the Lord by helping our neighbors well; rather, it is because the Lord has delivered us from all sins that we can now love other people. The debt of love is not a word telling us to fill up an insufficient salvation with our own deeds, but an exhortation to share the grace we have already received. When we rightly know this order, we do not put forward our own righteousness even after showing love, but give thanks to the Lord.

The commandments are directed toward the good of our neighbors

Paul does not explain love vaguely as merely a good heart, but connects it with what we do to our neighbors. Let us read verse 9. It says, *"For the commandments, 'You shall not commit adultery,' 'You shall not murder,' 'You shall not steal,' 'You shall not bear false witness,' 'You shall not covet,' and if there is any other commandment, are all summed up in this saying, namely, 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself'" (Romans 13:9)*. Can we say that we love the other person while doing what these commandments forbid? Harming the lives of others and taking away their possessions to satisfy our own greed cannot go together with love.

There are many laws and commandments that God has given, but broadly divided, they are two: loving God and loving people. Jesus Christ showed His love toward us by having the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross to receive that judgment in our place, and rising again from death. Since we have already received that love and have come to love God, the one thing that now remains is to love our neighbors as ourselves. We think about what we ourselves need, and we do not want our own pain to be treated lightly. If so, we must not lightly pass over our neighbors' needs and hardships either. If I boast that I keep the commandments well while inflicting on the other person harm that I myself do not want, I am missing the love that those commandments teach.

People say that they keep the law while living a religious life, but the core of God's law is love. Caring only for oneself and loving only one's own family is not love but selfishness, so the heart that lets benefit go only to those close to oneself must be

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broadened in the light of this word. This is because the word telling us to love our neighbors does not mean that we should pick out and care for only those who are in relationships that are advantageous to us. We must also look after the hardships of those who cannot give anything back in return, and have a heart to preach the news of salvation even to souls who are not yet close to us. The love we received was not a reward for first having become qualified and recognized by the Lord.

Verse 10 says, *"Love does no harm to a neighbor; therefore love is the fulfillment of the law" (Romans 13:10)*. That love is the fulfillment of the law does not mean that we may ignore the commandments. Because love does not do to our neighbors the evil that the commandments forbid, and gives that person true benefit, Paul bound the commandments and love together as having one meaning. We must not stop at boasting that we have not done certain things, but must look back on whom we are caring for by following that word.

Because greed to look after our own interests first still rises up in our hearts, we must accept this word every day. We must not take our own wrongs lightly because of our assurance that we have received the remission of sins. When the Lord received baptism from John, He had our sins passed on to Him, paid their price by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death to remit all those sins. This grace does not give us the freedom to harm others; rather, it becomes the basis on which we realize that such greed is wrong, turn around, and care for our neighbors. Even in admitting our wrongs and setting relationships right, we must put the other person's benefit ahead of the desire to protect our own righteousness.

Share the love that souls need

Then how should we share this love? Loving is a great skill, so in order to love, we must first know what the other person needs and what we should help with. Having a heart that wants to love does not mean that we know everything the other person needs, so we must sufficiently look into what difficulties that person is in. If we one-sidedly offer what we want to give and then demand that the other person be thankful, we can make that person's heart heavy even while helping. Discerning the areas of need and helping, yet not using that help as a reason to dominate the person or make him follow our own will, is the love that seeks nothing in return and does no evil to a neighbor.

This love is needed even for those who oppose and hate us. Even if others harm us, as long as what they do does not hinder the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must be patient, endure, and bear with them, and become people who give something to them rather than receive something from them. However, loving people does not mean blurring the truth of salvation or accepting even claims that oppose the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only when we cover over the inconvenience caused to us personally, yet clearly preach the truth that gives life to that soul, does love lead to true benefit.

Along with this, we must not forget the needs of the soul. True love, which is the fulfillment of the law, is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which God has removed that person's sins. Relieving temporary hardship is also precious, but those who are afraid because of sin need the news of the love spoken of in this word: *"God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8)*. To those who think that they can stand before God only if they correct their own deeds, we must make

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clear the basis of the salvation that Jesus has already accomplished. It is that Jesus bore not only that person's sins but all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in that person's place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Preaching the word so that the person, too, may gain the assurance of the remission of sins that we gained first, explaining again the parts he did not understand, and praying for that soul is love.

Even while preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not press people on the basis of how quickly they agree with what we say. Since the purpose is to make them know accurately the salvation that the Lord has accomplished, we must listen to and look into what the other person does not know and what thoughts he is bound by. With a heart that seeks recognition for our eloquence or our zeal, it is hard to care for souls sufficiently. When we rejoice that the person comes to know the Lord's love and stands boldly before God, even our labor of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is freed from boasting for ourselves.

Also, do not try to stand only as one who gives love, but gratefully accept the exhortation and care that your brothers and sisters give. This is because, while helping one another's shortcomings, we can lay down the thought that one person does everything well, and rely together on the Lord's grace. Those who remember the love they have received do not demand help as if it were their right, nor, having given help, do they place on the other person an obligation to repay it. When the grace we have received from the Lord goes back and forth among us in love like this, there is sincerity in our fellowship as well.

The word "debt" sounded heavy at first, but the debt of love is not a bill that crushes us. Since Jesus has remitted all our sins through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the

Cross, and the resurrection, this word awakens us to what we, who have been loved in this way, should share as we live. Today, let us do no evil to the people beside us, give them the help they need, and preach the news of salvation so that their souls may know and believe in the remission of sins. Living while remembering the love we first received, instead of counting what we will get back from others, is the life of people who are indebted to the love of salvation. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

A life of staying awake and waiting for the day of the Lord's return

< Romans 13:11–14 >

"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts."

The salvation of the body that has drawn near

Remembering the time when we first believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and staying awake in faith today are different things. Even if we have heard the word of the remission of sins for many years, if our hearts are caught up only in fulfilling our own greed, it is easy to forget what we should be living for now. Paul exhorts the brothers and sisters who have believed for a long time that the time has come to wake from sleep. It means that we should go beyond remembering the

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salvation we have received, and examine our lives today with the hope of meeting the Lord in the days ahead.

Let us read verse 11. It says, *"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11)*. The salvation that draws near here does not mean that the remission of sins has not yet been fully accomplished. It means that the salvation in which we who have received the remission of sins will meet the Lord and our weak bodies will be transformed into perfect bodies, the salvation in which we will be delivered from this world ruled by the devil and will live with the Lord, is drawing near. Since we have come closer to that day than on the day we first believed, we must awaken our sleeping hearts.

If we do not have the assurance of the remission of sins, even the Lord's coming sounds only like a fearful story. This is because those who look for a way to resolve sin within themselves do not know how much preparation is enough. But the reason Jesus received baptism from John was to have all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all. Because He bore those sins, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross to receive that judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Since the Savior who has remitted our sins without leaving any behind is coming again, there is the hope of salvation instead of fear in the hearts that wait for Him.

What we hold on to is not the self-confidence that our own preparation has become perfect, but the Lord's salvation revealed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only when we have the faith that the Lord has made us sinless righteous people can we keep from being swept away by the circumstances of the world and also look forward to the salvation of the body that He

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will give in the future. The flesh is still weak, and there are hardships in life, but those hardships cannot take away the salvation we are waiting for. The hope of meeting the Lord awakens our hearts to live by faith in just such days as today.

While we know that the time of the Lord's coming is not far off, setting a date or calculating that everything will end within a few years is not what it means to know this time. Just as in the days of Noah people lived without thinking of judgment and then suddenly met the flood, judgment will come just as suddenly upon those who do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so we must discern this age. But the exhortation that Paul gave us is not to be afraid, but to stay awake now. Both the heart that thinks there is still plenty of time and puts off the word, and the heart that is afraid of the circumstances of the world and lets go of what it should do, must turn around in the light of this exhortation. Faith that waits for the Lord makes us believe the word the Lord has spoken more than unsettling rumors, and makes us set our hearts on the work we must do today.

Cast off the works of darkness

Verse 12 speaks of that awakened life in this way: *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12)*. The hope that the day is drawing near and the exhortation to cast off the works of darkness go together. If, while waiting for the day we will meet the Lord, our hearts still keep planning the things of lust, we are living contrary to that hope. Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, already

received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death to remit all our sins. We who are assured of this remission of sins must not leave the works of darkness as they are, but must renew our hearts toward the gospel of the water and the Spirit and put on Christ's armor of light.

Paul points out those works of darkness specifically. Let us read verse 13. It says, *"Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy" (Romans 13:13)*. Giving ourselves over to our desires, or quarreling with and envying one another, does not fit with a life of waiting for the Lord. We must not use the fact that we have received the remission of sins as an excuse to keep doing such things, but must turn our hearts and conduct toward what the Lord is pleased with.

In particular, quarreling and envy easily arise when we put our own interests and boasting first. If we cannot rejoice together when others do well and are caught up in the thought that we ourselves must be recognized more, people who should be serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit end up competing with one another. In that state, we spend our strength more on looking for the other person's shortcomings than on caring for souls. Since we are people who should give thanks together for the salvation we have received, we must not scatter the hearts that are united for the gospel of the water and the Spirit because of our own boasting.

If we speak and act just as our emotions rise up, wounds remain on each other even after the quarrel has passed, and we suffer great trouble. At such times, rather than seeking to relieve our own feelings, we must think about what benefit it will bring to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If being patient and understanding the other person, even though it is a little

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uncomfortable, preserves the path of serving the Lord together, then it is wiser to choose that path than to push our own will through to the end. Casting off the works of darkness is not vaguely saying that the world is bad, but turning around these hearts within us in the light of the word.

That does not mean that we stand before the Lord by perfectly fixing our flesh with our own strength. It means that, while believing in the Savior who has made us righteous, we acknowledge our wrong desires and abandon the plans that are driven by those desires. Even when you fall, do not hide or justify yourselves, but accept the word that the Lord has given. Believing that word and turning our hearts again toward the Lord's work is the way for people who have received the remission of sins to live with the armor of light on.

Live your remaining days with a heart that believes in Christ

Verse 14 says, *"But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:14)*. Putting on Jesus Christ is a life of faith in which we believe in Jesus and His word and wait for the Lord in hope. This Jesus is the One who bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death to become our Savior. To put Him on means that, when deciding what to do, we do not follow what our own desires dictate, but learn from the word what the Lord who saved me is pleased with. We must look back to see whether, while saying only with our mouths that we wait for the Lord, our thoughts and plans are always directed only toward ourselves.

Paul said not to make provision for the things of the flesh for the sake of lust, so we must examine the purpose of our plans. In the word that follows, Paul said, *"If we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8)*. Since we who have received the remission of sins through the Lord belong to Christ whether we live or die, even in the days we spend eating, working, and living, we can make not the things of the flesh but the spiritual work through which souls are saved the goal of our hearts. It means praying for those who do not yet know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, treasuring opportunities to preach the word, and uniting our hearts with the brothers and sisters who labor with us. For those who wait for the Lord, the time that remains is not time for filling only their own greed.

To live in this way, we need fellowship in which we hold on to one another. This is because our hearts easily become discouraged when we look at the hardships of the world for a long time, and when our flesh is weary, we neglect the Lord's work. The nearer the day of the Lord's return draws, the more we must owe one another no other debt except the debt of love, and live helping, embracing, and uniting with one another. Hear the word of salvation together, share the grace you have received, and look after one another's labors. Even the hope that we had forgotten while staying alone in our own thoughts becomes clear in our hearts again when we share faith with people who wait for the same Lord.

The hope of waiting for the Lord must also be conveyed to the souls beside us. This is an age in which we must also teach faith to our children and families and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. Do not put it off, saying that you will tell them later because they are close to you, but make this gospel of the water and the Spirit clear to them so that they too

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may know and believe in the remission of sins. This is because Jesus has already accomplished this remission of sins by having not only their sins but all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paying the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. It means that we should not live keeping the assurance of welcoming the Lord only to ourselves, but should let other souls also enjoy that grace. Our labor of praying and serving for the gospel of the water and the Spirit today is not separate from the faith that looks toward the day of the Lord's return.

Rather than how long it has been since we first believed, the question we need is what we believe and what we are pursuing now. Taking into your hearts the word that the salvation of the body has drawn near, turn away from the plans made for lust, and stay awake to the work of saving souls. When the joy of the salvation we first received continues into awakened faith today, it becomes a life of believing in Jesus Christ, who saved us, and in His word, and of waiting for the day of the Lord's return. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Cast off the works of darkness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ

< Romans 13:11–14 >

“And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep; for now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed. The night is far spent, the day is at hand. Therefore let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light. Let us walk properly, as in the day, not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy. But put on the Lord Jesus Christ, and make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts.”

Dear beloved saints, in the first part of Romans chapter 13, the apostle Paul said that the born-again righteous should be subject to the governing authorities and should owe no one anything, but should keep repaying only one debt, the debt of love, throughout their whole lives. But when he comes to verse 11, he suddenly lifts our gaze all at once to the matter of time. He is telling us to know what time we are now living in. And he exhorts us to cast off all the works of darkness and to put on only the Lord Jesus Christ. Today’s short passage is a word that clearly shows with what attitude we must stay awake and live in these last times when the salvation that Jesus accomplished

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through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection comes to us.

The time has already come to wake from sleep

The apostle Paul says this in verse 11: *"And do this, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep" (Romans 13:11)*. Dear fellow believers, just because people are born again does not mean that they are always awake. We too, if we fall into the busyness of daily life and into our own complacency, are always in danger of falling spiritually asleep. That is why the apostle Paul exhorts us to become aware again and again of what time we are now living in. He is saying that the time has already come to wake from sleep.

And he clearly states this: *"Now our salvation is nearer than when we first believed" (Romans 13:11)*. The *"salvation"* spoken of here does not refer to the salvation in which we first received the remission of sins. That remission of sins has already been fully accomplished once and for all. This is because all our sins have already been remitted through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paying the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. The salvation spoken of here refers to the time when the kingdom in which we will live forever with the Lord finally comes. Dear fellow believers, since that much time has passed since we were first born again, that kingdom has also drawn that much closer. The more time passes, the clearer this truth becomes.

The salvation that came upon our souls through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection does not end merely as a memory of the past. That event gave us the remission of sins once and for all, and at the same time it bound us, as a very first step, to the promise of the glory of the kingdom that will finally come. Therefore, born-again people must shake off spiritual sleep and live awake every day with hearts joined to that promise.

The night is deep, and the day is near

So verse 12 raises that awareness of time in verse 11 with an even stronger metaphor: *"The night is far spent, the day is at hand" (Romans 13:12)*. Dear fellow believers, this human history in which we live is going deeper and deeper into the darkness of night. But it is saying that as much as that darkness has deepened, the light of dawn has instead come that much closer. The born-again righteous are precisely the people who must stay awake toward that dawn.

Then in what form must that wakefulness appear? The apostle Paul speaks of it in two actions: *"Let us cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12)*. On the one hand, we are to throw off the works of darkness, and on the other hand, we are to put on the armor of light. The expression *"armor"* here is very meaningful. Dear fellow believers, this is because it means not merely changing clothes, but arming ourselves firmly with light, like soldiers standing on a spiritual battlefield.

So in verse 13, the apostle lists very specifically, one by one, the works of darkness that we must throw off: *"Not in revelry and drunkenness, not in lewdness and lust, not in strife and envy"*

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(Romans 13:13). Dear fellow believers, revelry and drunkenness, lewdness and lust, strife and envy—these are all things that might be done only in the dark of night, not things that the born-again righteous, who live in the bright light, should harbor in their hearts. Then the apostle concludes with a positive command: *"Let us walk properly, as in the day" (Romans 13:13)*. Born-again people, wherever they are and whether anyone is watching or not, must live properly, as if they were living in broad daylight in front of everyone. This propriety is not merely observing formalities outwardly. It refers to a holy transparency that honestly reveals even the deepest motives of the heart before God.

Dear fellow believers, this armor of light, however, is not a garment of moral resolution that we weave by our own strength. The salvation that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection must come into a person's heart; only such a person puts on the garment of His righteousness in the very place where his sins disappeared once and for all. That very garment is the armor of light. It is not that we squeeze out our strength in order to walk properly; rather, the garment already put on us naturally leads our steps along the proper path. That garment was put on us because we believed in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, 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 rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

The Lord Jesus Christ, who is the armor of light

So verse 14 puts the decisive period on all these words: *"Put on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 13:14)*. Dear fellow believers, verse 12 said, *"Let us put on the armor of light" (Romans 13:12)*, and here the apostle Paul finally makes clear what the true identity of that armor is. That armor of light is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. Born-again people are not those who cover themselves with their own righteousness or their own morality, but those who have put on Him as their garment.

And the phrase that follows clearly shows the other side of this command: *"Make no provision for the flesh, to fulfill its lusts" (Romans 13:14)*. Dear fellow believers, preparing in advance a way to satisfy the desires of one's flesh is exactly the same as laying down, with one's own hands, an occasion for falling into the works of darkness. The born-again righteous do not leave room in their hearts and daily lives for such occasions to grow. Rather, they are people who live adjusting their time and the flow of their hearts so that His truth and love may grow in that place.

Dear fellow believers, this word, "put on the Lord Jesus Christ," is at the same time the deepest comfort and the strongest challenge to born-again people. It is a comfort because not our insufficient righteousness but the perfect righteousness that He accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection has become our garment. It is a challenge because those who have put on that garment must leave absolutely no occasion in their hearts for their lusts to grow, and must live straightening His garment again every day. The whole life of the born-again righteous

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unfolds upon this holy attire in which these two aspects are blended together.

Steps that stay awake and walk toward that kingdom

Dear beloved saints, let me summarize once more this word telling us to cast off the works of darkness and put on the Lord Jesus Christ. From verse 8 through verse 10, the apostle Paul painted a picture of love. The born-again righteous are people who must owe no one anything, but must live repaying only one debt, the debt of love, throughout their whole lives. And from verse 11 through verse 14, he paints a picture of wakefulness. We must always live aware of what time we are now living in.

In this time when the night is deep and the day is near, the born-again righteous must throw off all the works of darkness and put on the armor of light. And what is the true identity of that armor of light? It is none other than the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. When the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, fully bore the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and established our righteousness forever through the resurrection—comes into our hearts, we at last put on, not our own righteousness, but Him as our garment.

Dear fellow believers, those who have put on that garment shake off every occasion for lust from their hearts and live proper daily lives, like people living in broad daylight. Each and every step of the righteous who live awake in this way becomes a living step toward the kingdom that will finally come. I pray in the name of the Lord that all of us will shake off spiritual sleep,

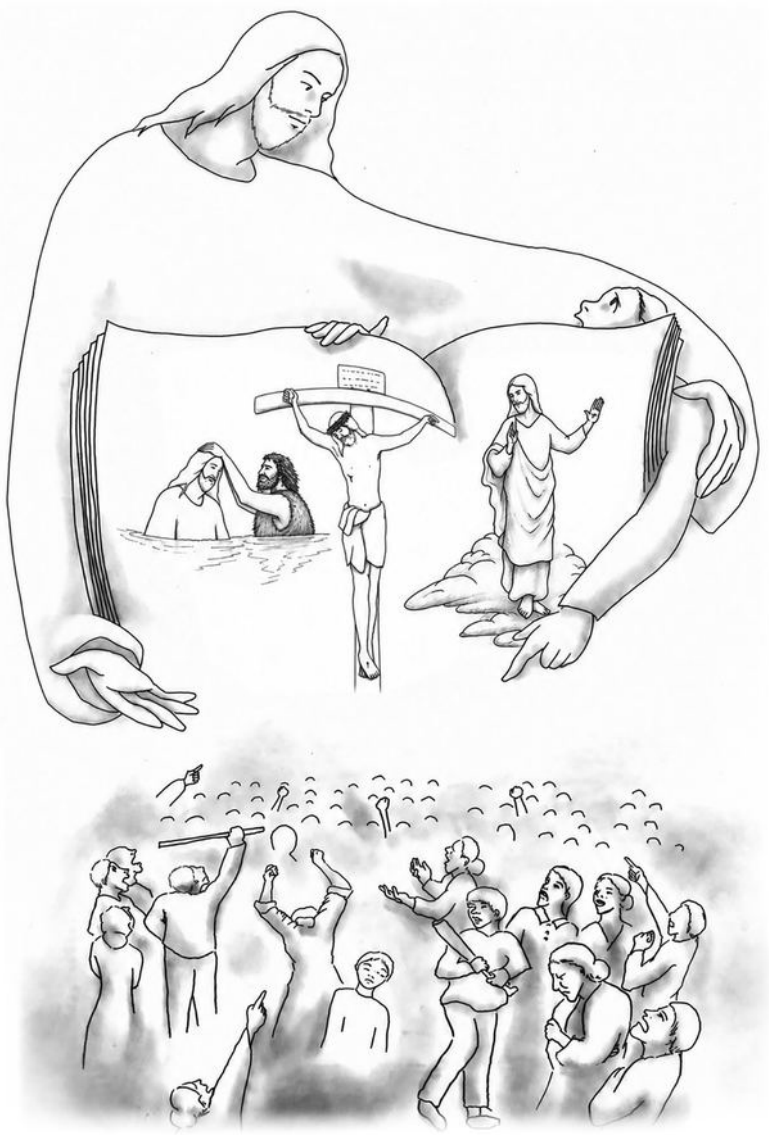
cast off the works of darkness, put on only the Lord Jesus Christ, and become blessed righteous people who stay awake and walk properly toward that kingdom. ✉

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CHAPTER

14

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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

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's

< Romans 14:1–12 >

"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us shall give account of himself to God."

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The great faith that receives a weak brother

Even while believing in the same Lord, people may differ from one another in how they think about food or in the heart with which they esteem a certain day. At such times, if one puts his own conviction first and despises the other person, a relationship in which they should serve the Lord together turns into a relationship of judging. Before speaking about such differences, Paul exhorts us to receive the one who is weak. This is because we need a faith that does not push away, by our own standards, a person whom the Lord has received.

Let us read verse 1. It says, *"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things" (Romans 14:1)*. Although Paul, who says this, was himself on the side of those who had the faith to eat anything, he does not make the level of his own faith the measuring stick, but first tells us to receive the one who is weak. Great faith is not revealed by pointing out the shortcomings of others and boasting about one's own level; it is revealed in the breadth of embracing a brother who is different from me. Paul was such a person.

In verses 2 and 3, the difference between the one who eats all things and the one who eats vegetables appears. It says, *"Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him" (Romans 14:3)*. The reason Paul gives for not judging one another is the fact that God has received him. That basis lies not in what he eats or does not eat, but in the salvation he believes in. Because Jesus had not only that brother's sins but also 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, God has received him, who believes in this salvation. Therefore, before

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condemning a brother on the basis of the difference between eating and not eating, we must think about whom God has received and by what grace. This is because all of this is a matter that depends entirely on God, not a matter for us to pass judgment on.

Verse 4 says, *"Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand" (Romans 14:4)*. Since both the standing and the falling of that servant depend on God, who is his Master, we must not pass judgment on that person as if we were his master. Do not regard that person's future as finished just because his weakness has been revealed. Believing in the One who makes him stand and helping him with the word is the proper heart with which to treat the Lord's servant.

We too are not people who stand in faith by our own strength; rather, we are people who, each time our shortcomings were revealed, believed in the salvation the Lord has given and followed that word again. If we remember that grace, we cannot immediately harbor a sense of superiority in the face of a brother's weakness. Knowing that just as we ourselves needed care, that person also needs patient waiting and teaching, we come to help him so that we may look to the Lord together.

The salvation that has made us the Lord's own

In verses 5 and 6, we see that there were some who esteemed one day above another and some who esteemed every day alike. Paul does not decide which side is right, but says that each should be fully convinced in his own mind, and that he who esteems the day should esteem it for the Lord. That is, the one who esteems the day, the one who eats, and the one who does

not eat all do so for the Lord and give thanks to God. Since the One we must look to together even amid our different actions is the Lord, we righteous people must be those who do everything for the glory of God, whether we eat or drink or whatever we do.

So Paul carries his explanation on from the matters of eating and of days to the question of whose we are. Let us read verse 8. It says, *"For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:8)*. Here Paul gathers both the matter of eating and the matter of days into one point: that none of us lives for himself, and that both living and dying are all for the Lord. The purpose of our lives is not to defeat other people for our own satisfaction, but to live for the Lord who saved us and for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When that purpose is clear, even when we see differences, we come to see our brother not as someone to overpower and defeat, but as someone with whom to serve the Lord together.

Verse 9 reveals the basis on which we have become the Lord's, saying, *"For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9)*. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Since our lifelong sins were also included in that sin, Jesus bore that sin, shed His blood and died on the Cross, thereby receiving the judgment in our place, and rose again from death. The purpose for which the Lord saved us from sin in this way was exactly what verse 9 calls *"to this end,"* that is, to become Lord of both the dead and the living and to make us His own. We who believe in this Savior who delivered us from sin are now the Lord's, and those who have become the Lord's do not spend their remaining days according to their own will but live doing the work the Lord has entrusted to them.

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Do not redefine this relationship, which we received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as no more than a matter of keeping food rules or days. The Lord did not pick out only those whose deeds are perfect and make them His own. Since the grace by which He remitted all sins has made us who believe belong to the Lord together, we must not disregard that grace merely because the other person's way of life is different from mine. The faith that knows that we all depend on the same Savior is the basis for accepting one another.

Therefore, being the Lord's does not mean that we have gained the right to insist only on our own opinions. It means that we are people who will give thanks to the Lord who saved us and live for Him, both in eating and drinking and in the heart with which we regard days. Receiving a weak brother is also connected with this purpose. Since the Lord has received that person, we too must look for ways to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with him, and must not let our differences hinder the Lord's work.

Each person stands before God

Paul deals with the heart that judges others by connecting it with our end. Verse 12 says, *"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12)*. On that day, each of us will tell God, without hiding anything, what he has done. We are all people who will stand before God and give account of our own deeds, not people who have been appointed now to pass judgment on everything about our brothers. Therefore, while scrutinizing what a brother is like, we must not forget to look back on whether our own hearts are fitting before the Lord.

Verses 10 and 11 also say that we shall all stand before the judgment seat of God and that every knee shall bow to the Lord. Even those who now look down on their brothers on the grounds that their own thoughts are right will stand before the Lord on that day. The reason we will be able to stand on that day without being condemned is that Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death; it is not because we were better than our brothers. If we know the grace by which the Lord has received us in this way, the word that we shall stand before the judgment seat becomes not a threat to frighten others but an exhortation that makes us humble our own hearts before the Lord first. Whatever situation we are in, as people who will give account of our own deeds to God, we must treat our brothers today.

Living according to this word does not mean that we need no teaching from one another. We must share the right word even with those who are weak and help their faith grow, but that labor must not become a way of proving our own superiority. This is because the purpose is to help our brothers know the Lord's salvation more surely and live for Him. Believing that God will make that person stand just as He has made us stand, we must lead him to enjoy together the grace we have received.

Also, having a broad faith is different from an attitude that blurs the gospel of the water and the Spirit and accepts every claim. While firmly holding to the truth of the remission of sins that Jesus has given through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, we care for the weaknesses of the people who are within that truth. If, even though the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in is the same, we cut off fellowship over trivial differences, we ourselves narrow the opportunity to live together for the Lord.

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Following the Holy Spirit whom the Lord has given us, let us care for one another, build one another up with the word, and put our hearts together in the work of caring for souls.

The judging that begins in the face of differences about food and days can stop when we remember whose we are. Since the Lord who received you has also received your brother, and since the power to make him stand also belongs to the Lord, instead of pushing away a weak brother, find a way to live together for the Lord. For us who are the Lord's whether we live or die, valuing one another and serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a life worthy of the grace we have received from the same Savior. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Let us do the work of the Holy Spirit

< Romans 14:1–23 >

“Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another’s servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord’s. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: ‘As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.’ So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.

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Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin."

Do we follow the Holy Spirit or the flesh?

Christians follow one of two things: either they follow the Holy Spirit, or they follow their own flesh. No matter how much Christians may go back and forth between the two, in conclusion they cannot help but follow the Holy Spirit. Because Jesus Christ has saved all mankind from all sins with the water and the blood, the work of the Holy Spirit is to preach the gospel of the water

and the Spirit, and to live for the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to follow the Holy Spirit. That is why we saints—that is, those who have received the remission of their own sins in their hearts by believing in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross—cannot help but do the work of the Holy Spirit and cannot help but follow the Holy Spirit.

Although that is what we say, because we live on this earth, placed in all kinds of environments and circumstances, there are times when we follow both. Yet ultimately we must do the work of the Holy Spirit and follow the Holy Spirit, and only by doing the work of the Holy Spirit can we live. It is God's will that the gospel of the water and the Spirit be spread throughout the whole world. Therefore, we who are born again, whatever our circumstances may be and whether our bodies are strong or weak, know that it is right to do the work of the Holy Spirit until the day we stand before the Lord, and we desire to do the work of the Holy Spirit.

Faith that has nothing for which to condemn itself

Romans chapter 14 contains this word: *"Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves" (Romans 14:22)*. This word says that one should keep to oneself that faith within oneself by which one believes in God, and that the person who does not condemn himself in what he approves is blessed. You and I each believe in God and live by that faith, serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live for the gospel; because we truly have faith concerning all these things and know that they are right, I know that we are doing the work of serving this

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gospel of the water and the Spirit before the Lord. It says that the person who in this way has nothing to condemn in what he approves is a blessed person. Though you and I are lacking, as people of the Holy Spirit we labor in the work of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and we are living lives of following the Holy Spirit all our lives. Concerning this work that we ourselves are doing, we have nothing for which to condemn ourselves; rather, we know that it is something to be truly proud of.

The apostle Paul said that the person who has nothing to condemn in what he approves is blessed. The apostle Paul himself did not even marry, for the sake of the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and having preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit for the Lord all his life, he was martyred and went before God. The person who has nothing to condemn in what he does and in the faith he holds in his heart is truly a person with a blessed faith. The apostle Paul's faith was not a feeble faith. It was a faith that followed the Holy Spirit and did the work of the Holy Spirit.

Whether we live or die, we are the Lord's

This apostle Paul, coming to Romans chapter 14, says in particular, *"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things" (Romans 14:1)*. He says that some have the faith to eat all things while others do not, that the standing and falling of God's servants all depend on God, and that both those who value the feast days and keep them and those who do not keep them are good if it is for the Lord. And he says, *"For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord.*

Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:7–8). To make us live for the Lord, our Lord came to this earth, had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. *"For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9)*. And in the end, when we stand before the judgment seat, we will confess everything we have done before God. It says, *"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans 14:10)*, and, *"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12)*. Therefore it says, *"Let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way" (Romans 14:13)*, and tells us to become people who practice whatever, in Jesus Christ, we know, are convinced of, and believe. It also says that we must not discourage our brothers over food, and that when we eat food, we must eat it with faith.

Do not destroy your brother with food

It means that because all food comes from God, we should regard all of it as clean with faith and eat it. In the old days, there was much idol worship in both Rome and Corinth. Because there were many very large idol sacrifices, they would set out a great deal of food there, and after finishing the sacrifice, they would take it down and eat it themselves, and what was left over that they could not handle, they took out to the market and sold. So when people went to the market, there was usually a lot of such food. That is why the apostle Paul said, *"Eat whatever is sold in the meat market, asking no questions for conscience' sake" (1 Corinthians 10:25)*. It means not to regard any food as unclean

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and not to ask at all whether it had been offered in an idol sacrifice, but simply to buy it and eat it. This is because food itself is clean.

It also says that saved people must not cause faith to collapse among themselves over what they eat. In the old days too, the rich were exceedingly rich and the poor were exceedingly poor. So even inside the church, some people brought food wrapped up and ate it. For example, it seems that on days when they held the Lord's Supper, each person brought bread and wine. In the old days, the church did not prepare these; rather, each person brought them, and after they conducted the ceremony with the bread and wine and shared the word of faith, they gathered all the remaining food and the saints shared it with one another. But among those who had brought a lot of food, some ate their own food behind the place of worship, just as a student secretly eats his lunch behind a pile of books stacked up during class. Such things happened often in the church in Corinth and also in the church in Rome. Some ate far too much in revelry, while others suffered greatly because they had no food. What is written, *"In eating, each one takes his own supper ahead of others; and one is hungry and another is drunk" (1 Corinthians 11:21)*, refers to exactly such circumstances. That is why it says, *"Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15)*, and, *"Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil" (Romans 14:16)*. It also says, *"The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17)*, and, *"For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men" (Romans 14:18)*. It means that we should act appropriately without leaning to either side.

The only thing born-again people have to do is the work of the Holy Spirit

The apostle Paul's faith was a faith that could receive all who were weak in faith, but that faith itself was not a feeble and lacking faith. It was a faith that followed the Holy Spirit and did the work of the Holy Spirit. That is why he had nothing to condemn in what he was doing, and he served the Lord with true conviction and with faith. As I said at the beginning, we either follow the Holy Spirit or follow the flesh—one of the two. Though we go back and forth, ultimately we cannot help but follow the Holy Spirit. No matter what, what is the work that we Christians must do as we live a life of faith after being born again? In conclusion, there is nothing but this: serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that other people throughout the whole world may also receive the remission of sins, following the Holy Spirit, and doing what pleases God. This is the work we must truly do, and it is for this that we now exist on this earth.

There are times when our bodies are sick and unwell. When our flesh becomes weak, much of us is taken up by our own flesh, so we become dull toward following the Holy Spirit and neglect it. Nevertheless, ultimately there is nothing but the work of the Holy Spirit. We exist for the work of God, and we all exist for the glory of God, just as it says, *"Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God" (1 Corinthians 10:31)*. It says that none of us lives for himself, but that we are all people who live for Christ, for this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that whether we live or die, it is all for Christ. To make us such people, Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us. That is why we belong to Christ, and we are

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people who cannot help but go on doing the work of Christ until we depart. So it says to keep one's faith to oneself before God. If I truly have nothing to condemn in this work in which I am now going forward for the Lord, and if this is right, I must live keeping that faith to myself.

"Whatever is not from faith is sin"

And it says, *"Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23)*. Everything that is not done from faith is sin. In practical terms, not following the Holy Spirit—that is, a born-again person not doing this right work of laboring to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that all the people of the whole world may hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit—is all committing sin. No matter how kindly and how well that person lives on this earth, and even if he is someone who helps people physically, he commits sin, because he truly is a person who does not act from faith, a person who does not carry out by faith the work of following the Holy Spirit that God is pleased with and that God has spoken of. On the other hand, the person who does the work of the Holy Spirit lives a life of acting from faith, so he is recognized for that faith, is praised before people too, and benefits many people.

The world is chaotic. Because there are so many chaotic things and life is so hard, we have no room to look after others, and it is hard to keep our faith, hard to live a life of faith, and hard to do the Lord's work. Though we long with all our hearts to finish this work quickly and go, the work does not go as we think. What the Lord has done we need only believe by faith, but following the Holy Spirit by faith, that is, doing the work of the Holy Spirit, means putting into action what I believe in my heart

and actually preaching it to other people, so that work is not so easy. Because it is not easy, I know it is hard. Even so, for us Christians there is no other way than the way of following the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no room for any other choice.

In this age we may think this way or that way, and individually we may think in various ways. But ultimately, since it says, *"Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23)*, as a result, not following the work of the Holy Spirit is all sin. And that itself is misfortune. When it is called sin, it is not something we just dismiss by saying, "Ah, it is sin"; rather, it means that it is in itself a life of curse. We must do the work of the Holy Spirit by faith. Even if it is difficult and hard for us, we cannot help but do this. The apostle Paul was like that too, and although in our church there are also people who are weak in faith and many who are lacking, and although there may be many reasons, there is still nothing but doing the work of the Holy Spirit. There is no other way but to go on doing the work of the Holy Spirit until the day the Lord comes, to go on doing the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world until we depart. Though we also have the mind of the flesh, ultimately we cannot help but do the work of the Holy Spirit. Into your hearts and mine, after God caused us to receive the remission of sins, He gave the Holy Spirit as a gift. Therefore, ultimately we cannot help but do this, and there is no other way but to go on doing this work until we depart. That is why it says to do everything for the glory of God, whether we eat or drink.

Our home is the work of the Holy Spirit

The work of the Holy Spirit is not my personal work, nor is it your personal work; it is the work of Jesus Christ, who has

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saved us through God, and the work of the Holy Spirit, who now dwells in our hearts. Because the work of the Holy Spirit is our very own work, we have a heart that desires to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. However much the world may try to turn upside down, I believe in God. This is because it has been said that when this gospel of the water and the Spirit has been fully preached to the whole world, our Lord will come. The Lord said, *"And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:14)*. On the day this gospel of the water and the Spirit has been fully preached to the whole world, our Lord will come, and not only will He come, but everything concerning this earth will also be fulfilled just as in the word written in the Book of Revelation. But until then, it will never happen that way. I believe so.

In this way, all that is needed is for the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be fully preached, and since this is precisely the work of the Holy Spirit, all we need to do is to complete this work. We cannot help but do this work, and since it says, *"Whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23)*, we cannot help but do it from faith. We know that the work we are doing is right and that we must carry out this work. Whatever our circumstances, we cannot help but do this work, and we must carry it out. You too, whatever your circumstances and whatever your thoughts, I hope you will live thinking of the work of the Holy Spirit. Whatever circumstances we are in, the conclusion is the work of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we finish doing this work for the Lord, the Lord will come.

Let us do the work of the Holy Spirit. Even if we are lacking and it is hard, let us do the work of the Holy Spirit until the Lord comes. I believe that when we have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, the world will, in step

with that, become extremely difficult and fully enter the age of tribulation. However, I absolutely do not believe that the Lord will come on such and such a day of such and such a month. That cannot be known either. When the age of tribulation comes, we will have done all we had to do, so what would there be to trouble our hearts? Not many days remain for preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is hard. It is truly hard. But as for this hardship, the weariness does not go away even if we exercise, and it does not go away no matter how much fleshly work we do. As for this hardship, the weariness goes away when we quickly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others. Mental stress is greatly reduced. If we relax a little, it eases a little, but it is not pulled out by the root.

You are struggling, I am struggling, and I know that our workers and our brothers and sisters are struggling too. Though you go back and forth, now following the Holy Spirit and now following the flesh, your home is still nothing but following the Holy Spirit, following the work of the Holy Spirit. That is how it is with your home and mine. Let us work. Let us work diligently and then go. And let us do so while expecting and while praying. Let us do so even when it is extremely hard. One thing is clear: we must live serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit well. At this time when the Lord is drawing near, there is nothing to talk about but this. Let us do the work of the Holy Spirit. Though we are lacking, let us join our strength together, follow the Holy Spirit, do the work of the Holy Spirit, and live well. Even if it is extremely hard, if we die, we will die here in this place of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and if we live, we will live here. Even if it means death, we will die serving this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and if we live, we will live well here. Dear fellow believers, let us make up our minds that way. If, just because it is hard, we go somewhere else,

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do something else, and go out into the world, is there any good place? There is none. I know that we born-again people must only do the work of the Holy Spirit, and while doing the work of the Holy Spirit, die here if we die and live here if we live. Even if it is truly hard, please do so and live well. Even if it is hard, let us take heart and live well. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Since we are the Lord's whether we live or die, let us not judge one another but serve with love

< Romans 14:1–23 >

"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things. For one believes he may eat all things, but he who is weak eats only vegetables. Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him. Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls. Indeed, he will be made to stand, for God is able to make him stand. One person esteems one day above another; another esteems every day alike. Let each be fully convinced in his own mind. He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks; and he who does not eat, to the Lord he does not eat, and gives God thanks. For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's. For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living. But why do you

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judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother? For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. For it is written: 'As I live, says the LORD, Every knee shall bow to Me, And every tongue shall confess to God.' So then each of us shall give account of himself to God. Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin."

Dear beloved saints, after the apostle Paul has fully unfolded, from Romans chapter 1 through chapter 11, the deep truth of the salvation we have received, from chapter 12 on he teaches how

the born-again righteous should live on this earth. Within that flow, chapter 14, which we read today, is a very concrete word that deals with how brothers whose measures of faith differ from one another should treat one another when they live together within one church. This word ultimately leads us to one truth, namely, the truth that whether we live or die, we belong to the one Lord. Today this word clearly shows how we should serve one another, standing on the fact that the salvation Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection has shaped us into one family.

Receive the brother who is weak in faith, but do not criticize him

At the beginning of chapter 14, the apostle Paul speaks as follows: *"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things" (Romans 14:1)*. Dear fellow believers, here, being "weak" does not mean not knowing the truth of salvation. It refers to believers who, because they have not fully accepted in their hearts the truth by which God has already released them in Christ, are still bound to the customs of the old law or to the regulations about food. At that time, the church in Rome had believers of Jewish origin and believers of Gentile origin mixed together in one community. So some, believing that the Lord had made all foods clean, ate anything, while others ate only vegetables according to the old laws of purification.

But, dear fellow believers, the problem was that this difference immediately flowed into two wrongs, contempt and judgment. Those who ate everything looked at those who ate

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only vegetables and despised them as foolish, and those who ate only vegetables looked at those who ate everything and judged them as unclean. The apostle Paul cuts off both of these currents at once: *"Let not him who eats despise him who does not eat, and let not him who does not eat judge him who eats; for God has received him" (Romans 14:3)*. Dear fellow believers, who is it that has received that brother? It is God. Then where would any person have the authority to evaluate that brother?

So in verse 4, the apostle Paul takes this illustration one step deeper: *"Who are you to judge another's servant? To his own master he stands or falls" (Romans 14:4)*. A born-again righteous person is a servant already bound to one Master. How that servant stands and how he wavers belongs only to that Master. And that servant's rising again and standing firm also does not depend on people's criticism, but on the one fact that the power to make him stand belongs to the Lord. Dear fellow believers, it is the Lord who caused that person to be born again; it is also the Lord who, through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, had all the sins of the world, including that person's sins, passed on to Him once and for all in accordance with the meaning of the transfer of sin foreshadowed by the system of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, and who shed His blood on the Cross and completely bore the price of that sin; and it is also the Lord who rose again and justified that person forever. Therefore, whatever measure of faith that person may be standing in now, the One who holds that person up and makes him stand cannot but be the Lord. There is no room for people's criticism to intrude.

We, who are the Lord's whether we live or die

Following the matter of food, the apostle Paul goes one step higher and deals with the matter of feast days. Some believers still esteem the old Sabbath and feasts highly, and other believers esteem every day alike. But what is the conclusion the apostle Paul draws here? It is not that one side is right and the other wrong. It is this: *"Let each be fully convinced in his own mind" (Romans 14:5)*. The key is not the outward form, but one thing: where all those acts are directed. Verse 6 states it clearly: *"He who observes the day, observes it to the Lord; and he who does not observe the day, to the Lord he does not observe it. He who eats, eats to the Lord, for he gives God thanks" (Romans 14:6)*. Dear fellow believers, whatever the form may be, if it is directed toward the one Lord and offered to God with thanksgiving, that act is accepted. But if it is done for people's eyes or with a heart that seeks to establish one's own righteousness, then either way it all loses its meaning.

And in verses 7 and 8, the apostle Paul takes this to a deeper place: *"For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's" (Romans 14:7–8)*. Dear fellow believers, how weighty this word is! It means that the very existence of the born-again righteous is not for themselves. All of us belong to One, and every breath while we are alive, up to the very last moment when we die, is all in the hand of that One.

Then how did we become the Lord's? Verse 9 condenses its basis into one line: *"For to this end Christ died and rose and lived again, that He might be Lord of both the dead and the living" (Romans 14:9)*. Dear fellow believers, the reason we became the Lord's is not our resolve or our devotion. It is

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because the one Christ Himself died and rose again and thereby became the Master of both the living and the dead. Within this one line the whole work of salvation that is connected as one is contained. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River in the year He turned thirty, Jesus had all the sin of all mankind passed on to His body once and for all in accordance with the meaning of the transfer of sin foreshadowed by the system of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament; bearing that sin, He was hung on the Cross, shed His precious blood, and died; and by breaking the power of death and rising again, He justified us forever. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished in this way, Jesus remitted once and for all the sin of the world, including our sins. Through this work of salvation connected as one, we have become His possession whether we live or die. Therefore we have become born-again righteous people who can offer anything—whether food, feast days, or any act of our daily lives—with a heart directed toward Him.

Each of us shall give account of himself to God

So in verse 10 the apostle Paul returns once more to that first exhortation: *"Why do you judge your brother? Or why do you show contempt for your brother?" (Romans 14:10)*. Dear fellow believers, here he cuts off one last time the two currents of criticism and contempt that he had cut off in verses 1 through 4. But why would the apostle Paul repeat the same exhortation again? It is to drive in one new nail after it this time, namely, the fact that all of us will stand before the judgment seat of God: *"We shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ" (Romans*

14:10). And in verse 12 he condenses it as follows: *"So then each of us shall give account of himself to God" (Romans 14:12)*.

Dear fellow believers, the one who must answer at the last moment is not one's brother but oneself. And the One to whom one must answer is not a person but the one God. Then what does this judgment seat mean to the born-again righteous? The righteous who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit are those who have accepted in their hearts that Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, that the price of that sin was fully paid by the blood He shed on the Cross, and that eternal righteousness was guaranteed by His resurrection. Therefore the condemnation concerning that person's sins already ended once and for all on the Cross. Does Romans chapter 8 verse 1 not 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" (Romans 8:1)*? However, as to how that person has lived each day as a servant of Christ after being born again, there still remains something he must answer for before the one Master. Therefore one must withdraw the hand of criticism from one's brother and live with the one fact engraved on one's heart that one is a person who will answer directly to the one Lord.

Do not destroy with your food the brother for whom Christ died in his place

Now from verse 13, the apostle Paul takes one step further toward something more active. He says that we should not stop merely at not judging our brother, but should *"rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our*

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brother's way" (Romans 14:13). Dear fellow believers, a stumbling block is an act that makes a brother's conscience feel offended, and a cause to fall is something that makes that brother's feet of faith slip. This is the apostle Paul's deep insight that the very freedom I enjoy can instead become a trap for another brother.

Then in verse 14 he clearly reveals one clear truth: "*There is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean" (Romans 14:14)*. Dear fellow believers, there is no uncleanness in food itself, because in Christ everything has been completely released and made clean. But if a brother whose conscience is weak eats that food with offense, then for that person the act becomes sin. It is not the food that produces sin; rather, what is done against one's own conscience becomes sin.

And in verse 15 the weight of this word deepens all at once: *"Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15)*. Dear fellow believers, how should we regard that one brother? That brother is not simply a fellow member within one church. He is a person for whom Christ Himself died. Therefore, to shake that brother with a single bowl of food is to treat lightly the weight of Christ's death. For that one brother, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, shed His precious blood and died on the Cross, and rose again. The weight of one brother is the very weight of this work of salvation connected as one. How could destroying that brother with a single bowl of food possibly be love?

The kingdom of God, which is righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit

So when we come to verse 17, the word that is the climax of the whole passage appears. The apostle Paul settles outward matters such as food and feast days all at once in this way: *"For the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17)*. Dear fellow believers, the essence of the kingdom of God is not regulations that show outwardly. It is three realities that come in the Holy Spirit. These three are all gifts that come only to the born-again righteous. The *"righteousness"* here is the righteousness of Christ put on us just as it is; *"peace"* is the rest that flows from the fact that the condemnation concerning our sins has already been completely finished on the Cross; and *"joy"* is the gladness that springs up from the truth that whether we live or die, we have become the possession of One.

Dear fellow believers, how do these three come to a person? Because Jesus had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, in accordance with the meaning of the transfer of sin foreshadowed by the system of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, we have been given the status of righteous people in whom sin no longer remains. Because the price of that sin was fully paid by the blood He shed on the Cross, the peace in which condemnation has completely ended has come upon us. And because eternal righteousness was guaranteed by His resurrection, unshakable joy has settled in our hearts. The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have accepted in their hearts this work of salvation connected as one, and in that Holy Spirit, righteousness and peace and joy are poured out at the same time. Outward things such as food or drink can never produce this

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reality. So in verse 19 the apostle Paul clearly reveals in one line the direction we ought to take: *"Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another" (Romans 14:19).*

Whatever is not from faith is sin

And from verse 20 the apostle Paul heads toward the conclusion of the passage: *"Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food" (Romans 14:20)*. Dear fellow believers, this is a weighty warning that my exercise of freedom, as just one person, could tear down the work that God is accomplishing within a brother. Then in verse 21 he paints one picture of love: *"It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak" (Romans 14:21)*. Dear fellow believers, the freedom of the born-again righteous is expressed by enjoying it, but it can also be expressed through the self-control of not enjoying it. It means that protecting a brother's conscience is more beautiful than exercising one's own rights.

And in verse 22 he goes one step deeper: *"Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves" (Romans 14:22)*. Dear fellow believers, this means not to boast before people of the measure of faith one has, but to keep it quietly before God. A person who has no rebuke of conscience regarding what he has discerned to be right is a blessed person.

So verse 23 clearly reveals in one line the conclusion of the whole passage: *"But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23)*. Dear fellow believers, everything done

with doubt becomes sin. All the weight rests not on whether the outward form of an act is right or wrong, but on that one point: whether the act comes from faith. What is the faith spoken of here? It is the conviction of the heart built on the work of One, namely, the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the precious blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. It is the conviction that believes, just as it is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin for us, and rose again from death to remit our sins. An act that does not stand on this conviction is, after all, merely an attempt to establish righteousness by one's own religious efforts, and in the end it cannot but be condemned.

Let us serve the Lord just as the Lord served us

Dear beloved saints, the truth that lies at the foundation of chapter 14's exhortation not to judge one another is clear. It is that we are all servants of the one Lord, that He has received each of us, that He Himself makes us stand, and that whether we live or die, we are His possession. All these truths are clearly contained in the one line of verse 9. It is that the one Christ died and rose again and thereby became the Lord of the living and the dead.

Dear fellow believers, this word that the apostle Paul nailed down is not merely a theological proposition. In this one line is condensed the entire work of salvation connected as one: through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Jesus had all the sin of mankind passed on to His body in accordance with the meaning of the transfer of sin

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foreshadowed by the system of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament; bearing that sin, He shed His precious blood and died on the Cross; and He broke the power of death and rose again. Through that work of salvation connected as one, He bought us. He first served us in that way.

Therefore we, the born-again righteous, who stand on that work, must close the mouths that would criticize our brother, withdraw the eyes that would despise our brother, and, before the weight of that brother for whom Christ died in his place, willingly lay down even our own freedom. Whether it is food, feast days, or any act, when every current is directed toward the One and offered to God with thanksgiving, the daily lives of us born-again righteous become, in themselves, a place that reveals the glory of the One. Since the Lord served us in that way, I pray in the name of the Lord that all of us may become people who also strive for peace and for the things that build up, serve our brothers with love, and serve the Lord throughout our lives with lives that serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The work of the Holy Spirit that builds up our brothers

< Romans 14:13–23 >

“Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother’s way. I know and am convinced by the Lord Jesus that there is nothing unclean of itself; but to him who considers anything to be unclean, to him it is unclean. Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let your good be spoken of as evil; for the kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit. For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men. Therefore let us pursue the things which make for peace and the things by which one may edify another. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All things indeed are pure, but it is evil for the man who eats with offense. It is good neither to eat meat nor drink wine nor do anything by which your brother stumbles or is offended or is made weak. Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves. But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because he does not eat from faith; for whatever is not from faith is sin.”

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A brother's faith is more precious than food

In the church in Rome there were, together, those who ate anything and those who kept away from meat and wine. As verses 14 and 20 of the passage say, some saints believed that no food was unclean in itself and ate without offense, while other saints regarded that food as unclean and ate it with an offended heart. But this difference spread into judging one another, and it went as far as one side pushing ahead according to its own conviction and shaking the faith of the other side. So Paul goes further than telling them in the previous verses not to judge, and now exhorts them not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall before their brother.

Let us read verse 13. It says, *"Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way" (Romans 14:13)*. What we must now examine is not only why my brother cannot do as I do, but also what influence I am having on my brother. Those who serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together should devote their hearts to helping one another stand by faith rather than spending their strength on evaluating one another.

In verse 14, Paul speaks of what he knows and is convinced of in the Lord Jesus. It is that no food is unclean in itself, so one may regard it as clean by faith and eat it. But just because one knows that fact, one must not push someone who still has an offended heart to eat no matter what. For the passage deals with both the word that there is nothing unclean of itself and the problem of the person who regards something as unclean. While keeping alive the teaching that food is clean, we must also listen to what our brother finds difficult and help him to accept it by faith.

Verse 15 says, *"Yet if your brother is grieved because of your food, you are no longer walking in love. Do not destroy with your food the one for whom Christ died" (Romans 14:15)*. Paul flatly declares that causing a brother to be grieved because of food is not walking in love. For a meal that is without offense to me can become a grief that shakes my brother's faith. That brother is not a person who is beside us in order to evaluate our behavior, but a precious person for whom Christ died in his place. Here, that Christ died in his place means that through the baptism He received from John, Jesus bore not only that brother's sins but all the sins of the world, and shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in his place. When I think of what the Lord, who rose again from death, did for him in this way, I cannot put forward only my conviction that I can eat anything. Making him stand without becoming discouraged in the grace he has received is more precious than food.

Verse 16, which says that we should not let the good we know be spoken of as evil, must also be received in this flow. If we say we know what is right yet do not care for people, that knowledge cannot benefit our brother. An attitude of mocking another person's shortcomings or forcing one's own conviction on him runs contrary to walking in love. Just as much as the Lord treasured that soul, we too must treasure his faith and let the truth we know lead to the labor of love.

The righteousness and peace we enjoy in the Holy Spirit

That is why Paul makes clear what the center of the kingdom of God is. Let us read verse 17. It says, *"For the kingdom of God*

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is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17). What we who serve the Lord together should treasure is not pushing through our own claims because of food, but the righteousness and peace and joy given in the Holy Spirit. We must not harm the fellowship in which we enjoy this grace because of eating and drinking.

The reason that righteousness has been given to us is that Jesus has remitted all sins. Having received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, Jesus shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and rose again from death. Since He bore even our lifelong sins, including them in that sin of the world, and received the judgment, we have no need to make righteousness by our own deeds and offer it before God. God has given the Holy Spirit as a gift to the hearts that believe in this remission of sins accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The conviction that sin has been remitted gives peace to hearts that were afraid before God, and the grace that saved us gives thanksgiving and joy. Therefore we have no need to go searching for joy in the Holy Spirit in special experiences. Since we also come to feel the same joy and fullness when the Holy Spirit rejoices in our hearts, the righteous who have received the remission of sins come to delight in serving this gospel of the water and the Spirit, even though their flesh is weary. As we hold fast to the testimony of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that there is no sin in our hearts and serve so that other souls too may know that grace, we come to take part together in the work in which the Holy Spirit rejoices. Fellowship in which we confirm to one another the righteousness the Lord has given is different from arguments in which we compete over our own rightness.

Let us read verse 18. It says, *"For he who serves Christ in these things is acceptable to God and approved by men" (Romans 14:18)*. Here, he who serves Christ is a person who lives by the righteousness and peace and joy received in the Holy Spirit. Because such a person treats his brother according to faith instead of putting forward his own conviction, God is pleased with him, and people too see his life and praise it. For the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he believes becomes beneficial to his brother as well. Verse 19 then tells us to strive for the things of peace and the things by which we build one another up. Even when teaching a brother what he does not know well, we must make it our aim that he believe more clearly and stand. If we put forward a heart that seeks to make him submit to our own explanation, a conversation becomes a quarrel; but a heart that seeks to share the same grace of salvation causes us to attend to that person's needs.

Verses 20 and 21 also exhort us not to destroy the work of God because of food and to refrain from doing anything that causes a brother to stumble. If I can stop eating for a while, I can thereby help the way by which my brother learns faith and stands. It is not because the act of not eating is itself holier, but because it is for that brother's benefit. We are not abandoning the faith that food is clean; rather, along with that faith, we walk in the love that cares for people.

Serve the gospel from faith

Now Paul causes us to examine with what faith we do all these things. Verse 22 says, *"Do you have faith? Have it to yourself before God. Happy is he who does not condemn himself in what he approves" (Romans 14:22)*. This is a word telling us

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to hold firmly before God what we believe and to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit according to that faith, and Paul was exactly such a person. Because what he believed and what he did did not diverge on the path of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he went that path to the end without wavering. We too must not try to show others our own level, but must become people who know and believe what pleases the Lord and actually serve. Although we are lacking and weak, God continues the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit through such people as us. Therefore we must hold fast in our hearts this beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus gave by having all our sins, weak as we are, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, paying their price with the blood of the Cross, and rising again from death. And we must live following the truth with thanksgiving throughout our lives, receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The word *"whatever is not from faith is sin" (Romans 14:23)* at the end of verse 23 also makes us look back on our lives. We cannot call it right to live following only our own flesh while knowing the way that pleases God. What we who have been born again believe to be right is preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that other souls too may receive the remission of sins. If, while knowing this news, we keep putting off the labor of preaching it to others, we must look back on ourselves, who do not put what we believe into action. Even if it is a life that does many things that are good in the world's eyes and helps one's neighbors, if it is not done according to faith, it is sin before God according to this word. For a born-again person to live turning his back on the work in which the Holy Spirit delights is the exact opposite of the blessing spoken of in verse 22, and it is in itself an unhappy life.

Even when reading this word dealing with acting in doubt when faced with food, we must not recalculate our own salvation by what we ate that day. Salvation is received the moment we believe in our hearts what Jesus has already accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection from death. But because the labor of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something that ends once we have believed, but something we must continue with our bodies every day, it is hard, and we often want to put it off. Even though the labor of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not easy, the Lord's salvation does not thereby fall short, nor are our sins washed away more in proportion to our labor. It is because we have received complete salvation that we choose the way of sharing that grace with other souls.

We too repeatedly set our hearts on the work in which the Holy Spirit delights and then lean toward what is comfortable for our own flesh. But for those who have received the remission of sins and have received the Holy Spirit, the only path that remains in the end is the path of living by following the Holy Spirit. Even on days when our bodies are exhausted and our hearts are sinking, we have no other choice but to walk that path again. Rather than trying to accomplish everything alone, let us join forces with those who believe together with us, pray for the souls who have not heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and continue the labor we are able to do. Even when our weakness is revealed, the truth of the remission of sins that the Lord has given does not change, so we must not lose sight of the value of the work of preaching that truth. Helping one another so that we ourselves and our brothers may stand together in this faith is the life of following the Holy Spirit.

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The situation of the church in Rome, where believers judged their brothers by eating or not eating, exists among us today too, only in a different form. Turn back from discouraging your brother with claims of being right, and build up his faith. Since the Lord bore not only his sins but all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John and shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, rejoice together in this salvation He accomplished for him. Share the righteousness and peace received in the Holy Spirit, and let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit even to souls who do not yet know this grace. Instead of arguing over what you can eat, consider how you can benefit your brother and other souls, and live as people of the Holy Spirit who strive for the things of peace and the things by which we build one another up. ✉

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CHAPTER

15

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Strong faith embraces the weak

< Romans 15:1–13 >

“We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, ‘The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.’ For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: ‘For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.’ And again he says: ‘Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!’ And again: ‘Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!’ And again, Isaiah says: ‘There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.’ Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in

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believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Let those who are strong in faith help their weak brothers

When we hear that someone's faith is strong, it is easy to picture a person serving the Lord without wavering, even alone. However, Paul first speaks of how a strong person treats the weak person beside him. If, because I handle a certain task well, I regard the brother who finds that task hard as merely frustrating, I must look back on whether I am using the strength of my faith for the benefit of my brother. This is because the faith received from the Lord cannot stop at boasting of one's own ability.

"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves" (Romans 15:1). A person who is strong in faith is someone who has known and believed the word first and so can think broadly about the work of the Lord. A weak person, even though he has received the same salvation, may still be bound by his own thoughts or hesitate in the face of small difficulties. At such times, if the one who believed first pushes that brother away, his weakness remains as it is. Only when we explain the word so that he can understand it, wait for him, and bear the burden together with him can he stand by faith.

Bearing the weaknesses of the weak does not mean approving all of a brother's wrong thoughts as right. It means not turning away from the person who is struggling because of those thoughts, but helping him with the word. Rather than pressing him to accomplish right away what I do easily, I must look into where he has gotten stuck. We too learned faith with

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the help of other brothers, and we are not as strong as Paul either, so there are times when we waver between the things of the Holy Spirit and the things of the flesh; therefore, the fact that we have received the strength to help others cannot be a reason to sit in a high place.

There is also a clear purpose in pleasing our neighbor. *"Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification" (Romans 15:2).* To blur the gospel of the water and the Spirit or to fall into fleshly thoughts together with the other person in order to make him feel good is not what is good. Truly loving our neighbor means preaching to him this gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which God removed his sins; so we must serve together in the work that pleases the Lord and benefit him so that he may believe the word of the remission of sins and stand firm. Even if we are not praised right away, the labor of teaching him the word step by step can become the help that our brother needs.

This is also the reason Paul told us to follow the example of Christ. The Lord did not choose the way of pleasing Himself, but received reproaches and suffering in order to save us. Jesus, who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, died, and rose again from death. All the sins of our entire lifetime were included in that sin of the world and were remitted; thus, even though the Lord knew our shortcomings, He accomplished that salvation to the end. When we think of how many sins we have committed before God, we also think of how many sins the Lord bore through the baptism He received from John. Can we, who have already received that love by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, look at the weaknesses of our brothers and seek only our own comfort? When we think of the Lord, who

first bore our weaknesses, the reason to labor while bearing the weaknesses of our brothers becomes clear.

Become of one mind through the comfort of the word and receive one another

When the work of helping a brother feels slow, we too need patience and comfort. *"For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope" (Romans 15:4)*. God did not leave us to endure and hold out by our own strength alone, but gave us the word. That word tells us that the salvation God promised has already been accomplished. Jesus accomplished that salvation by receiving baptism from John and having our sins passed on to Him, by shedding His blood on the Cross and paying the price of that sin, and by rising again from death. Because we know this fact, we need not give up on the Lord's help by looking only at our present shortcomings.

The comfort of the word is different from the thought with which we soothe ourselves by saying that there are no difficulties. Our hearts receive comfort when we always reflect on this gospel of the water and the Spirit, which tells us how the Lord removed all our sins, and when we know and believe what promises God has given. Just because a brother shows weakness today does not mean that the salvation the Lord bestowed on him becomes smaller. As we hear the word and pray together with him, we gain the strength to endure difficulties and go forward by faith. This is not trying to obtain again every day the remission of sins we have already received; rather, it is believing in that grace and correcting our present thoughts and lives.

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Paul asked that God, who gives this patience and comfort, would make us like-minded. If each of us insists on his own thoughts to the end, we cannot serve the Lord with one mind even if we are gathered in one place. We must look to Jesus Christ, in whom we believe together, and set our hearts on the salvation of souls that He desires. When we serve the Lord with one mind in this way, what comes out of our mouths is not the boast that I did it, but the thanksgiving that God made it happen, and we come to praise together the salvation God has bestowed. Giving glory to God is not separate from a life that values our brothers.

"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7). The basis on which the Lord received us is not that we had fixed all our weaknesses. Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and then rose again from death and fulfilled righteousness, and He received us who believe in that righteousness. So we too must receive the brothers who believe in the same gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must not divide people by how familiar they are with the life of faith or by the size of the work entrusted to them, but treat them as one family in Christ. Receiving weak brothers and helping them grow together is the service given to those who have strong faith.

The mercy and hope given to all peoples

The basis of the exhortation to receive one another is also revealed in the scope of the salvation the Lord bestowed. Paul says that Christ became a servant to the circumcision in order to reveal the truth of God and to confirm the promises given to the

fathers. That is, the servants in the Old Testament prophesied in advance that Jesus would come, bear our sins, and receive the judgment in our place; God did not forsake that promise but sent Jesus Christ; and Jesus fulfilled that promise exactly through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. Also, since He bestowed mercy on the Gentiles too and caused them to give glory to God, it is not that He let only those who heard the promise first enjoy grace and left others to remain outside.

Paul tells us that the Scriptures say again and again that the Gentiles too will rejoice with the Lord's people and praise God. He also cites the word of Isaiah to make clear that the hope of all peoples is in Christ, who will reign over the nations. The fact that we receive salvation from the same Lord, even though our origins are different and the environments we have lived in are different, is the reason we should receive one another and serve God together. If we keep those who have become one family through the gospel of the water and the Spirit at a distance because of fleshly distinctions, we go against the heart of the Lord, who bestowed mercy on all peoples.

This word does not end with caring only for the people in our church. Because souls who do not yet know the Lord's salvation also need to hear of that mercy, our concern must widen to the people who need the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who know the name of Jesus but do not know that the Lord completely removed all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection are also people who need that mercy. Helping weak brothers is, in the end, also the work of enabling them to serve the Lord's work with the same heart. The love of receiving one another and the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

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cannot go separately, because the Lord, who received us, wants to save other souls as well.

That is why Paul asks, *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13)*. Joy and peace do not arise because our circumstances always go smoothly; rather, they are given as we believe in the Lord, who received baptism from John and had our sins passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and then rose again from death. Since the Holy Spirit, who dwells in us who have received the remission of sins, causes us to think of the Lord's promises through the word, we can look toward the day when the Lord comes, even in the midst of today's difficulties, and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together. Standing alone without wavering is not the only strong faith. Let us believe in the Lord, embrace our weak brothers, and become people who give thanks with one mind together with them and serve the Lord in hope. Then the strength of faith given to us will become a benefit to our brothers and the church. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Just as Christ received us, let us also receive one another

< Romans 15:1–13 >

"We then who are strong ought to bear with the scruples of the weak, and not to please ourselves. Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification. For even Christ did not please Himself; but as it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me.' For whatever things were written before were written for our learning, that we through the patience and comfort of the Scriptures might have hope. Now may the God of patience and comfort grant you to be like-minded toward one another, according to Christ Jesus, that you may with one mind and one mouth glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ. Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God. Now I say that Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers, and that the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy, as it is written: 'For this reason I will confess to You among the Gentiles, And sing to Your name.' And again he says: 'Rejoice, O Gentiles, with His people!' And again: 'Praise the LORD, all you Gentiles! Laud Him, all you peoples!' And again, Isaiah says: 'There shall be a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles, In Him the Gentiles shall hope.' Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in

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believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit."

Dear beloved saints, in the preceding chapter 14, the apostle Paul explained how brothers whose measures of faith differ from one another within one church should treat one another. Did he not say, *"Receive one who is weak in the faith, but not to disputes over doubtful things" (Romans 14:1)*? But when we come to chapter 15, that exhortation goes one step deeper. It does not stop merely at receiving brothers; now it says that the strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak. And who is the example for all of this? It is none other than Jesus Christ, who Himself received us. Today's word clearly shows that the work by which Jesus received us through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection is the deep root of all the love with which we receive and serve one another. Jesus received us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John, He had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all; with the blood He shed on the Cross, He paid the price of that sin; and He rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

The strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak

At the beginning of chapter 15, the apostle Paul speaks as follows: *"Now we that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves –ASV" (Romans 15:1)*. Dear fellow believers, here the word "bear" is a truly weighty

word. It means to support and carry the weight of a person together. In chapter 14 he told us to receive the weak brother, but here he goes one step further and tells us to carry the weight of that weak brother together with him. This means that the freedom the strong enjoy was not given to them so that they might exercise their own rights, but rather so that they might support the weight of their weak brothers.

Then toward what should that bearing be directed? Verse 2 says it clearly: *"Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, leading to edification" (Romans 15:2)*. Dear fellow believers, being told to please our neighbor does not mean that we should humor that person. It means that we should act in the direction in which good is accomplished in that person and he is edified. The freedom of the born-again righteous reveals its measure richly only when it is used, not to satisfy oneself, but to build up the framework of a brother's faith.

And in verse 3, the apostle Paul clearly reveals in a single stroke the one example for all these exhortations. *"For even Christ did not please Himself" (Romans 15:3)*. Dear fellow believers, the reason we are able not to please ourselves is that Christ Himself first showed us that example. In the same verse 3, Paul brings in the word of Psalm 69, saying, *"As it is written, 'The reproaches of those who reproached You fell on Me'" (Romans 15:3)*. This was originally a song in which David poured out the weight of the insults he had received because of his zeal toward God. But its deep meaning was a prophecy that foreshadowed the weight of all the reproaches, insults, and death that Jesus, the Messiah, would Himself receive for us human beings. Dear fellow believers, what does this one line, that Christ did not please Himself, point to? It points to the whole of the work in which Jesus, in the year He turned thirty, had all the sin of all mankind transferred to His body once and for all through

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the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, in accordance with the meaning of the passing on of sin foreshadowed by the system of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament; was hung on the Cross while bearing that sin, shed His precious blood, and died; and broke the power of death and rose again, thereby guaranteeing eternal righteousness to us. Jesus laid down all His own rights and received us. So we born-again righteous people too have become able not to make our own freedom absolute, but to walk the path of receiving our weak brothers.

One mind and one mouth are made by the God of patience and comfort

And in verse 4, the apostle Paul condenses the eternal value of the Old Testament into one line. *"Whatever things were written before were written for our learning" (Romans 15:4)*. Dear fellow believers, the Old Testament is not merely a book from long, long ago. It is a channel that supplies patience, comfort, and hope to us born-again righteous people. Patience is the strength that enables us to endure the weight of restraining our own freedom and bearing the weaknesses of our weak brothers, and comfort is the consolation that pours into our hearts the knowledge that the strength to endure that weight is not squeezed out of our own will but flows out of the word of God.

And in verse 5, he drives in one very important nail. Dear fellow believers, who is the One who makes one mind and one mouth? It is not man. It is *"the God of patience and comfort" (Romans 15:5)*. That the strong and the weak in one church become like-minded with one another is not something made by human effort. Rather, it is something that the God of patience

and comfort Himself shapes. And in verse 6, he makes clear where that one mind and one mouth must be directed. It is not toward one's own glory or the glory of the strong. Everything comes together in the one task, to *"glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ" (Romans 15:6)*.

So verse 7 is the axis of the whole passage. *"Therefore receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7)*. Dear fellow believers, on what do both the example for receiving a brother and the standard of its weight depend? They depend on the fact that Christ received us. Then how did Christ receive us? Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His body once and for all, in accordance with the meaning of the passing on of sin foreshadowed by the system of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament; He paid the full price of that sin with His precious blood on the Cross; and He guaranteed eternal righteousness through His resurrection. That is how He received us. Dear fellow believers, if we are people who have been received through that work, then I believe it is right that when the strong receive a weak brother, they should not receive him after measuring his measure this way and that, but should receive him with the weight of the work by which Jesus received us.

Christ, who fulfilled the promises to the Jews and received the Gentiles

Next, in verse 8, the apostle Paul again condenses the work of Christ into one line. *"Jesus Christ has become a servant to the circumcision for the truth of God, to confirm the promises made to the fathers" (Romans 15:8)*. Dear fellow believers, this

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expression, that He became *"a servant to the circumcision,"* is a phrase that clearly reveals that Jesus is the One who fulfilled all the promises toward the Jews. All the covenants given to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the promise of an eternal throne given to David, and all the prophecies of the Messiah given through the prophets were fulfilled in Jesus.

But when we come to verse 9, the scope of that work does not stop with the Jews. *"That the Gentiles might glorify God for His mercy" (Romans 15:9)*. Dear fellow believers, this means that the fulfillment of the promise toward the Jews became at the same time a channel of mercy toward the Gentiles. So, in order to make this truth clear, the apostle Paul quotes four passages of the Old Testament one after another from verse 9 through verse 12. By spreading out the Psalms, the books of the law, and the Prophets, he clearly reveals that the whole Old Testament was originally consistent in God's heart toward the salvation of the Gentiles.

In verse 12 there appears *"a root of Jesse; And He who shall rise to reign over the Gentiles" (Romans 15:12)*, and this One is Jesus Christ. And the promise that the nations will put their hope in Him is the one line that guarantees the status of us Gentile born-again righteous people. Dear fellow believers, we were originally people who were outside that promise. But we are people who have come into the place of one family through the work of Jesus. The root of all the spiritual richness that we Gentile born-again righteous people enjoy is planted not in our own merit but in the work of Jesus, who fulfilled all the promises originally given to the Jews and brought even us Gentiles into that richness. Because Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on 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 all our sins, we Gentiles too have come into that promise by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The God of hope makes hope abound by the power of the Holy Spirit

So in verse 13, the apostle Paul concludes the whole passage with a one-line doxology. *"Now may the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing, that you may abound in hope by the power of the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:13)*. Dear fellow believers, here the expression *"the God of hope"* is very important. It means that our hope does not spring out of our resolve or our religious efforts. It means that it is a gift that God, who Himself is the source of hope, pours out on us.

Then what is the essence of that hope? The deep root of that hope is the status of eternal righteousness, the freedom of being released from sin, and the promise of everlasting life, which have been given to us through the work that Jesus Himself accomplished by having the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His precious blood on the Cross, and rising again from death. Dear fellow believers, the daily life of us born-again righteous people is not something we create by our own efforts. Does not chapter 14, verse 17, say earlier, *"The kingdom of God is not eating and drinking, but righteousness and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit" (Romans 14:17)*? The flow of living while enjoying, by the power of the Holy Spirit, the righteousness, peace, and joy that flow out from the work of Jesus is precisely our daily life.

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From the place of being received to the place of serving the gospel

Dear beloved saints, today's word from chapter 15, verses 1 through 13, which tells us to receive one another, clearly shows the example of that path. Who is the one example of that whole flow in which the strong ought to bear the weaknesses of the weak, not please themselves, and act for the good and edification of their neighbors? It is none other than Christ. Because Christ Himself did not please Himself, and because He Himself received all the sin and reproaches of us human beings, we born-again righteous people too can lay down the path of pleasing ourselves and walk the path of carrying the weight of our brothers together with them.

Dear fellow believers, the axis of this passage is clearly contained in verse 7. *"Receive one another, just as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Romans 15:7)*. This means that the standard for receiving a brother lies not in the brother's measure but in the fact of how Christ received us. Only those who receive their brothers with the weight of that work, in which Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His body once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, fully bore the price of that sin on the Cross, and guaranteed eternal righteousness through His resurrection, can at last walk the path of peace naturally.

Dear fellow believers, what kind of people were we originally? We were not people who accomplished something by our own strength, but simply people who were received by Him. So our work cannot be our boast either. Rather, it is merely a place of joining in the flow of the work that Jesus accomplished first. In that very place where we were received, I bless you in the name of the Lord that you may all become such

blessed born-again righteous people who now support weak brothers, receive one another, give glory to God the Father with one mind and one mouth, and finally live by offering yourselves to the service of this gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Preach the gospel of the remission of sins to the Gentiles

< Romans 15:14–21 >

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation, but as it is written: ‘To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.’”

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The work of raising up people whom God will accept

After preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, what we should examine is not how many people have gathered or what work has been accomplished conspicuously. Looking back on his own ministry of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles, Paul first makes clear whether they had become holy offerings that God would accept. This means that we must ask what the people who have gathered have heard and what they have believed. If someone who has not yet escaped from sin is merely calling on the name of Jesus, he needs the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which tells how the Lord remitted sins.

Paul acknowledged the fact that the brethren in Rome already knew the word and were people who could admonish one another. *"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Romans 15:14)*. Since he did not write the letter in order to ignore them or to show off his own knowledge, he was able to give an exhortation that reminds even brothers who already believe. Knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that we no longer need to hear the word. Only when we think of both the grace we have received and the purpose for which we serve can we help one another rightly.

The reason Paul wrote boldly was that God had given him grace and a duty. *"That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16)*. This duty was the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people who did not know God, so

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that they would receive the remission of sins and stand before God. The word “offering” appears here, but it does not mean offering people on an altar. Just as a priest offers up an offering that God will accept, the one who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit presents before God those who have heard that gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and become sanctified in the Holy Spirit. Paul called this work the priestly duty entrusted to him.

Only when we know the basis of this holiness does the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach also become clear. The basis on which the Gentiles become holy lies in the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all. The sins of our entire lifetime are also included in them. So the Lord shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and died, and by rising again from death He remitted our sins. The One who made us sinless so that God could accept us is Jesus Christ. We present to God, as holy people, those who believe in the salvation He accomplished through this gospel of the water and the Spirit; it is not a work of making other people clean by the merit of the one who preaches.

Therefore, when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not end our teaching at making people commit sins a little less. If people think that they will be accepted by God only when they fix their own weaknesses, they will again examine their own deeds and become afraid. We must let them know that the sins that come out of those weaknesses were also already included in the sin of the world that Jesus had passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and have been remitted. A person who has received the remission of sins does not become a sinner again just because he is weak and commits sins again; rather, the salvation that the Lord

accomplished is that He removed even those sins completely. Since it takes time for the hearers to believe this grace fully, we must not press them impatiently, but must build up right faith in them again and again with the word.

Boast in what Christ has accomplished

Raising up holy people whom God would accept was also a cause for boasting for Paul. However, he said that he boasted in the work of God in Christ Jesus. He did not say that he had changed the Gentiles because he had some special ability; rather, he revealed the Lord, who worked through him. We too, after preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, give thanks when we see people receive the remission of sins and rejoice, but we must not hold onto those results as evidence of our own wisdom or persuasiveness.

"I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" (Romans 15:18–19). The One who worked in Paul's words, in the deeds he did, and in the power that appeared in that ministry was Christ. The Lord had the word preached through the apostle and caused the Gentiles to hear and obey. Since Paul himself was also a servant working by the grace he had received, he could not attribute to himself what the Lord had done.

As we read this word, there is no need for us to think that some sign must first appear to us today as well before we can say that we have received the Holy Spirit. The power that appeared in Paul's ministry was bestowed by Christ Himself in the time of the apostles in order to make the Gentiles obedient;

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this is not a word that turns the evidence of our having received the Holy Spirit into special experiences. Rather, the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart that has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and then rose again from death. Because that Holy Spirit gives us the heart to let other souls also know this salvation, we must preach the word of salvation accurately rather than look for things that will astonish people's eyes.

Paul says that he went all around from Jerusalem to Illyricum and preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit widely. From Jerusalem to Illyricum was a long road that would be hard for one person to cover entirely, but his statement that he went all around that road and fully preached does not mean that he made his name known in many places; it means that he let souls who did not know the Lord hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We too, rather than first boasting of the amount of our labor, must examine what gospel has been preached through that labor. If the hearers come to know clearly and believe in the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished, then we too have reason to boast of the Lord's grace.

Toward souls who have not yet heard

Paul, who boasted of what the Lord had done, turned his eyes toward the people who needed the gospel of the water and the Spirit. *"And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20)*. Another man's foundation is a foundation that someone else has laid first. Rather than building

more on top of it in a place where someone had already gone in and the name of Christ was being called on, Paul made it his work to go to places where no one had yet preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to preach complete salvation to souls who did not know the news of the Lord. At the same time, he did not adjust the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he preached to fit a foundation that had already been laid. This is because one cannot assume that the remission of sins has been rightly preached in a place just because people there call on the name of Christ. If a teaching leaves out that Jesus bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, it is a foundation different from the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Paul preached. Together with this, we must also tell people that the Lord shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and rose again from death; only then can we clearly preach the remission of sins.

Paul did not get tied to building on another man's foundation, but went to the Gentiles whom the news of the Lord had not reached. Today, we too must not spend all our strength only on persuading people who hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet in the end do not accept it, while failing to care for souls who have never even had the chance to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must look for whether there are people who want to hear about the Lord's salvation, and when an opportunity to preach opens, we must tell them the content of salvation step by step. Even if those who hear it for the first time do not understand everything right away, we can explain it again and help them believe the word.

However, this does not establish for us a rule that we must not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people who know the name of Jesus. People who say they believe in Jesus but do not know how the Lord removed sin are no different from

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people who have not yet received the news of the Lord; therefore, we must let both those who say they believe and those who hear it for the first time hear the true gospel of the water and the Spirit. While not mixing the truth with the foundations of other faiths, we must broaden our concern for souls. This is because we must not look only at who is arguing with us and forget who is waiting for the news of the Lord.

"As it is written: 'To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand'" (Romans 15:21). Paul worked according to this will revealed in the word. The fruit we should examine after preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit also lies here, not in the number of people gathered. It is that people who did not know the news of the Lord come to know that salvation, and that people who were afraid because of their own sins believe in the righteousness that Christ has given and stand before God. Let us not hesitate by looking only at what we lack in our deeds, but use the words and labor given to us for that work. Let us serve the soul who has not yet heard by preaching to him the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and had not only that soul's sins but all the sins of the world passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death, so that he may come to the Lord as a holy person who has received the remission of sins. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

We who have become apostles to the Gentiles

< Romans 15:14–21 >

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation, but as it is written: ‘To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.’”

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The gospel of the water and the Spirit that is preached throughout the whole world

When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we first go to those who believe in Jesus, but now we come to feel in our hearts that we must also go to the Gentiles who do not believe in Jesus and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. In this world, are there many people who believe in Jesus, or are there more people who do not believe in Jesus? There are more people who do not believe in Jesus. We should live our life of faith and set the direction of our lives for the purpose of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those Gentiles.

If we work only for ourselves, our scope becomes narrow, but if we do the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the many people who do not believe in Jesus, the scope of our faith becomes that much wider. The people of Israel are not a people who believe in Jesus either, and the countless people in the Middle East, Europe, and Asia are all Gentiles. They either do not know Jesus at all, or, even if they do believe in Jesus, they believe in Him in a religious way. So they are people who do not know that Jesus has completely saved them from sin through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We, who have been born again first, should now open our eyes toward the Gentiles with a new heart and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them.

The apostle Paul said to the saints in Rome, *"Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:15–16).*

What we can see here is that the apostle Paul wanted, above all else, to preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles.

The apostle Paul, who did not want to build a house on another man's foundation

The apostle Paul said, *"I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named" (Romans 15:20)*. And he gave the reason for it, saying, *"Lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20)*. So the apostle Paul wanted, throughout his life, to preach the beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles who did not know Jesus.

When we look at the Pauline Epistles, the apostle Paul has something in his heart, but he does not speak about it precisely. We can see that at times he reveals it openly, and at times he also hides it. The apostle Paul said to the saints, *"That I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16)*.

The apostle Paul's saying that he would not build a church on another man's foundation means that he would not preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who call on the name of Jesus. To put it simply, another man's foundation here refers to religious people who believe only in the precious blood of Jesus' Cross and believe that they have received the remission of sins. In reality, these people are no different from the people of the world who have not been born again.

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The apostle Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles

We must now turn our eyes toward the Gentiles. This means that we must turn our eyes to those who do not believe in Jesus rather than to those who believe in Jesus. Among the apostles, the apostle Paul was a servant whom God specially chose as the apostle of the Gentiles. So he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles throughout his life and then went before the Lord. By contrast, Peter was a disciple who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to his own people. So when we look at First and Second Peter, many things are said that are addressed to the people of Israel.

The apostle Paul said, *"From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19)*. Because there were no special means of transportation in that age, he had to go around in person and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. At most, it was a matter of taking a ship or riding a horse, so we may think that for the most part he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit while walking on foot with great difficulty. The region in which the apostle Paul thus preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit all his life after meeting the Lord stretched from what is now the Middle East and Turkey to the region of Europe. If we spread out a map and look at it now, we may think that he did not travel very far, but when we consider the circumstances of that time, it was an enormous distance. It means that even if it is a distance one could go around in a single day by airplane today, at that time it was a very long distance that was hard to cover even by preaching for a whole lifetime. I think I know how hard it must have been for preachers like the apostle Paul to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Thus, it is no exaggeration to say that the apostle Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles. He was a servant of God whom God specially raised up in order to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles. As this word says, he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles in order to offer them up, by the Holy Spirit, as an offering acceptable to God. In other words, this means preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles, causing their sins to be completely removed, and making them flawless brides of Jesus Christ. This is because Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and completely removed that sin with the blood of the Cross. All the sins of the world that Jesus had passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John include all the sins of my whole life and of yours. Jesus bore that sin, shed His blood and died on the Cross, received the judgment for sin in our place, and saved us from sin by rising again from death. Paul preached the true gospel of the water and the Spirit, which removes sin 100 percent flawlessly, so that even if we commit sin in the future because we are lacking, we do not come to have sin again. So he made the Gentiles saints acceptable to God before God, and also such brides.

So when the apostle Paul preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God worked in a special way. He allowed the works of the Holy Spirit in which the sick were healed when handkerchiefs brought from Paul's body were laid on them, and the sick were healed even when only Peter's shadow fell on them as he passed by. That is why the apostle Paul said, *"I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" (Romans 15:18–19)*. At that time, God

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performed many amazing works together with the apostles. And it means that Paul preached this gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who did not believe in Jesus in order that this word might be fulfilled: *"To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand" (Romans 15:21)*.

We are now preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who do not believe in Jesus, and we are also preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who believe in Jesus. Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who believe in Jesus is in some cases very easy and in some cases very difficult. "I have already been believing like this for so long, so are you saying this is fake? Our denomination is this big, so are you saying it has gone wrong? Are you, such a small group, saying that all of us, this big group, have gone wrong?" Saying such things, religious people reject this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

So the apostle Paul preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles. It means that he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit toward the Gentiles in this way according to the will of God, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those to whom the Lord's news had not been brought, so that they might see, and so that those who had not heard might understand. We too are doing the work of preaching this beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles according to the will of God. Even now, when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to religious people, we often see them rejecting it like this. The apostle Paul was also rejected at that time for this reason, and so he must have resolved not to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who called on the name of Jesus Christ. And he became the apostle of the Gentiles, who sought out the Gentiles all his life and preached

the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them. We believe that God has also called us in this last age as people who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles.

Of course, even a person who believes in Jesus is, strictly speaking, spiritually a Gentile if he has not yet come into Christ. We first try preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to such a person, but to those who do not accept it and oppose it, we shake the dust off our feet and get up without any lingering attachment. Rather than preach the gospel to people who oppose the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the apostle Paul wanted to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles who did not know God.

What God wants from us in this age

God wants us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles. Even religious people who already believe in Jesus but say that it is true that they have sin are in fact Gentiles. This is because they are not spiritually the people of Israel. In their thinking, people who become good by believing in Jesus, who do not smoke, do not drink, and do not lie, like the Pharisees, receive a passing grade in the religious world. But in the world of faith, in the world of the kingdom of God, the kingdom of heaven, if you have sin, you fail, and it is hell.

We must clearly know what God wants from us in this age. And we must lift our eyes high and look far, and go forth toward the Gentiles carrying this beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is what God is telling us. The apostle Paul was a person who lived about 1,900 years ago. Even in that age there were already many people who believed in Jesus, and it means that even among the Jews there were already many distorted

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gospels at that time besides the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostles preached, and they believed those distorted gospels. So the apostle Paul resolved not to preach the gospel of the baptism Jesus received from John, this true gospel of the water and the Spirit, to those people who believed the distorted gospels, and he strove to do so. But in fact we do not do that now. Rather, because there are aspects that make it easy to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who believe in Jesus, we are preaching it without distinction. But we must also take an interest in those who do not believe in Jesus and strive in the work of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe. God is pleased with this.

God will surely accomplish this work. We believe that He will cause there to be many works in which those who have not yet heard or understood the gospel of the water and the Spirit come to understand the gospel of the water and the Spirit and return to God.

Arrange a marriage for the Gentiles as the brides of Christ

If we open our eyes wide and look at the world, all people are outside Christ and are all Gentiles. It means that although there are many people who believe in Jesus, in reality they are all Gentiles. We have the responsibility to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles as the apostle Paul did. We must cause them to receive the remission of sins as holy saints without sin, acceptable to God, and return them to God. In this way we must act as matchmakers for Jesus Christ. We must bring many holy brides to Jesus Christ.

We are all matchmakers. We must do the work of God with the faith that we are apostles to the Gentiles. Those who have not yet received the remission of sins need to hear and learn the word of God in detail. Knowing or not knowing the truth seems like a very small difference. But the difference between a person who knows that truth and a person who does not know it is truly great. We must do the work of teaching true faith to people with patience.

Just as the apostle Paul, who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles, said *"that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16)*, let us strive in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which makes the Gentiles holy. There are still so many places to work in the whole world, and there are so many Gentiles who must hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God has helped us until now, and we believe that from now on, too, God will open the way and let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the Gentiles.

I hope that you will clearly know that, in this age, we are apostles to the Gentiles chosen by God like the apostle Paul, and pray for them. I hope that you will pray for those who have never yet come into contact with the gospel of the water and the Spirit even once.

Countless religious people strive to be saved by their own deeds, but spiritually speaking, they score zero before God. Let us not be too bound by our weak deeds, but let us do the work of preaching this beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who have never yet heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit even once. Let us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Gentiles who say that they believe in Jesus but, because they do not know the truth, are still searching. In these last days we must do this work. Let us strive in this work. So let

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us work so that, among all the people of the whole world, all who will know the truth and return will return, and all who will understand will understand, and they will meet the Lord and enter the kingdom of heaven together with us. You and I must live preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the faith that we are all apostles to the Gentiles. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The priestly duty of the gospel in offering up the Gentiles as a holy offering

< Romans 15:14–21 >

“Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another. Nevertheless, brethren, I have written more boldly to you on some points, as reminding you, because of the grace given to me by God, that I might be a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I have reason to glory in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God. For I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God, so that from Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ. And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man’s foundation, but as it is written: ‘To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand.’”

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Dear beloved saints, at the juncture where the apostle Paul is now almost finishing the long exhortation of the Book of Romans, he unfolds what the calling he received is. What kind of person is he? He is a person who has become a minister of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles. And what does he call his own ministry? He calls it *"ministering the gospel of God" (Romans 15:16)*. Today this word clearly shows how the work that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection shapes a Gentile into a holy offering acceptable to God. And at the same time, it awakens us, the born-again righteous, to where we must lift our gaze in this last age.

The priestly duty of the gospel in offering up the Gentiles as a holy offering

In verse 14, the apostle Paul first unfolds his gentle heart. *"Now I myself am confident concerning you, my brethren, that you also are full of goodness, filled with all knowledge, able also to admonish one another" (Romans 15:14)*. Dear fellow believers, it means that the apostle Paul by no means regarded the measure of the saints in Rome lightly. Then why would he have gone to the trouble of sending such a weighty letter of exhortation? The reason is embedded in his own calling.

Verses 15 and 16 compress the essence of the calling the apostle Paul received into a single line. What is the grace he received? It is the ministry of being *"a minister of Jesus Christ to the Gentiles, ministering the gospel of God, that the offering of the Gentiles might be acceptable" (Romans 15:16)*. Dear fellow believers, what work did the priests of the Old Testament era do? They laid their hands on the head of an animal,

transferred sin to the animal, and then offered that animal as an offering. The apostle Paul likens his own ministry to the work of the priests of old, but one thing is decisively different. The offering he offers is not an animal. It is the Gentiles. It means that the work of causing those Gentiles to be *"sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16)* and to become an acceptable offering is precisely the essence of the apostle Paul's ministry.

Then, dear fellow believers, how can a Gentile be *"sanctified by the Holy Spirit" (Romans 15:16)* and become an acceptable offering? Can one become holy through human effort or religious deeds? No, one cannot. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River in the year He turned thirty, Jesus had all the sin of all mankind passed on to His body once and for all, in accordance with the meaning of the passing on of sin foreshadowed by the system of the laying on of hands in the Old Testament; He paid the full price of that sin with His precious blood on the Cross; and He guaranteed eternal righteousness through His resurrection. In this way, by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rising again from death, Jesus remitted the sin of the world, which includes our sins, once and for all. The Gentile who has accepted this very work in his heart only then becomes one who has been made holy and becomes an offering acceptable to God. The apostle Paul was an apostle who became the channel for preaching that work and poured out his whole life so that the Gentiles would become those who have been made holy through the work of Jesus.

The One who made the Gentiles obedient is Christ

And when he comes to verse 17, the apostle Paul drives in one clear nail. What is it that he boasts of? It is not his own

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achievements. He boasts *"in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God" (Romans 15:17)*. Dear fellow believers, who is the subject of all the ministry of the born-again righteous? It is Jesus. People are merely His instruments.

Verse 18 makes that meaning even clearer. *"I will not dare to speak of any of those things which Christ has not accomplished through me, in word and deed, to make the Gentiles obedient—in mighty signs and wonders, by the power of the Spirit of God" (Romans 15:18–19)*. Dear fellow believers, is the one who brought about the obedience of the Gentiles the apostle Paul? No. It is Christ. It means that the apostle Paul was merely an instrument held in His hand. When we look at the Book of Acts, how full of great works of power is the ministry of the apostle Paul? It is full of such works of power that the sick were healed when merely a handkerchief was laid on them. But is what the apostle Paul is looking at that power itself? No. It is the direction in which that power is headed. Where does the direction of all the signs and wonders converge? It converges on one thing, the obedience of the Gentiles.

Is that not why verse 19 says, *"From Jerusalem and round about to Illyricum I have fully preached the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:19)*? Dear fellow believers, what is the reason that the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the gospel of the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross, was fully preached throughout that vast region? Was it human power? No. This makes it clear that it was a work that the power of Christ Himself brought about. Dear fellow believers, how does the obedience of the Gentiles come about? Can human resolution or religious devotion produce true obedience? By no means. When the work of Jesus, that is, the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, the precious blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, is engraved in the heart, the Holy Spirit comes upon

that person, and by the power of that Holy Spirit the obedience of new life naturally springs up. Christ, who made the Gentiles obedient, that is, Jesus, took the sin of the world, which includes our sins, upon Himself 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.

I will not build on another man's foundation

And when he comes to verse 20, the apostle Paul reveals one clear principle that he set for himself as he carried out his ministry all his life. *"I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20)*. Dear fellow believers, what does this mean? It means that he did not go to places where the name of Christ was already being called on, but turned his steps to places that had never once heard His name. This principle shows the essence of the apostle Paul's calling in a single line. What kind of apostle was he? He was an apostle who received the ministry of going into regions where no false gospel or incomplete gospel had taken root and firmly establishing there, from the very beginning, the whole of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the gospel of the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross.

Dear fellow believers, even in the apostle Paul's time, a distorted gospel that emphasized only the blood of the a distorted gospel that added circumcision and the law had already taken root in many places. What would happen if one preached in such places the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that is, the true gospel in which the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River, the precious blood of the Cross, and the

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resurrection are joined in one flow? An attempt would immediately arise to absorb it into their own religious system. The apostle Paul did not pour out his time in such places. Rather, I believe he turned his steps to regions that had never once heard, and poured out his whole life in the work of firmly laying the foundation of the true gospel from the very beginning.

And when he comes to verse 21, he concludes the basis of that calling with the word of the Book of Isaiah. *"To whom He was not announced, they shall see; And those who have not heard shall understand" (Romans 15:21)*. Dear fellow believers, it means that the Old Testament promise that the gospel of the water and the Spirit would reach those who had never once heard the news of the work of Jesus was being fulfilled just as it was through the lifelong ministry of the apostle Paul. Originally, Isaiah chapter 52 is a prophecy concerning the suffering and glory of the Messiah, but it also contains the calling of the apostles who would preach the work of that Messiah. The apostle Paul was firmly engraving in his heart that he himself was the very one standing in one flow of that prophecy.

We too must lift our gaze toward those who have not heard

Dear beloved saints, then does this calling of the apostle Paul simply end as the story of an apostle of long ago? No, it does not. It continues with the same weight for us, the born-again righteous who live in the last age. Dear fellow believers, how many Gentiles are there in this world today who have never once heard of the work of Jesus? They are still spread out vastly. There is the Islamic world, there is the Buddhist world, there are regions where a form of Christianity mixed with superstition has

taken root, and there are also regions where only a distorted gospel that emphasizes only the blood of the Cross has taken root. Those very places are the regions that we, the born-again righteous, must lift our gaze to look upon.

Dear fellow believers, just as the apostle Paul poured out his whole life in those regions, I believe that we, the born-again righteous, must also become those who join together in the ministry of letting flow into those regions the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we originally received, that is, the gospel of the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross. What kind of people were we originally? Were we not Gentiles who had never once heard this gospel? But because someone preached this true gospel to us, have we not today become those who have been made holy and become acceptable to God? The news we heard at that time was precisely that Jesus had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross because of that sin, rose again from death, and remitted all our sins.

The holy flow that those who have received let flow on

Dear fellow believers, the truth that this word, in which the apostle Paul unfolds his calling, conveys to us is clear. The calling that the apostle Paul received was the priestly duty of the gospel of offering the Gentiles to God as an offering sanctified by the Holy Spirit. And the One who accomplished that work was not a man but Christ. The One who made the Gentiles obedient was also Christ, and the power that caused the gospel

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of the water and the Spirit to be fully preached throughout that vast region was also the power of Christ.

Dear fellow believers, how does a Gentile become holy? He does not become holy through his own religious efforts. When the work in which Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to His body once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, completely bore the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and guaranteed eternal righteousness through His resurrection is engraved in the heart, the Holy Spirit comes upon that person, and only then does that person become a holy offering. We are precisely the people who have been made holy in that way. So we too, boasting not in our own boasting but in Christ Jesus in the things which pertain to God, must lift our gaze toward the souls who have never yet heard this gospel of the water and the Spirit even once. I pray in the name of the Lord that you will all become such blessed born-again righteous people, who live offering yourselves to that holy flow of letting the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we have received flow on to those who have not heard it. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The church that joyfully shares the love it has received

< Romans 15:22–29 >

“For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ.”

The long-awaited meeting and the next step of the gospel

For many years Paul wished to meet the brothers in Rome, but that way was blocked many times. For him, who had been doing the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit in other places, visiting the church in Rome was not a trip made only for his personal pleasure. Because he wanted to have fellowship with the brothers and then go on to Spain to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that meeting was also connected with his next ministry. When we look together at the visit Paul hoped for and the service he first had to carry out, we can see how the people who have received the gospel of the water and the Spirit are connected with one another.

Paul wanted to meet the brothers in Rome and share his heart with them. *"For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while" (Romans 15:24)*. He did not say that he would only receive help from the brothers and then leave right away; rather, he said that he wanted to have fellowship with them first. This is because when people who have received the same salvation share the word and their hearts, they gain strength from one another. The Lord's workers, too, are not people so strong that they carry out every task alone; they need the fellowship and support of the brothers.

The words expressing his hope to be sent on his way by them carry the meaning that the church in Rome could take part in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the days ahead. Even if not every brother can walk the same path as Paul in person, they cannot regard that ministry as something unrelated to themselves. When one person goes and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, those who pray for him and supply what he needs also take part in the same work. Since each other's labors are connected in this way, when we think about the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must not look only at the work done before our own eyes.

Having now finished the ministry he had carried out in that region, Paul looked toward places farther ahead. This is because,

while enjoying that grace together in the places where he had already preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he was thinking of the souls who had not yet heard it. In this world there are still many people who have never heard the news of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That news is that Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and then rose again from death. We, too, who have heard and believed this news and received the remission of sins, must not enjoy that joy only by ourselves and close our hearts. When we seek to convey that joy to others as well, fellowship goes beyond talking about each other's circumstances and becomes a time of thinking together about the Lord's work.

Look after the poor brothers first

However, Paul did not say that he would go to Rome right away. *"But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem" (Romans 15:25–26).* The heart to go farther to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the heart to serve the brothers who were in difficulty at that time were both present in him. If anyone says that he is doing the Lord's work but pays no attention to the lives of those who already believe in the same Lord, that heart of service cannot be complete.

The church in Jerusalem was in the midst of persecution and tribulation. Since there were even people who were arrested and killed for believing in Jesus, it was hard even to make a living, and so there were poor brothers among them. The believers in Macedonia and Achaia gathered material goods for their needs,

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and Paul was entrusted with the work of delivering them. Not only the labor of standing at the front of the ministry and preaching the word, but also the labor of meeting the needs of the brothers was work entrusted to Paul. If someone is suffering because he cannot obtain what he needs right away, we must not stop at feeling sorry in our hearts but must find a way to actually help.

Here we also see service in which the church looks after others together. It was not merely a gift given because someone was close to one particular person; rather, the believers gathered their hearts and helped a church in difficulty. We, too, can look into the circumstances of the brothers together and discuss what kind of help is needed. When the needed material goods are prepared, we must fulfill our responsibility to the end so that they are properly delivered to the people who need them. This is because it is more important that the brother actually benefits than that we feel self-satisfied for having given help.

In difficult times, if I think only of my own circumstances, my heart easily becomes narrow. However, a person who has the Holy Spirit cannot live only for himself. The Holy Spirit dwells in the person who has received the remission of sins by believing that Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and then rose again from death. That Holy Spirit makes such a person think also about how other brothers are living. Even if I do not have the strength to solve every problem, I can be of one mind with the church, find what I can do to help, and ask God for what is needed. The harder the world becomes, the wider the concerns of our prayers grow as we think of the people we should look after. A person who used to ask only for what he needed for his own life comes to make supplication

together for the brothers and also for the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The joyful sharing of those who have received the gospel

Paul says that this help was given joyfully, and at the same time he explains that it was the due service of debtors. *"It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things" (Romans 15:27)*. Before the Gentiles heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit and were saved, there was the church that had come before them, which preached and served that gospel of the water and the Spirit even in the midst of persecution. Now that those people were going through hardship, serving them with the material things they needed was fitting for the grace that had been received.

That spiritual grace is the remission of sins, which cannot be obtained with money. The sin of the world includes all the sins we commit as we live, and Jesus received baptism from John and had all those sins transferred to Him once and for all. Because of that sin, the Lord shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment in our place, and died; and on the third day He rose again from death, remitted our sins, and completed salvation. Because there were those who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to us, we too heard and believed this fact and came to stand before God as righteous people. What we have received is eternal salvation, far greater than help that makes our circumstances a little better.

Therefore, we must not take the word about being debtors to mean that we must repay the price of salvation with material

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things. Since Jesus has already paid the full price of sin on the Cross, giving material things to the church does not make up some remaining price. Because the grace we received freely is precious, we do not turn away from the hardship of the brother who brought that grace to us, and we share what we have so that he may obtain the help he needs. The statement that they did it gladly and the statement that it is their duty do not contradict each other. When we know the love we have received, the labor of serving them becomes not an obligation forced upon us but something we carry out with thanksgiving.

Also, no one can count on receiving more wealth because he has shared material things with them. The purpose of helping a brother lies not in my becoming richer but in meeting his needs according to the love received from the Lord. While we look into one another's circumstances and discuss together what to undertake, we must not close even our hearts because we have few material goods. If we ask the Lord for the strength to help and add our labors to one another's, we can take part even in service that we could not carry out alone.

Fellowship in which we share the blessing of Christ together

Paul reveals his plan, saying, *"Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain" (Romans 15:28)*. He intended to move on to his next path only after fulfilling his responsibility to the point of surely delivering the collected help to the brothers in Jerusalem. The material goods he was going to deliver were the fruit of the brothers who had received the gospel of the water and the Spirit and responded with love. Only when that love was

actually delivered could the hearts of the church that helped and the church that received the help be joined together.

And when he visited Rome, too, Paul was not going with an empty heart. *"But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29)*. He looked forward to sharing the Lord's word with the brothers and rejoicing together in the grace of salvation. That grace is the remission of sins that Jesus gave by having our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and paying the price of that sin, and rising again from death. It would not be a meeting in which the church in Rome only gave one-sidedly, but a meeting in which they would serve one another and gain strength within this grace received from the Lord. In this way, fellowship in Christ does not end with giving and receiving material things but leads on to believing and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although the long-awaited meeting seemed to be put off again, there were brothers on Paul's path whom he had to look after. He carried out both the work of serving the poor brothers in Jerusalem and the work of seeking to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in Spain within the love of the same Lord. Let us, too, think together of the brothers we want to meet, the brothers who need help now, and the souls who have not yet heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Giving thanks for the salvation that Jesus first gave us through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, let us become a church that joyfully shares what is needed, sends one another out, and carries on the Lord's work. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Let us preach the gospel to the whole world with the fullness of the blessing of Christ

< Romans 15:22–33 >

"For this reason I also have been much hindered from coming to you. But now no longer having a place in these parts, and having a great desire these many years to come to you, whenever I journey to Spain, I shall come to you. For I hope to see you on my journey, and to be helped on my way there by you, if first I may enjoy your company for a while. But now I am going to Jerusalem to minister to the saints. For it pleased those from Macedonia and Achaia to make a certain contribution for the poor among the saints who are in Jerusalem. It pleased them indeed, and they are their debtors. For if the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things. Therefore, when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit, I shall go by way of you to Spain. But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ. Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in

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Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen."

Dear beloved saints, as the apostle Paul is now nearly finishing his long epistle, the Book of Romans, he lays out where he intends to direct his steps from now on. He would go to Jerusalem, pass through Rome, and finally go as far as Spain. But a very deep truth is contained in this story of his steps. It is that not every path of the born-again righteous flows according to their own will, and that what we must take with us wherever we go is not something of our own but *"the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29)*. Today's word clearly shows us how we must let all the abundance that has flowed from the work Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection flow out to the whole world.

The way that was blocked many times and the vision toward Spain

The apostle Paul says this in verse 22: *"I also have been much hindered from coming to you" (Romans 15:22)*. Dear fellow believers, the single phrase "*much hindered" (Romans 15:22)* contains a deep truth that runs through the apostle Paul's entire ministry. He had long had a desire to go to the saints in Rome. But that way had been blocked several times. In Acts chapter 16, there is a record that he tried to preach the word in Asia, but the Holy Spirit stopped him, and that he tried to go to

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Bithynia, but the Spirit of Jesus did not permit him. Dear fellow believers, does every path of the born-again righteous flow according to their own plans? No, it does not. God Himself opens the way, and God Himself also blocks the way.

So in verses 23 and 24, the apostle Paul sketches the direction of his ministry. *"Now no longer having a place in these parts" (Romans 15:23).* Dear fellow believers, what does this mean? It means that in the eastern region where he had been ministering, that is, from Jerusalem to Illyricum, the gospel of the water and the Spirit had already been fully preached everywhere. So where does he now turn his eyes? He turns them to the west. Dear fellow believers, where is this place called Spain? It is the Spain of today. At that time it was a vast territory at the farthest western end of the Roman Empire, an unknown land that the news about the work of Jesus had never once reached. Why would the apostle Paul have sought to direct his steps to that vast territory? It was because his calling was the work of preaching the true gospel, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to those who had never once heard it. What the apostle Paul intended to take to that unknown land was that very news: that Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

The fellowship of one family in which spiritual things and material things are exchanged

But the apostle Paul could not go straight to Rome and Spain; so where does he turn his steps first? He turns them to Jerusalem. The reason is clearly stated in verse 25: *"I am going to*

Jerusalem to minister to the saints" (Romans 15:25). Dear fellow believers, what kind of work was this? It was the ministry in which the apostle Paul personally carried in his own hands the offering that the Gentile believers of Macedonia and Achaia had joyfully collected for the poor Jewish saints in Jerusalem. Dear fellow believers, what do people do who have accepted in their hearts that they have become one family? They feel a brother's difficulty as if it were their own and naturally let what they have flow out.

And in verse 26, he clearly reveals in a single expression how that offering was gathered: *"It pleased" (Romans 15:26)*. Dear fellow believers, was it gathered by force or out of obligation? No. People who had accepted in their hearts that they had become one family in Jesus voluntarily poured it out with joyful hearts. So verse 27 compresses the weight of that flow into one line: *"If the Gentiles have been partakers of their spiritual things, their duty is also to minister to them in material things" (Romans 15:27)*. Dear fellow believers, what are the *"spiritual things" (Romans 15:27)* spoken of here? They are the gospel of the water and the Spirit received in Christ, the status of eternal righteousness, the presence of the Holy Spirit, the freedom of having been released from sin, and the hope of eternal life—all of these. What kind of people were the Gentiles originally? They were people outside the promise. But through the work of Jesus, who was born among the Jews, they came to enter the place of one family. This is because Jesus had the sin of the world, including our sins, passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, received that judgment in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted all the sins even of us who were Gentiles. What would be the fitting response to those spiritual things received freely? It is letting the material things one has

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flow out to brothers in difficulty. I know that in the past as well as now, all people who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts let things flow out to one another in this way as one family.

I shall go with the fullness of the blessing of Christ

And in verse 28, the apostle Paul clearly states the order of his steps. He would first finish the ministry of the offering in Jerusalem, and then pass through Rome and go on to Spain. Does he not use the words *"when I have performed this and have sealed to them this fruit" (Romans 15:28)*? Dear fellow believers, would the apostle Paul have regarded this offering as merely a simple donation? No. It was the fruit of being born again that had grown naturally within the Gentile churches. Carrying that fruit to Jerusalem in person and confirming it as visible evidence of their having become one family was a weighty ministry for the apostle Paul.

And verse 29 is a climax of this passage. *"But I know that when I come to you, I shall come in the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29)*. Dear fellow believers, what does the apostle Paul say he will take with him when he goes to Rome? His learning? His apostolic authority? The achievements of his ministry? No. It is *"the fullness of the blessing of the gospel of Christ" (Romans 15:29)*. Then what is that fullness of the blessing? It is all the abundance that flows from the entire work that Jesus Himself accomplished once and for all. The freedom in which no sin remains in us any longer because all the sin of mankind was transferred to His body once and for all through the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River; the status in which eternal righteousness is guaranteed to us because He paid the full price of that sin with

His precious blood on the Cross; the hope in which eternal life is promised to us because the power of death was broken through the resurrection; and the righteousness, peace, and joy that the Holy Spirit pours into our hearts—all of these are precisely the content of that fullness of the blessing.

Prayer offered by striving together through the love of the Spirit

Now, at the point of bringing the main body of Romans to a close, the apostle Paul lays out one earnest request to the saints in Rome. What is the root of that request? It is contained in one line in verse 30: *"Through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit" (Romans 15:30)*. Dear fellow believers, the work that Jesus Christ Himself accomplished and the love of the Spirit poured into our hearts through that work are the very foundation on which the apostle Paul lays out the weight of his request. And when he says *"that you strive together with me in prayers" (Romans 15:30)*, the word used in the original Greek has the meaning of wrestling together and struggling together. Is the prayer of the born-again righteous merely a religious ritual? No. It is spiritual labor in which we wrestle together for the ministry and the steps of a brother.

Then what are the subjects of that prayer? In verse 31 he clearly states two. The first is to ask *"that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe" (Romans 15:31)*. Here, who are those who do not believe? They are the Jewish religious leaders who did not accept the work of Christ. The apostle Paul clearly knew that the moment he entered Jerusalem, their fierce opposition and threats would be waiting for him. The second is to ask *"that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the*

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saints" (Romans 15:31). Dear fellow believers, how does this *"love of the Spirit" (Romans 15:30)* come to dwell within us? The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have accepted in their hearts the work in which Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, completely bore the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and justified us forever. And that Holy Spirit pours the love of God into our hearts. Does not Romans chapter 5, verse 5 say so?

Desiring that the God of peace be with them

And in verse 32, the apostle Paul compresses into one line a picture he is drawing in his heart. *"That I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you" (Romans 15:32)*. Dear fellow believers, what was the standard for all the steps by which he hoped to meet the saints in Rome? Only one thing: the will of God. No matter how urgent his own plans or ministry schedule were, the single standard of the will of God was firmly established above all of them. He also says that he will *"come to you with joy" (Romans 15:32)*. Was the reason the apostle Paul never lost his joy in any circumstance throughout his life that his own situation was good? No. It was because the righteousness, peace, and joy he had received in Jesus were firmly rooted in his heart.

So verse 33 closes the main body of Romans with a one-line doxology. *"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (Romans 15:33)*. Dear fellow believers, this expression *"the God of peace" (Romans 15:33)*, which the apostle Paul often used, carries the deep meaning that God, who had originally

been in a place of enmity with us, Himself brought about reconciliation and became the God of peace for us. What kind of people were we originally? We were enemies of God. But because Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, no sin remains in us any longer; because He completely bore the price of that sin with His precious blood on the Cross, eternal righteousness has been guaranteed to us; and because He broke the power of death through the resurrection, the hope of eternal life has been prepared for us. When the peace formed through all this work is firmly engraved in our hearts, the same peace that the apostle Paul enjoyed, a peace that did not waver in any circumstance, flows into us as well.

Those who have received the fullness of the blessing let it flow out to the whole world

Dear beloved saints, the truth conveyed to us by the steps of the apostle Paul, who intended to head for Spain by way of Jerusalem and Rome, is clear. The apostle Paul clearly declared himself to be a worker of Christ Jesus for the Gentiles, entrusted all his steps to the will of God, and clearly knew that what he would take with him was not his own but the fullness of the blessing of Christ. Where do all the truths that the apostle Paul unfolded in one breath from chapter 1 to chapter 15 finally gather? They gather in one thing: the peace that comes from reconciliation with God.

Dear fellow believers, what kind of people were we originally? We were Gentiles outside the promise and enemies of God. But through the work that Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him

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through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River by the laying on of hands, shedding His precious blood and dying on the Cross, and rising again from death, we have become those who are reconciled, have become one family, and have become those who freely received that fullness of the blessing. Then what is the true foundation of all the ministry, devotion, and steps of us, the born-again righteous? It is not our own will. It is the single fact that the God of peace Himself is with us. Therefore, I pray in the name of the Lord that we, too, may all become such blessed born-again righteous people, who live offering ourselves to the holy work of letting the fullness of the blessing of Christ that we freely received flow out toward the whole world, which has still never once heard this gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

How can we help fellow workers who are far away?

< Romans 15:30–33 >

“Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me, that I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints, that I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you. Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen.”

Prayer that strives together even when we are apart

With the dangerous road to Jerusalem before him, Paul asked the brothers in Rome, whom he had not yet visited, to strive together with him in prayer. When we hear that a brother who serves the gospel of the water and the Spirit with us is leaving for a difficult place, our hearts are concerned for him; but if we cannot follow him in person and cannot provide everything he needs right away, it seems that there is nothing for us to do but wait for news. Paul made that request because even a church that was far away could actually take part in the ministry he was to carry out, and that same faith is needed in the prayers we offer today for our fellow workers.

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"Now I beg you, brethren, through the Lord Jesus Christ, and through the love of the Spirit, that you strive together with me in prayers to God for me" (Romans 15:30). Paul was an apostle who had preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit in many places, yet he needed the prayers of other brothers. This is because being used by the Lord does not mean that one can solve every difficulty alone. Since he could not guarantee his ministry by his own ability, he had to ask God, and he also urged those who believed in the same Lord to ask together with him.

That exhortation was made through our Lord Jesus Christ and through the love of the Spirit. The love that the Holy Spirit gives does not stop at thinking only of one's own circumstances; it makes us understand others and care for them. Even if it is not a difficulty I am facing right now, the work of a fellow worker comes into my heart, and I come to want to help him so that he can serve the Lord. Since prayer is the act of making known that person's needs to God with such love, we must not stop at briefly remembering his name but must consider what to ask for.

Paul and the brothers who pray for him have the love of salvation received from the same Lord. When Jesus received baptism from John, He had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our entire lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all. He then shed His blood on the Cross, received in our place the judgment for the sin that had been passed on to Him, and died, and by rising again from death He saved us from all sins. Paul and we, who have received this salvation, can make known the needs of our fellow workers to the same God the Father. Because we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has made us God's people, we do not treat even Paul's difficulty as someone else's affair but ask for help together.

Because the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, which have received the remission of sins, concern for other souls is also

given to us. If, having received that heart, we turn away, thinking, "I do not work directly, so it has nothing to do with me," we fail to follow the love that the Lord has given us. Let us think about what help we can give, and let us ask God even for what we cannot fill with our own strength. We must go beyond sending out a minister and asking only about the results, and rely on the Lord together so that he can preach the word.

Ask together for protection and for the fruit of service

Paul clearly stated two things to pray for. *"That I may be delivered from those in Judea who do not believe, and that my service for Jerusalem may be acceptable to the saints" (Romans 15:31)*. First, he asked them to pray that he would be rescued from those who sought to harm him. Since the hostility of people who did not obey the gospel of the water and the Spirit lay before Paul as he went to Jerusalem, he did not regard that journey as an ordinary visit. He was not bold because he did not know the danger; rather, he relied on God while knowing those difficulties.

Here, the request that he be delivered does not mean that Paul had to obtain the remission of sins again. It was a request that he himself, who was preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, be protected from the hands of his adversaries. Since Jesus had not only Paul's sins but also all the sins of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and then rose again from death, Paul was a person who had already received the remission of sins by believing this. Even to people who have been saved in this way, physical dangers and difficulties in ministry come, so they need God's help. We, too,

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must not say that since a worker has faith, he does not need to think about such things as danger; rather, we must know the circumstances he faces and ask for his protection. It is bringing requests to God together so that God, who sent him, will take care of that ministry.

The other was a prayer that the believers in Jerusalem would regard Paul's service as acceptable. Paul was taking with him the help that had been collected for the poor brothers. Even though he had the good intention of delivering what was needed, he could not guarantee by his own strength that it would actually be received as beneficial by the brothers. So he did not ask only for his own safety, but asked that the love of the church that was helping would be conveyed well to the church that was receiving the help. It is the faith that God must be with us even in the work of helping people.

In the same way, our prayers, too, must go as far as the purpose of the service. In addition to the worker coming back safely, we can ask that souls will hear and believe the word he has preached, and that the help prepared will reach the brothers who need it and become a strength to them. We must ask that those who hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit will not miss the truth because of their own thoughts, and we must also ask together that those who serve will not grow weary or put only their own will first. When we think not only about the outward appearance of the ministry but also about who must gain what benefit through that work, the content of our prayers also becomes specific.

The exhortation to strive together in prayer does not mean that we move God by the number of people praying; rather, it means that brothers who rely on the same Lord embrace the needs of one ministry as their own affair. That Lord is Jesus, who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He

received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death. Because our strength is lacking, we rely on that Lord and come to ask much of God, and as we ask in this way, the measure of our prayer grows and our faith also grows. When we learn of the circumstances, we pray; when we hear of a new difficulty, we bring that matter to God again; and when we hear the news that the Lord has opened the way, we give thanks together. When we keep being of one mind in this way, we can see that the minister is not someone who works alone in isolation but a fellow worker who serves the Lord together with the church.

The joy and peace of meeting within the Lord's will

Paul's request for prayer did not end with escaping from danger. *"That I may come to you with joy by the will of God, and may be refreshed together with you" (Romans 15:32)*. He wanted to go to the brothers in Rome and rest together with them after finishing his ministry, but he asked that even that meeting would take place according to the will of God. While telling God of his desire to visit, he left it to the Lord's guidance when and by what way he would go. It is a prayer that makes us think of both the hopes we hold and the will of the Lord together.

Therefore, we cannot judge that God has heard us only if all our plans are fulfilled on the date we set as we prayed. Paul, too, did not put forward the fulfillment of his own schedule as the only condition, but asked that he might follow the will of God. When the way opens slowly, we must look into what the Lord is now having us carry out and ask for help again. Going out into ministry by believing in the Lord and waiting for His guidance

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do not contradict each other. With the faith that the Lord, who is greater than our plans, leads the work, we can pray together.

In the rest Paul desired, there was the joy of meeting the brothers. Fellowship in which a fellow worker who has returned after carrying out hard work shares the grace of salvation together with others and lets his heart rest is a precious service that the church can give. We must not ask only what work he accomplished and how much, but must also listen to the difficulties he went through and give thanks to the Lord together. A church that has prayed and been of one mind can value not only the fruit of the ministry but also the brother who carried out that labor. The prayers offered while he is away lead to fellowship after he returns.

"Now the God of peace be with you all. Amen" (Romans 15:33). Paul did not wish help to come only to himself, but asked that God would be with all the brothers in Rome. This is because both those who send and those who go live by relying on the same God. Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and then, by rising again from death, remitted all those sins. We, who have been reconciled to God through this remission of sins, can make Him our refuge even in the midst of difficulties and carry on the Lord's work. Paul wished that the brothers who join in prayer for him would also stand together in that peace.

Even a church that is far away has work to do for a fellow worker who has left for a difficult place. Let us ask together for his safety and for the fruit of the service entrusted to him, and let us make supplication that we may meet again and rest within the Lord's will. If we hold that work in our hearts and pray where we are, we can strive together in the faith that relies on the Lord even though we are apart. Let us make the time of waiting for

news of our fellow worker a time of bringing him before God. And believing in the God of peace who is with all of us, let us together carry out the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus removed our sins through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. ✉

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CHAPTER

16

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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

Receive the precious sister in the Lord

< Romans 16:1–2 >

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also.”

A worker who has become our sister in the Lord

When we welcome a worker who has come to the church, our hearts are sometimes moved first by how close we have been to that person. We may readily make room for someone familiar, yet put off even asking a person we are meeting for the first time what he needs. But Paul, introducing Phoebe to the brothers in Rome, exhorted them to receive her in the Lord. He is saying that they must open their hearts not because they had spent a long time living together, but because she is a member of the family who belongs to the same Lord. If we follow this exhortation, our standard for welcoming workers must also change.

“I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea” (Romans 16:1). Paul called Phoebe a worker of the church in Cenchrea and at the same time called her our sister. He made known both the labor she was doing and

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what kind of person she was in the Lord. Paul wanted the brothers in Rome not to treat Phoebe as a visitor who had nothing to do with them, but to accept her as a person of the same faith. This is because even a worker who had been serving in another church is a precious member of the family who does the Lord's work together with us.

Calling her our sister makes us think of the relationship formed within the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus saved us, who could not stand before God because of sin, and made us God's people. Jesus received baptism from John and thereby took upon Himself, once and for all, all the sins of the world, which include the sins of our whole lifetime; then He shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and died. Because He remitted our sins by rising again from death, we who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit have become righteous by the same grace. We call those who believe in this salvation together sisters and brothers; so just because we are meeting someone for the first time does not mean that there is no relationship the Lord has formed between us.

The faith that we have received the same remission of sins must also be the foundation of the heart with which we treat one another. We cannot treat lightly a person whom the Lord has regarded as precious just because he is unfamiliar to me. Whatever work he has been entrusted with, if he is a worker laboring for the Lord, we must recognize and respect his service. Knowing that anyone who lives for the Lord is a precious person is something that happens when there is faith in our hearts. Since someone I already know has commended him, it means not stopping at merely being polite, but acknowledging in my heart that he too is a person who has received the same salvation as I have and who serves the Lord.

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Only when we have such a heart can we stay together with a worker even when his shortcomings become visible. Since not all the weaknesses of character and life disappear after we are saved, our hearts easily close if we look only at the ways in which we differ from one another. But if we believe the fact that he is a person who has received the remission of sins and belongs to God, we can help with what he lacks and serve together. We should correct what is wrong with the word, yet we must not push the person himself away, but help him rely, together with us, on the salvation the Lord has given.

Open the door of your heart wide and receive her

Paul also clearly tells them with what kind of heart they should welcome Phoebe. *"That you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints" (Romans 16:2)*. To receive her in the Lord does not refer merely to the act of opening the door and greeting her. She is a person who has received the remission of sins through the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and she is a worker of the Lord who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. It means that, knowing this, they should honor her, open the door of their hearts wide to receive her, and unite their hearts with hers. If they kept her at a distance in their hearts while speaking only polite words outwardly, it could not be said that they were fully receiving her as Paul asked.

Proper courtesy must contain a heart that values the other person as precious. It means listening to the circumstances of the worker who has come, making room for fellowship, and being of one mind so that the worker can do the Lord's work at ease among us. If we put our effort only into showing how much we

have prepared, we may miss what that person actually needs. On the other hand, even if we have not been able to prepare anything great, if we have a heart that listens carefully to what that person says and gladly helps, we can convey the warmth of welcoming that person as a member of the same family.

Also, we must not treat others carelessly on the grounds that we belong to the same Lord. If we think of someone as close family, we may entrust work to him without any explanation or take his labor for granted; but closeness in the Lord is a reason to value one another all the more. Just because a worker has come to serve us, we cannot regard him as someone to be moved around for our convenience. When we understand the work he has to undertake and also take on together the parts we can help with, the fellowship of receiving him from the heart takes place.

Receiving someone in the Lord also clearly includes the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe together. We value one another as precious because we together believe in the remission of sins that Jesus has given and live for that truth. That remission of sins is what Jesus accomplished by having our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shedding His blood on the Cross and receiving that judgment in our place, and then rising again from death. If becoming close to people becomes the goal and we even mix in a different gospel, we lose the meaning of becoming one in the Lord. We must share the same word of salvation and confirm one another's hearts, comfort one another with that word, and treasure and keep the relationship in which we serve together.

Such receiving is not something that merely makes the atmosphere pleasant for the one day of the visit. It actually shows the fact that the Church of God and its workers can trust one another and have fellowship. When the person who has come learns that here too there are members of the family of the

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same Lord, he can get out of the feeling of being alone and think about the Lord's work together with them. The church that receives him also hears through that worker how the brothers in other places serve the Lord, and comes to know the matters it should look after and pray for together with them.

Receiving someone extends even to helping with what is needed

But receiving does not end with words of acknowledgment from the heart. Paul asked for practical help, saying, *"Assist her in whatever business she has need of you" (Romans 16:2)*. It means that rather than first deciding what we want to give, we must look into what the worker needs. If a worker is having difficulty in the Lord's work because he cannot obtain what he needs, and we merely keep repeating that we are glad to see him, it is hard to say that we have shared our hearts with that worker in his labor.

During his stay, he may need help with what is necessary for daily living, or he may need our cooperation in carrying on the work he has been entrusted with. We must first listen to his circumstances and find the help we can give. Even if it is something I cannot do right away, I can discuss it with the church and connect him with the person he needs, and for the part we lack the strength to resolve, we can ask God together. The exhortation to help in whatever is needed keeps us from closing our hearts by putting forward only our own circumstances before we have even heard his needs.

Paul made clear the reason for that request, saying, *"For indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also" (Romans 16:2)*. Phoebe was a worker who had looked after and

helped not only Paul but many people. Paul went about, here today and there tomorrow, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death. Since even Paul needed protection and help, that work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not something he accomplished by himself alone. Now, if Phoebe, who had been giving help, had something she needed, it was fitting for the other brothers to look after her.

However, this does not mean that they should put a price on how much she had helped and return only that much. Paul made known for whom Phoebe had labored, so that the brothers in Rome would also value her labor as precious. When we together meet the needs of a person who serves the same Lord, one person's service leads on to another person's service. We too, while being thankful when we receive help, must think of another worker's circumstances as our own matter when he asks for help.

Even though many churches are far apart, the fact that they are one family in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not change. No matter where a worker who has been serving the Lord comes from, if he is a person who believes in the same salvation as we do, we must accept him from the heart and look together into what he needs. We must not divide the church that gives help and the worker who receives it into high and low positions, but must have the faith that we work together by the grace we have received from the Lord. Then even the labor of helping becomes not a right to dominate the other person, but the joy of serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit together.

When we receive an unfamiliar worker, the standard that should move our hearts is not how familiar that person is, but

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whether that person too has received the remission of sins through the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and is our sister or brother who belongs to the Lord. Let us first believe that fact and receive that person. Let us value that person's labor as precious, have fellowship in the word, ask what is needed, and actually help. It is not that the person becomes one family only after we wait until he becomes familiar to us; rather, it is showing through receiving and helping the relationship that the Lord has already formed. The receiving that Paul asked for when he commended Phoebe must take place just the same among us today. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Since we have become one family in the Lord, value the fellow workers and greet one another

< Romans 16:1–16 >

"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. Greet Mary, who labored much for us. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the

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beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you."

Dear beloved saints, after the apostle Paul has fully unfolded the deep, deep truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit from Romans chapter 1 through chapter 15, what does he do when he comes to the last chapter, chapter 16? He calls each person by name, one by one, and tells the saints to greet them. At a glance, it looks like just a list of greetings. Dear fellow believers, would this list, however, be merely a string of greetings? No, it would not. The image of the new family produced by the work that Jesus Himself accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection is contained, just as it is, on this one list like a single picture. Today's word clearly shows how we, who have become one family through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must value those fellow workers and receive one another.

I commend Phoebe, a worker of the church in Cenchrea

The apostle Paul commends a sister at the beginning of chapter 16. *"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea" (Romans 16:1)*. Dear fellow believers, this sister named Phoebe appears at the very top of the

list. Cenchrea was the outer port city of Corinth, and it seems that around the time the apostle Paul was writing this Book of Romans in Corinth, this very Phoebe personally carried this epistle all the way to Rome. Here, the Greek word translated *"servant"* is diakonos, which means one who serves, one who renders service. And the Greek word translated *"helper"* is prostatis, a very weighty word meaning a sponsor or a supporter.

Dear fellow believers, what does the apostle Paul say about this sister? He says, *"She has been a helper of many and of myself also" (Romans 16:2)*. As the apostle Paul went about preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, here today and there tomorrow, this sister named Phoebe truly became a helper to him and helped him with what he needed. So he is saying that when she goes to Rome, they should receive her with fitting courtesy, help her with what she needs, and open their hearts wide to receive her. Dear fellow believers, within the work of Jesus, do differences of gender, social status, or origin determine the weight of one's work? No, they do not. In the year He turned thirty, Jesus had all the sin of mankind passed on to His body once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, according to the meaning of the transfer of sin that the Old Testament system of the laying on of hands foreshadowed; He paid the full price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross; and He rose again from death and justified us forever. That work gave people who had been pushed to the margins of religion a new identity as a gift. What does Galatians 3:28 say? Does it not say, *"There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Galatians 3:28)*? That very truth is firmly engraved on the name of one sister, Phoebe.

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Priscilla and Aquila, fellow workers who risked their lives

Who is the second person the apostle Paul calls? It is the couple Priscilla and Aquila. *"Who risked their own necks for my life" (Romans 16:4)*. Dear fellow believers, this couple originally lived in Rome, but they were expelled by the edict of Emperor Claudius and moved to Corinth. There they met the apostle Paul, who did the same work of tentmaking, and entered the path of working together with him. After that, they went to Ephesus with the apostle Paul and there taught the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished, and now they had returned to Rome again and formed a house church.

Dear fellow believers, it says that this couple risked their own necks for the life of the apostle Paul. And the apostle Paul adds one more word: *"To whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Romans 16:4)*. Dear fellow believers, did the devotion of one couple stop at protecting the life of one apostle? No, it did not. It led to the thanksgiving of all the churches that the gospel of the water and the Spirit, flowing through Paul, reached. Then, dear fellow believers, how could Priscilla and Aquila lay down even their own lives? Is love that lays down one's life for others produced by man's religious devotion? No, it is not. When the work in which Jesus Himself laid down for us everything He had once and for all—that is, His glory, His throne, and even His life—is engraved on our hearts, the Holy Spirit pours that very love into us just as it is. Is that not what Romans 5:5 says? The love with which Jesus took upon Himself, once and for all, the sin of the world, which includes our sins, through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross to pay the price of that sin for us, and rose again from death to remit all our sins—that love has

been poured into the hearts of us who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Epaenetus, who is named next, is recorded as *"the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ" (Romans 16:5)*. The fact that one person's being born again is remembered as the first fruits of an entire region shows how weighty the change of each and every person is to Jesus.

Various fellow workers who have become one family in Jesus

Next, the apostle Paul keeps each person in his heart and calls out their names. Mary is called a sister *"who labored much for us" (Romans 16:6)*. Dear fellow believers, is labor in Jesus meant to build up one's own reputation? No. It flows out as devotion for brothers and sisters. And Andronicus and Junia were relatives of the apostle Paul who had also once been imprisoned together with him, and the apostle Paul speaks of them as those *"who also were in Christ before me" (Romans 16:7)*. Dear fellow believers, did the apostle Paul base his apostleship on his being the first one born again? The point is that he did not.

And dear fellow believers, these names—Amplias, Urbanus, and Stachys—were names often used for slaves in Roman society at that time. Yet what does the apostle Paul call them? He calls them brothers *"my beloved in the Lord" (Romans 16:8)* and *"our fellow worker in Christ" (Romans 16:9)*. Is this not a passage that clearly shows that the work of Jesus tore down that wall of social status once and for all? Dear fellow believers, in verses 10 and 11, however, even more astonishing names appear. Those of the household of Aristobulus appear to be people

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belonging to the family of Aristobulus, who is known to be a grandson of Herod the Great, and the name Herodion is also a name deeply connected with the family of Herod. Dear fellow believers, this means that even from the household of that very family of Herod, which had so persecuted Jesus, born-again brothers and sisters came forth. What does this show? It clearly shows the truth that the work of Jesus pierces through and enters the darkness of any family whatsoever.

And Tryphena and Tryphosa of verse 12 appear to be twin sisters, judging from the similarity of their names, and both are called sisters *"who have labored in the Lord" (Romans 16:12)*. Persis is a name indicating someone of Persian origin, and she is recorded as *"the beloved Persis, who labored much" (Romans 16:12)*. Rufus in verse 13 appears to be one of the two sons of Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross of Jesus in His place in Mark chapter 15. And the apostle Paul refers to that mother as *"his mother and mine" (Romans 16:13)*. Dear fellow believers, how deeply moving an expression this is! Dear fellow believers, what would the essence of this list be? Jews and Gentiles, free people and slaves, men and women, people from prestigious families and people from the margins—all are called side by side on this one list. Because of the work Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection—that is, because of the laying on of hands at the Jordan, the precious blood of the Cross, and the resurrection—all the former walls have collapsed, and all people have become one family with the one identity expressed by the words *"in the Lord"* and *"in Christ."*

Since we have become one family in the Lord,
value the fellow workers and greet one another

Greet one another with a holy kiss

And verses 14 and 15 depict two other groups, each a house church. The five brothers of verse 14 and *"the brethren who are with them" (Romans 16:14)* seem to have been one gathering that met in one house, and the five people of verse 15 and *"all the saints who are with them" (Romans 16:15)* seem to refer to another house church. Dear fellow believers, within that huge city of Rome, born-again righteous people abiding in Jesus were scattered among several homes and gathering there. And the apostle Paul kept every one of those small gatherings in his heart and laid out his greetings line by line.

And in verse 16 the apostle Paul clearly states in one line how brothers and sisters abiding in Jesus should greet one another. *"Greet one another with a holy kiss" (Romans 16:16)*. Dear fellow believers, this holy kiss was the universal custom of greeting in the early church. It was a greeting by which people who had become one family through the work of Jesus, keeping no distance between one another, expressed with their bodies the deep intimacy of one family. Dear fellow believers, it is decisive that the apostle Paul attached the word *"holy"* to this greeting. He made it clear that it was not merely a social formality, but a greeting between members of a holy family built upon the work of Jesus. Because Jesus had the sin of the world 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 rose again from death, brothers and sisters who believe in that gospel of the water and the Spirit can greet one another as one holy family.

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To greet means to open the door of your heart and receive one another

Dear beloved saints, then what would this word *"greet"* mean? Would it mean simply asking after someone once and leaving it at that? No, it would not. To greet means to unite. Just as one naturally sides with one's own, it means to accept him, show him respect, and in every way receive and embrace him in the heart. It means to know that he is truly a worker, that he is a saint, and that he is one of God's people, and to open the door of your heart wide to receive him. And it means to supply what he needs and to cherish one another. The whole of chapter 16 is like that. Chapter 16 is the chapter of greetings.

Dear fellow believers, whom did the apostle Paul tell them to greet? He told them to greet those who were truly his fellow workers, who believed together in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who had become workers, and who lived for the Lord's kingdom. Every time he called each person, he gave all the reasons: he is the firstfruits of Achaia; they are in Christ before me; she labored much in the Lord; they risked their necks for me. In this way he gave every reason for greeting them.

Dear fellow believers, what kind of people were we originally? Whether Jews or Gentiles, free people or slaves, from prestigious families or from the margins, were we not all scattered sinners? But through the work in which Jesus took all our sins upon Himself once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, fully bore the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and made us righteous forever through His resurrection, we have become one family. So we too must live by opening the door of our hearts wide to receive the fellow workers who abide together in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, valuing them, supplying what

they need, and cherishing and serving one another. I pray in the name of the Lord that you may all become such blessed born-again righteous people, who know that you have thus become one family in the Lord, greet one another in holiness, and live as one body. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Stand firm and greet one another

< Romans 16:1–27 >

"I commend to you Phoebe our sister, who is a servant of the church in Cenchrea, that you may receive her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever business she has need of you; for indeed she has been a helper of many and of myself also. Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. Greet Mary, who labored much for us. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who

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are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you. Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

Greeting someone means recognizing that person's faith

It is no exaggeration to say that Romans chapter 16 is a chapter of greetings. The apostle Paul says, "*Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the*

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churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. Greet Mary, who labored much for us. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me" (Romans 16:3–7). Speaking in this way, he keeps on telling them to greet, to greet, all the way to verse 16.

In this chapter 16, the last chapter of the Book of Romans, the apostle Paul is making a request as he closes his epistle. The apostle Paul had carried out his pastoral ministry as much as he could, and so he is asking the saints in Rome, and also the ministers and saints of all the churches to which he had preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to greet one another.

That the apostle Paul says to greet so-and-so, to greet so-and-so who did such-and-such work, means that the church in question was a church the apostle Paul recognized. It means that it was truly a church toward which the apostle Paul had no reservations at all in the Lord, in the spiritual realm, a church he had no reservations at all about greeting and having fellowship with.

Because the apostle Paul preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, raised up as ministers those among the people who had received this gospel of the water and the Spirit and been saved who would live for the Lord and who had gifts, and then went to other regions and preached the gospel, many of the people he tells them to greet here are ministers whom the apostle Paul raised up after he met the Lord. There are deacons among them too, but whatever their offices were, they are people who truly believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and labored for the Lord. And as God's people, and also as God's servants, these people were in no way lacking.

So the apostle Paul told them to greet those among the saints and among God's servants who had truly received the remission of sins in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and who had the Holy Spirit. He told them to have fellowship with one another. As we see from the way the apostle Paul told them to greet here, the saints cannot greet just anyone. They cannot have fellowship with just anyone. The apostle Paul, too, was one who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believed in God, but he said, *"And so I have made it my aim to preach the gospel, not where Christ was named, lest I should build on another man's foundation" (Romans 15:20)*.

In the apostle Paul's heart there were churches, ministers, and saints whom he would greet and have fellowship with; he did not tell them to greet just anyone. If that were the case, he could simply have told them to greet all the churches; but especially here in chapter 16, this chapter of greetings, he told them to greet one another, to have fellowship with one another and share, to confirm the same faith, and to help one another. So, to greet someone means to truly recognize that person in one's heart. To greet means that I recognize that person's faith, that I recognize that church, and that I recognize the ministers and saints of that church. That church, too, comes over here and greets, and so they recognize each other.

We cannot greet just anyone

But we do not greet churches we cannot recognize, churches we are unable to recognize. That is something we cannot do. In the last years of his pastoral ministry, the apostle Paul told them to greet in this manner. Dear fellow believers, if we were to greet in this age, whom would we greet? We can greet one another

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with the ministers and saints of churches that have the same faith. When we go to their region, we visit and see them, share meals, have fellowship, and if there is help to receive, we receive help as well.

What would we do when we go out to another country? If people hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach, receive the remission of sins, and say that they truly believe it, we will greet them, meet and talk with them, and have fellowship together. But if not, we will not greet them. If we greet them for the purpose of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that may be another matter, but otherwise we cannot do it. That was what the apostle Paul's heart was like.

We, too, have churches, saints, and servants of God whom we can greet. There are not that many people in this world who can have fellowship with us and greet one another with us. Only those who have the same faith as ours, the same faith as yours, can greet us, have fellowship with one another, and share with one another. We do not exchange greetings with churches that are not like that, or with people who are not like that and yet call themselves servants of God. We cannot greet one another.

That is because our faith and theirs differ, because we differ in whether or not we have the Holy Spirit, and because what we believe differs. We are those who offer spiritual worship and who have been saved spiritually, but they do not know spiritual salvation; they try to be saved in the flesh, try to be saved by doing good deeds, and are bound by the law, so it does not work. There is no exchange between us. We cannot greet one another; each side locks its door against the other and shuts it.

The churches, God's servants, and saints that the apostle Paul told them to greet appear here one after another. I, too, once thought about this word in which the apostle Paul tells them to greet, "What is so great about greetings? They are just the words

of greeting at the close of a letter." But the more I thought about it, the more I came to realize, "The only people the apostle Paul could truly have spiritual fellowship with were these people. Because these were the only people even the apostle Paul could have fellowship with, this is a tremendous word. It has a spiritual meaning." It was not a message simply telling them to say hello; it was a message that there is an exchange of hearts, and it meant that the apostle Paul recognized those people's faith.

If you go to any province, or even to a small city, how many churches there are! Yet there are only one or two places that we must make sure to visit and greet. Places where hearts truly connect are that rare. Seen in that light, we can know how blessed the people who have the faith that the apostle Paul recognized are, and also, through the fact that even now in this age you and I can greet one another and have fellowship, we can confirm how much you and I, who have this kind of faith, connect with each other and share the same faith. Do you have that kind of faith that allows you to greet one another? Do you have no reservations at all?

Whatever country we go to, there are particular people for us to greet. They must be people of the same faith. We are not people who received the remission of sins by doing something well in the flesh, but people who received the remission of sins spiritually, by faith. We, too, have people like this to greet. The people who greet one another with us are very happy people. We do not greet just anyone.

That was so for the apostle Paul, and you and I, too, do not greet everyone who says that he or she believes in Jesus. Just because people say they believe in Jesus does not mean that their faith is all correct. There are a great many cases where it is not the right faith. Even so, there is no need to slander it; in any case, it means to greet those whom we should greet. I give thanks that

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God has given us that kind of belief, that kind of faith, with which we can truly greet one another.

Avoid those who serve only their own belly

The second thing the apostle Paul spoke about is to keep away from those who live only for their own belly. He said, *"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17–18).*

There are people who do not serve Christ but serve only their own belly, and such people among those who believe in Jesus are those who cause others to stumble over the gospel of the water and the Spirit and those who stir up strife. They are the ones who argue over whether this is right or that is right. This is not proper. Such people speak very cunningly, piecing things together very minutely, fit Bible verses together when they talk, and while doing so speak flattering words. That is why it says that they deceive the hearts of the simple. It says to keep away from such people, to avoid them, to depart from such people.

This is because, when the apostle Paul wrote this letter of Romans chapter 16, there were such people in that church. There were people who liked to stir up strife, who hindered others from believing the word of God purely, who gathered people together only to serve their own belly and collected material things only for their own belly—there were such leaders. What do such people do while preaching the word of God very cunningly and very minutely? They deceive. And they speak flattering words. What are those flattering words?

Putting into worship services things that can attract people's hearts, saying that how our sins were passed on to Him when Jesus received baptism from John is of no use at all, and simply saying, "Believe in Jesus. Then you will be blessed. You will go to heaven," only making people feel good in the flesh—that is flattery. That is why it says, *"By smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18)*. There are such people.

It means that there are professional leaders who live only for their own belly, that is, who carry on pastoral ministry in order to make a living. It says to keep away from such people. Do you know why such people diligently gather people together and tell them to receive blessings? It is because the more people gather, the more comes back to them. Such people are those who carry on pastoral ministry for their own belly, and we cannot greet such people. The people the apostle Paul mentioned here were all people who truly lived for the Lord and who saved the souls of others. He said to depart far from those who are not like that, who carry on pastoral ministry only to make a living for themselves, with no concern for the souls of others.

The gospel that must be spread to all nations

Third, the apostle Paul said that this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that must be spread to all nations. He said, *"According to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith" (Romans 16:25–26)*. Truly, this gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul had was the gospel that would make

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all nations believe and obey, the gospel that all people must believe, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that must be spread to all nations. So the apostle Paul told them to depart from those who stir up strife, and to greet those who truly and purely believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he preached, to greet one another, to have fellowship with one another, to join hands, and to rise up.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached was the gospel by which all nations could receive the remission of sins if they only believed and obeyed. That gospel of the water and the Spirit is this gospel of the water and the Spirit that you and I have. The apostle Paul wanted to preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and he did preach it. In the last chapter of the Book of Romans, the apostle Paul said to greet one another, next to keep away from such people, and third to spread this gospel of the water and the Spirit to all nations. And fourth, he said that this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that will establish you, and that this gospel is the gospel of the water and the Spirit of God's wisdom.

The wisdom of God that establishes us

At the end of this passage it says, *"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever" (Romans 16:25–27)*. So if you ask what establishes the saints, it is this gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul

preached that establishes the saints. This is also the wisdom of God. The wisdom of God is in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Dear fellow believers, what do you think? It means that even though people are lacking, they have no sin; that they received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and though they are so lacking, they still have no sin; and that they nevertheless become people who can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others.

What can make people complete like this is the wisdom of God, and it is this gospel of the water and the Spirit, which came from the wisdom of God and by which God saved us with His wisdom. Apart from this gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is nothing that can establish people, nothing that can establish people's souls, hearts, thoughts, and bodies. The apostle Paul does not simply call the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he preached the gospel in an ordinary way, but keeps calling it *"my gospel" (Romans 16:25)*. What kind of gospel was the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached? It was the gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in the Old and New Testaments. He spoke of the gospel of the water and the Spirit in which, on the basis of the writings of the Old Testament prophets, the word prophesied in the Old Testament was fulfilled through Jesus Christ in the New Testament.

It means that the apostle Paul preached this gospel of the water and the Spirit, which was made known to all nations by the writings of the prophets, just as we preach it these days, by connecting the sacrificial system revealed in Leviticus and the books of the law in the Old Testament with the event in the New Testament in which Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John, and with His death on the Cross and His resurrection. That is why he said that he gives glory through

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Jesus Christ to God, who is able to establish you by this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What truly establishes us, you saints, and God's servants? It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through this gospel of the water and the Spirit, our faith is established, and our souls, our thoughts, our hearts, our bodies, and our circumstances are established. Without this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we cannot be established. We cannot be established by anything at all. By what could our faith be established?

Why can we always stand firm, even though we are always lacking? It is because there is the salvation in which the Lord had all the sins of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John for us, and removed all the sins of the world through that baptism and the blood of the Cross. Because we believe in that salvation, our hearts stand firm in faith, our hearts that know we have no sin become firm, and because we have no sin before God and so our hearts are unashamed, we preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit with spiritual faith to those who are still bound in sin. We stand firm by faith. In chapter 16, the apostle Paul speaks of these several things and closes with the benediction *"be glory through Jesus Christ forever" (Romans 16:27)*. He closes by asking blessings on God's people.

The Book of Romans, which closes with a prayer of blessing

All of the apostle Paul's epistles close at the end with this kind of prayer of blessing. God said, *"So they shall put My name on the children of Israel, and I will bless them" (Numbers 6:27)*. This means that God said that if His servants bless by invoking

the name of the LORD, saying that they desire to bless, He will give blessings. That is why, when we close a worship service, we too—even though I have no power—bless the saints, God's servants, and the church by believing the word of God, saying that we desire God, who saved us, to give all blessings of spirit and body upon them. We do so because God said that He would give them. And when people actually accept it in their hearts, God actually does bless them in that way.

When God's servants and the saints hear the word and ask blessings for one another and pray, God hears those prayers asking for blessings and gives us blessings. That is why we receive blessings. That is why the apostle Paul gave the benediction *"be glory through Jesus Christ forever" (Romans 16:27)*. God gives His blessings through the church to God's people, and also to all nations of the whole world.

In fact, even when the saints have difficulties, they pray, and if they cannot pray themselves, others pray for them, and then even in those difficult situations God blesses them, so that they come to know that they have received many blessings, and they cannot help but confess it. In any case, in this Book of Romans the apostle Paul said this: "Greet one another. Depart far from those who live only for their own belly. And this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that must be spread to all nations. And this gospel of the water and the Spirit establishes us, and this is the wisdom of God." We, too, believe so. Our faith is exactly the same as the faith revealed in this Bible.

Dear fellow believers, do you feel such things? If you read in the Psalms the things you feel and experience, you can find a great many such things in the Bible, showing why people of several thousand years ago and you and I today are in exactly the same state and have exactly the same hearts. It is because the same Holy Spirit was there. It is because there was the same

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Holy Spirit and the same struggle. In this way, we have looked through the epistle at this gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached.

Live by the faith with which we can greet one another

This gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach is the gospel that must be spread to all nations of the whole world. There is no way to receive the Holy Spirit other than this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Entering the kingdom of God, too, is only through this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and receiving the Holy Spirit is only through this gospel. However hard you search, there is no other way. It does not happen by shouting and playing instruments loudly while saying, “Receive the fire!” There is no way other than receiving the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which our Lord gave and by which God saved us with His wisdom.

Dear fellow believers, even though you and I are lacking, we are people who have received the remission of sins by believing with our hearts. We are people who have no sin because we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We are righteous people. We are God’s workers, God’s people, and people who can greet one another. We are not people who live only for our own belly. God spreads the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world through us, through you.

Let us give thanks before God, and, regardless of when the Lord comes, let us work as we do now while we are able to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we have finished preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord will come of His own accord and take us of His own accord.

We must listen to this word in which the apostle Paul told them to greet one another, and we saints must truly greet one another, give one another strength, and live that way with spiritual faith. However lacking you may be, and though, thinking in fleshly terms, you and I are worthless people, if we think spiritually, with the faith that believes the word of God just as it is written, we come to know how definite and how certain people you and I are. Let us live that way, praising God with spiritual faith and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Fellow workers bound together by the same gospel

< Romans 16:3–16 >

“Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles. Likewise greet the church that is in their house. Greet my beloved Epaenetus, who is the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ. Greet Mary, who labored much for us. Greet Andronicus and Junia, my countrymen and my fellow prisoners, who are of note among the apostles, who also were in Christ before me. Greet Amplias, my beloved in the Lord. Greet Urbanus, our fellow worker in Christ, and Stachys, my beloved. Greet Apelles, approved in Christ. Greet those who are of the household of Aristobulus. Greet Herodion, my countryman. Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved Persis, who labored much in the Lord. Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine. Greet Asyncritus, Phlegon, Hermas, Patrobas, Hermes, and the brethren who are with them. Greet Philologus and Julia, Nereus and his sister, and Olympas, and all the saints who are with them. Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you.”

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Fellow workers who took on even the danger to their lives

When the names of many people follow one after another at the end of a letter, it is easy to think that all the important teaching that came before is finished and to read quickly and skim past them. But Paul did not merely write down the names; he made known what kind of labor each of them had done and repeatedly urged them to greet these people. This was because he wanted the church to value those who had served the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with him and to receive them from the heart. If we look carefully at these names, we come to know who the people were with whom Paul could truly share his heart and have fellowship, and we can also learn with what kind of heart we should treat the brothers and sisters who serve the Lord beside us.

"Greet Priscilla and Aquila, my fellow workers in Christ Jesus, who risked their own necks for my life, to whom not only I give thanks, but also all the churches of the Gentiles" (Romans 16:3–4). Paul called Priscilla and Aquila fellow workers who work together in Christ Jesus. Having worked together with Paul means that they preached together the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of the world passed on to Him, shed His blood on the Cross and received that judgment in our place, and then remitted our sins by rising again from death. These were people who took on even the danger to their own lives for Paul. Since all the churches of the Gentiles were also thankful for that labor, service for one worker became a benefit even to many souls.

Paul made clear even the reasons for greeting them in this way so that the brothers in Rome would also know what kind of people the two were and welcome them. It means that the church

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in Rome too should welcome, with the same gratitude, the people for whom all the churches of the Gentiles were thankful, and embrace them as precious workers of the Lord. Greeting carries all of these meanings: welcoming, valuing, and becoming one in heart. It does not mean giving them special treatment because they are people close to Paul, but accepting them as workers who labored together for Christ. If our fellowship too stays only at the question of who gets along well with me, we can easily miss the preciousness of a brother who has labored for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even if I have never received help from him directly, I must be able to know that the Lord's work has been served through him and be thankful.

Paul also had them look after and greet the church that was with them, and he also introduced Epaenetus as someone he loved. Epaenetus, whom he called the firstfruits of Achaia to Christ, was a precious brother who had come into the Lord. Not only the workers who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but also the people who have been saved by believing in that gospel of the water and the Spirit are valued as precious within the same fellowship. In the heart of Paul, who remembered the brother who had come to believe first and looked after the church gathered together, there is a love that cherishes the people bound together by the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Remember the many labors done in the Lord

This greeting was not given only to those who had taken on great danger. *"Salute Mary, who bestowed much labor on you – ASV" (Romans 16:6)*. Mary's labor was for the brothers in Rome. Paul did not speak only of those who had helped him at his side;

he also remembered those who had labored for other brothers. We likewise must not regard as important only the service that is directly visible to our own eyes, but must recognize the labor that each person has undertaken in his own place for the church and for souls.

Andronicus and Junia were people who had been imprisoned with Paul and who had been in Christ before Paul. Paul introduced them, who had been known even to the apostles, so that the church in Rome would also recognize them. Thinking of the relationship of faith in which they had stood together even in hardship, he had the church in Rome accept them as well. When we come to know the circumstances of a brother who has gone through hard things, we can treat him not merely as someone who will do some work for us, but as a fellow worker who has labored while relying on the Lord.

Next, Amplias and Stachys are introduced as people he loved, and Urbanus as a fellow worker who works together. Apelles is mentioned as one approved in Christ, and Paul told them to send greetings also to the household of Aristobulus, to Herodion, and to those of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord. Though the words introducing them differ, the center that connects them is Jesus Christ, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and then rose again from death. Rather than which house one belonged to, what relationship one had with Paul, or what office one held, the fact that one is a person who believes and serves together in the Lord becomes the basis of fellowship. For a higher office does not make one better, nor does a lower office make one lacking.

Paul also exhorts them, saying, "*Greet Tryphena and Tryphosa, who have labored in the Lord. Greet the beloved*

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Persis, who labored much in the Lord" (Romans 16:12). Although he did not record in detail what work they did or how much, he valued as precious and loved the labor they had done in the Lord. We too must not look lightly on a brother's labor because it does not take the same form as mine. Because the tasks needed for the gospel of the water and the Spirit differ from one another, we must recognize and cherish as precious fellow workers even those who carry out work different from ours.

Recognizing that labor is not putting into someone's hands something to boast of that displays his own strength. It is believing the fact that he is a person who works together with us by the grace received from the Lord, and thanking him for his service. Since no one can carry out all the Lord's work by the strength of one person alone, we can work together only when we value one another's labor as precious. If we see where he falls short, we should help him; if he is in difficult circumstances, we should pray together; and we must give him strength so that he may carry on by faith the work entrusted to him.

"Greet Rufus, chosen in the Lord, and his mother and mine" (Romans 16:13). In Paul's words calling Rufus's mother his own mother, we can also see the closeness within faith. People who serve with love in the Lord become as precious to one another as family, because the grace of salvation that we received together through the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection does not leave relationships within the church as mere formal encounters. Just as Paul looked after the saints with a father's heart, we too must have the faith that my brothers, my sisters, and my mother are all in the church. This greeting contains the heart that says to regard one another as a family to live together with, looking after one another's lives and labors.

The same salvation joins all the brothers as one family

Paul's greetings continue to Asyncritus and Phlegon, and to Hermas and Patrobas and Hermes. He includes even the brothers who are with them, and when he mentions Philologus and Julia and Nereus and his sister and Olympas, he also looks after all the believers who are with them. It is not that he valued only those whose names were made known and passed by those who served alongside them. We too must not care only for well-known workers, but must look after all the brothers and sisters who are with us, believing the same gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Then how did such different people become one family? Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth and, by receiving baptism from John, had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all. So the Lord shed His blood on the Cross, received the judgment for that sin in our place, and died, and by rising again from death He remitted our sins. The sin of the world that the Lord bore includes all the sins that each of us commits throughout our lives. Since we have become righteous by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit together, we have become members of the same family who belong to God, even though the places where we were born and the circumstances in which we have lived are different. That grace joins as one the hearts of those who greet and those who are greeted.

Although each of us has weaknesses, we can have fellowship in the Lord because we believe in the same salvation. In Paul's saying, "*Greet those who are of the household of Narcissus who are in the Lord" (Romans 16:11)*, we can also see what this fellowship is joined by. Not every one of that household became

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the object of the greeting; rather, those among them who belonged to the Lord were its object. Since this fellowship is joined not by bloodline or family but by the salvation received together, we cannot share the heart of one family with those who do not believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. But if, regarding a brother who believes in the same salvation, we say that we will accept him only if he suits us in every respect, we are binding the relationship that God has formed to our own tastes. Nor does this mean that we cannot rightly point out one another's wrongs. Helping one another correct wrongs upon the same faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, gathering our hearts again to the Lord's work, and looking after that person's needs—this is the fellowship of loving fellow workers.

Paul concludes all these exhortations by saying, *"Greet one another with a holy kiss. The churches of Christ greet you" (Romans 16:16)*. If earlier he urged them to accept each person one by one, now he tells them to greet one another. It must not harden into a relationship in which only one side keeps being respected and the other side keeps serving. As people who have received grace from the same Lord, we must cherish and value one another and share the heart to carry out the Lord's work together.

The words that all the churches of Christ greet the brothers in Rome tell us that their fellowship was not confined to one region. Since the church is the place where the righteous who have been called out of the world are gathered, those who believe in the same gospel of the water and the Spirit and live for the same Lord can be of one mind even though they are far apart from one another. Let us listen to one another's circumstances, pray, share the help that is needed, and, when an opportunity to meet arises, have fellowship gladly. When we regard the labor of other churches as the Lord's work too and

rejoice together, the faith that we are one family is also revealed in our lives.

At first they were names that were easy to pass by, but now we have seen that in each of those names there is a person to be valued as precious in the Lord. The brothers and sisters beside us too are precious fellow workers who serve the Lord in their own places. Let us recognize their labor, be thankful, and, as befits a family bound together by the same salvation, open our hearts and greet them. Rather than only waiting to see who will recognize me first, let us go first to the brother whom the Lord has placed beside me to serve the same gospel of the water and the Spirit, thank him, and add our strength to his. Let us share our faith with one another and serve together the Lord's gospel of the water and the Spirit—the Lord who had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death to make us one family. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Beware of those who go against the gospel

< Romans 16:17–27 >

“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”

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The final exhortation and greetings of the Book of Romans

The Book of Romans, the epistle that the apostle Paul sent to Rome, ends with chapter 16. The final content of the epistle sent to the saints in Rome was the word, *"Note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them" (Romans 16:17),* and also the instruction to greet. The apostle Paul had not yet gone to Rome. Nevertheless, the apostle Paul wanted to tell the saints in Rome the core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately.

When we read the Book of Romans, one of Paul's epistles, I cannot tell you how systematic and amazing the words of the apostle Paul are. Romans chapter 1 speaks of the introduction of the epistle, the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and those who will be judged before God; chapter 2 speaks of the fact that the Jews have no advantage at all, that is, that even if people say they believe in Jesus, those who have not been born again have no advantage at all, and that it is not accomplished merely by believing in Jesus, but one must believe in Jesus and be born again. Chapter 3 speaks of the righteousness of God revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit; chapter 4 says that, like Abraham, although we have done nothing, we are saved from sin by faith; and chapter 5, too, speaks of being saved by faith through the righteousness of one Man. Chapter 6 speaks of the baptism Jesus received from John, saying that those who were baptized into Jesus have been saved from sin and live and walk with Him; and chapter 7 speaks of the fact that we died with Jesus Christ to sin, that only those who died with Him can live with Him, and that only such people have been born again. Chapter 8 speaks of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that says, *"There is therefore*

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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 of the Millennial Kingdom and the hope of the kingdom of heaven. So we see that the apostle Paul intentionally wrote the epistle so that every single chapter, all the way to chapter 16, would be systematic and connected from beginning to end.

And when we come to chapter 16, it tells them to greet. It was saying: Receive the ministers who labored together with the apostle Paul, for they will be going to the church in Rome; when the servants and workers of God come, greet them; greet so-and-so, my relative; greet so-and-so and so-and-so, who labored with me for this gospel of the water and the Spirit; greet one another and have fellowship with one another. The very last chapter of the Book of Romans told them to drive away those who cause others to stumble, and also told them to greet.

Did the apostle Paul have no conflicts at that time as he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit? The apostle Paul preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which was accomplished through the baptism and the blood of Jesus. But among the saints in Rome, there were also people who rejected the content of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached. The word of God clearly says that Jesus caused us to be born again through the water of the baptism He received from John and through the blood; yet when we go to people who already claim to believe and preach to them the salvation of receiving the remission of sins, the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, there are those who refute it and those who oppose it. So it takes a great deal of strength because of those who do not know the truth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and I have thought about whether the apostle Paul did not have such difficulties, too—whether he did not struggle

because of those who refuted the content of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he preached, and whether he did not also have to give warnings. If the apostle Paul had approved of anyone at all who said he simply believed in Jesus unconditionally, he would not have had such difficulties. But I believed that if the apostle Paul preached the clear gospel of the water and the Spirit, preaching the gospel by saying, "If it is not this, it is not salvation," then every time those who refuted the gospel he preached appeared, he would have given warnings, would have rejected them, and would have clearly presented the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Avoid those who leave out the baptism and make people believe only in the Cross

So when I looked at Romans chapter 16, I saw that the apostle Paul, as he wrote the last chapter of the Book of Romans, said, *"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:17–18)*. What the apostle Paul asked of them as he wrote the epistle for the last time was that they should watch out for those who go against their doctrine, stir up divisions, and cause others to stumble, and depart from them.

What is meant by those who go against your doctrine, stir up divisions, and cause others to stumble? The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached was the water, that is, the fact that Jesus received baptism from John; the blood, that is, the death of Jesus; and the Spirit, that is, the fact that Jesus is

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God. The apostle Paul clearly preached these three: the water, the blood, and the Spirit. Few servants have preached the remission of sins by Jesus, the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, as much as the apostle Paul did. These two apostles, the apostle Paul and the apostle John, spoke of it the most. But it says that there are those who go against this gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit. There are those who go against the fact that the Lord saved us by water and by blood—those among the people who believe in Jesus who go against it. And there are those who cause others to stumble, those who make others fall, those who make people fall into destruction even though they believe in Jesus, those who leave out the fact that Jesus received baptism and make people believe only in the Cross of Jesus. Those who do not preach Jesus' baptism of water that washes away sin, the baptism by which Jesus bore the sin of the world, but take it out so that people cannot believe in it and make them believe only in the Cross; those who lead people to believe in Jesus and teach them, yet preach while leaving out Jesus' receiving of baptism and make them believe only in the blood of the Cross, so that in the end they go to hell even after believing in Jesus—we are told to keep away from such people.

It says to watch out for such people and depart from them. Such people use our Lord Jesus Christ as a pretext, yet do not serve Christ but serve only their own belly, and with smooth and flattering words they deceive the hearts of the simple. There are leaders who believe in Jesus but work in order to make a living. People who play the role of church leaders in order to make a living—such people are flattering leaders. They speak flattering words, saying that anything is fine, that it is fine. People who deceive others cunningly and craftily with human philosophical thoughts and gloss things over only with reason, so that people

go to hell even while believing in Jesus—it means that you must depart from such people.

And he said, *"I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19)*. This was precisely what the apostle Paul was concerned about and warned of at the end. It was to beware of those who oppose the gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread of the truth. It was telling them to drive away those who do not believe and not to be together with them. The apostle Paul, too, while preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, had difficulty in trying not to mix with those who were false. Paul had difficulty in drawing a clear line between the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the false gospel. It means that the reason the apostle Paul could not do much work was that it was hard to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit while doing this work of separating. This is what was hardest for the apostle Paul as he did his pastoral ministry. He struggled tremendously to sort out those who did not believe the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached, as well as those who added to it and those who took away from it.

Paul, who entrusted the saints to his fellow workers

As the apostle Paul preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit and served the church, he did not do pastoral ministry by himself. If there were any among the brothers or sisters who had a precious heart and a gift for serving the Lord, he selected them. And he entrusted the saints to whom he had preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those workers, having them tend the sheep, raise them, and care for them. So the apostle Paul said,

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"Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you" (Romans 16:21), conveying to the saints in Rome the greetings of the fellow workers who were with him. In this way Paul served the churches together with his fellow workers. Whatever minister comes, he comes as a worker in the name of Jesus. We must know that we should greet such servants well, greet one another, and have fellowship with one another.

The gospel revealed through the writings of the prophets

What kind of gospel was the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached? From verse 25, this part is spoken of. *"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (Romans 16:25–27)*.

What kind of gospel was the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached? It came about according to the revelation of the mystery, which was made known through the writings of the prophets so that all nations might believe and obey. It came about through the writings of the prophets, according to the revelation of the mystery. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached is not a newly invented message unrelated to the Bible. God had already had the word recorded through His servants several thousand years

ago, and the Lord opened it up and showed it to Paul. He made him realize, "Ah, so this is what the word of God is!"

For example, the tabernacle appears in the Old Testament, and God said, *"Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine woven linen and blue, purple, and scarlet thread; with artistic designs of cherubim you shall weave them" (Exodus 26:1)*. When the sanctuary was built, the gate of the court was made that way, the door of the sanctuary where God dwells was also made that way, and every door was made by embroidering blue, purple, and scarlet thread mixed together with fine woven linen. He said, *"You shall make a screen for the door of the tabernacle, woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen, made by a weaver" (Exodus 26:36)*. And there was a veil that divided the middle of the inside of the sanctuary, and just as He said, *"You shall make a veil woven of blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. It shall be woven with an artistic design of cherubim" (Exodus 26:31)*, the colors of that veil were also blue, purple, and scarlet thread.

So the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached was not something he obtained alone through prayer, apart from the Bible. When the apostle Paul looked at the written word that God had spoken long ago through Moses, through the prophet Isaiah, through the prophet Ezekiel, and through all the prophets, he realized, "Ah, so this is what this means!" Why did God tell them to make it by embroidering with blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and why did God have this blue thread recorded? It is because Jesus came to this earth to make us, who had become sinners, sinless, and to remove the sins of sinners, and so Jesus Himself had to receive baptism from John, which is the blue thread. Only in this way would He Himself bear our sins.

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The gospel of the blue, purple, and scarlet thread

And the purple means that Jesus, who bore our sins, is God in His very essence. It means that He is the Christ, the King. The blue and the purple are the gospel of the water and the Spirit in which Jesus Christ, who is God, had all our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and removed the sins of sinners. The scarlet is the blood; it means that Jesus saved all mankind from sin by shedding His blood on the Cross and receiving the judgment for us. This was the gospel of the water and the Spirit of salvation that God had hidden in Jesus Christ from eternity. This was the glad tidings sent from the kingdom of heaven, the glad tidings by which God saves us, mankind. This was the gospel of the water and the Spirit given to sinners. It was the gospel of the water and the Spirit of the remission of sins, sent to sinners by Jesus, the Son of God. Jesus, who bore the sin of the world and died in our place on the Cross, rose again from death and became our eternal Savior.

So the apostle Paul said, *"According to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith" (Romans 16:25–26)*. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached was the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit. He preached the truth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit revealed in the writings of the prophets. He said, *"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the*

faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever" (Romans 16:25–27). We give thanks and glory to the wise God, who has firmly established us through this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit. The reason we, who have become righteous through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, can stand firm before God is the gospel of the water and the blood, that is, the gospel of the blue, purple, and scarlet thread. There is nothing else here. The half-gospel of those who entice people with smooth words cannot exist.

Dear fellow believers, there is only one gospel of the water and the Spirit under heaven. That gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel of the blue, purple, and scarlet thread. The true gospel of the water and the Spirit is this gospel. The gospel of the water and the Spirit of the kingdom of heaven is not a gospel of the purple and scarlet thread alone, but the gospel of the blue, purple, and scarlet thread. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached was precisely the gospel of the blue, purple, and scarlet thread. This faith, this salvation, by which you and I receive salvation and can stand firm before God, was the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the blue, purple, and scarlet thread represent. If we had believed only in the purple and scarlet thread, we would not have received the remission of sins. The apostle Paul, too, did not preach only the purple and scarlet thread. The apostle Paul preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit of the remission of sins that the blue, purple, and scarlet thread represent. And the last exhortation that the apostle Paul gave was to keep away from those who reject this and to drive them away. The apostle Paul told all the saints in Rome to go to all the servants of God and greet them, and so had them have fellowship with one another. And he told them

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what the gospel of the water and the Spirit is and how they should live.

Stand firm through this gospel

Our God has established us by faith, through this gospel of the water and the Spirit from heaven. I truly give thanks to the Lord. Just as the apostle Paul was concerned, we too must truly keep away from those who reject this gospel of the water and the Spirit or those who go against this doctrine. And we must teach those who do not know it. In the time of the apostle Paul, the apostle Paul had another person write down what he said. He had someone write in his place. Through the word recorded in that way, and by having what the servants of God said recorded in writing, God has spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all people.

I hope that we will remember these facts: that in the Book of Romans, as the apostle Paul wrote his epistle for the last time, he asked them to beware of those who go against the doctrine of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he had preached; that the word the apostle Paul had preached was the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit; and that he actually preached in the New Testament the word that had been recorded in the Old Testament by the prophets, that is, Jesus Christ as revealed in the Old Testament—that if the Old Testament said, "He will save us in this way," he preached, "Jesus came to this earth and saved us in this way." And I hope that our faith will stand even more firmly and that we will live by faith.

I hope that we will all become God's people who preach the gospel to many people and save many souls. When things are difficult and hard, pray; do not think of running away, but take

a look at what you are like and pray. And pray for one another and ask God for help. And so I hope that we will become a church that greets one another, holds one another up, and preaches the truth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, until that last day. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

This gospel establishes you

< Romans 16:17–27 >

“Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen.”

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The season for gathering in the fruit

Autumn is a really good season for doing the work of God. When we look at all things, we come to think of God's providence. Just as the leaves of a tree fall and only the fruit remains, and then the fruit that has returned to the soil sprouts, grows, and bears new fruit again, I thought that we too must do likewise if we are to bear the fruit of faith after meeting the Lord. I have a heart that wants to do much work quickly and gather in the fruit before God gathers us into the storehouse of the kingdom of God. So I have a heart that wants to work even more diligently and faithfully in these last days in the work of gathering the fruit that leads to everlasting life.

When we look at the word of Romans chapter 16, we see that the apostle Paul said, *"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them" (Romans 16:17)*. If certain people go against the doctrine of God, stir up divisions, cause others to stumble, and do not believe but oppose it, how could we be together with those people? Therefore the Lord told us to depart from such people. It says that this is because those people do not serve Jesus Christ but serve only their own belly. If we who have been born again also do not do the work of serving Christ, we too will end up becoming people who serve only their own belly. It is right for the righteous to serve Christ and the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And it is right for the righteous to help other people receive the remission of sins. This is the proper life of carrying out God's command.

How can the born-again live together with those who go against the doctrine of God? And even if they live together, how could they be of one mind with them? Those people only stir up fights and cause those who follow God well to stumble and fall.

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This is the word God speaks to the church. And this word teaches that even a righteous person, if he does not think before God and does not live before God, becomes a person who looks out only for his own belly. When people look at things by their own standard, they may think that living while looking out only for their own belly is the wisest thing. That is because all people think only in the way that is to their own advantage.

But the born-again righteous must know well what is truly wise before God and seek it. Living only for one's own flesh, which will decay in this world, is not true wisdom before God. If the righteous do not live for their own flesh but do the work of God in that time, they can do the work of saving many people from sin and letting them receive the Holy Spirit. Nevertheless, if they work only for the food which perishes on this earth, they must know that this is not only unwise but also an evil thing before God. The apostle Paul said before God, *"I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19)*. That is right. We have a heart that wants to be wise in God's good work and dull toward evil work.

Avoid those who are evil

We must not be together with those who are evil. Those who live a life of faith before God may appear foolish in the eyes of worldly people, but even so, they must run with one heart toward the truth alone to the end. The evil people the Bible speaks of are those who pretend to care for others but in fact cause them to stumble and fall with flattering words. They also oppose the Church of God and those who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The word says that not only must we ourselves not

become such people, but we must not even sit in the same place with such people.

"The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20). This is because our enemy is God's enemy, and God will take care of it Himself. Next, we can see that the apostle Paul is conveying greetings from his fellow workers. We must not forget to value the brothers and sisters who serve the will of God together with us, to pray that we may be with them in heart, and to greet them often. Meeting often is good, but because that was difficult, it was necessary to send greetings at least by letter, and I think we should consider this important.

The gospel that had been hidden since before the creation of the world

The apostle Paul says, *"According to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began" (Romans 16:25)*. In his epistles, the apostle Paul often used the expressions *"my gospel"* or *"the gospel which was preached by me" (Galatians 1:11)*. And it says that this gospel of the water and the Spirit was kept secret since the world began but has now been made manifest. What is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul spoke of here? It refers to the gospel of the water and the Spirit of the faith that believes that Jesus Christ removed sin. It refers to this gospel of the water and the Spirit by which Jesus Christ received baptism from John, shed His blood, and saved sinners. And it says that this gospel of the water and the Spirit was kept secret since the world began and has now been made manifest.

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The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached was, as this word says, a gospel planned before God made this universe and all things. After God made the universe and made man, He told man not to eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the Garden of Eden. But in the end people ate that fruit of the knowledge of good and evil, and afterward they came to know sin and to know shame, and it is written, *"Also for Adam and his wife the LORD God made tunics of skin, and clothed them" (Genesis 3:21)*. And the Lord promised that He would come to this earth in the future as the Seed of the woman and save people from sin, and He fulfilled it all just as He had promised. All of this was in God's plan from the beginning. And it is recorded that this gospel of the water and the Spirit was kept secret and has now been made manifest again.

The apostle Paul preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit that had been hidden from eternity and was then revealed. Before the time of the apostle Paul, the servants of God in the Old Testament prophesied by the Holy Spirit that Jesus Christ would come to this earth, bear our sins, receive the judgment for us, and save us; then in the New Testament this prophecy was fulfilled, and Jesus Christ actually came to this earth and saved us from all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. And it says that in the time of the apostle Paul, this good news, which had been planned since the world began, was now revealed.

This gospel that we now preach is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that had been hidden since before the creation of the world. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit preached in the age of the apostles, which was *"kept secret since the world began but now made manifest" (Romans 16:25–26)*. To hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we now preach is to

encounter the most beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit in the whole world. And this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that was hidden the longest. This gospel of the water and the Spirit had been hidden from eternity, but it has now been revealed, and people have finally come to encounter it. This gospel of the water and the Spirit had been hidden from eternity and has now been revealed and is being preached. So we now believe and receive the remission of sins. Even in the old days of the Old Testament, there were people who believed and received the remission of sins, and in the New Testament, in the age of the apostles too, many people believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. After the age of the apostles, a corrupted gospel was handed down in Christianity, and the pure gospel of the water and the Spirit could be found only in the word of the Bible. But the light of the gospel of the water and the Spirit was not extinguished; after flowing faintly for such a long time, it is now being spread again throughout the whole world.

"My gospel," which Paul preached

The apostle Paul called the gospel of the water and the Spirit *"my gospel."* The *"my gospel"* that the apostle Paul preached is not a gospel on the level of simply saying that if you believe in Jesus, you go to heaven. What the apostle Paul preached as *"my gospel"* was that Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth clothed in human flesh and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

The apostle Paul preached the same gospel of the water and the Spirit as we do, in this way: that as Jesus received baptism from John, He had all the sins of all people passed on to Him,

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just as He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*; that He therefore bore the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again three days after His death; and that He removed all our sins and saved us from all sins. And he preached that the Lord rose again and has ascended to the right hand of God the Father; that everyone who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit has obtained everlasting life, received the remission of sins, received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and become a child of God; and that, whereas God from before the creation of the world wanted to create mankind and make them His own children, that purpose is now being fulfilled and has been fulfilled. This beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit that we now believe and preach is precisely the gospel that the apostle Paul preached.

The apostle Paul also preached that the death of Jesus Christ was a death in which He was given up as the sacrificial offering because of the sins of all mankind; that the resurrection of Jesus Christ gave all mankind a life of living forever, having received the remission of sins and obtained everlasting life through believing in Jesus Christ; and that Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death in order to give us new life. We too are now preaching it in exactly the same way. This gospel of the water and the Spirit had been hidden since before the creation of the world, but it has now been revealed and is being spread throughout the whole world. This gospel of the water and the Spirit that we now preach is the beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul preached.

This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel *"by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith" (Romans 16:26)*. And this gospel of the water and the

Spirit has been preached until now through the servants of God by the Holy Spirit, and the mystery of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which had been hidden until now, has been revealed again in people's hearts. So it came about according to the revelation of the mystery, so that all nations might believe and obey. This gospel of the water and the Spirit must surely be preached to all nations, and it is the gospel by which all nations will believe and obtain life.

Only those who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can preach the gospel

Only people who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is because only people who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can understand the mystery of this beautiful gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why the Bible says, *"But God has revealed them to us through His Spirit. For the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10)*. This means that only when the Holy Spirit is in one's heart does one come to know what the words of the Bible mean.

People who do not have the Holy Spirit do not know what the words of the Bible are saying even when they read them. What is black is just letters, and what is white is just paper. People who do not have the Holy Spirit know nothing but the words, "Believe in Jesus and become a good person." Their eyes cannot see the spiritual world. For example, when they read the word in the Bible, *"I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19)*, they think as follows: "Ah, it must mean that we should live good lives; it must be a word telling us not to do evil things." But is that knowing the

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meaning of the word correctly? No. The words *"wise in what is good"* mean that we should preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which saves dying souls and gives life to those who have no choice but to go to hell, even if we are persecuted in that work. People who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit can lead those who do not to everlasting life. They can help them receive the Holy Spirit. Therefore, the word means that it is wise to do the work of helping people receive blessings before the eternal God.

In this way, many people read the words of the Bible, but people who have the indwelling of the Holy Spirit see them on a different level and understand the Bible on a different level. That is why God first gave us the Holy Spirit and had us preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to others through the Holy Spirit. In fact, the apostle Paul said that this gospel of the water and the Spirit has the power to enable the saints to go on living in this world no matter what, to serve the Lord, and to live good lives. That is truly so. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given lets the saints be blessed and live before God, and lets them take on the spread of God's gospel of the water and the Spirit and live by faith until the day the Lord comes.

The word that the apostle Paul spoke in conclusion in the last chapter of the Book of Romans was *"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel."* Then by what can you and I become those who stand firm before God? It is precisely through this gospel of the water and the Spirit that we become those who stand firm before God.

We are those who live for the purpose of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. When we think before God about the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given, our weakness comes to mind at the same time. How many sins we have received the remission of before

God, how many wrongs we have done before God, and yet how many sins our Lord bore through the baptism He received from John—when we think about this before God, we cannot help but believe and give thanks that we have become sinless through faith in the baptism and the Cross of Jesus Christ. Our Lord removed all my sins and yours. When we think about this beautiful love before God, we cannot help but preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

When we think about ourselves and look back on ourselves as we live a life of faith before God, we come to realize how precious a gospel this gospel of the water and the Spirit is, and we always give thanks. Because we are those who have believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, we must live for the purpose of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because we have received the remission of sins, we must live for this purpose. How can we not believe that He gave us the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made you and me sinless? How can we not believe that our Lord bore all sins when He received baptism from John, and that He bore all the sins of the world and died for us on the Cross? When we think of God's love of salvation, we cannot help but live our lives for this gospel of the water and the Spirit, following the will of God.

What to think about before God

If we live our life of faith before God and think about everything before God, we must surely preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. We cannot help but live such a life. That is because, seen before God, nothing is more precious than this gospel of the water and the Spirit. We can

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know that this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the most precious thing, and that God has placed you and me in this world to preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit. First, we must know that our having been saved before God through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a miracle and a blessing. This gospel of the water and the Spirit enables us to stand firm before God. The reason we must give our lives for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, live only for the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and then go before God giving thanks and glory to Him is the love of this gospel. That is how it is when we think about it before God.

We need to hold up our hearts often to the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to examine and consider, "What am I lacking before God now, and what is the center of my heart like?" Especially in this age, only when we always call to mind this gospel of the water and the Spirit, how our Lord removed all my sins, can we live a life of faith well. If we forget the love by which Jesus made us sinless through the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, how could we endure these hard and difficult last days and carry out the Lord's command to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the ends of the earth? I ponder this.

What is the wisest thing to do in this age? I believe that in this age we must do the work of spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This age is bleak, and people all over the world are trembling with fear. In this age, in which such days are coming, you and I must think before God about what we will do. I clearly say before God that in this age all of us must join our strength and do the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. What we born-again people must do in this age is to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. It is the work of missions. For this

work, we must think much before God, and we must live for this purpose. As you and I live in this age, we must not think of other things but must live thinking only of the one purpose: that this precious gospel of the water and the Spirit must be spread throughout the whole world. Is it not right for you and me to give our own lives before God for the spread of this gospel of the water and the Spirit? I think that you and I must live that way. We must preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world.

Those who stand firm through this gospel

We are people who have now come into this grace by faith and are standing before God, people who have been saved from all sins by God. Just as the owner picks all the produce and gathers it into the storehouse when all the fruit is ripe, when we have preached this gospel of the water and the Spirit fully, we become very well-filled grain in God's sight. And I believe that God will take us from this earth to the eternal storehouse of heaven and let us live together with our God forever. We should know that what we must do in this age is to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and believe so and live so.

We must become strong through this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Nothing is more precious than this gospel of the water and the Spirit. There are many other works in this world besides serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but there is no work more precious than serving the gospel of God that God has given us, the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is, that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, and bore all the sin of mankind, and so bore the sin of the world and went

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to the Cross, was nailed to it, said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, and died, and rose again from death and gave us new life. I believe there is nothing more precious than this work of serving this gospel of the water and the Spirit and spreading this gospel of the water and the Spirit. We receive the remission of sins on this earth and do many different kinds of work, but we should believe that the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the most blessed work and the work by which we receive blessings before God, and live that way.

Through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can always live having every problem of sin resolved by faith before God. We can live at any time, every moment, as strong Christians before God. We must stand firm by faith in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, come before God by faith, look to Jesus Christ, who has made us perfect, serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith, give our whole lives to God by faith, and become people who serve this gospel.

As the apostle Paul wrote the last chapter of the Book of Romans, he concluded it as follows: *"To God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (Romans 16:27)*. Those who serve Jesus Christ receive glory forever through Jesus Christ. It means that those who serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith before God and live for the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit live in glory forever through Jesus Christ. That is what the apostle Paul is saying here. It is actually so. We born-again people must think before God, have faith before God, and live knowing before God that the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ is precious. And so let us receive and enjoy many blessings before God. I hope that you will all truly become those who are simple concerning evil and wise in what is good. God has been pleased to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit throughout the whole world. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Avoid those who go against the doctrine, and stand firm on the gospel ordained before the world began

< Romans 16:17–27 >

"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them. For those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly, and by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple. For your obedience has become known to all. Therefore I am glad on your behalf; but I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil. And the God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly. The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen. Timothy, my fellow worker, and Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater, my countrymen, greet you. I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord. Gaius, my host and the host of the whole church, greets you. Erastus, the treasurer of the city, greets you, and Quartus, a brother. Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began

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but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen."

Dear beloved saints, at the beginning of chapter 16 the apostle Paul unfolded his greetings by warmly calling by name, one by one, nearly twenty-six brothers and sisters. But when he comes to verse 17, his tone suddenly changes sharply. He throws out one weighty word of exhortation. Dear fellow believers, why does such a firm exhortation come right after that warm calling of the family by name? It is because the apostle Paul clearly knew from where the greatest danger enters among people who have become one family in Jesus. This final passage today clearly shows how we must depart from the false teachings that tear down the gospel of the water and the Spirit and stand firm on that gospel ordained before the world began.

Note those who go against the doctrine and avoid them

In verse 17, the apostle Paul exhorts as follows: *"Now I urge you, brethren, note those who cause divisions and offenses, contrary to the doctrine which you learned, and avoid them" (Romans 16:17)*. Dear fellow believers, what do the words "go against the doctrine" mean here? Do they simply refer to quarrels or differences of opinion between people? No, they do not. They refer to teachings that tear down the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the apostle Paul had preached all his life.

Avoid those who go against the doctrine,
and stand firm on the gospel ordained before the world began

Dear fellow believers, what is the essence of the truth that the apostle Paul unfolded in one breath from chapter 1 to chapter 15? It was the work of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, in which Jesus, in the year He turned thirty, had all the sin of mankind transferred to His body once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, in accordance with the meaning of the transfer of sin foreshadowed by the Old Testament system of the laying on of hands; paid the full price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross; and justified us forever through His resurrection. But what was happening even in the apostle Paul's day? A corrupted teaching that took only the precious blood of the Cross out of this one flow and emphasized it, and left out the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River, had already taken root in many places. Verse 18 reveals the true nature of the hearts of such false teachers: *"Those who are such do not serve our Lord Jesus Christ, but their own belly" (Romans 16:18)*. Dear fellow believers, whom do they serve? They do not serve Christ. They serve their own belly. What is their weapon? Does it not say that they *"by smooth words and flattering speech deceive the hearts of the simple" (Romans 16:18)*? Their way is to shake, with cunning eloquence and pleasing flattery, believers who have not discerned the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Be wise in what is good and simple concerning evil

So in verse 19, the apostle Paul clearly reveals in one line the weight of the discernment we ought to have: *"I want you to be wise in what is good, and simple concerning evil" (Romans 16:19)*. Dear fellow believers, what does this mean? It means to live sharply in discernment concerning the work of Jesus and to

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live dully toward the deceptions of false teaching. It means that, toward the cunning eloquence of the false teachers, we should rather be like simple people and not be swayed by it. Dear fellow believers, does this discernment come from our own learning or religious measure? No, it does not. It is the gift of Jesus that comes upon those who have firmly engraved the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their hearts. So what should we do when we encounter false teaching? It is not to argue with them right there and get caught up in it, but, exactly as the apostle Paul's word says, to *"avoid them" (Romans 16:17)*.

And verse 20 clearly reveals one axis of this passage: *"The God of peace will crush Satan under your feet shortly" (Romans 16:20)*. Dear fellow believers, what kind of promise is this? It means that the promise given in Genesis 3:15, that the Seed of the woman would crush the head of Satan, was fulfilled once and for all in Christ. Satan's head has already been crushed once and for all through the Cross and the resurrection. So when born-again righteous people stand on that truth, what happens to Satan's deception? It is broken to pieces under our feet. Is that not why the apostle Paul immediately adds a short blessing? He says, *"The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be with you. Amen" (Romans 16:20)*. It firmly engraves on us that the root of all that discernment and victory lies not in our will, but in the grace of Jesus. Dear fellow believers, what is that grace? It is the grace by which 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 for us with the blood He shed on the Cross, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins.

The gospel flows on together through the hands of many people

Yet, dear fellow believers, right at the point where the apostle Paul clearly said to keep their distance from false teachers, what does he immediately do? He gathers into one line the names of the fellow workers who had been working alongside him and conveys them to the saints in Rome. The apostle Paul clearly knew that departing from false teaching and joining deeply together with fellow workers who abide in Jesus must happen at the same time. Timothy, who appears in verse 21, was the apostle Paul's lifelong spiritual son and his closest fellow worker. Lucius, Jason, and Sosipater are his kinsmen or fellow workers.

Dear fellow believers, verse 22 is quite interesting: *"I, Tertius, who wrote this epistle, greet you in the Lord" (Romans 16:22)*. What does this mean? It means that this Book of Romans was not written by the apostle Paul himself directly, but was a letter in which a brother named Tertius wrote down the words that came from the apostle Paul's mouth. Dear fellow believers, this great letter, in which the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus is unfolded in one breath, was shaped together not by the hand of one apostle but by the hands of two people. Gaius in verse 23 was the owner of the house where the apostle Paul stayed in Corinth, and he was called *"the host of the whole church" (Romans 16:23)*. Erastus was the treasurer of the city of Corinth. Dear fellow believers, as these names flow out one line at a time—from Timothy, his spiritual son, to Tertius, who wrote down the letter, Gaius, who provided a place for meetings, and Erastus, the treasurer of a city—what is revealed? It reveals, just as it is, how the gospel of the water and the Spirit is shaped together and flows on together through the hands of many people in Jesus. So even a servant of Jesus like the apostle Paul did not

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do his work by his own strength alone. This gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus received baptism from John and so had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him, died shedding His blood on the Cross and so received that judgment in our place, and rose again from death and remitted all our sins—flowed on together in just that way, following the hands of many fellow workers.

The mystery of the gospel kept secret since the world began

And from verse 25 to verse 27, the apostle Paul unfolds the final doxology of the entire Book of Romans. What does he say about the gospel of the water and the Spirit that he had preached all his life? He says that it was *"kept secret since the world began but now made manifest" (Romans 16:25–26)*. Dear fellow believers, since when was that work of Jesus ordained? It means that it was an eternal plan that had been ordained from eternity, even before this universe and all things were made. And in verse 26 it says, *"By the prophetic Scriptures" (Romans 16:26)*. Dear fellow believers, was the gospel the apostle Paul came to understand a new teaching that he received through some vision? No, it was not. It was the mystery of the work of Jesus that had already been engraved in the Old Testament Scriptures.

Do you know where one picture of this mystery is firmly engraved? It is engraved on the veil and the door of the tabernacle recorded in Exodus chapter 26. Dear fellow believers, with what were all the doors and the inner veil of the tabernacle embroidered? They were embroidered with blue, purple, and scarlet thread, and fine woven linen. Dear fellow believers, what would these three colors of thread point to? They point to the

work that Jesus accomplished once and for all through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. What is the blue? It points to the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, through which He had all the sin of mankind transferred to His body once and for all, in accordance with the meaning of the transfer of sin foreshadowed by the Old Testament system of the laying on of hands. What is the purple? It points to the fact that He is by nature God and the Christ, the King of kings. What is the scarlet? It points to the fact that He shed His precious blood on the Cross, fully bore the price of that sin, and so received our judgment once and for all.

Dear fellow believers, these three colors of thread woven together in one flow are the original form of the work of Jesus. Yet what is it like when a teaching takes out only the precious blood of the Cross to emphasize it and leaves out the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River? It is exactly the same as an attempt to make the veil with only purple and scarlet, leaving out the blue. It is a teaching that has corrupted the original work that God established. Is that not why, in verse 17, the apostle Paul so firmly and clearly said to depart from such people?

He is able to establish you by this gospel

Dear beloved saints, and so in verse 27 the apostle Paul brings the entire Book of Romans to a close with a doxology: *"Now to Him who is able to establish you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began but now made manifest, and by the prophetic Scriptures made known to all nations, according to the commandment of the*

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everlasting God, for obedience to the faith—to God, alone wise, be glory through Jesus Christ forever. Amen" (Romans 16:25–27). Dear fellow believers, how do born-again righteous people stand firm without being shaken? Is it by their own will? Is it by their own religious deeds? No, it is not. Only when they stand firmly on this gospel of the water and the Spirit does that firmness come upon them. Dear fellow believers, even if false teachers try to deceive us with smooth and flattering words, what happens if we stand firmly on this gospel? The God of peace crushes that Satan under our feet.

Dear fellow believers, what kind of people were we originally? We were scattered sinners. But through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God had ordained before the world began, even before this universe and all things were made—through that work in which Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, fully bore the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and made us righteous forever through His resurrection—we have become one family and holy righteous people. Where does the end of all the truth that the apostle Paul unfolded in one breath from chapter 1 to chapter 16 come together? It comes together in the glory of God through Christ. So I pray in the name of the Lord that all of us, too, may become such blessed born-again righteous people, who firmly depart from the false teachings that tear down that gospel, stand firm on this gospel of the water and the Spirit ordained before the world began, join hands with our fellow workers and let this gospel flow out together, and give all glory forever and ever only to that wise God. ✉

◇ About the Next Series

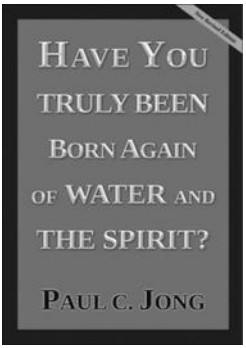
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

News about newly released books, as well as various ways to access them—including eBooks (PDF, EPUB), audiobooks (M4A, MP3), and online reading—can be found at **www.bjnewlife.org.**

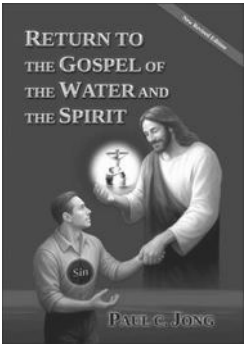
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

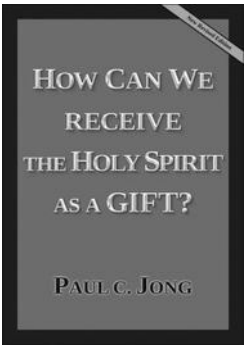
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

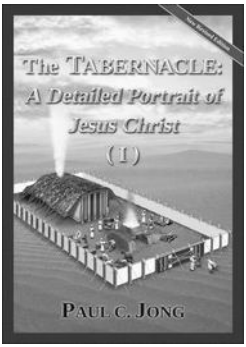
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



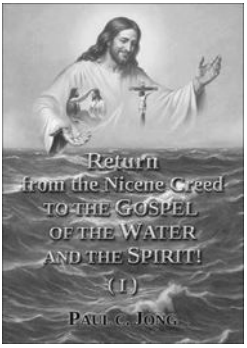
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

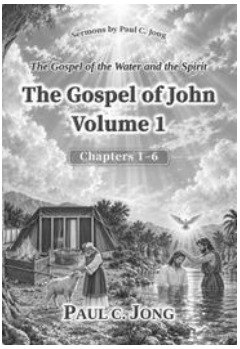
Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit?
The 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)

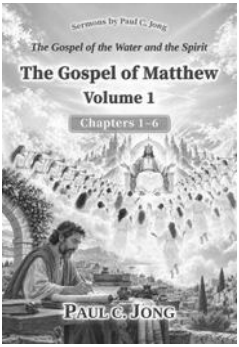


"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

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.

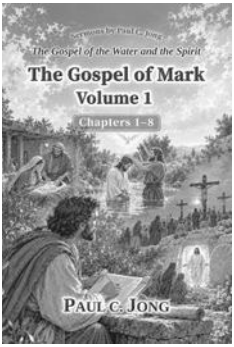
Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

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.

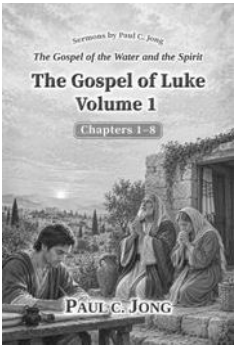
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Mark (2-Volume Series)



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.

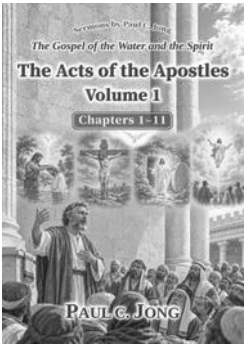
Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

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.

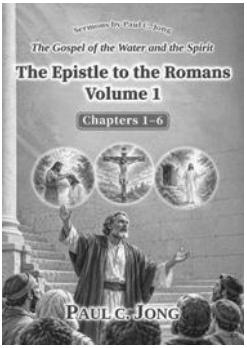
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Acts of the Apostles (2-Volume Series)



"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)

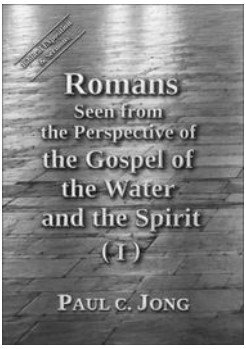


How do we, who became sinners through the disobedience of one man, Adam, become righteous? Romans chapters 1–6 show us the person who, while judging others, came to realize his own sin before the law; Abraham, who believed the God who had promised; and the person who was baptized into Christ. These chapters 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,

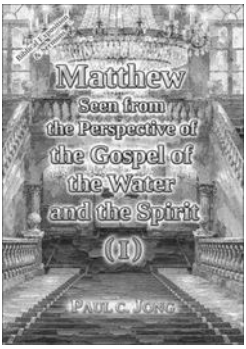
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)



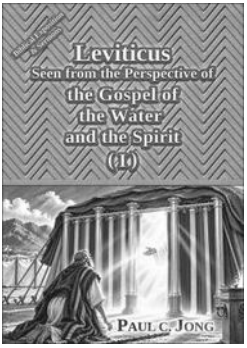
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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)

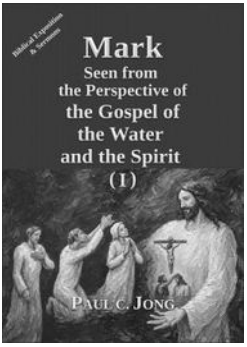


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the 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)



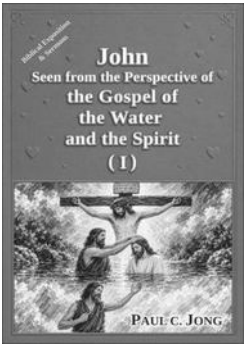
Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

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)

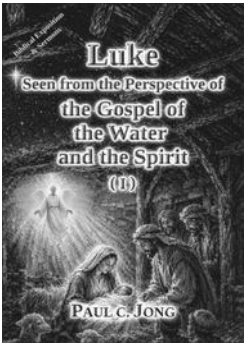


John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

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)

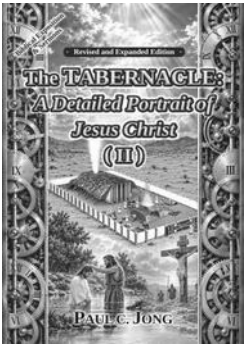


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central 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!

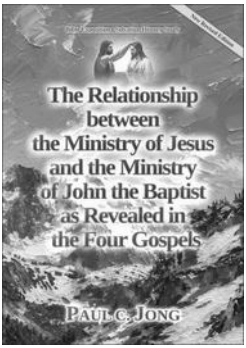
The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (3-Volume Series)



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.

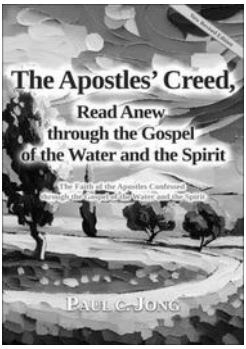
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through 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]

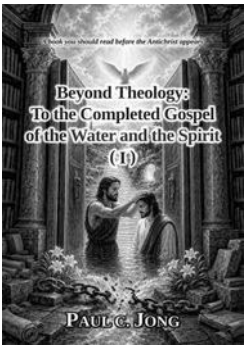


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission 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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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.

If not my own conduct, what must I believe to be able to stand before God?

"For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes" (Romans 10:4)

Even if I serve God zealously, if I make my own conduct the basis of salvation, my heart is at ease on the days when I have done well, and on the days when my faults are revealed, I am anxious, as if I had become a sinner again. But all the sins of the world, including our lifelong sins, were passed on to Jesus once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Jesus, who shed His blood and died on the Cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place and rose again from death on the third day. Because He paid the price of sin that the law demanded, the person who believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit does not need to struggle to stand righteous by his own deeds.

Being justified by believing does not mean filling up salvation by adding an effort called faith. It is accepting that my sin, too, is included in all the sins of the world that Jesus removed. Even when faults are revealed, the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished does not fall short. We should acknowledge our wrongs and turn around, but the righteousness by which we stand before God lies not in my having changed but in Jesus.

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