Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Matthew

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

(VI)

Paul C. Jong



Matthew Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (VI)

Biblical Exposition & Sermons



"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42)

Preparing for the Lord's Second Coming is not a matter of calculating dates or looking for a way to escape disaster. It is discerning the times by the Word even in the midst of the deceptions and tribulations of the last days, and preparing beforehand the faith with which to welcome the Lord.

That preparation begins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world; He was judged for those sins and died on the cross, and He rose again and completed our salvation. We must not merely look at the signs in the world and be afraid. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receive the remission of our sins, and stay awake as we wait for the Lord's return.

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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Matthew
Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit
(VI)

PAUL C. JONG



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SEOUL, KOREA

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First Edition: 2026
Published: August 2026

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

ISBN 978-89-282-6292-2
Illustration: Young-ae Kim
Reviewed: Elizabeth
Translator: Elizabeth
Printed in South Korea
Cover image based on a licensed image from 123RF

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

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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

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

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

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

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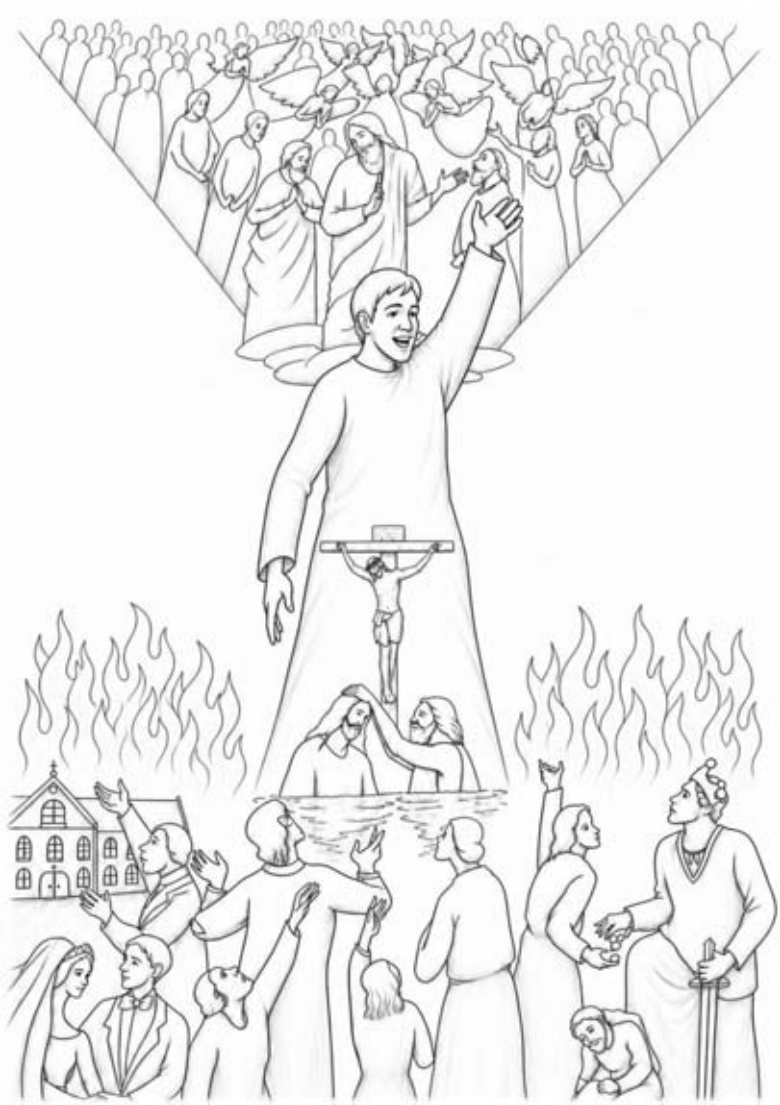

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Preface

Matthew chapters 24 through 28 are the word in which Jesus Christ reveals the things that will happen at the end of the world, suffers and dies on the Cross bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism, completes the salvation of mankind by rising again, and commands His disciples to preach the gospel to the whole world. This book is the sixth Bible study book expounding these five chapters from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

As the end of the world draws near, wars, famines, earthquakes, and many disasters occur ever more frequently, and false christs and false prophets delude people. Lawlessness abounds and love grows cold, and the age also comes when the Antichrist appears and persecutes those who believe. But these things do not happen by chance; they are the fulfillment of the prophecies Jesus spoke beforehand. The person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins is not seized with fear before the changes of the world; he discerns the times by the word and prepares for the return of the Lord.

Jesus came to this earth in the flesh to save us from sin and judgment. And with the baptism He received from John the Baptist He had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body, and by hanging on the Cross bearing those sins and dying shedding His blood, He received the punishment of sin in full. By rising from the dead Jesus overcame the power of sin, death, and Satan and became our eternal Savior. Therefore the most important faith in preparing for the last days lies not in finding a way to escape the disasters, but in believing with the heart the

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gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has completed, and so receiving the remission of all sins.

The word of the last days and of salvation delivered in Matthew chapters 24–28

Matthew chapter 24 speaks of the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, the signs of the end of the world, the great tribulation, and the return of Jesus Christ. The fig tree refers to the nation of Israel, and the restoration of Israel, which had lost its nation, as an independent state again in 1948 is an important sign telling that the last days are near. Only God the Father knows the exact day and hour, but the righteous who have received the remission of sins discern, in the light of the word, the time and the age in which they live.

In the last days a temple will be built in Jerusalem, and the Antichrist will enter it, exalt himself as God, and demand worship and submission from the people. This is the event in which the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place, and from this point the great tribulation begins in earnest. The righteous who believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit must keep their faith even in the face of persecution and martyrdom. After the tribulation, actual changes will take place in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and Jesus will come again with power and great glory to resurrect and gather His people.

Though two men work in the same field and two women grind together at the mill, one is taken and the other is left. The one who is taken is the person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and obtained the Holy Spirit; the one who is left is the person who, though outwardly leading a religious life, has not been born

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again according to the word. Therefore we must believe the gospel now, be united with the church, and live as faithful and wise servants who give out the food of life in due season.

In the parable of the ten virgins in Matthew chapter 25, the lamp represents the church of God and the oil represents the Holy Spirit. Even if one belongs to a church, if sin remains in the heart because one has not believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one cannot receive the Holy Spirit. The wise virgins receive the remission of sins, hold the Holy Spirit in their hearts, and wait for the Lord, the Bridegroom. The Holy Spirit is not obtained with money or merit, by the laying on of a revivalist's hands, or by religious zeal; He is the gift God gives to the person who believes the gospel of the remission of sins.

The talents mean the abilities God has given to each person. The person who has received the remission of sins must use his time, material things, health, knowledge, and skills for the preaching of the gospel. To use the abilities one has received only for one's own flesh, without being united with the church and serving the gospel, is to bury one's talent in the ground. Salvation is not a reward for works but the grace of God received by faith; yet to refuse the Lord's will to the end after receiving the remission of sins and to oppose the work of the gospel is by no means a light matter. We must use the grace and the abilities we have received from the Lord for the gospel and receive the commendation of a good and faithful servant.

The parable of the sheep and the goats teaches how the person who has become righteous by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit ought to serve the church of God, the workers of the gospel, and the brothers and sisters. To serve one of the least of the brethren who belong to the Lord is to serve the Lord Himself. The righteous who have received the remission of sins do not boast of their own good deeds; thankful for the love

and grace they have freely received from the Lord, they serve the church and souls.

Matthew chapter 26 records the faith of the woman who poured the fragrant oil and the betrayal of Judas Iscariot, the last Passover supper and the prayer in Gethsemane, and the arrest and interrogation of Jesus. The woman who poured the fragrant oil knew by faith the death and burial of Jesus, and offered to the Lord what was most precious to her. The bread Jesus distributed represents the body of the Lord, who took on the sins of mankind with His baptism, and the cup represents the blood He shed on the Cross for the judgment of those sins. The body and blood of the Lord testify that the baptism He received from John the Baptist and His death on the Cross are one connected work of salvation.

Matthew chapter 27 shows the event in which the sinless Jesus is tried and mocked, and dies nailed to the Cross. The Cross is not the place where the sins of mankind first passed to Jesus; it is the place where the price of the sins He had taken on at the Jordan River was paid. That the veil of the sanctuary was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died shows that the sin which had blocked the way between God and sinners was removed, and that a new and living way was opened for believers to come boldly before God.

Matthew chapter 28 records the actual resurrection of Jesus Christ and the last mission He gave His disciples. Jesus did not merely faint and then awaken, nor did the disciples steal His body and invent a story of resurrection. The Lord rose bodily from the dead just as He had said, and He is God, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth.

The risen Jesus commanded His disciples to make disciples of all the nations, to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to observe

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all the words He had commanded. This is the command to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the peoples so that they receive the remission of sins, and to nurture those who have received the remission of sins within the church of God and raise them up as disciples who preach the gospel. The Lord is always with the church and the believers entrusted with this mission, through the word and the Holy Spirit, to the end of the age.

With the faith that waits for the Second Coming

This book surveys the whole flow and the meaning of the text of each chapter, presents questions and answers by which what has been learned can be confirmed and organized, and includes sermons that help apply the word to actual faith and life. Dear readers, please first read the Scripture text slowly, confirm the meaning of the word through the exposition and the questions and answers, and then look back on your own faith and life through the sermons.

I hope that everyone who reads this book believes with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished and receives the remission of all sins. And I hope that each one receives the Holy Spirit and becomes a child of God, discerns the times by the word in these last days full of disasters and delusion, and, united with the church of God, serves the gospel with the abilities entrusted to him.

I earnestly pray that until the day the Lord comes again, you will preach the gospel of life to the whole world, keep the faith before any tribulation and persecution, and live as faithful workers who hope for the resurrection, the rapture, and the eternal kingdom of God. I give all the glory to God the Father,

the Son, and the Holy Spirit, who has saved us through the baptism, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and who is with us to the end of the age. ✉

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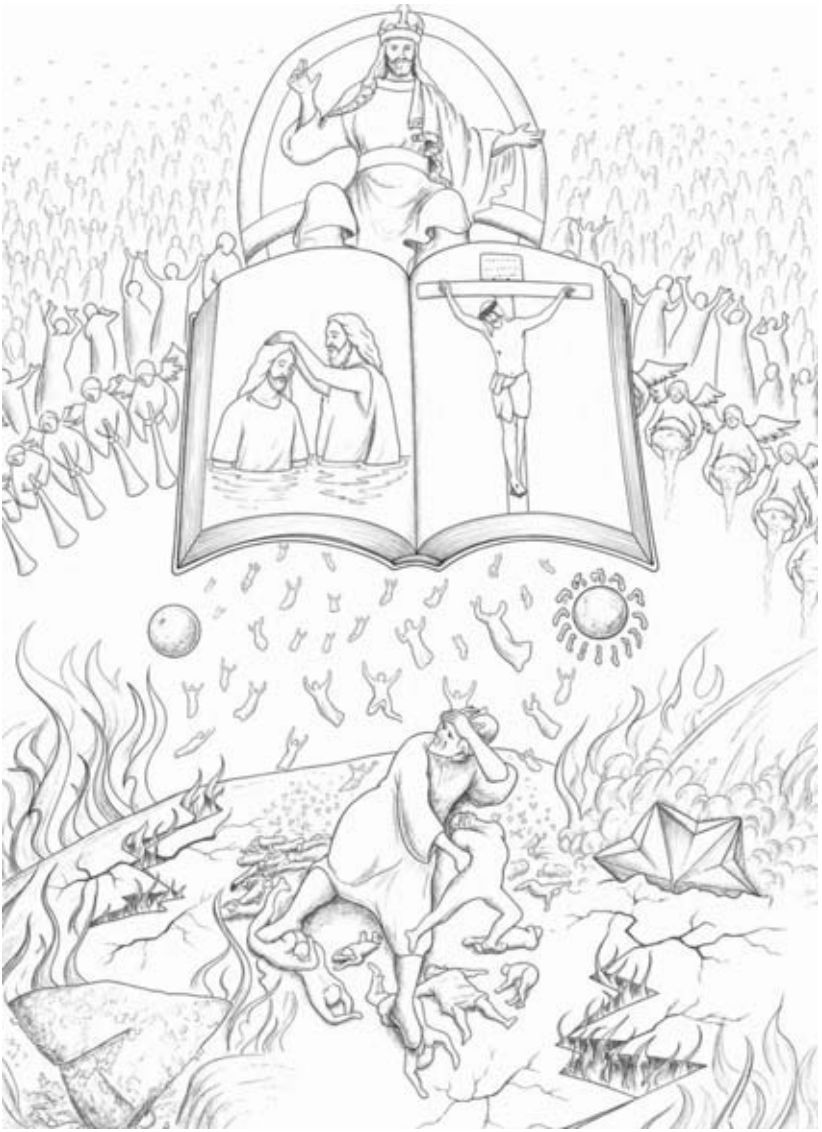

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Matthew Chapter 24

< Matthew 24:1-51 >

“Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, ‘Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.’ Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, ‘Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?’ And Jesus answered and said to them: ‘Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. ‘Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name’s sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come. ‘Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’

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(whoever reads, let him understand), ‘then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. ‘Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. ‘Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. ‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. ‘Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that

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summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. 'But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 'Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 24 is the chapter in which Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, spoke to His disciples about the destruction of the temple, the tribulation to come, the worldwide preaching of the gospel, the return of the Son of Man, and the final judgment. It is commonly called the "Olivet Discourse."

This discourse begins with the foretelling of the destruction of the temple, but it shows as actual events the disasters and deception of the last days, the appearance of the Antichrist and the great tribulation, the martyrdom of the saints, and the Second Coming of Jesus and the rapture. Therefore, we must examine wars, famines, and earthquakes, as well as the changes in science, technology, and the world order, in the light of this word, discerning that now is the age of disasters, and we must follow the commands Jesus repeated: "Do not be deceived," "do not be afraid," "endure to the end," and "watch."

1. Jesus foretells the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem (verses 1–2)

When Jesus went out of the temple and was leaving, the disciples pointed to the temple buildings, wanting to show Him their magnificence. In those days the temple in Jerusalem was an edifice built of great and beautiful stones, and it was the center of the religious pride of the Jews.

But Jesus said that not one stone would be left upon another, and that all would be thrown down. This was fulfilled historically in A.D. 70, when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Roman army.

The magnificence of the temple and its religious tradition could not hold back the judgment of God. What God looks for is not a splendid building but people who believe and obey His

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word. If people abandon the will of God and rely only on religious outward forms, then no matter how solid something may look, it can collapse.

2. The disciples ask about the signs of the end of the age (verse 3)

When Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately and asked three things. They asked when the temple would be destroyed, what sign there would be when Jesus comes again, and what would happen at the end of the age.

The answer of Jesus goes beyond foretelling the destruction of the temple and shows the flow of events that will actually take place at the end of the world. It is a word that leads from the beginning of sorrows and the preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, to the abomination of desolation and the Antichrist who will appear in the rebuilt temple, to the great tribulation and martyrdom, and then to the Second Coming of Jesus and the rapture of the saints that will follow.

Therefore, we must not regard Matthew chapter 24 merely as a prophecy that ended in the past. We must compare the disasters and wars appearing in today's reality, the advance of science and technology, and the changes in the world order with the end-time words of the Bible and discern the times. However, setting the date of the Second Coming on the basis of present events is a matter of going beyond the word of the Lord.

3. The first thing to beware of is deception (verses 4–5)

The first thing Jesus said was not about wars or earthquakes; it was, *"Take heed that no one deceives you."* The greatest danger of the last days is not the disasters themselves but being deceived by false christs and false teachings.

Many will come in the name of Jesus, claiming that they themselves are the Christ, and they will deceive people. False teaching does not always come in a form that blatantly denies Jesus. It can deceive people by using the name of Jesus, the Bible, signs, and religious authority.

Therefore, we must not judge something to be the work of God merely because we have seen an amazing experience or a miracle. We must discern whether that teaching agrees with the Bible and whether it testifies of Jesus Christ rightly. If a particular person claims that he alone is the savior, or that people can be saved only by joining his group, we must be on our guard.

4. Wars, famines, and earthquakes are the beginning of sorrows (verses 6–8)

Jesus said that there would be wars and rumors of wars, clashes of nation against nation, wars of kingdom against kingdom, and famines and earthquakes in various places. But He said that even when such things happen, it does not mean that the end has come right away.

Jesus called this *"the beginning of sorrows."* This expression shows that, like the beginning of birth pains, suffering will be repeated and intensify as the world moves toward its final consummation.

We must not declare the end of the world by setting a specific date every time a war or an earthquake breaks out. Rather, Jesus said, *"See that you are not troubled."* Believers do not take disasters lightly, but neither are they seized with terror and swept along by false prophecies and groundless rumors.

Disasters awaken people to the fact that the world man has built is not eternal and that the kingdom of God and salvation

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are needed. Therefore, what we must do in the age of disasters is not calculate dates but help those who suffer, examine our own faith, and preach the gospel.

5. An age of persecution, betrayal, and love growing cold (verses 9–13)

The disciples of Jesus will suffer tribulation and persecution because of the name of the Lord and will be hated by all nations. In fact, from the time of the early Church, many believers were persecuted because of the gospel. This word shows that keeping the faith will not be easy in the last days either.

There is not only persecution from the outside. Even within the community, people will be offended, betray one another, and hate one another. Many false prophets will appear and deceive people, and as lawlessness abounds, the love of many will grow cold.

In the time of tribulation, a person's true heart is revealed. To protect themselves, people may betray others, abandon their faith out of fear, and give up love and mercy when suffering drags on.

The word *"But he who endures to the end shall be saved"* does not mean that a person buys salvation as the merit of having endured suffering. It means that whoever truly believes in Jesus does not forsake the Lord even amid tribulation and deception but keeps the faith. Endurance is not an act that pays the price of salvation; it is the fruit that appears from true faith.

6. The gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world (verse 14)

Jesus 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."

What stands at the center of God's plan for the end of the world is not war or disaster but the preaching of the gospel. Before the judgment comes, God opens the way so that all nations can hear the gospel. Believers should not look at the end only with fear but see it as the opportunity to bring the news of salvation to those who have not yet heard the gospel.

Preaching the gospel is not a method by which man calculates dates and hastens the end. When the end will come is God's authority. What is entrusted to believers is not to calculate results and timing but to testify of the gospel faithfully in the place given to them.

7. The abomination of desolation and the great tribulation that will come upon Judea (verses 15–22)

Jesus said that when they see the *"abomination of desolation,"* spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place, those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains at once. He warned that a situation so urgent would come that there would be no time even to go back home to get one's belongings.

This word is connected with the temple that will be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the last days. After Israel builds the temple and restores the sacrifices, the great tribulation will begin in earnest when the Antichrist enters that holy place, takes the seat of God, calls himself God, and forces people to worship him.

Therefore, the *"abomination of desolation"* cannot be seen merely as a vague symbol of evil. It refers to the event in which the Antichrist, who opposes God, sits in the rebuilt temple, declares himself to be God, and demands to be served. When this sign appears, believers must discern that the time of the final tribulation has arrived.

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That tribulation will be very severe, but it is not a situation beyond God's rule. For the sake of His elect, God will shorten those days. Even in the midst of tribulation, God's sovereignty and protection do not disappear.

8. We must beware of false christs who perform signs and wonders (verses 23–28)

When the tribulation grows severe, people will look for a savior. At that time, someone may say that the Christ is here or that He is there. False christs and false prophets will show great signs and wonders to try to deceive people.

The mere fact that a sign has taken place is no proof that the person is a man of God. This is because false prophets can also do things that astonish people. What matters more than miracles is whether the word he preaches agrees with the gospel of the Bible.

The Second Coming of Jesus is not a secret event known only to some people, nor an event to be verified in an inner room. It will appear as clearly and publicly as lightning flashing from the east to the west. If someone claims that the Christ has already returned in secret and is in a particular place, that claim does not agree with the word of Jesus.

The word *"For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together"* refers to the actual scene in the great tribulation, when the corpses of the martyrs killed by the Antichrist and his servants become many, and the eagles gather to feed on those carcasses. This is a sign showing that after the event of martyrdom takes place, the time has come for Jesus Christ to return.

9. The Son of Man comes with power and great glory (verses 29–31)

After the great tribulation, actual cosmic changes will take place: the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. This is not human imagination or a mere symbol; it is the end-time sign in which God the Creator moves all the things of nature, and after it the Son of Man will appear with power and great glory.

When Jesus first came to this earth, He came in a lowly and humble form. But when He comes again, He will come on the clouds with power and great glory. At that time, no one will be able to call Jesus an ordinary man or a false prophet. All nations will see His authority.

Jesus will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet and gather His elect from one end of heaven to the other. Not one of the Lord's people scattered throughout the world will be forgotten; they will all be gathered to the Lord. To believers, the Second Coming is not only a day of fear but the day when salvation and hope are completed.

10. The parable of the fig tree and the signs of the times (verses 32–35)

When the branch of the fig tree becomes tender and puts forth leaves, we can know that summer is near. In the same way, when we see the things Jesus spoke of appearing, we must know that the coming of the Son of Man is near.

The fig tree represents Israel. That Israel, which had long lost its nation and been scattered, recovered its nation in 1948 is an end-time sign like the branch of the fig tree becoming tender and putting forth leaves. Believers who have seen this sign must discern that the coming of the Son of Man is near,

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but they must not use it to calculate the date of the Second Coming.

The word *"this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place"* is connected with the last age in which Israel, symbolized by the fig tree, has been restored. It means that after the nation of Israel was established again, before that nation disappears from the world, the end-time events Jesus spoke of will be fulfilled and the Lord will return. We cannot know the exact year and date, but the generation that has seen the restoration of Israel must know that the coming of the Lord is near and stay awake.

What is certain is the word: *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."* Human calculations can be wrong, but the words of Jesus are certain to be fulfilled.

11. No one knows that day and hour (verse 36)

Jesus said that no one knows the day and hour of His return, but His Father only. Therefore, the act of calculating a specific date and time and prophesying the return of Jesus goes against this word.

The purpose of Bible prophecy is not to satisfy curiosity or to find out a secret date. It is to make us prepare today's faith and life so that we can greet the Lord whenever He comes.

No one can know the exact date and time of the Second Coming. But that does not mean this word leaves us wholly unable to discern the time and season of the end. Believers must know that the coming of the Lord is near by examining the signs Jesus gave and today's reality in the light of the word, and they must always stay awake and prepared without setting dates.

12. Judgment that comes suddenly, as in the days of Noah (verses 37–41)

Jesus said that His coming would be as the days of Noah. Before the flood came, people were eating and drinking, marrying, and living their ordinary daily lives. This does not mean that eating, drinking, and marrying are sins. The problem was that they ignored God's warning and lived as if the daily life of the world would continue forever.

Until the day Noah entered the ark, people did not realize that judgment was approaching. In the same way, the Second Coming of Jesus will also come suddenly, at a time when many people do not expect it.

At that time, a decisive separation will take place between people who were in the same field and at the same mill. The one who is taken is the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and been born again of the Spirit; the one who is left is the person who still holds sin in his heart. This taking does not mean something accomplished in advance, before the tribulation; it is the rapture that takes place together with the Second Coming of Jesus, after the appearance of the Antichrist and the martyrdom of the saints.

The clear point of this passage is that even those who outwardly do the same work in the same place will meet different ends before the Lord. No one is saved automatically for belonging to a family or a church community; each person must stand before the Lord by faith.

13. The command to watch and be ready (verses 42–44)

If the master of the house had known when the thief would come, he would have watched. The Second Coming of Jesus will also come at a time when people do not expect it.

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Therefore Jesus commanded, *"Watch"* and *"be ready."*

To watch does not mean to go without sleep or to live gazing only at the sky every day. It is to discern false teachings, to keep one's faith in the Lord, and to carry out faithfully the work entrusted to us.

Abandoning one's occupation and family responsibilities, or selling off one's property and offering it to a particular group in the name of preparing for the Second Coming, is not biblical preparation. Right preparation is to do today's work honestly, love our neighbors, preach the gospel, and live a life that is not ashamed before the Lord.

14. The faithful and wise servant (verses 45–47)

Jesus said that the faithful and wise servant gives food in due season to those whom his master has entrusted to him. If, when the master returns, that servant is faithfully doing the work entrusted to him, he is blessed.

To "give them food in due season" means, first of all, to provide the word and the care needed by the people entrusted to us. A spiritual leader is not someone who treats people as his own possessions but a steward who has been entrusted with the Lord's people and looks after them.

The faithful servant does not merely calculate when his master is coming. He continues the work entrusted to him until the master comes. The person who waits for the Second Coming most rightly is not the one who talks about it the most, but the one who faithfully carries out today the mission the Lord has entrusted to him.

15. The evil servant who thought his master was delaying (verses 48–51)

The evil servant thought that his master would delay his

coming. He beat his fellow servants, ate and drank with the drunkards, and used the authority his master had entrusted to him for his own desires.

The master's delay revealed the servant's true heart. There are those who remain faithful even when the master is out of sight, and there are also those who abuse others when they think no one is watching. True faith in the Second Coming does not frighten and dominate people; it makes us remember that we are servants who must answer to the Master.

The master returns at a time the evil servant does not expect and judges him. Holding an office and authority in the church guarantees no one's safety. Rather, the one who has been entrusted with much bears greater responsibility. A leader who beats and exploits others and fills his own desires will receive the solemn judgment of the Lord.

16. The overall lesson of Matthew Chapter 24

The purpose of Matthew chapter 24 is not to lock believers up in terror of disasters. By telling His disciples in advance that there would be hardships in the last days, Jesus kept them from being bewildered or deceived.

Even when believers see wars, famines, and earthquakes, they must not immediately set the date of the end. They must not be dazzled by the miracles of false christs and false prophets, and they must take care that their love does not grow cold amid persecution and lawlessness. Believing that God rules the world, they must preach the gospel to all nations and keep the faith to the end.

The Second Coming of the Lord is not a secret event made known only to some people; it will take place clearly and gloriously enough for everyone to know. We cannot know that day and hour, but the word of the Lord is certain to be fulfilled.

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Therefore, the most right way to prepare for the Second Coming is to share the food of life today with the people entrusted to us, to serve the gospel and our neighbors, and to live as faithful and wise servants.

To sum up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 24 tells us that although the temple and the order of this world will collapse, the word of Jesus stands forever and the Lord is certain to come again in glory; therefore, we must not calculate dates or fear disasters, but discern false teachings, keep love and faith to the end, and faithfully carry out the work of the gospel entrusted to us.

2) Matthew Chapter 24 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 24 is not a word given so that we would guess the signs of the last days or calculate the date of the Second Coming. Jesus taught what gospel we must believe and keep when tribulation and deception intensify, and how those who have received the remission of sins must live until the Lord comes.

The person who can greet the Lord boldly when He comes again is not the one who relies on his own deeds, but the one who believes that Jesus completely removed all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and with the blood of the Cross. And the faithful servant who watches is the one who gives out this gospel of the water and the Spirit as the food of life in due season.

1. The temple collapses, but the salvation the Lord accomplished is eternal (verses 1–2)

The disciples marveled as they looked at the magnificent buildings of the temple in Jerusalem, but Jesus said that not one stone would be left upon another and that it would be thrown down. This refers first to the historical judgment that would come upon Jerusalem and the temple.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this word also shows that the religious outward forms and institutions people rely on are not eternal. No matter how magnificent a church building, how long a tradition, and how elaborate a worship ritual one may have, if the sins of the heart have not been washed away, no one can enter the kingdom of God by such things.

What God acknowledges forever is not the religious buildings people have raised but the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. Jesus said, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."* Even though the institutions and buildings of this world collapse, the gospel—that Jesus took our sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross—does not change.

Therefore, the first step in preparing for the last days is not to boast of an outward religious life but to make sure whether our faith stands on the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

2. What we must beware of first in the last days is the deception against the gospel (verses 4–5)

To the disciples asking about the signs of the end of the age, the very first thing Jesus said was, *"Take heed that no one deceives you."* What He warned of before wars and earthquakes was deception.

False christs do not always appear blatantly denying the

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name of Jesus. They can use the name of Jesus, speak of the Bible, and hold up amazing experiences and signs, and yet blur the salvation Jesus actually accomplished.

The standard for discerning deception is not a person's character or popularity, nor the size of the miracle, but the content of the gospel. The true Christ is the Son of God who came to this earth in a human body. By being baptized in the Jordan River by John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, He received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body. And bearing those sins, He was crucified, shed His blood and died, and rose again on the third day.

If anyone teaches that we need only believe in the blood of the Cross while leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John, or that because Jesus failed to remove all sins, man must wash his sins away daily with prayers of repentance, that is different from the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A teaching that makes people add their own deeds back into salvation holds sinners under sin to the very end.

The more we live in the last days, the more we must stop chasing after new mysteries and return to the gospel of the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that Jesus has already completed.

3. Why we must not be afraid even amid wars and disasters (verses 6–8)

Even while saying that there would be wars and rumors of wars, famines and earthquakes, Jesus said, *"See that you are not troubled."* Such things are the beginning of sorrows, but the end is not yet.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also go through disasters and suffering. Receiving the remission of sins does not mean that we never meet war,

disease, or economic hardship. But believers have no need to fear that a disaster is the eternal punishment for their sins. This is because Jesus has already received the judgment of our sins in our place on the Cross.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all our sins—past, present, and future. Since He paid the wages of all those sins on the Cross, there is no condemnation for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The body may suffer disasters and even die, but the soul has already obtained eternal life.

Therefore, when believers meet a disaster, rather than being swayed by terror and rumors, they must confirm the gospel again. We must hold on, with present-tense faith, to the fact: "The Lord took upon Himself even the sins of a weak person like me, was judged in my place, and has made me a righteous person without sin."

4. To endure to the end is to believe the gospel to the end (verses 9–13)

In the last days, believers may be hated and persecuted because of the name of Jesus. Many will be offended and betray and hate one another, and false prophets will deceive people. As lawlessness abounds, love also grows cold.

We must not understand the word *"But he who endures to the end shall be saved"* to mean that we obtain salvation as the merit of having endured suffering for a long time. Salvation was completed by Jesus, and we receive it by faith. To endure to the end is to keep believing, even amid tribulation and deception, in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood, without casting it away.

It is hard to endure to the end by human will alone. But the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received

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the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When believers grow weak, the Holy Spirit reminds them of the baptism of Jesus and the Cross, and He holds their faith firm so that they do not deny the Lord.

This does not mean, however, that the saved may live however they please. To keep the faith is not to claim the gospel with the lips only; it is to choose a life that does not betray our brothers and sisters even under persecution, does not abandon love even when lawlessness abounds, and suffers together with the gospel.

5. What is the *"gospel of the kingdom"* that must be preached in all the world? (verse 14)

Jesus 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."* In the last days, the most important work of God is not bringing disasters but testifying to all nations of the gospel that saves sinners.

The gospel of the kingdom is not a teaching that tells sinners to live good lives on their own and so enter heaven. It is the news that God has completed salvation for sinners, and that they should believe it and come into the kingdom of heaven.

The Son of God came to this earth in the flesh. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to Him. The Lord carried those sins to the Cross, shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in full, and by rising again He overcame sin and death. The Holy Spirit testifies that this salvation is true and complete.

Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all sins, becomes righteous, and obtains eternal life. God wants everyone,

without distinction of nation, language, or status, to believe this gospel and be saved.

Therefore, believers living in the last days must not be absorbed only in calculating the date of the end; they must bring this news of salvation to those who have not heard the gospel. Serving so that the gospel of the kingdom is preached—through books, words, videos, many languages, and the testimony of our lives—is the work the Church must do in the last age.

6. In the time of the great tribulation, faith matters more than worldly possessions (verses 15–22)

Jesus said that when they see the abomination of desolation standing in the holy place, those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains. He said that a tribulation so urgent would come that there would be no time to go back for the things in the house or for the clothes left in the field.

This word points to the temple that will be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the last days and to the Antichrist who will appear there. When the Antichrist declares himself to be God in the temple and forces people to worship him, the great tribulation will begin in earnest. We cannot know the exact date, but believers must discern the rebuilding of the temple and the appearance of the Antichrist as the decisive signs recorded in the word.

What this passage clearly teaches is that when tribulation strikes, we must not lose our faith while trying to protect our property and the conveniences of life. When things are peaceful, people talk as if they would believe at any cost, but in a crisis where life and property are about to be taken away, what a person treasures most is revealed.

To the person born again of water and the Spirit, the most

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precious thing is not worldly possessions but the remission of sins and the eternal life the Lord has given. Our bodies can be taken from us, but no one can take away the salvation Jesus accomplished. For the sake of His elect, God governs even the days of tribulation.

7. We must believe the written gospel rather than great signs (verses 23–28)

In the last days, false christs and false prophets will show great signs and wonders and deceive people. The more anxious people become, the more they look for powerful leaders and visible miracles.

But a great sign does not make a teaching the truth. Even if someone heals the sick and utters amazing prophecies, if he does not rightly preach the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, we must not follow him. The work of the Holy Spirit does not bind people to a particular leader; it leads them to believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

The Second Coming of Jesus is not an event we can know only if someone informs us, saying, *"He is in the desert"* or that He has come secretly to an inner room. It will appear so that everyone can know it, like lightning flashing from the east to the west. Therefore, anyone who claims to be the returned Christ, or claims that Christ has already returned in secret, does not agree with the word of Jesus.

A watchful faith is not looking for a new christ; it is keeping to the end Jesus Christ, who saved us from the beginning, and His gospel of the water and the Spirit.

8. Jesus, who comes in glory, is the Savior who first washed away our sins (verses 29–31)

When Jesus first came to this earth, He came in the form of

a frail baby and appeared as a humble King riding on a donkey. To serve sinners, the Lord lowered Himself, received baptism from John, and was crucified.

But when He comes again, He will come with power and great glory. The powers of the heavens will be shaken, and all nations will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds. The Lord will send His angels and gather His elect scattered in all directions.

To those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Second Coming is not a day of condemnation but the day salvation is completed. Because they have already received the remission of sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and the Cross, they can greet the Lord, the Judge, as their own Savior. Those whose bodies have died will rise again, and those who are alive will also share in the glorious life the Lord gives.

But to those who have rejected the gospel and still hold their sins, the Second Coming is the day of judgment. Jesus is not One who passes over sin lightly; He is the righteous King who judges the sin of having rejected to the very end the salvation He provided.

9. The parable of the fig tree shows the restoration of Israel and the time of the end (verses 32–36)

The fig tree represents Israel, and Israel's recovery of its nation in 1948 is an important sign announcing that the last days are near. Just as we know that summer is near when the branch becomes tender and leaves come out, so we must know that the Lord's return is near as we see the restoration of Israel and the various signs Jesus spoke of. However, no one knows the exact date of that day and hour.

To discern the times is to look at the restoration of Israel,

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the disasters, and the changes of a world preparing for the appearance of the Antichrist in the light of the word, and to know that the end is near. It is not, however, to fix a particular year and date. We must not grow complacent, saying, “I once considered myself saved long ago, so I am fine”; we must believe even now that all our sins were washed away by the baptism of Jesus and the Cross, and preach the gospel.

The gospel is not knowledge kept only as a memory of the past. Whenever we discover our weakness, we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the present tense. This does not mean receiving the remission of sins anew; it is confirming again in our hearts the remission of sins the Lord has already completed and giving thanks.

Even when my feelings are dark and my flesh looks lacking, the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and took even those sins upon Himself does not change. Heaven and earth will pass away, but the word of the Lord will not pass away; therefore our salvation also is secure upon the word of the Lord.

10. The faith needed in an age like the days of Noah (verses 37–41)

The people of Noah’s day ate, drank, and married, living their ordinary daily lives until the flood came. Daily life itself was not the sin; the problem was that they did not believe the word of God’s judgment and salvation.

Noah did not prepare the ark because he could see rain before his eyes. He entered the ark because he believed the word of God. In its gospel application, Jesus Christ is like the ark of salvation in which we escape the judgment. We escape the judgment of sin in the baptism of Jesus and His Cross.

Different ends appear for people who worked in the same field and ground at the same mill. Even though people

outwardly attend the same church and offer the same worship, one person may have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, while another may still hold sin in his heart.

Belonging to a family or a church community is no substitute for salvation. Each person must believe with the heart that Jesus took all his sins upon Himself with His baptism and was judged on the Cross.

11. To watch is to live with faith in the remission of sins (verses 42–44)

Jesus said to watch, because we do not know on what day the Lord will come. To watch is not to keep chasing rumors about the Second Coming or to abandon daily life and gaze only at the sky.

First, our own remission of sins must be certain. If we still believe we are sinners bound for judgment even though Jesus took on all our sins, we cannot help being afraid when the Lord comes. The faith that we have become righteous, without sin before God, by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—this is the preparation for greeting the Second Coming.

Second, we must follow the leading of the Holy Spirit who dwells in our hearts. The person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells does not live for his flesh alone but thinks of the Lord and the work of the gospel. When he does wrong, he admits that wrong and turns back, and he sets his life straight so that the gospel is not hindered.

Third, we must do the work entrusted to us today. To carry out faithfully the responsibilities of family and occupation, help those in hardship, preach the gospel, and serve souls together with the church—this is the watchful life.

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12. The food of life that must be given out in due season (verses 45–47)

The faithful and wise servant gives food in due season to the people his master has entrusted to him. In the dimension of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the most important spiritual food is the word that makes known how Jesus saved sinners.

To the person weighed down by sin, we must preach the word that Jesus took even his sins upon Himself with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. To the person who fears judgment, we must make known the fact that Jesus received the judgment of those sins in his place on the Cross. And with the person despairing in the face of death, we must share the hope that Jesus rose again and gives eternal life and resurrection to those who believe.

Giving out food in due season does not mean preaching only. It also includes making, translating, and delivering gospel books, teaching the word, helping those who preach the gospel to keep working, and looking after the weak.

The faithful servant does not treat people as his own possessions. As a steward entrusted with the Master's sheep, he serves them so that they are not bound to any man but believe in Jesus Christ and the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

13. The evil servant who thought his master was delaying (verses 48–51)

The evil servant thought his master would delay his coming, and he beat his fellow servants and ate and drank following his own desires. He held the position of a servant, but he did not live according to his master's will.

When faith in the Second Coming disappears, people can use their authority in the church to dominate others, use material things for their own greed, or treat others carelessly.

The knowledge of the gospel and a church office do not automatically make a person a faithful servant.

Nor must we use the assurance of the remission of sins to justify the indulgence of the flesh. If anyone says, “Jesus has removed all sins, so it does not matter how I live,” and enjoys greed and unrighteousness, he is going against the meaning of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus washed away all our sins not so that we would enjoy sin more, but so that we would be saved from sin and freed from condemnation and live following the Holy Spirit. The person who is truly saved wants to serve the Lord and the gospel because the grace he has received is so great.

14. The direction in which those born again of water and the Spirit are to live in the last age

Matthew chapter 24 is not a chapter that teaches us to hide and save only ourselves when disaster comes. Jesus told us to discern deception, not to be afraid, not to let love grow cold, to keep the faith to the end, and to preach the gospel of the kingdom to all nations.

We cannot know the exact date of the end of the world. But we do know the fact that we now have the opportunity to preach the gospel. Therefore, until the Lord comes, we must clearly testify of the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection. To those who still suffer with sin remaining in their hearts, we must bring the good news that the Lord has already removed all their sins.

The person who has received the remission of sins is not someone with a strong body who feels no fear of tribulation at all. He may be weak in the flesh and feel fear, but he is the person who relies on the Holy Spirit in his heart and does not cast away the gospel. The Holy Spirit gives the word and the

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faith that are needed and holds him so that he follows the Lord to the end.

15. The core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Matthew Chapter 24 conveys

Jesus said that in the last days false christs and false prophets would deceive many people, that wars, disasters, and persecution would arise, and that lawlessness would abound and love would grow cold. But the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can hold on to the salvation Jesus completed even amid the confusion of the world.

Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God who came in a human body. With the baptism He received from John, the Lord received all our sins passed on to Him; on the Cross He received all the judgment of those sins; and He rose again from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life, and can hope for the return of the Lord.

Therefore, the watchful life is not a life of calculating the date of the Second Coming; it is a life of believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit even now, discerning false teachings, keeping love and faith even in tribulation, and giving out the food of life to souls in due season.

To sum up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 24 tells us to believe to the end in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, so as to overcome deception and tribulation; to preach this gospel of the kingdom to all nations; and, as faithful and wise servants who have received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, to stay awake and greet the return of the Lord. ✉

Matthew Chapter 24

The true preparation that overcomes the last days is to receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to stay awake waiting for the Lord

Introductory Words

Matthew chapter 24 is the chapter in which Jesus, on the Mount of Olives, spoke to His disciples about the destruction of the temple, the tribulation to come, the worldwide preaching of the gospel, and the return of the Son of Man and the final judgment; it is commonly called the “Olivet Discourse.” When the disciples boasted of the temple buildings, Jesus said that not one stone would be left upon another and that all would be thrown down.

The disciples asked when such things would be, and what signs there would be of the Lord’s coming and of the end of the age. Jesus first told them to take heed that no one deceives them, and said that many would come in the name of Christ and deceive people. He said that wars, famines, and

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earthquakes are the beginning of sorrows, and that although there would be persecution, betrayal, and love growing cold, he who endures to the end will be saved.

Jesus said that this gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end would come. And He warned that when the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place, there will be great tribulation in Judea, and that at that time false christs and false prophets will show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect—so we must not be deceived.

After the tribulation of those days, the sun will be darkened, the stars will fall from heaven, the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and the Son of Man will come on the clouds with power and great glory. At that time He will send His angels and gather His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other. The Second Coming of Jesus is a certain event that will surely take place.

With the parable of the fig tree, Jesus said that when we see all these signs, we are to know that the Son of Man is near, right at the doors; and yet He said that no one knows that day and hour except the Father. Therefore, we must stay awake for that day, which will come suddenly as in the days of Noah, and, like the faithful and wise servant, carry out faithfully the work the Master has entrusted to us.

The true preparation that overcomes the last days does not lie in calculating dates; it lies in the faith that has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and so can greet the Lord whenever He comes. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took on the sin of the world, paid the wages of those sins on the Cross, and completed the salvation by rising again. Now, examining the words of this

passage in order, let us look into the signs of the last days and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that keeps us awake, waiting for that day.

Even though the visible temple collapses, the salvation Jesus established with the gospel of the water and the Spirit will never collapse

"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.'" (Matthew 24:1–2).

Matthew chapter 24 begins with the scene of Jesus going out of the temple. In chapter 23, immediately before, Jesus rebuked the hypocrisy of the scribes and Pharisees and said that the house of Jerusalem would be left desolate. Therefore, this scene of His leaving the temple carries a meaning beyond a simple change of place.

The temple in Jerusalem was the center of faith and of the nation for the Jews of that day. The temple was large and magnificent, adorned with beautiful stones and offerings. The disciples, too, were deeply impressed by the scale and beauty of that temple.

The disciples tried to point out the temple buildings to Jesus because they also took pride in the visible glory of the temple. They may have thought that such a magnificent temple would be preserved forever under God's protection. But what Jesus saw was different from what the disciples saw.

The disciples saw the beautiful stones of the temple, but Jesus saw the unbelief and hypocrisy inside it. The disciples

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saw the grandeur of the building, but Jesus saw a religious system that had rejected God, the Owner of the temple. Man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at whether there is life and truth within.

The temple was originally the place where God met sinners and showed them the way of the remission of sins. The priests passed the sinner's sins onto the sacrificial offering, and that offering shed its blood and died in the sinner's place. All these sacrifices were a shadow showing in advance Jesus Christ, who would take on the sin of the world.

But the religious leaders had lost the true meaning of the temple. They offered sacrifices in the temple and taught the Law, yet they did not receive Jesus, the Savior to whom the temple and all its sacrifices testified. While boasting of the temple building, they rejected Jesus, the Owner of the temple.

That Jesus went out of the temple shows that God is not confined to a building made with hands. However holy a place's history may be, if the word and the righteousness of God are rejected there, the building itself cannot guarantee the presence of God.

The true temple where God dwells is not simply a building made of stone. First of all, Jesus Christ Himself is the true temple where God and sinners meet. No sinner can come before God except through Jesus.

The sacrificial offerings presented in the temple of the Old Testament bore the sinner's sins in his place. But the sacrifice of animals was a model that showed in advance the salvation of Jesus Christ who was to come. Jesus came to this earth to actually take on all the sins of the world and accomplish eternal redemption.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to His

own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Just as sins were passed onto the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, Jesus took on the sins of all the people of the world by receiving baptism.

After that, Jesus was crucified bearing the sin of the world. By shedding His blood and dying there, He received in our place the judgment of sin that we should have received. And He rose again on the third day, overcoming sin and death and completing eternal salvation.

Therefore, the true remission of sins is not obtained by entering the place called the temple in Jerusalem. Nor are the sins of the heart washed away because a person worships in a beautiful chapel and presents many offerings. It is when we believe with the heart in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood that we receive the remission of sins.

Jesus asked, *"Do you not see all these things?"* The disciples were already looking at the temple, but they did not see the spiritual state of that temple or the judgment that was to come upon it. The Lord wanted them to see the will of God beyond the outward beauty.

In the life of faith, too, what we see matters. People can see the size, history, buildings, membership, and finances of a church. But God sees whether the gospel of the water and the Spirit is being preached accurately within it, and whether people have believed that gospel and actually received the remission of sins.

Large buildings and long traditions are not wrong in themselves. Preparing a building to serve God and keeping it beautiful can also be necessary. But if buildings and traditions are placed ahead of Jesus Christ and the gospel He accomplished, they can become idols.

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Concerning the temple, Jesus declared, *"Not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down."* To human eyes it was a building so solid that it seemed it could never fall, but in the face of the judgment of God it could not last forever.

This prophecy was fulfilled historically when Jerusalem and the temple were destroyed by the Roman army after Jesus spoke it. It became clear that no one can rely only on buildings and religious institutions while rejecting God.

The fundamental reason the temple fell was not that there was any fault in its stones. It was because they rejected Jesus, the Owner of the temple, and lost the true purpose of the temple: the remission of sins and reconciliation with God. The outward form of a religion from which the gospel has disappeared cannot last forever, however splendid it may be.

The temple and the sacrifices of the Old Testament foreshadowed the salvation Jesus would come and accomplish. When Jesus took on all sins with the baptism He received from John and accomplished eternal redemption on the Cross, the substance of that foreshadowing appeared. Now sinners come to God not through the blood of animals and the sacrifices of the temple, but by believing in Jesus Christ.

Therefore, to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus is the foundation of complete salvation. The buildings and institutions of this world can change and collapse, but the remission of sins Jesus accomplished does not change. This is because all sins were taken on by the Lord's baptism, and the wages of those sins were paid in full on the Cross.

Believers themselves also become the temple of God in which the Holy Spirit dwells. This is not because man is holy by nature. It is because they have believed in the gospel of the

water and the Spirit, been washed of all their sins, and received the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The Holy Spirit does not dwell in the hypocrisy of those who claim to be righteous on their own while believing that sin still remains in their hearts. He dwells in the heart of the person who has believed the word that Jesus washed away all sins, actually received the remission of the sins of his heart, and become righteous. That is why the saved must keep holy not only a building made of stone but also their own hearts and lives.

However, that believers have become the temple of God does not mean that the conduct of the flesh instantly becomes perfect. Even the saved are weak and can make mistakes. But such a person does not hide his sins and put on a hypocritical front; relying on the grace of the remission of sins he has already received, he obeys the word and goes on correcting his wrong conduct.

This word makes us examine what our faith is built upon. If our faith is built on a church building, a particular leader, the traditions of a denomination, or our own religious career, then when those things are shaken, our faith can collapse with them.

But if our faith is built on the word of the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, our salvation is not shaken even when the circumstances of the world change. The foundation of true faith is not visible stones but the word of God that never changes.

That Jesus spoke of the destruction of the temple does not mean that all church buildings are unnecessary. Nor is it a word telling us to hate any particular nation or people. It is a warning given to everyone who relies on religious outward forms more than on God.

Today, too, there is something that must come before

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building large chapels and making the name of a church widely known. Within the church, the complete remission of sins that Jesus accomplished with His baptism and the Cross must be testified. Sinners must hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe it, and be born again.

A small gathering where the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached accurately can be more precious before God than a large temple without the gospel. What God wants is not a splendid exterior but hearts that believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and a church that preaches that gospel.

Matthew 24:1–2 tell us that nothing visible in this world is eternal, however solid it may be. Buildings, institutions, and human achievements will all disappear someday. But the salvation Jesus completed by taking on all sins and being judged will never collapse.

Therefore, we must look not to the glory of the visible temple but to Jesus Christ, the true temple. We must believe in our hearts the gospel the Lord accomplished with the water and the Spirit, build our faith on that gospel, and preach the unchanging word of the remission of sins to other souls as well.

The most important preparation of the last days is not calculating the times but believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, keeping it to the end, and preaching it

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying,

'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. 'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come" (Matthew 24:3–14).

When Jesus said that the temple in Jerusalem would be completely destroyed, the disciples quietly questioned the Lord on the Mount of Olives. They wanted to know when the temple would be destroyed, and what signs would appear at the time of the Lord's return and at the end of the age.

The disciples' question contained together the destruction of the temple, the Lord's return, and the end of the age. The answer of Jesus shows the flow of the last age: the disasters and the preaching of the gospel, the appearance of the Antichrist and the great tribulation, the martyrdom of the saints, and the Lord's return and the rapture that will follow. We cannot fix the exact date, but we must clearly know the order of events revealed in the word.

The disciples asked *"when"* these things would happen, but Jesus first said, *"Take heed that no one deceives you."* In the Lord's eyes, the greatest danger for believers living in the last days is not that they do not know the date, but that they are

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deceived by false teaching.

People want to know the date of the end of the world and its special signs. But the Lord emphasized keeping the faith rather than a timetable that satisfies curiosity. However much knowledge of the end times a person may have, if he does not know the true gospel, he cannot escape deception.

In verse 5, Jesus said that many would come in His name, saying, *"I am the Christ,"* and would deceive people. This includes false saviors who literally claim to be the Christ. But we must also beware of false teachers who use the name of Jesus while distorting the salvation He accomplished.

False teaching does not always appear in a form that denies the name of Jesus. It can speak as if exalting Jesus and yet fail to convey accurately how the Lord saved sinners. It can also obscure the righteousness of God while emphasizing human zeal, experiences, offerings, and loyalty as if they were conditions of salvation.

Therefore, the standard for discerning deception is not a leader's fame or ability or the number of his followers. It is the written word of God. In particular, we must examine whether that teaching testifies of the complete remission of sins that Jesus Christ accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon His own body the sins of all the people of the world. Then, bearing those sins, He was crucified, shed His blood and died, receiving the punishment of sin in our place, and by rising again on the third day He overcame sin and death.

The baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection are one work of salvation that cannot be separated. The baptism is the event in which He took on our sins; the Cross is the event in which He received the judgment of the sins He had taken on; and the resurrection is the event of victory showing that

salvation has been completed. Whoever believes this gospel with the heart receives the remission of sins and is born again of the Spirit.

Therefore, if anyone speaks of the blood of the Cross while leaving out the way Jesus took on the sin of the world, or teaches that human merit must be added to the Lord's salvation, he blurs the complete gospel. To overcome deception, we must know and believe, according to the word, the whole process of the salvation Jesus accomplished.

In verse 6, Jesus said not to be troubled even when we hear of wars and rumors of wars. Wars and conflicts certainly bring severe suffering, but we must not conclude that the end of the world has come whenever a war breaks out. The Lord said, *"For all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet."*

Believers must not take lightly the wars and disasters that happen in the world, but neither must they be seized with fear. The Owner of history is not man but God, and all the events of the world are under God's permission and sovereignty. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have eternal life that cannot be taken away even by the death of the body.

In verses 7 and 8, He called the wars between nations and kingdoms, the famines, and the earthquakes *"the beginning of sorrows."* This is an expression like the beginning of birth pains. Such events show that the world is not continuing forever but moving toward God's judgment and consummation.

However, we must not calculate the date of the Second Coming on the basis of a particular war or earthquake whenever one occurs. Jesus did not tell us to use disasters to stir up terror. Rather, He told us not to be afraid, to beware of deception, and to stand firm in the gospel.

The disasters of the world show people that the things they

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have relied on are not eternal. The power of nations, the economy, science and technology, and possessions cannot guarantee eternal safety to man. The One who solves the problem of sin and death is Jesus Christ alone.

In verse 9, Jesus said that the disciples would be delivered up to tribulation and killed, and would be hated by all nations. In fact, the apostles and the believers of the early Church suffered much persecution because of the name of Jesus and the gospel. In the last days as well, those who believe and preach the true gospel may face the opposition of the world.

The reason the gospel meets opposition is not merely that the words and actions of believers make the people of the world uncomfortable. The gospel of the water and the Spirit denies man's self-righteousness and religious merit and exalts only the righteousness of Jesus Christ. To those who want to hold on to their own merit, this gospel can be a hard word to accept.

However, we must not behave rudely or create needless conflict in the name of preaching the gospel. Believers must convey the truth clearly, but with love, gentleness, and wisdom. We must be able to distinguish between the criticism we receive because of our own wrong attitude and the persecution we receive because of the gospel of Christ.

Verse 10 says that when tribulation strikes, many will be offended, and will betray one another and hate one another. When things are peaceful, everyone may look like a believer, but when hardship comes, what each heart has believed is revealed.

A person in whose heart the gospel has not taken root can abandon the faith when tribulation and loss come. To protect his own safety, he may betray his companions, hate his brothers and sisters in the faith, and compromise with the

powers of the world. That is why it is important to know the gospel accurately and engrave it on the heart while things are still peaceful.

In verse 11, Jesus said that many false prophets would rise up and deceive many. A false prophet is not merely someone who tells lies; he is someone who alters the word of God to suit his own desires and teaches it so. Rather than leading people to God, he makes them submit to himself.

False prophets may emphasize only material blessing, success, and the healing of diseases. Or they may use the terror of the end times to control people and make them give their property and devote their lives. Conversely, they may never speak of sin and judgment, teaching that all faiths are the same and so blurring the truth of salvation.

A true worker of the gospel does not exalt himself like a savior. He preaches that Jesus took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again. He does not bind people to his own organization or authority but leads them to believe in Jesus Christ and His word.

In verse 12, Jesus said that because lawlessness would abound, the love of many would grow cold. When people do not fear God and each lives following his own desires, the using and betraying of others increases. The more sin is taken for granted, the more love and trust disappear.

Here, love growing cold does not mean only that the goodwill of the people of the world decreases. It is a warning that even within the community of faith, people can put their own interests first and lose their love for the gospel and for souls. Hating one another in the name of defending the truth is not the Lord’s will either.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

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know that they themselves first received the great love of God. They were saved not because they were righteous, but because Jesus took on all their sins and punishment. When we believe this grace, the love that pities others and wants to preach the gospel to them springs up.

The word in verse 13, *"But he who endures to the end shall be saved,"* does not mean that a person obtains the remission of sins by the act of enduring suffering well. The remission of sins is received only by believing in the righteousness Jesus accomplished. Endurance is not a merit that pays the price of salvation; it is the fruit of faith that a person who believes the true gospel bears in the midst of tribulation.

To endure to the end does not mean merely gritting one's teeth and holding out by the strength of the flesh. It is refusing to cast away, even amid deception, persecution, and disaster, the gospel that Jesus washed away all my sins. It is believing that the word of God does not change even when my circumstances and feelings are shaken.

The endurance of believers does not come from their own will alone. The Holy Spirit dwells in the believer's heart, reminds him of the word, and gives him strength to keep the gospel. Believers must endure hard times in union with the church, hearing the word, praying, and encouraging one another.

In verse 14, Jesus said that the end would come after *"this gospel of the kingdom"* is preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations. At the center of what determines the end of the world, there are not only wars and disasters; there is God's plan of salvation—the preaching of the gospel.

Before God judges the world, He sees to it that all nations can hear the gospel of salvation. Beyond language, nation, and status, He makes it possible for anyone to hear of the salvation

Jesus Christ accomplished, believe it, and receive the remission of sins.

This gospel of the kingdom is not the vague news that we will be blessed if we believe in Jesus. It is the news that the Son of God came in a human body, took on the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, saving sinners completely.

Therefore, the most right way to prepare for the last days is not to set the date of the Second Coming or chase rumors of disasters. First, we must make sure whether we have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately and received the remission of sins. And we must keep this gospel unshaken and preach it to those who have not yet heard it.

Matthew 24:3–14 tell us to choose discernment over fear, faith over curiosity, and the preaching of the gospel over self-preservation. Even when the world is shaken and love grows cold, believers must hold on to the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

In the end, the true preparation of the last days is to stand in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who believes this gospel and is washed of all sins, keeps love following the leading of the Holy Spirit, does not cast away the faith even amid deception and tribulation, and preaches the gospel of the complete remission of sins to all nations—he is the one who rightly prepares for the return of the Lord.

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The way to overcome the great tribulation and deception is to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit firmly in the heart and wait for the return of the true Christ

"'Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place' (whoever reads, let him understand), 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened. 'Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. 'Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Matthew 24:15–28).

Jesus said earlier that the end would come after the gospel of the kingdom is testified to all nations. In verses 15–28 that follow, He shows together the tribulation that will strike Jerusalem and the extreme persecution and deception that will arise in the last days.

This word points to the great tribulation that will begin when the Antichrist enters the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem in the last days, calls himself God, and forces people to worship him. Believers must not dismiss this event as a vague symbol or a thing of the past; they must believe it as a word that will actually be fulfilled in the last age.

The *"abomination of desolation"* in verse 15 refers to the Antichrist who will appear in the last days. He will enter the rebuilt temple in Jerusalem, sit in the place where God should be, call himself God, and force the whole world to worship him. This is the climax of the evil that God regards as an abomination.

The words *"standing in the holy place"* mean that the Antichrist will actually enter the rebuilt temple and take the place of God. He will remove the holy furnishings of the temple, set up his own seat, call himself God, and force people to serve and praise him.

When the new temple is built in Jerusalem and the Antichrist proclaims himself to be God inside it, the decisive stage of the seven-year great tribulation will begin. When he watches, persecutes, and tries to kill those who refuse to worship him, the martyrdom of the saints will take place, and after that the Second Coming of Jesus and the rapture will follow.

The words *"whoever reads, let him understand"* are a command to recognize clearly the signs of the last days. Believers must watch carefully for the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and the Antichrist who will appear there, and when it happens they must realize that the great tribulation has begun and keep their faith. We do not fix an exact date, but we must know for certain the signs and the order recorded in the word.

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In verse 16, Jesus told those who are in Judea to flee to the mountains. This is a practical command not to take the danger lightly when the tribulation strikes but to escape at once. Ignoring danger or exposing oneself to it needlessly on the grounds of having faith is not wise conduct.

In verses 17 and 18, He said not to go back to get the things in the house or the clothes left in the field. This means the calamity will be so urgent that even a moment's delay is not allowed. No property is more precious than life, and no worldly goods are more precious than the gospel and faith.

Applied spiritually, this word means that in the last days believers must not turn back with their hearts caught by the wealth and status of the world. It does not mean that the act of abandoning material things is a condition of salvation. It means that we must not deny God and the gospel because of possessions.

In verse 19, Jesus said woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies. This does not mean that they have more sin. In a situation where people must flee in haste, those caring for expectant mothers and little children cannot help facing greater hardship, and so the Lord grieved over their suffering.

In verse 20, He said to pray that the flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. In winter it is hard to travel, and in the Jewish society of that day there were practical restrictions even on movement on the Sabbath. This word shows that even in the great tribulation, God looks upon the concrete circumstances and weaknesses of His people.

That the prophecy of the tribulation is already fixed does not make prayer unnecessary. God commanded His people to pray, and through that prayer He opens the way to endure hardship. Believers must not fear the future but rely on God

and pray in the present.

Verse 21 says that there will be great tribulation such as has not been since the beginning of the world. This does not mean life merely becoming somewhat harder; it refers to extreme persecution and suffering that human strength alone can hardly endure.

The purpose for which the Bible foretells the tribulation is not to plunge believers into terror. It is to prepare them in advance so that even when such things come, they will not panic and abandon their faith. It is to make us believe that Jesus knows all things and governs even the end of history.

The faith that overcomes tribulation is not created suddenly at that moment. While things are peaceful, we must know the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately and engrave it on our hearts. If we are not sure how we received the remission of sins, we can easily be shaken before extreme tribulation and deception.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took all the sins of mankind upon His own body. And bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and by rising again on the third day He saved us completely from sin and death.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not lose eternal life even when the life of his body is threatened. The powers of the world may harm his body, but they can never nullify the remission of sins Jesus accomplished. This is the assurance of salvation that believers must hold on to in the midst of tribulation.

The word in verse 22, *"unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved,"* means in its context that amid the extreme tribulation it will come to the point where no one could physically survive. The salvation spoken of here includes,

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first of all, the preservation of life through the tribulation.

But for the sake of His elect, God will shorten those days. This means that even the power of the tribulation is not unlimited. However strong the forces of evil may look, they cannot go beyond the bounds and the period God has set.

The reason believers have hope is not that their own endurance is strong. It is because God knows and protects His people and limits even the days of tribulation. The sovereignty and mercy of God hold believers to the end.

From verse 23, Jesus again warned of deception. The more severe the tribulation becomes, the more people look for a powerful leader and miracles to save them at once. Precisely then, false claims like "*Here is the Christ!*" or "*There!*" can wield great influence.

People are more easily deceived by false saviors when they are afraid and desperate than when things are peaceful. If someone promises to protect them and shows them economic security and miracles, they may follow him without ever checking the word of God.

Jesus firmly commanded, *"Do not believe it,"* concerning such talk. Christ is not someone people can designate at will. Who Jesus is and how He accomplished salvation have already been clearly revealed through the Bible.

The false christs and false prophets of verse 24 can show great signs and wonders. Therefore, we must not conclude that someone is a servant of God merely because an amazing miracle has taken place. More important than supernatural phenomena is whether the gospel he preaches agrees with the word of God.

The core of the true gospel is that Jesus took on the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again. When

we believe this completed salvation with the heart, without adding human deeds and merit to it, we receive the remission of sins.

False prophets can obscure this complete gospel even while using the name of Jesus. They may put miracles, success, and material blessing first, demand absolute obedience to a leader, and exalt their own power and organization above the gospel.

The words *"to deceive, if possible, even the elect"* mean that their deception is very powerful. Because it can look biblical and devout on the outside and even display amazing power, believers must always discern it by the word.

But this word does not mean that a person who is truly born again is carried off by falsehood without any hope. Jesus warns His people in advance, and the Holy Spirit keeps those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the truth. Believers must not boast of their own wisdom but stay awake in the word and in the church.

In verse 25, Jesus said, *"I have told you beforehand."* Even the deception and tribulation of the future are not unforeseen events to the Lord. Because the Lord has spoken in advance, believers can remember the word without panicking even when such things come.

Verse 26 tells us not to believe it when people say that the Christ is in the desert or in the inner rooms. The true Second Coming does not take place in a secret location known only to a few. If any group claims that the returned Christ is with them alone, we must reject that claim by the word of Jesus.

In verse 27, the Lord compared His coming to lightning that flashes from the east to the west. Lightning is not a hidden event that we can know only if someone explains it. It happens in an instant, is revealed far and wide, and no one can monopolize it as a private event.

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The Second Coming of Jesus will not take place in the manner of a particular leader declaring himself to be the Christ. The very same Jesus who was crucified, died, rose again, and ascended will come publicly with power and glory.

Therefore, we must not follow claims that the Christ has appeared in a certain country, that He has come secretly to some inner room, or that He has been born again as a particular person. The true Second Coming is not an event made known by people's propaganda but an event God reveals plainly before the whole world.

The word in verse 28, *"For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together,"* is a solemn analogy meaning that where there is death and judgment, its consequences are certain to appear. Just as it is natural and certain that eagles gather where there is a carcass, the judgment of God is certain to come where sin abounds.

This word is not an analogy of some vague spiritual death or a general principle of judgment. It clearly reveals the order of the end: in the great tribulation believers will be martyred and their bodies will lie fallen, and after the tribulation Jesus Christ will return with power and great glory.

A religion without the gospel of the water and the Spirit may look alive on the outside, but inside it there is no life of the remission of sins. Even with miracles, prophecies, and a splendid organization, if it leaves sin as it is in people's hearts, it becomes a spiritually dead religion.

On the other hand, the person who believes in the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection has eternal life. He believes that he has been made righteous not on the basis of his own feelings or the circumstances of the world, but on the basis of the word of the salvation God accomplished.

Matthew 24:15–28 are not a word that teaches believers

human secrets for escaping the tribulation. They tell us to avoid danger wisely in urgent times and, above all, never to cast away the true Christ and the gospel before any threat or miracle.

The preparation of the last days is, before storing up food and property or seeking out some place, to solve the problem of the sins of the heart. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, be washed of all sins, and receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts. Only then can we discern the truth even when false christs and false gospels appear.

Therefore, rather than straining to calculate the dates and figures of the tribulation, we must believe the gospel firmly today. We must keep in our hearts the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit, hold one another up in the word and in the church, and wait for the day when the true Lord comes again in glory like lightning.

Jesus, who comes again in glory after the tribulation, gathers from the four winds those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

"'Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29–31).

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After speaking of the great tribulation and the deception of false christs, Jesus made known what will happen when He comes again. This passage shows in what order the tribulation, the Second Coming, and the gathering of the elect will appear.

Verse 29 begins with the words *"Immediately after the tribulation of those days."* This means that the glorious appearing of the Son of Man follows after the great tribulation Jesus foretold and the persecution of believers.

Believers must not complacently think that they will live without any hardship in the world and then greet the Lord. Jesus said in advance that believers could be hated and suffer tribulation because of His name and the gospel.

But the existence of tribulation does not mean that believers have been abandoned by God's protection. God limits the period and scope of the tribulation and holds His people so that they can bear it. The believer's body may suffer, but the eternal life he has received in Christ cannot be taken away.

The strength to endure tribulation does not come from a person's strong will. It comes from certain faith concerning how one has received the remission of sins. If the word of salvation is not clear in the heart, faith can be shaken in situations where life is threatened.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies that Jesus took all the sins of mankind upon His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Bearing those sins, Jesus was crucified, shed His blood and died, receiving the judgment of sin in our place, and by rising again on the third day He overcame sin and death.

The person who believes this gospel knows the fact that Jesus has already taken on all his sins and been judged for them. Therefore, even when the final tribulation comes, he is not seized with the fear of being judged because of sin. By

believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, he has already become a child of God.

In verse 29, He said that the sun will be darkened, the moon will not give its light, the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. This shows that the Lord's return is not an event happening only within human society but a cosmic event that affects the whole created world.

The sun, the moon, and the stars God created have provided the light and order people need to live. But when the Lord comes again, even the order of nature, which man relied on as if it would never change, will be shaken.

People take for granted not only nations, the economy, and science and technology, but also the order of nature in which the sun and the moon keep their courses. But all creation was made by the word of God and is sustained according to His will. When the Creator moves, nothing can remain in its present state.

These signs in the heavenly bodies become a marker announcing to the whole world that the judgment of God is at hand. False christs claim to appear hidden in some desert or inner room, but the return of the true Christ is a public event to which heaven and earth testify together.

In verse 30, Jesus said, *"Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven."* At His first coming, Jesus came in the form of a lowly and frail man. He was born in a stable in Bethlehem, was despised and persecuted by people, and at last was crucified.

But when He comes again, He will not come in a lowly and hidden form. He will come as the Lord of judgment and the King of kings with power and great glory. At that time, no one will be able to call Jesus an ordinary man or a false prophet.

Jesus said, *"They will see the Son of Man coming on the*

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clouds of heaven with power and great glory." The true Second Coming is not an event that only a few people know in secret. It is an event in which the people of the world will clearly see the coming of the Lord.

Therefore, even if someone claims to be the returned Christ, or says that Christ has already come secretly in some person's body, we must not believe it. The Second Coming of Jesus is not proven by human propaganda and explanation; it is an event God reveals openly in heaven.

The word that Jesus comes on the clouds reveals His divine glory and authority. At His first coming, Jesus came in the form of a servant to save sinners, but at His return He comes as the King who completes salvation and judges the world.

At that time, all the tribes of the earth will mourn. Those who rejected Jesus and relied on the power and wealth of the world will come to know that the Jesus they rejected is the true Son of God and the Lord of judgment.

Their mourning is not simply weeping out of fear of disaster. It is because their own unbelief is exposed—they did not believe even though God let them hear the gospel again and again. They will wail as they see that the fact that they refused when the opportunity of salvation was given can no longer be undone.

On the other hand, to those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord's return is not only a fearful day of judgment. It is the joyful day when the Savior they have long waited for comes, and the glorious day when they are released from the weakness of the flesh and the sufferings of the world.

Believers have no fear of judgment, not because they have lived perfectly without sinning. It is because Jesus took on all their sins with the baptism He received from John and received

all the punishment for those sins on the Cross.

If a person professes to believe in Jesus yet thinks that sin still remains in his heart, it is hard for him to wait boldly for the day of the Second Coming. This is because a sinner cannot stand before the holy Lord. He must first believe the gospel that Jesus has completely washed away all his sins.

The person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the word by which God has declared him "righteous." While admitting the shortcomings of his flesh, he believes that because the salvation Jesus accomplished is perfect, he can stand before the Lord as a righteous person without sin.

In verse 31, Jesus said that He would send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet. The sound of the trumpet is the sound that announces to the whole world the arrival of the King and the working of God. It is not a secret gathering carried out without anyone knowing, but an event God executes with power.

To believers, the great sound of the trumpet is a signal of salvation and victory, but to those who have rejected the gospel, it is the sound announcing that judgment has begun. The same return of the Lord becomes joy to some and wailing to others.

That difference does not depend on how much one possessed in the world, what denomination one belonged to, or how long one lived a religious life. It depends on whether one believed with the heart in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished with the water and the Spirit.

Jesus sends His angels and gathers *"His elect."* The elect are not people of outstanding human qualifications; they are those who, according to God's plan of salvation, heard the gospel of Jesus Christ, believed it, and received the remission of sins.

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They are those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit beyond nation, language, and status. Some have already died and fallen asleep in the Lord, and some may remain alive until the day of the Second Coming. God does not forget even one of them.

The words *"from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other"* show that God's salvation is not confined to any particular nation or region. Wherever in the world they may be, all who have believed the true gospel will be gathered before the Lord.

It never happens that God fails to find a person because he is in a remote place or separated from other believers. Even a believer who lived and died without a name in people's eyes, if his name is written in the Book of Life, the Lord is certain to remember him and gather him.

This gathering is not simply an assembly of people at one place on earth. It refers to the completion of salvation, in which the believers who have died rise again and the believers who are alive are transformed to greet the Lord in glorious bodies. At that time, believers are completely released from sin, death, and every weakness of the flesh.

The believer's salvation begins with the remission of the sins of the heart and is completed with the resurrection of the body and entry into the eternal kingdom of God. When we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the soul is saved from all sins, and when the Lord comes again, even the body is transformed into a glorious, incorruptible body.

Therefore, even though our bodies now are weak, fall sick, and finally die, there is no need to despair. Just as Jesus rose again, those who believe in Him will also rise again. The death of a believer is not eternal destruction but like a sleep that waits for the resurrection.

This word was not given so that believers would only hide in fear of the tribulation. Because the Lord's return and the resurrection are certain, it tells us to preach the gospel faithfully in the time that remains. We must make the way of salvation known to the souls among all nations who have not yet heard the gospel.

To prepare for the Second Coming is not to calculate dates or give up daily life. It is to do faithfully the work entrusted to us today, while in our hearts we firmly believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, discern false gospels, and convey the true remission of sins to others.

Matthew 24:29–31 tell us that the history of the world does not end in tribulation and death. Jesus comes again with power and great glory, judges evil, and gathers His people from all over the world.

Therefore, to those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Lord's return is not a day of terror but a day of hope. The person who has been washed of all sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection can wait for the great sound of the trumpet not with fear but with joy and boldness.

A watchful faith is not calculating the date of the Second Coming but believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and giving out the food of life in due season

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this

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generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. 'But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. 'Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:32–51).

After speaking of the great tribulation, His glorious return, and the angels gathering the elect from the four winds, Jesus gave the parable of the fig tree. The heart of this parable is that believers must look at the signs of the times and discern that

the Lord's return is near.

When the branch of the fig tree becomes tender and leaves come out, people know that summer is near. Even without calculating an exact date, they can tell by the change of seasons that the time is near. In the same way, when the things Jesus spoke of appear, we must know that the Son of Man has come near.

The fig tree represents Israel. Israel's recovery of its nation is an end-time sign like the fig tree putting forth leaves. We cannot calculate the date of the Second Coming by this event alone, but through the restoration of Israel believers must know that the Son of Man is near, at the doors, and stay spiritually awake.

Wars, famines, and earthquakes, the persecution of the gospel, the appearance of false prophets, and the cooling of love show that the world will not continue forever in its present state. But seizing on any one event to fix the year and date of the Second Coming is a matter of going beyond the word of the Lord.

The word in verse 33, *"know that it is near—at the doors,"* means that believers must live with alertness and hope. The person who believes that the Lord may come soon does not waste today carelessly. He treasures the faith and the mission of preaching the gospel entrusted to him.

The word in verse 34, *"this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place,"* points to the last age in which Israel, the fig tree, has been restored. Before the re-established nation of Israel disappears from the world, the final events Jesus spoke of will be fulfilled and the Lord will return. Therefore, we who have seen the restoration of Israel must know that the Lord's coming is near and prepare our faith and the preaching of the gospel.

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What matters here is not fixing the length of the generation by human calculation. It is the fact that what Jesus has spoken is certain to be fulfilled. The word of God has never once failed, and the word concerning the last days will also be fulfilled without fail.

In verse 35, Jesus declared, *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away."* Even heaven and earth, which look most solid to man, can disappear, but the words of Jesus are eternal.

The believer's assurance of salvation also must not be built on the changing world or on his own feelings. It must be built on the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished. Even when the world is shaken and our feelings change, the remission of sins the Lord accomplished does not change.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies that Jesus took all the sins of mankind upon His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Bearing the sins He had thus taken on, Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment of sin, and by rising again on the third day He completed the salvation.

The person who believes this word of salvation with the heart can believe the fact that all his sins have been washed away. That assurance does not come from human feelings or religious experiences but from the word of God that never passes away.

Verse 36 says plainly that no one knows the day and hour of the Lord's return. He said that the angels of heaven do not know, that even the Son, who became flesh and stood in the place of a servant, does not know, and that only the Father knows. But the word that we do not know the date does not mean that we cannot even discern the time and the signs of the end.

The true preparation that overcomes the last days is to receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to stay awake waiting for the Lord

This word does not deny the divinity of Jesus. It shows that for the work of salvation, Jesus came in a human body and lowered Himself to the place of a servant who obeys the Father. The authority to set the time of the Second Coming belongs to God the Father.

Therefore, we must not believe anyone who claims to have learned the date of the Second Coming by special revelation. Setting a date and making people abandon their property, jobs, and families goes against the word of the Lord.

That we do not know the date of the Second Coming does not mean that we need not prepare for it. Rather, precisely because we do not know when it will be, we must always be prepared. The preparation Jesus wants is not abandoning daily life in the grip of terror but living faithfully in the gospel.

In verse 37, Jesus said that His coming would be as the days of Noah. God told Noah in advance of the judgment of the flood and had him prepare the ark. Noah could see no flood before his eyes, but he believed the word of God and built the ark.

By contrast, the people of Noah's day ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, until the day the flood struck. This does not mean that eating, drinking, and marrying are sins in themselves. The problem was that they ignored the word about God's judgment and lived as if the visible life were everything.

Even though they heard the word of judgment Noah preached, they did not realize it. They neither forsook their sins and returned to God nor made ready to enter the ark. In the end, when the flood came, they had lost the opportunity to turn back.

Today, too, people can live thinking only of their jobs, businesses, marriages, and property. Daily life is necessary, but it must not become the whole of life. If a person gives no

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thought to his soul, his sins, and the coming judgment, he has fallen into the same spiritual sleep as the people of Noah's day.

Just as the ark was the only place to escape the judgment in Noah's day, the way to be saved from the final judgment is to enter into Jesus Christ. The ark is a model showing the Christ who would save sinners.

No one can escape the judgment by his own good deeds or religious merit. We must believe the fact that Jesus took on all sins with the baptism He received from John, received all the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again on the third day. Believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit is the faith that enters into Christ.

Just as Noah and his family entered the ark and were saved from the judgment of water, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit escapes the judgment of sin in Jesus Christ. Even when the final judgment comes upon the world, he has already received the remission of all sins and eternal life in the Lord.

Verses 40 and 41 say that even between people doing the same work in the same place, a separation will take place at the end. Though two men work in the same field and two women grind at the same mill, one will be taken and the other left.

Even though people outwardly work together, attend the same church, and offer the same worship, we cannot say that the faith of their hearts is also the same. One person may have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart and received the remission of sins, while another may hold only the religious form.

On the last day, it is not a person's office and outward appearance but what he has believed in his heart that is revealed. Those who believed in the righteousness Jesus accomplished and those who clung to their own righteousness

will be clearly divided.

In this passage, the one who is taken is the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of the sins of his heart, and been born again of the Spirit; the one who is left is the person who has believed in Jesus only religiously and still has sin in his heart. At the Lord's return these two groups are clearly divided, and the born-again are taken to the Lord.

The command in verse 42, *"Watch,"* does not mean not to sleep the sleep of the body. Nor does it mean only to feel fear at the news of the world—still less to be indifferent to the signs of the end. It means to discern today's disasters and the changes of the world in the light of the word, to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit firmly, and to carry out faithfully the work the Lord has entrusted to us.

The person who is spiritually awake first makes sure whether he has received the remission of sins. He does not stop at vaguely thinking that he believes in Jesus; he knows and believes from the word how all his sins were washed away by the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The person who is awake also discerns false gospels. He does not follow miracles, fame, and religious power, but examines whether a teaching agrees with the complete remission of sins Jesus accomplished.

Verse 43 compares the Lord's return to the breaking in of a thief. This does not mean that Jesus is like a wicked thief; it means that the unprepared will meet Him suddenly, at an hour they do not expect.

If the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and guarded his house. In the same way, because we cannot know the hour of the Second Coming, believers must keep the faith and stay prepared in

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their daily lives.

The word in verse 44, *"be ready,"* means, for the person who has not been saved, first to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. No one can greet the Lord with sin in his heart. He must believe the word that Jesus has washed away all sins and become righteous.

For the believer who has already received the remission of sins, it means to keep the gospel firmly and carry out the mission the Lord has entrusted. Having the assurance of salvation does not mean one may live according to the desires of the flesh. In gratitude for the grace of salvation, we must serve God and preach the gospel to other souls.

In verse 45, Jesus spoke of *"a faithful and wise servant."* The faithful servant looks after the people entrusted to him even while the master is out of sight. He does not use the master's property and people as if they were his own but serves them according to the master's will.

The wise servant gives out *"food in due season."* The food of the body is also necessary, but the most important food the church must give out to people is the word of life. To souls dying in sin, we must convey the remission of sins Jesus Christ accomplished.

The food of life is not human philosophy or ways to succeed in the world. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took on our sins with His baptism, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, saving sinners.

Pastors and workers of the gospel are not people who bind others under their own authority but servants who share the word of life. They must not use the property and labor of believers for their own desires. They must pity people's souls and feed them with the accurate gospel.

Moreover, the work of giving out food is not entrusted to

pastors alone. Whoever has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins can convey the word of salvation he has received to his family, his neighbors, and those who have not yet heard the gospel.

If, when the master returns, he sees that servant still giving out food, that servant is blessed. The Lord remembers not splendid words and great achievements but a life that faithfully shared the gospel and love in the place entrusted to it.

That the master entrusts all his goods to that servant means that the faithful servant will receive glory and reward in the kingdom of God. Salvation is received by faith, but for the faithfulness with which the saved serve the Lord, there are the praise and the reward God gives.

From verse 48, the figure of the evil servant appears. With his lips he acknowledges his master, but in his heart he thinks, *"My master is delaying his coming."* He lives as if the master would never come and uses the authority entrusted to him to fill his own desires.

The evil servant beats his fellow servants. This includes not only physical violence but also oppressing believers with religious power and ruling them with fear and condemnation. A leader who does not serve the people God has entrusted to him but makes them submit to himself is walking the way of the evil servant.

He eats and drinks with the drunkards, following his own desires. The problem is not so much the act of eating and drinking as the attitude of abandoning the mission the master entrusted and falling into dissipation and greed. It is hypocrisy that outwardly keeps the office of a servant while actually going against the master's will.

The evil servant did not say that his master would not come. He only thought that he would come late. This is a warning that

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a person can acknowledge the Second Coming as doctrine and yet live in his actual life as if the Lord would never come.

But the master returns on a day the evil servant does not expect and at an hour he does not know. At that time, his office and outward religious life cannot protect him. The master judges how he treated the people entrusted to him and what food he gave out.

The words in verse 51, *"his portion with the hypocrites"* and *"weeping and gnashing of teeth,"* reveal the final judgment of God. The one who acted as if he were a servant serving the Lord but in fact did not believe in the Lord and only used people cannot escape the judgment.

This word is a solemn warning given even to those who have received the remission of sins. If anyone makes his salvation an excuse to abandon the Master's will, torment his fellow servants, and live following worldly greed, the Lord will treat him exactly like an unbelieving hypocrite and judge him. The profession of having been saved in the past is no shield that protects disobedience.

Even a person who has received the remission of sins can become like the evil servant if he follows the thoughts of the flesh. Therefore, we must not justify our wrongs but receive the rebuke of the Holy Spirit and turn back before the word and the church. We must accept with a reverent fear the fact that whoever refuses the Master's will to the end and does not serve the gospel will be punished together with the unbelieving.

Matthew 24:32–51 show what the life of the person waiting for the Second Coming should be. We must discern the signs without setting dates, must not let our hearts be wholly taken by the life of this world, and must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins with certainty.

The true preparation that overcomes the last days is to receive the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and to stay awake waiting for the Lord

And the person who has received the remission of sins must live as a faithful and wise servant until the day the Lord comes. He must not oppress the souls entrusted to him but serve them with love, giving out in due season the food of life: the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection.

In the end, a watchful faith is not a faith that waits for the Second Coming gazing only at the sky. It is a faith that believes the word of God in one's own place today, lives honestly, serves the gospel in union with the church, and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls who have not yet received the remission of sins. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 24

[Question] 1. What content concerning the end times is recorded in Matthew chapter 24?

Matthew chapter 24 is a word concerning the end times, recording the destruction of the temple in Jerusalem, the signs that will appear at the end of the age, the return of Jesus, and the attitude believers must have.

First, Jesus foretold that the temple in Jerusalem would be completely destroyed, with not one stone left upon another. At this, the disciples asked when it would happen and what signs there would be of the return of Jesus and of the end of the age.

"Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

As the signs of the end, Jesus spoke of the appearance of false christs and false prophets, wars and rumors of wars, clashes of nation against nation, and famines and earthquakes. He also said that believers would suffer tribulation and persecution because of His name, that people would hate one another, and that lawlessness would abound and love would grow cold. But He said that he who endures to the end will be saved, and that the end will come after the gospel of the kingdom is preached to all nations.

Next, He foretold that the abomination of desolation would stand in the holy place and that an unprecedented great tribulation would strike. At that time, false christs and false

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prophets will show great signs and wonders and deceive people, so believers must hold the word firmly so as not to be deceived.

After the tribulation, great changes will take place in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and Jesus will come again on the clouds with power and great glory.

"They will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory" (Matthew 24:30).

The return of Jesus will not take place in secret; it will be made known to everyone, just as lightning is seen from the east to the west. The Lord will send His angels and gather His elect from the four winds.

However, no one can know the exact date and hour of the Second Coming. Just as the people of Noah's day did not realize it until the flood struck, Jesus will come suddenly while the people of the world are immersed in their daily lives.

"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42).

Finally, Jesus compared the faithful and wise servant with the evil servant. The faithful servant gives food in due season to the people entrusted to him until his master returns, but the evil servant thinks his master will come late and lives in dissipation. The Lord rewards the faithful servant and brings severe judgment on the evil servant.

Therefore, the heart of the eschatology recorded in this chapter is this: do not be deceived by the signs of the end or fear them; preach the gospel and keep the faith to the end; and always stay awake, preparing for the return of Jesus, who will come at an hour no one knows.

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[Question] 2. Besides Matthew chapter 24, where in the Bible are the end times dealt with?

Besides Matthew chapter 24, the representative passages of the Bible that deal with the end times, the Second Coming, the resurrection, the judgment, and the completion of the kingdom of God are as follows.

The Old Testament:

• Isaiah 24–27: the judgment on the whole world and the resurrection of the dead

• Isaiah 65–66: the new heavens and the new earth

• Ezekiel 37: the restoration of the dry bones and the restoration of Israel

• Ezekiel 38–39: the war of Gog and Magog and the judgment of God

• Daniel 7: the kingdom of the Son of Man and the final judgment

• Daniel 9:24–27: the prophecy of the seventy weeks

• Daniel 12: the final tribulation and the resurrection of the dead

• Joel 2–3: the day of the LORD, the outpouring of the Spirit, and the judgment of the nations

• Zechariah 12–14: the day of the LORD and the reign of the Messiah

• Malachi 4: the great and dreadful day of the LORD and the final judgment

The New Testament:

• Matthew 25: preparation for the Second Coming and the judgment, through the parables of the ten virgins, the talents, and the sheep and the goats

• Mark 13: the Olivet Discourse, parallel to Matthew chapter 24

• Luke 21: the destruction of Jerusalem and the signs of the Second Coming

• John 5:28–29: the resurrection of life and the resurrection of condemnation

• John 14:1–3: the return of Jesus and the place prepared for believers

• Acts 1:9–11: the promise of the return of the ascended Jesus

• Romans 8:18–25: the restoration of creation and the redemption of the believer's body

• 1 Corinthians 15: the resurrection of the dead and the body to be transformed

• 1 Thessalonians 4:13–5:11: the coming of the Lord, the resurrection of the believers who have died, and the day of the Lord

• 2 Thessalonians 1–2: the judgment at the Second Coming and the appearance of the man of lawlessness

• 2 Timothy 3:1–5: the corruption of people that will appear in the last days

• 2 Peter 3: the day of the Lord and the new heavens and the new earth

• Jude 14–15: the coming of the Lord and the judgment of the ungodly

• Revelation 6–22: the tribulation, the Second Coming, the final judgment, the Millennial Kingdom, and the new heavens and the new earth

Among these, the passages most directly parallel to Matthew chapter 24 are Mark chapter 13 and Luke chapter 21, and the passages that deal with eschatology most comprehensively are the Book of Daniel, 1 and 2 Thessalonians, 2 Peter chapter 3, and the Book of Revelation.

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[Question] 3. What is the relationship between Matthew chapter 24 and chapter 23, the chapter before it?

If Matthew chapter 23 is Jesus' rebuke of the religious leaders of Israel and His declaration of judgment, chapter 24 is the word of prophecy that reveals concretely how that judgment would come upon Jerusalem and the temple and what would happen in the last age.

In chapter 23, Jesus rebuked the scribes and Pharisees for the sin of shutting the door of the kingdom of heaven, persecuting the servants of God, and leading souls astray with hypocrisy and lawlessness. He also declared that because Jerusalem had rejected the prophets God sent and Jesus Christ, its house would be left desolate.

Following this word, in chapter 24 Jesus went out of the temple. When the disciples pointed to the temple buildings, Jesus said that not one stone would be left upon another and that all would be thrown down. This shows that the judgment on Jerusalem and the temple declared in chapter 23 would actually be carried out. Thus the declaration of chapter 23, *"Your house is left to you desolate,"* takes concrete shape in the prophecy of the temple's destruction in chapter 24.

Afterward, on the Mount of Olives, the disciples asked when these things would happen and what signs there would be of the return of Jesus and of the end of the age. Jesus spoke of the deception of false christs and false prophets, wars, famines, and earthquakes, the persecution of the saints, the abounding of lawlessness, the worldwide preaching of the gospel, the great tribulation, and the return of the Son of Man. Therefore, chapter 24 begins with the prophecy of the destruction of Jerusalem and the temple and expands into the word

concerning the last days of the world and the return of Jesus Christ.

Connecting the two chapters, chapter 23 reveals the cause of the judgment, and chapter 24 explains the process in which that judgment appears and the signs of the last age. The result of rejecting the word of God and the servants He sent, while clinging only to outward religious forms and self-righteousness, is in the end spiritual desolation and judgment.

On the other hand, the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not be deceived by false teachings but hold firmly to the word of Jesus. He must also believe to the end, and preach to the whole world, the gospel that Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and then rose again, completing the salvation.

Therefore, Matthew chapters 23 and 24 are not words separated from each other. Chapter 23 is the rebuke of false religion and the declaration of judgment, and chapter 24 is the word that teaches the fulfillment of that judgment, together with the discernment, the faith, and the mission of preaching the gospel that the saints must hold in the last age.

[Question] 4. Matthew 24:1–2—what was the occasion on which Jesus spoke concerning the end times?

The direct occasion on which Jesus came to speak concerning the end times was that the disciples tried to show Him the magnificence of the temple buildings in Jerusalem.

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"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple" (Matthew 24:1).

The disciples thought the temple was solid and would exist forever, but Jesus foretold that the temple would be completely destroyed.

"Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2).

The disciples who heard this shocking word came to ask about the time of the temple's destruction and the signs of the return of Jesus and of the end of the age, and Jesus taught the eschatological word in answer to them. Therefore, the foretelling of the temple's destruction is the direct occasion for the eschatology of Matthew chapter 24.

[Question] 5. Matthew 24:1—what did the temple in Jerusalem look like in the days of Jesus?

The temple in Jerusalem of that day was the Second Temple, rebuilt in the days of Zerubbabel and greatly expanded by Herod the Great; it is commonly called Herod's Temple. The work began around 20 B.C., and in the days of Jesus the construction of several attached buildings was still continuing.

The temple had the following features.

• The platform of the Temple Mount was greatly enlarged, creating wide courts and magnificent colonnades.

• Large, finely dressed white stones were used in the construction.

• The front of the temple was decorated with so much gold that it shone in the sunlight until it was hard to keep one's eyes open.

• The parts not covered with gold were so white that from a distance, it is said, the temple looked like a snow-covered mountain.

• The whole work of rebuilding and expansion was so large in scale that it went on for decades.

Thus the temple was the center of religion and the pride of the nation for the Jews of that day, and it was a majestic building that looked as if it would not easily fall. That is why the disciples, too, proudly tried to show Jesus the temple buildings.

"His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple" (Matthew 24:1).

But Jesus foretold that even such a magnificent temple would be so completely destroyed that not one stone would be left upon another. This shows the fact that the outward splendor of a building cannot hold back the judgment of God.

[Question] 6. Matthew 24:2—how did Jesus say the temple would be destroyed?

Jesus prophesied that the magnificent temple buildings would be destroyed so completely that not one stone would be left upon another.

"Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down" (Matthew 24:2).

This means that the temple in Jerusalem would not merely be partially damaged but thoroughly destroyed. This prophecy was fulfilled when Jerusalem and the temple were demolished by the Roman army.

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[Question] 7. Matthew 24:3—where did Jesus teach the word concerning the end times?

The place where Jesus spoke the word concerning the end times is the Mount of Olives.

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Matthew 24:3).

After coming out of the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus sat on the Mount of Olives and spoke to His disciples about the destruction of the temple, His return, and the signs of the end of the age.

[Question] 8. Matthew 24:3—explain the questions the disciples asked concerning the destruction of the temple, the coming of Jesus, and the end of the age.

The substance of what the disciples quietly asked is the following three things.

"Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?" (Matthew 24:3).

That is, the disciples asked because they wanted to know the time of the temple's destruction that Jesus had foretold, and the signs of His return and of the end of the world. In answer, Jesus taught the word concerning deception, wars, tribulation, the preaching of the gospel, the great tribulation, and His return.

[Question] 9. Matthew 24:4–14—what signs will appear when the end of the age is near?

The signs of the end of the age that Jesus spoke of are as follows.

1. False christs and spiritual deception

Many will come in the name of Jesus, claiming that they themselves are the Christ, and will deceive people.

"Many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many" (Matthew 24:5).

2. Wars and rumors of wars

Wars will break out in many places, and rumors of wars will be heard continually. But Jesus said that this alone does not mean the end has come right away.

3. Clashes between nations and kingdoms

Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom.

4. Famines and earthquakes

Famines and earthquakes will occur in various regions. Jesus called these things *"the beginning of sorrows."*

"For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:7–8).

5. Tribulation and persecution of believers

Because of the name of Jesus, believers will be hated by all nations, delivered up to tribulation, or killed.

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6. Betrayal and hatred

Many will be offended, and they will betray one another and hate one another.

7. The appearance of false prophets

Many false prophets will rise up and deceive many people with wrong teachings and signs.

8. The increase of lawlessness and the decline of love

As sin and lawlessness abound, people's hearts become selfish and their love for one another grows cold.

"Because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:12).

9. There are those who keep the faith to the end

Even amid tribulation and deception, there are people who keep the faith and endure to the end.

10. The worldwide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom

The gospel of the water and the Spirit—which Jesus accomplished by taking on the sins of mankind with His baptism, being judged on the Cross, and rising again—is preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations. After that, the end of the world comes.

"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).

Therefore, the occurrence of one war or one earthquake does not mean the end of the world has come right away. The end comes after deception, wars, and tribulation deepen, the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world, and God's plan of salvation is accomplished.

[Question] 10. Matthew 24:9–12—what events make up the third sign that will appear in the last days?

The third sign of the last days appears as the believers in Jesus suffering tribulation and persecution and being hated by all nations. Furthermore, people betray and hate one another, and through the deception of false prophets and the abounding of lawlessness, the love of many grows cold.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:9–12).

Therefore, the third sign is not only the persecution of the faith; betrayal and hatred, false teachings, the increase of lawlessness, and the decline of love appear together.

[Question] 11. To what point in time does *"Then,"* mentioned repeatedly in Matthew chapter 24, refer?

The word *"Then,"* repeated in Matthew chapter 24, refers to each of the times when the events prophesied for the last age take place in order. It must be understood within the flow of the end: the beginning of sorrows and the worldwide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, the appearance of the Antichrist and the great tribulation, the persecution and martyrdom of the saints, the actual signs appearing in the sun, the moon, and the stars, and then the return of Jesus Christ, the rapture of His elect, and the judgment.

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The *"Then"* of verse 9 refers to the time when, following the beginning of sorrows—wars, famines, and earthquakes—the disciples of Jesus suffer tribulation and hatred. At this time many stumble and hate one another, false prophets rise up and deceive people, and lawlessness abounds so that love grows cold. But he who endures to the end is saved, and the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations.

The *"then"* of verses 15 and 16 is the time when the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the prophet, stands in the holy place. This refers to the time when the Antichrist enters the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the last age, claims to be God, and demands worship. Since the great tribulation unfolds in earnest from this event, those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains without delay.

The *"then"* of verse 21 and after is the time when the great tribulation, such as has never been since the beginning of the world, and the deception of false christs and false prophets arise. They show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Therefore, the saints must not follow people's words or visible wonders but hold firmly to the word Jesus spoke in advance.

The *"Then"* of verse 30 refers to the time when, after the great tribulation has passed, the sign of the Son of Man appears in heaven and Jesus comes again with power and great glory. The Lord sends His angels to gather His elect and judges the world. The taking of one and the leaving of another in verses 40 and 41 also points to the time when the Lord's return and the final separation take place.

Therefore, *"Then"* refers to each point in time at which the events of the end unfold in their appointed order. The disasters and the preaching of the gospel proceed, the Antichrist appears,

then come the great tribulation and the persecution and martyrdom of the saints, and after that tribulation Jesus returns and His elect are raptured. This does not mean that the saints are raptured first, before the tribulation. We cannot know the exact date and hour, but through the signs Jesus spoke of, we can discern that the last age and the time of His return are near.

The saints who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must believe the word of God rather than fear the tribulation and deception of the last days. They must believe to the end, and preach, the gospel that Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rose again, completing the salvation—and so prepare for the return of the Lord.

[Question] 12. Matthew 24:9—to whom does *"you"* refer?

Directly, *"you"* refers to the disciples who were listening to the words of Jesus. More broadly, it includes all believers who would afterward believe in Jesus and preach the gospel.

"Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake" (Matthew 24:9).

Therefore, this word foretells the persecution the disciples would actually undergo, and at the same time it speaks of the tribulation and hatred believers will suffer in the last days because of the name of Jesus.

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[Question] 13. Matthew 24:13—who is saved in the time of tribulation?

In the time of tribulation, the person who keeps the faith and endures to the end amid all kinds of persecution and deception obtains salvation.

"But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13).

To endure here does not mean earning salvation by one's own strength; it means keeping the faith to the end without forsaking Jesus and His gospel even in hardship.

[Question] 14. Matthew 24:14—what does this verse say must be accomplished before the end of the world comes?

"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).

The end of the world comes after the gospel of the kingdom is preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations. Wars, famines, and earthquakes are the beginning of sorrows, but they alone do not bring the world to an end. Jesus said that the end would come only after the gospel is preached throughout the whole world.

This gospel of the kingdom is the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took on all the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of sin, and then rose again from the dead, saving sinners. That this gospel is testified to all nations does not mean that everyone will necessarily believe; it means that it is

preached so that every nation has the opportunity to hear the gospel and believe.

Therefore, although no one can know the exact date of the end of the world, the preaching of the gospel throughout the whole world is an essential condition that must be fulfilled before the end comes.

[Question] 15. Matthew 24:15–28—explain the flow of the main events that take place in the period of the great tribulation.

The period of the great tribulation unfolds in the following order.

1. The abomination of desolation stands in the holy place.

This refers to the event in which the Antichrist enters the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the last age, claims to be God, and demands worship. From this point, the great tribulation begins in earnest.

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand) (Matthew 24:15).

2. Those who are in Judea must flee at once.

A tribulation so urgent will strike that there will be no time even to go back for one's belongings or clothes. It will be an especially hard time for those who are pregnant and those who are nursing babies, so people must pray that their flight will not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

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3. A great tribulation such as has never been before takes place.

The tribulation will be so severe that unless God shortened those days for the sake of His elect, no one would survive.

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:21–22).

4. The deception of false christs and false prophets becomes extreme.

They show great signs and wonders and try to deceive, if possible, even the elect. Therefore, we must not believe or follow the claim that the Christ is in the desert or in the inner rooms.

"For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect" (Matthew 24:24).

5. In the end, Jesus returns publicly.

The Lord's return does not take place secretly in some one location; it appears like lightning, so clearly that everyone can know it.

"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together" (Matthew 24:27–28).

Therefore, the period of the great tribulation unfolds through the desecration of the holy place, the urgent flight, the unprecedented tribulation, the deception of false christs, and then the clear return and judgment of Jesus.

[Question] 16. Matthew 24:15—explain the meaning of the abomination of desolation spoken of by Daniel the prophet, and of the holy place.

The words *"when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place"* mean the event in which the Antichrist enters the temple to be rebuilt in Jerusalem in the last age, takes the place of God, claims to be God, and demands worship.

"Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place" (whoever reads, let him understand) (Matthew 24:15).

Here, the *"abomination"* refers to an idolatrous and profane being that God hates, and the *"holy place"* refers to the temple dedicated to God. This word therefore means that the Antichrist's defiling of the temple and lording it over people like God is the sign announcing the full beginning of the great tribulation.

[Question] 17. Matthew 24:16–18—what must people do when they see the abomination of desolation standing?

When the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place, those who are in Judea must flee to the mountains at once. They must not go back even to get the things in the house or the clothes left in the field.

"Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes" (Matthew 24:16–18).

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This means that because the tribulation will strike very suddenly and urgently, people must flee without delay, without clinging to the property or things of this world.

[Question] 18. Matthew 24:19—why did Jesus say woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days?

He said woe to *"those who are pregnant"* and *"those who are nursing babies"* because, although people must flee in haste in the great tribulation, it is very hard for a pregnant woman or a mother caring for a little child to escape quickly.

"But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days!" (Matthew 24:19).

Here, *"woe"* does not mean that they are judged for having especially many sins; it means that they will undergo greater physical hardship and suffering in the tribulation.

[Question] 19. Matthew 24:20—what did Jesus tell us to pray concerning the day of flight?

Jesus told us to pray that the day of fleeing from the tribulation would not be in winter or on the Sabbath.

"And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath" (Matthew 24:20).

In winter, the roads became rough with cold and rain and travel was difficult, and on the Sabbath, long-distance travel could be restricted by the rules of Jewish society. The meaning, therefore, is to ask for God's help in advance so that when the great tribulation strikes, people can escape quickly and safely.

[Question] 20. Matthew 24:21—how severe is the *"great tribulation"*?

The *"great tribulation"* means a tribulation so extreme that there has never been one like it from the beginning of the world until now, nor ever shall be again.

"For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be" (Matthew 24:21).

This therefore means a tribulation beyond ordinary wars and disasters—one so unprecedentedly great and painful that everyone's life is threatened.

[Question] 21. Matthew 24:22—what does it mean that the days of the tribulation will be shortened?

That "those days will be shortened" means that God will reduce or limit the period of the great tribulation.

"And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:22).

If the tribulation continued without limit, the suffering would be so great that no one would survive; but God sets and shortens that period to protect His elect. This means that even in the midst of tribulation, God governs history and does not forget His people but shows them mercy. To "shorten" here does not mean the remission of sins; it means reducing the number of the days of tribulation.

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[Question] 22. Matthew 24:23–25—in what ways is it recorded that false christs and false prophets deceive the saints?

In the period of tribulation, false christs and false prophets claim that the Christ is here or there, and they show great signs and wonders to try to deceive believers. Their deception is so powerful that, if possible, they would deceive even the elect.

"Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand" (Matthew 24:23–25).

Therefore, believers must not accept something as the work of God merely because amazing signs and wonders appear. They must discern by the word Jesus gave in advance and must not be shaken by false claims.

[Question] 23. Matthew 24:26–27—what is said about the manner of the return of Jesus?

The return of Jesus does not take place secretly in a particular place like the desert or the inner rooms; it takes place publicly, so that the whole world can clearly know it, like lightning flashing from the east to the west.

"Therefore if they say to you, 'Look, He is in the desert!' do not go out; or 'Look, He is in the inner rooms!' do not believe it" (Matthew 24:26).

"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:27).

Therefore, we must not believe the claim that Jesus has come secretly to some particular place, or anyone who says that he himself is the returned Christ. The true return of Jesus will take place so clearly and gloriously that everyone can recognize it.

[Question] 24. Matthew 24:28—explain what the words *"For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together"* reveal.

The words *"For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together"* reveal that many deaths will occur through the great tribulation and the judgment of God.

Just as eagles naturally gather where there is a carcass, the judgment of God is certain to come upon a world full of sin and death. And just as one can tell where a carcass lies by seeing the eagles gather, the return and judgment of Jesus are not hidden things either; they will be revealed so that everyone can clearly know them.

[Question] 25. Matthew 24:29–31—what things will happen when Christ comes again?

When Christ returns, the following events take place.

• The sun is darkened and the moon does not give its light; the stars fall and the powers of the heavens are shaken.

• The sign of the Son of Man appears in heaven, and all the tribes of the earth mourn.

• Jesus comes on the clouds with power and great glory.

• He sends His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and

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they gather His elect from all over the world.

"Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29–31).

Therefore, the return of Jesus is not an event that takes place in secret; it takes place with power and glory, witnessed by the whole world.

[Question] 26. Matthew 24:31—what does the trumpet that will sound together with the angels announce?

The *"great sound of a trumpet"* means the command and signal of God that announces the glorious return of Jesus to the whole world and directs the angels to gather His elect.

"And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:31).

This is no ordinary trumpet sound; it is a mighty signal that proclaims the end of the tribulation and the return of Jesus, and calls God's people together from the four winds.

[Question] 27. Matthew 24:32–33—what can we learn through the parable of the fig tree?

The fig tree represents Israel. The branch of the fig tree becoming tender and putting forth leaves points to the scattered nation of Israel recovering its statehood in 1948 and appearing again in history. Seeing this sign together with the events of the last age that Jesus spoke of, we must realize that the Lord's return has drawn near.

"Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors" (Matthew 24:32–33).

Therefore, believers must discern the restoration of Israel and the various signs of the times, believe that the Lord's return is near, and stay awake, preaching the gospel.

[Question] 28. Matthew 24:34–35—what does the word *"this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place"* mean?

Jesus said that just as we know summer is near when the branch of the fig tree becomes tender and puts forth leaves, so when we see the signs He spoke of appearing, we are to know that the Son of Man is near, right at the doors. Then He said this:

"Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:34–35).

Here the fig tree represents Israel. The fig tree putting forth

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leaves again points to the scattered people of Israel forming a nation again and appearing in the history of the world. Therefore, *"this generation"* does not refer only to the people who lived in the days of Jesus; it refers to the generation that witnesses the restoration of Israel together with the signs of the last age that Jesus spoke of.

The words *"till all these things take place"* mean that the things prophesied in Matthew chapter 24—wars, famines, and earthquakes, the deception of false christs and false prophets, the tribulation and persecution of the saints, the abounding of lawlessness, the worldwide preaching of the gospel of the kingdom, the great tribulation, and the return of the Son of Man—are certain to be fulfilled. Before the last age, in which Israel has reappeared in history, passes away, the word of God concerning the end of the world and the return of Jesus Christ will be fulfilled.

However, we must not calculate the date of the return of Jesus on the basis of this word. In verse 36 that follows, Jesus said that no one knows that day and hour, but God the Father only. The words *"this generation"* were not given so that we would fix a particular year and date; they were given so that we would see the signs of the last age, realize that the Lord's return is near, and stay awake.

The words *"Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away"* are a declaration that even though the visible heavens and earth disappear, not one of the prophecies Jesus spoke will fall to the ground; they will certainly be fulfilled. The circumstances of the world and the thoughts of man change, but the word of God never changes. Therefore, the saints must believe the words of Jesus more surely than the claims of the people of the world.

The saints who have received the remission of sins by

believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must realize that they are living in the last age, when the Lord's return is near. They must not let their hearts be taken by the affairs of the world or fall into calculating the date of the Second Coming; they must firmly believe the gospel that Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and then rose again, completing the salvation. And until the day the Lord comes, they must diligently preach this gospel to the souls who have not yet received the remission of sins, staying awake.

Therefore, the word *"this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place"* means that within the last age that witnesses the restoration of Israel and the signs of the end, everything Jesus prophesied is certain to be fulfilled. It is not a word telling us to set dates; it is a solemn exhortation to believe the unchanging word of God and prepare for the return of the Lord.

[Question] 29. Matthew 24:36—can we know when the Lord's return will be?

No one can know the exact day and hour when the Lord will return. Not even the angels of heaven know; only God the Father knows.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36).

Therefore, we must not calculate or assert the exact date and hour of the Second Coming. But the word that we cannot know the date does not mean that we can know nothing of the season and the signs. The person who has received the

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remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must look at the signs Jesus spoke of—the restoration of Israel, the disasters, the appearance of the Antichrist, and the great tribulation—discern that the time of the Second Coming is near, and prepare his faith.

[Question] 30. Matthew 24:40–41—what is the event of 'one being taken and the other being left'?

At the Lord's return, an event of separation takes place: between people doing the same work in the same place, one is taken and the other is left.

"Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left" (Matthew 24:40–41).

This means that at the Lord's return, the saved and the unsaved are clearly divided. The one who is taken is the born-again person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the one who is left is the person in whose heart sin remains. This rapture takes place when Jesus returns in glory, after the appearance of the Antichrist, the great tribulation, and the martyrdom of the saints; it is not an event that happens first, before the tribulation.

[Question] 31. Matthew 24:42—what is the meaning of the word "*Watch*" that Jesus spoke?

The word "*Watch*" does not mean not to sleep physically; it means to live without forgetting the Lord's return, keeping

the faith, and remaining spiritually prepared.

"Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming" (Matthew 24:42–43).

Since we cannot know the exact time of the Second Coming, believers must discern deception, carry out faithfully the work entrusted to them, and stay prepared so that they can greet the Lord whenever He comes.

[Question] 32. Matthew 24:43–44—what does the expression 'broken into' mean?

To have a house "broken into" means that a thief digs through the wall of the house, comes in, and steals its goods. It is an analogy meaning that if the master of the house had known at what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and prevented the break-in.

"But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect" (Matthew 24:43–44).

This means that since the Lord will return suddenly, at a time no one expects, believers must not grow careless but always stay prepared with faith.

[Question] 33. Matthew 24:45—what kind of person is the "*faithful and wise servant*"?

The *"faithful and wise servant"* is the person who looks after the people entrusted to him by his master and gives them

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the food they need in due season.

"Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season?" (Matthew 24:45).

Spiritually, this means the person who faithfully carries out the mission received from the Lord and delivers to people, at the right time, the word of God and the food of the gospel. While waiting for the Lord's return, he serves the souls entrusted to him sincerely rather than seeking his own gain.

[Question] 34. Matthew 24:46–47—what reward does the faithful and wise servant receive from his master?

The servant who is faithfully carrying out the work entrusted to him when his master returns is blessed, and he receives the reward of being made ruler over all his master's goods.

"Blessed is that servant whom his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods" (Matthew 24:46–47).

This means that the Lord gives praise, authority, and reward to the person who has faithfully carried out the mission entrusted to him until the Lord's return.

[Question] 35. Matthew 24:48–49—why did the evil servant neglect the work entrusted to him?

The evil servant is the person who thinks his master will delay his coming, takes the Second Coming lightly, mistreats

his fellow servants, and lives a dissipated life, eating and drinking with drunkards.

"But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards" (Matthew 24:48–49).

That is, the evil servant abandons the responsibility entrusted to him on the grounds that his master is out of sight, harms others, and lives following his own desires. This warning does not apply only to hypocrites who never believed from the beginning. Even a person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if he abandons the church and the work of the gospel, lives following the desires of the flesh, and harms his fellow servants, the Lord will treat him as an evil servant, the same as an unbeliever.

[Question] 36. Matthew 24:50–51—what does the master who comes on a day not expected and at an hour not known do to the evil servant?

Upon the evil servant comes the judgment: the master returns suddenly, on a day he does not expect and at an hour he does not know, punishes him severely, and appoints him the punishment that the hypocrites receive.

"The master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 24:50–51).

Weeping and gnashing of teeth reveal the extreme suffering and belated regret experienced under the judgment of God.

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This is the solemn punishment for the one who took the Lord's return lightly and abandoned the responsibility of the gospel entrusted to him. Therefore, even those who have received the remission of sins must not dismiss this warning as a word that has nothing to do with them, but must live as faithful and wise servants who, in union with the church, give out the food of the gospel in due season. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Have the faith that prepares for the Second Coming now

< Matthew 24:1-8 >

"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows."

"Not one stone shall be left here upon another"

Today I want to share the word about having the faith that waits for the Lord's return, the faith that prepares for His return. For the Lord's return to begin, the seven-year great tribulation

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must first begin, and within this passage we will consider together when those disasters begin.

"And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.'" (Matthew 24:2) Pointing to the temple in Jerusalem, Jesus said that not one of the stones with which that temple was built would be left upon another; they would all be thrown down. The Lord is One who always takes what is actually before His eyes and speaks of what He is going to do. He was saying that just as that temple would collapse, this world will also come to its end like that.

That is why the disciples went on to ask. *"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Matthew 24:3)* Their questions were two: when will these things be, and what will be the sign of the end of the age?

"The beginning of sorrows"

"And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:4–8).

Here He spoke of the beginning of sorrows. This beginning of sorrows means the disasters that announce that the seven-year great tribulation is about to begin. Before the seven-year great

tribulation opens in earnest, kingdom will rise against kingdom and nation against nation, and there will be famines and earthquakes in various places. And many will appear, each claiming that he himself is the Christ.

The Book of Revelation has the same word. "*When He opened the third seal, I heard the third living creature say, 'Come and see.' So I looked, and behold, a black horse, and he who sat on it had a pair of scales in his hand. And I heard a voice in the midst of the four living creatures saying, 'A quart of wheat for a denarius, and three quarts of barley for a denarius; and do not harm the oil and the wine.'" (Revelation 6:5–6).*

When the third seal is opened, the age of famine comes. A denarius is a day's wages, and with it one can buy only a quart of wheat; that is, it will be an age in which a person works all day long and barely gets one meal. That age is precisely the time of the word we have read today—the time when famines and earthquakes occur in various places and nation rises against nation, kingdom against kingdom. After these things comes the time of the pale horse, when the Antichrist appears; at that time the people of Israel will be killed, and among the Gentiles, those who have received the remission of sins will also be martyred. And after that, the plagues of the seven trumpets and the seven bowls come in earnest.

"Take heed that no one deceives you"

The first thing the Lord said was to take heed that no one deceives you. He said that many would come in His name, saying, "I am the Christ." Today, too, there are those who blatantly claim to be the Christ, and those who call themselves servants of God while performing false miracles and false signs.

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Things happen where a man stretches out his hand before people and they fall backward, and having fallen, they tremble, laugh, and make the sounds of beasts. Seeing this, people have wandered for a long time, unable to discern whether it is the work of the Holy Spirit or the work of the Devil. Not a few have traveled far to receive such power, received the laying on of hands, and come back to do the same things.

But the Bible says that the coming of the lawless one is with false miracles, power, and lawlessness. Where people follow experiences, miracles, and feelings instead of centering on the word of God, and where the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the righteousness of God are not known, deception is certain to enter. It is the same with speaking in tongues. People call the meaningless repetition of the same sounds "tongues," but a true tongue is a definite language, speech made up of sentences.

This present age is the time before the seven-year great tribulation comes, the time when Satan the Devil works most actively. That is why the Lord said, before anything else, to take heed that no one deceives us.

"Putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of salvation"

Then, when such things actually strike us, what kind of people will you and I be? Suppose an earthquake strikes, buildings collapse, and everything becomes chaos. Whom will you look for at that time? Will you honor your brothers and sisters, or will you hate one another? Concerning this, the Apostle Paul spoke as follows.

"But let us who are of the day be sober, putting on the breastplate of faith and love, and as a helmet the hope of

salvation. For God did not appoint us to wrath, but to obtain salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ, who died for us, that whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with Him" (1 Thessalonians 5:8–10).

At that time, the most precious people to God's people are God's people. Among those weak in faith, there are some who do not even know who their own family is. But those who truly believe come to know clearly, when such things strike, that those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtained the righteousness of God are their own brothers, their sisters, and their family.

He told us to put on the breastplate of faith and love. Those who truly believe know how precious God's people are, and they become people who cherish and love them not only outwardly but from the heart. However selfish a person may be, when that time comes he becomes generous and knows that they are precious members of the body.

He also told us to put on the hope of salvation as a helmet. The faith that believes that before long the Lord will come, that we will be raptured, and that we will reign in the Millennial Kingdom the Lord spoke of—that faith is the helmet. The person who has this hope is not shaken even in the face of disaster.

Before long, the beginning of sorrows will come

The people of the world do not believe these things. *"When they say, 'Peace and safety!' then sudden destruction comes upon them, as labor pains upon a pregnant woman. And they shall not escape" (1 Thessalonians 5:3).* But we are not like that.

"But you, brethren, are not in darkness, so that this Day should overtake you as a thief. You are all sons of light and sons

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of the day. We are not of the night nor of darkness. Therefore let us not sleep, as others do, but let us watch and be sober" (1 Thessalonians 5:4–6).

Because we are sons of light, that Day cannot overtake us as a thief. The sons of darkness do not know, and so they are struck suddenly one day, but to the sons of light all this has been shown in advance. Therefore, we must prepare our faith beforehand, put on the helmet of the hope of salvation and the breastplate of love, and live cherishing, respecting, and caring for one another.

When it actually strikes, many different scenes will unfold. Some will be called first in the midst of the disasters; some will cry out the gospel in the place of refuge; and some will be hated by their own families, be arrested, suffer hardship, and even be martyred. But Revelation chapter 7 records that at that time a multitude beyond counting from every nation will be saved and praise God, and that, having shed their blood in martyrdom, they will rise again and stand before God.

If disaster is coming in any case, and if the end is coming in any case, then at that time we will set our hope on the kingdom of heaven, cry out this gospel all the more mightily, and go when the Lord calls us. That is why we must prepare our hearts now.

Before long, the beginning of sorrows that the Lord spoke of will come. This is not talk that ends with a sermon; it is our faith, and it is the work of preparing now, in advance, how we will live by faith when we actually go through those things. When that time comes, there will not even be leisure to gather like this and share the word.

The gospel that has made us sons of light

Then what has made us sons of light? Our Lord received

baptism from John and took on all the sins of the world once and for all; He bore those sins, was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died; and He rose again from death in three days, and so He has delivered us wholly from sin. It is precisely this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Because we have believed this gospel and received the complete remission of the sins of our hearts, the Holy Spirit is in us, and so we have become sons of the day who do not belong to darkness. The faith that waits for the Second Coming comes from here. With a heart in which sin remains, no one can wait for the Lord's coming with hope. It is because we have received the remission of sins that we actually wait for the Lord to come.

Therefore, preaching this gospel and preparing for the Second Coming are not two separate things. The Lord Himself said that this gospel of the kingdom would be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end would come. This is exactly why we are preaching this gospel.

Let us gird up the loins of our hearts

To begin waiting for the Second Coming only when the time of the Second Coming arrives is too late. Before the time of the Second Coming arrives, we must prepare the faith that waits for it, and wait. Only then, when that time comes, can we face it without fear, wait for it, and greet it.

From now on we must gird up the loins of our hearts. Whatever our circumstances may be, and whatever may come upon us, we must hold the heart that waits for the Lord's return with today's faith, and prepare the faith that can overcome the hardships of that time. There is no anxiety about what has been anticipated in advance.

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If we are to preach the gospel, we must preach it now; if we are to prepare our hearts, we must do it now; and if we are to do the work of God, we must do it now. If we are satisfied only with preaching the gospel and do not prepare for the Second Coming, our faith collapses.

But because we have God who gives us the victory, we give thanks. Do not be afraid; even if the Lord were to come tomorrow, we must still do today's work in full, preparing the faith of our hearts, and preach the gospel until that day. You and I must live with this kind of faith. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The signs of the last days of this world

< Matthew 24:1-31 >

"Then Jesus went out and departed from the temple, and His disciples came up to show Him the buildings of the temple. And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.' Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. 'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to

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all the nations, and then the end will come. ‘Therefore when you see the ‘abomination of desolation,’ spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place’ (whoever reads, let him understand), ‘then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes. But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect’s sake those days will be shortened. ‘Then if anyone says to you, ‘Look, here is the Christ!’ or ‘There!’ do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand. ‘Therefore if they say to you, ‘Look, He is in the desert!’ do not go out; or ‘Look, He is in the inner rooms!’ do not believe it. For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For wherever the carcass is, there the eagles will be gathered together. ‘Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other.”

The signs of the last days

Today we consider the word concerning the signs of the last days of this world. Matthew chapter 24 is the passage where our Lord told us, all in one place, by what steps the end of this world comes and what relationship that end has with the nation of Israel.

"And Jesus said to them, 'Do you not see all these things? Assuredly, I say to you, not one stone shall be left here upon another, that shall not be thrown down.'" (Matthew 24:2).

The temple in Jerusalem was a building raised over forty-six years. It was a temple built so solidly, its foundation laid and its stones piled up, and yet the Lord said that not one stone would be left upon another; all would be thrown down. It happened just as He said, and it is said that today no one can even clearly identify where that temple stood.

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?'" (Matthew 24:3) The disciples understood that the Lord's word did not stop at the one temple, and so they asked about the signs of the end of the age.

Eyes that discern the times

"And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there

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will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:4–8).

The first thing the Lord said was to take heed not to be deceived. And He said that nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and that there would be famines and earthquakes in various places. He said that this is not the end but the beginning of sorrows.

We are now seeing with our own eyes how peoples living mixed together within one country fail to unite and turn against one another, and how earthquakes, great winds, and famines, unlike in former days, keep occurring without ceasing. The disasters the Lord spoke of have already begun. We must know how to discern this age.

Do not cling to the things below

"'Therefore when you see the 'abomination of desolation,' spoken of by Daniel the prophet, standing in the holy place' (whoever reads, let him understand), 'then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let him who is on the housetop not go down to take anything out of his house. And let him who is in the field not go back to get his clothes" (Matthew 24:15–18).

That the abomination of desolation stands in the holy place means that one who calls himself the Christ climbs up into that holy place where God is served and declares himself to be the Christ. When that happens, He tells those in Judea to know that the tribulation of the nation of Israel has come and to flee to the mountains. It is a word telling them to leave without clinging in the least to the things below.

"*But woe to those who are pregnant and to those who are nursing babies in those days! And pray that your flight may not*

be in winter or on the Sabbath. For then there will be great tribulation, such as has not been since the beginning of the world until this time, no, nor ever shall be. And unless those days were shortened, no flesh would be saved; but for the elect's sake those days will be shortened" (Matthew 24:19–22).

The people of Israel keep the Sabbath even now. From sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday is their Sabbath. The Lord, knowing their circumstances, told them to pray that their flight would not be in winter or on the Sabbath. His word that there has been no such tribulation from the beginning of the world, nor ever shall be, shows how severe that tribulation will be.

Even if they say the Christ is here, do not believe it

"'Then if anyone says to you, 'Look, here is the Christ!' or 'There!' do not believe it. For false christs and false prophets will rise and show great signs and wonders to deceive, if possible, even the elect. See, I have told you beforehand" (Matthew 24:23–25).

The people of Israel are still waiting for the Messiah promised in the Old Testament. Because they rejected the Savior who has already come and are waiting for a Messiah yet to come, when the tribulation becomes extreme they will call desperately for the Christ. Precisely at that time, those claiming to be the Christ will rise up in place after place.

In ordinary times, no one would believe a man who called himself the Christ. But when the tribulation is extreme, people flock to him without a moment to discern. That is why the Lord said not to go out even if they say he is in the desert, and not to believe it even if they say he is in the inner rooms, and declared, *"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west,*

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so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:27). It is a word that the Lord's coming cannot be hidden.

"The sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light"

"'Immediately after the tribulation of those days the sun will be darkened, and the moon will not give its light; the stars will fall from heaven, and the powers of the heavens will be shaken. Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. And He will send His angels with a great sound of a trumpet, and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of heaven to the other" (Matthew 24:29–31).

Think of it for a moment. It is twelve noon, and suddenly the sun loses its light and the whole earth goes dark. At night the moon is up but gives no light, and the stars of heaven fall. This is the end of this world. For now, the stars of heaven still travel their courses in the providence of God, but this earth will not remain as it is forever.

The Lord spoke of the tribulation of the nation of Israel, and then He spoke of the end of this whole earth coming together with that tribulation.

Only the Father knows

"'Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that

summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away" (Matthew 24:32–35).

The fig tree is the tree that points to Israel. Just as we know that summer is near when leaves sprout on the fig tree, so when these things happen to Israel, we are to know that the Son of Man is at the doors. That they lost their nation, were scattered for nearly two thousand years, and then recovered their nation again also happened just as God said. When that restored nation is engulfed again in great tribulation, we are to know that the end of this world is near.

"But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only" (Matthew 24:36) No one knows the day and the hour. But the Lord has revealed the signs to us like this. Trying to count out the date is what the Bible forbids; in the past, people set dates and made a stir, and when nothing happened, they made people unwilling even to speak the word "end times" at all. That is how Satan lays a smokescreen in advance, so that people cannot even begin to think about this matter.

Do not forget the fact that this earth will come to an end

"But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son

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of Man be" (Matthew 24:37–39).

Noah built the ark for a hundred years, proclaiming that judgment was coming upon this earth. But the people did not believe; they ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, until they met that day. Today is no different. Even if this earth were to end tomorrow, people would still go to the wedding hall this evening, buy and sell, pay into their savings, and do all their business. If they really knew it would end tomorrow, would they do so?

That is why we must live without forgetting the fact that this earth will come to an end. This world has its end, and you and I each have our own personal end as well. Whatever has a beginning is certain to have an end. We must not think we will live on for thousands of years.

One will be taken and the other left

"Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left" (Matthew 24:40–41) And then He said to watch, for we do not know on what day the Lord will come.

While people work together, sleep together, and each live their busy lives, there is a work in which the Lord takes His people away. This is called the rapture. Some are called and go to stand before God, and some remain on this earth. We must think about how pitiful those who are left behind will be.

The Apostle Paul called us the firstfruits of the Spirit. Jesus Christ became the firstfruits, and we are those attached to that fruit. The Lord said that He would take these firstfruits away.

How is one's name written in the Book of Life?

Then who is taken? The person who has received the remission of sins. The Lord of the First Coming came to this earth to remove our sins. Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River and took on all the sins of the world once and for all; He bore those sins and received the judgment in our place on the Cross, shedding His blood and dying; and He rose again from the dead in three days, and so He has saved us wholly from sin. And now He sits at the right hand of God the Father.

The person who has believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins is a child of God, the one whose name is written in the Book of Life. Those who have not are judged before the Great White Throne judgment. Just as the end of this earth is certain, it is also certain that some will enter the kingdom of God and some will not.

When does our Lord, who is seated there, come? *"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)*. When the number of those among the Gentiles who believe this gospel and are saved is filled, then the door of tribulation opens for Israel, and they finally return to the Lord. Then the Millennial Kingdom comes to this earth; at the last there is the Great White Throne judgment; and in the new heavens and the new earth the Lord dwells with His people forever.

Let us light our lamps and wait for the Lord

The night of sin is deepening over the world. There is no one who seeks God, and even the memory of having seen the light is fading from people's hearts. Many have come to believe in Jesus

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as a religion, attending church because it is said that churchgoing makes one a well-mannered person.

But we are different. Though it be not an electric light but a small oil lamp, each of us must light the lamp of faith and shine it over the rough night sea. Like servants waiting for their master, we must hold up our lamps, love nothing else more than the Lord, love the Lord alone, treasure the Lord alone, and be ready for that day.

And we must preach the gospel. Even in our own families there are so many who live like mayflies, with no preparation for what may happen tomorrow. So that they may not suffer the tribulation at the last, and may not come to eternal destruction, we must bring them this gospel: that Jesus Christ came to this earth and has already removed all our sins.

This is the attitude of the saints living in the last days, and this is what the Lord asked of the saints of the last age in this chapter 24. No one knows when He will come, but He is certain to come. It is only that He seems slow to our eyes. You and I must stay awake, hold up our lamps, and greet that day. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Prepare for the last days

< Matthew 24:3-14 >

"Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives, the disciples came to Him privately, saying, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign of Your coming, and of the end of the age?' And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows. 'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake. And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. But he who endures to the end shall be saved. And this gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world as a witness to all the nations, and then the end will come."

"You will hear of wars and rumors of wars"

Today we share together how the Lord teaches us concerning tribulation. When the disciples asked what sign there would be

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of His coming and of the end of the age, the Lord answered like this.

"And Jesus answered and said to them: 'Take heed that no one deceives you. For many will come in My name, saying, 'I am the Christ,' and will deceive many. And you will hear of wars and rumors of wars. See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet. For nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:4–8).

First, He said that we would hear of wars and rumors of wars. There are disasters that come when the technology man has made breaks down unexpectedly, and there are disasters that come through unseasonable weather—heavy snow, cold waves, floods, and earthquakes. Whether they come from man or from nature, things that can only be called upheavals keep happening everywhere without ceasing.

From now on we will hear such news far more often than we do today. But the Lord said, *"See that you are not troubled; for all these things must come to pass, but the end is not yet" (Matthew 24:6)*. We must not regard this as the end. It is only the beginning.

"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom"

He also said that nation would rise against nation and kingdom against kingdom. Countries in which many peoples lived bound together have split apart, and in place after place peoples have set out to find their own nation. It has even come to the point where they tell other peoples to leave—to go and

leave their businesses and property behind.

On the other side, the opposite happens. Nations join together into one great bloc, and that great bloc swallows up the small nations. Then, when they collide over the economy or their interests, kingdom rises against kingdom and they go to war.

So the last days will not be peaceful. The world will become noisy, chaotic, and complicated—a desolate land, hard to live in. Since the Lord has taught us so, we must engrave this word deeply on our hearts. When such things happen, it is not something strange; it is the word being fulfilled.

"They will deliver you up to tribulation"

"'Then they will deliver you up to tribulation and kill you, and you will be hated by all nations for My name's sake" (Matthew 24:9).

Upheaval and tribulation are different. Upheavals arise of themselves, and so they can be avoided; but tribulation is made by men, and so it cannot be avoided. He said that people will seize us, deliver us up to tribulation, and kill us. When that time comes, many among us will die. Learn it so, know it so, and believe it so. But do not be afraid.

That will be the time when it is fixed by law that the born-again may not set foot on this earth. Religions, too, will be merged into one, and all who are not born again will become one side and stand on the side of Satan. So the born-again become those who defy the government in that world. Even if they hunt down such people, try them, and kill them, we will have no reason to feel wronged. We are people who cannot stand on Satan's side in any case.

If only a few of us were seized and killed while the world

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remained good to live in, we would feel wronged, but that will be a time when the whole world is in chaos, when killing a person has become easier than killing a beast, and when neither human decency nor love can be found. Therefore, at that time we can meet death with thanksgiving instead, with joy. Only, choosing death for oneself must never happen.

I, too, am anxious at heart that at that time I might become a man who begs before the saints to be allowed to live just a little longer. So I do not trust my own will or my own thoughts. I simply receive this word the Lord has taught. If we believe this word now and store it up in our hearts, I believe that at that time the Lord will bring it to remembrance and enable us to bear it.

"Many false prophets will rise up"

"And then many will be offended, will betray one another, and will hate one another. Then many false prophets will rise up and deceive many. And because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:10–12).

In the time of tribulation, false prophets rise up. If at that time someone appears with a kind and loving face, performing powers and miracles, calling himself the Christ, and even protecting people from those who come to seize them, many will follow him, saying the Lord has come. But our Lord does not come that way. *"For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes to the west, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be" (Matthew 24:27)* He comes so that all the people of the whole world see Him.

Even now false prophets are not few. There are those who call themselves God, and those who say that man is god. There are also those who claim to teach the Bible while in fact

gathering up the believers' possessions to build great chapels. With the money for raising one chapel in one place, one could preach the gospel to the whole world and have plenty left over. He said that from now on such people will rise up in even greater numbers.

He said that because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold. If someone falls only a little short, we can forgive and bear with one another. But when a person goes down a wholly wrong path, we cannot walk with him, and so in the end hatred comes before love. Therefore, as far as we can, we must not practice lawlessness, and even if we are lacking, our hearts at least must walk the right road.

"He who endures to the end shall be saved"

"But he who endures to the end shall be saved" (Matthew 24:13) This word means that there are those who, in that time of tribulation, will not see death but will have their bodies transformed. Since the Lord has taught so, such people are certain to exist. If there were none, He would not have spoken this word.

I am quick-tempered, and it seems I could not endure like that. But among those whose patience runs deep, who have been steeled by prayer and faith, who do not lose their temper at anything and are full of the fruit of the Spirit, there will be those who endure to the end. Such people are truly worthy of respect. I hope they will remain to the end, preach the gospel, do our share as well, and then come.

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This gospel of the kingdom will be preached in all the world

"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).

This gospel has not yet entered the whole world. Whatever country you visit, it is hard to meet people who believe, just as it is, this gospel of the water and the Spirit that the early Church believed. However hard we strive, we fall short of making every last person know it. This we admit.

But the Lord said that it would be preached in all the world, and that then the end would come. Then what will happen? The very event of our being delivered up to tribulation and killed can become the channel through which this gospel is made known to the whole world. Just as those who were martyred in the amphitheaters of old testified by their deaths to what they believed, the question of why these people die rather than forsake that faith will become known to the whole world.

And so people will come to know. They will come to know that the God these people believe in is Jesus Christ who came to this earth; that these are the people who have received the remission of sins by believing in His water and blood; and that their country is not this earth but the kingdom of God. And from among them, those who follow after our faith will rise up all over the world.

The salvation accomplished with the water and the blood

Then what is it that we believe, that we cannot forsake it even

before all this? Our Lord came to this earth as a man; He received baptism from John and took on all the sins of the world once and for all; He bore those sins and was nailed to the Cross, shedding His blood and dying; and He rose again from death in three days, and so He has saved us wholly from sin. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Lord wants all the people of the whole world to know His birth, His baptism, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection—all of it. When the Lord Himself directs that work, the day when every person in the whole world hears this gospel is also certain to come. And then, only then, the end comes.

Let it be to me according to Your word

Therefore, we must receive this teaching into our hearts and believe it. *"Then Mary said, 'Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word.' And the angel departed from her" (Luke 1:38)* Just like the faith of Mary, who received the word of God just as it was, we too must receive all that is to come, saying, "Let it be according to the Lord's will."

Whether we suffer tribulation or are put to death does not depend on us but on the Lord. So when these signs appear, we need only strengthen our faith all the more, saying, "Ah, the Lord taught that such things would happen in the time of tribulation—so now is that time." At that time there will be no leisure to hear the word like this. We must receive the teaching now, in advance, and store it up in our hearts.

By faith we preach the gospel, by faith we endure, by faith we live, and by faith we are even martyred. Whatever we do, we must do it by faith. Nor must we shake other saints with faint-hearted words at that time.

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When the Lord comes, those who take part in the first resurrection will rise again, and those who remain alive will be transformed in a moment. And, just as the Lord said, He will have them reign with Him for a thousand years. You and I must learn about this last time in advance and engrave it on our hearts, practice no lawlessness but embrace love, and be ready, saying, "Let it be according to the word of the Lord." ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Stay awake and give out the food of life in due season

< Matthew 24:32-51 >

“‘Now learn this parable from the fig tree: When its branch has already become tender and puts forth leaves, you know that summer is near. So you also, when you see all these things, know that it is near—at the doors! Assuredly, I say to you, this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place. Heaven and earth will pass away, but My words will by no means pass away. ‘But of that day and hour no one knows, not even the angels of heaven, but My Father only. But as the days of Noah were, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. For as in the days before the flood, they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noah entered the ark, and did not know until the flood came and took them all away, so also will the coming of the Son of Man be. Then two men will be in the field: one will be taken and the other left. Two women will be grinding at the mill: one will be taken and the other left. Watch therefore, for you do not know what hour your Lord is coming. But know this, that if the master of the house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have watched and not allowed his house to be broken into. Therefore you also be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect. ‘Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his master made ruler over his household, to give them food in due season? Blessed is that servant whom

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his master, when he comes, will find so doing. Assuredly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all his goods. But if that evil servant says in his heart, 'My master is delaying his coming,' and begins to beat his fellow servants, and to eat and drink with the drunkards, the master of that servant will come on a day when he is not looking for him and at an hour that he is not aware of, and will cut him in two and appoint him his portion with the hypocrites. There shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth."

The wisdom that discerns the seasons

Jesus told His disciples to learn the parable of the fig tree. Just as we know that summer is drawing near when the branch becomes tender and leaves sprout, He said that when we see the things He spoke of appearing, we are to know that the Son of Man is near, at the doors. God does not want the saints to live knowing nothing at all of the flow of the times. He wants us to look at the world in the light of the word and prepare for the Lord's return.

The fig tree points to the nation of Israel. That Israel, which had lost its nation, was restored as an independent state in 1948 is the mark of the fig tree's branch becoming tender and its leaves sprouting—the sign announcing that the last age is near. The word *"this generation will by no means pass away till all these things take place"* means that before the restored nation of Israel completely disappears from this earth, the Lord will come again and the things He prophesied will be fulfilled. Only God the Father knows the exact day and hour, but the righteous who have received the remission of sins must see this mark and discern the time and the age in which they live.

Right discernment is not knowledge for satisfying curiosity. It is the wisdom that knows the Lord's return is near and sets today's faith upright. If we only analyze the news of the world and do not serve the gospel, there is no profit in knowing the signs. If we watch disasters, wars, and moral corruption and still live following only our own greed, we are like people who cannot discern the seasons. The fruit of discernment must appear as repentance and faith, the preaching of the gospel, and faithfulness.

The saints must not be swept up in sensational claims about the end. A teaching that fixes a particular year and day, makes people abandon their property, or makes them stop their daily lives is different from the word of the Lord. Knowing the date is not preparation; believing the true gospel and faithfully doing the work entrusted to us, so that we can greet the Lord whenever He comes—that is preparation.

The word that will never pass away

Jesus said that heaven and earth would pass away, but His words would never pass away. Even the heavens and the earth we see are not eternal, but the Lord's promise is certain to be fulfilled. Man's predictions miss the mark and the world's learning changes, but the word of God does not change. In the age of the end, the surest ground the saints must hold on to is not the fashion of the times or the opinions of men but the word of the Scriptures.

The promise that the Lord will come again is also certain to be fulfilled. We must not think of the Second Coming as a distant story merely because a long time has passed. With God, a thousand years are as a day and a day as a thousand years. That

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the Lord seems slow in coming is the grace of His long patience, so that even one more soul may hear the gospel and be saved. But when the time God has appointed arrives, He will come without delaying a single moment.

To believe the word is not to acknowledge the Second Coming with the lips only. It is to set the priorities of our lives with the faith that the Lord may come even today. We must lay down the greed the gospel does not need, live at peace with our brothers, and not put off the mission entrusted to us. Not pushing to tomorrow the preaching and the serving that must be done, but doing them today—this is the attitude that actually believes the word.

Even when our circumstances are hard, the word does not change. Even when the church is small and the fruit of preaching the gospel is not immediately visible, God's will to preach this gospel of the kingdom to the whole world is accomplished. The saints must not lose heart over visible results alone but lean on the word and carry out their own share of the work. God joins our small labors together and causes the gospel to be delivered to many souls.

The faith that the word never passes away also places our own judgment under the word. When what the world calls right differs from the Scriptures, we must choose the word of God. Even if the majority reject the gospel and old doctrines are accepted as if they were the truth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit to which the Scriptures testify cannot be changed. The person who keeps the word is not a person behind the times but a person standing on the eternal truth.

The indifference of Noah's day

Jesus said that His coming would be as the days of Noah. Before the flood came, people ate and drank, married and were given in marriage, living as usual. Eating, drinking, and marrying are not sins in themselves. Their problem was that they heard the warning of God's judgment and did not believe it, and that they were absorbed only in the life of the flesh and did not realize it until the flood arrived.

Today, too, many people make eating well and living well in this world the whole purpose of life. They take great interest in their houses, jobs, health, and children's success, but they give no thought to whether there is sin in their hearts or what judgment awaits them after death. Even a churchgoer, if he seeks only worldly blessing rather than the truth of being born again, is no different from the people of Noah's day.

Noah believed in the unseen flood by the word of God and prepared the ark. People must have thought him foolish, but he obeyed the word for long years. For the saints of today, the refuge that corresponds to the ark is the righteousness of salvation Jesus Christ accomplished. To escape the judgment of God, we must not enter some religious form; we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took over onto His own body the sins of all the people of the world. And bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving all the judgment of sin, and He rose again in three days. The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection are God's complete salvation that delivers sinners from the judgment. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who believes this truth

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and testifies that he is a child of God.

The person who believes this gospel is the person who has entered the spiritual ark. He escapes the judgment not by his own good deeds but under the protection of believing in the righteousness of Jesus. Therefore, we must first examine whether we have received the remission of all our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If sin still remains in the heart, we must hear again from the word the salvation the Lord accomplished, and believe it.

Noah did not believe only inwardly in his heart; he actually built the ark. We, too, must not say we believe the gospel while chasing only the world in our lives. We must give thanks for the salvation we have received, prepare the work of the gospel together with the church, and deliver the word of judgment and salvation to our families and neighbors. Even amid people's ridicule and indifference, we must trust the word of God still more, as Noah did. Obedience grounded in the word is the fruit of faith, not a price paid to buy salvation.

Belonging to a church is also precious, but the name of a church does not itself save anyone. Just as Noah's ark was built according to the word of God, a true church must preach the gospel God has accomplished. We must not sit inside a religious organization without the gospel of the water and the Spirit and think ourselves safe. Each person must hear the word of truth and believe it with the heart, and after receiving the remission of sins, he must be united with the Church of God that preaches the gospel.

Two people divided in the same place

Jesus said that when two men are in the field, one will be taken and the other left, and that when two women are grinding at the mill, one will be taken and the other left. The one who is taken is the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and obtained the Holy Spirit; he takes part in the resurrection and the rapture at the Lord's return. The one who is left is the person who, though showing the same appearance of a life of faith in the same place, has not been born again according to the word and remains under the judgment. The taking and the leaving, therefore, reveal the final separation of the saved from the unsaved.

The standard that divides salvation is not outward office or religious career. It hangs on whether one believes the fact that Jesus took on all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and ended the punishment of those sins on the Cross. The person who believes this gospel, receives the remission of sins, and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in him belongs to the Lord. On the other hand, however long a person has attended church, if he holds sin in his heart and relies on his own works, he is still under the judgment.

Therefore, we must not only examine other people's faith; we must confirm our own faith before the word. We must look back and ask whether we know the gospel of the water and the Spirit only as knowledge, or whether we have believed it with the heart and accepted God's verdict that we are without sin. The assurance of salvation does not come from having lived devoutly; it comes from the word that Jesus has actually removed all sins.

Moreover, the person who has received the remission of sins first must preach this gospel to his family and his close neighbors. Living together does not automatically produce the same faith.

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The more we love someone, the more honestly we must speak to him of judgment and salvation. We cannot force anyone to believe, but we must be patient, pray, and share the gospel so that he gets the opportunity to hear the word.

Even hearing the same sermon, one person receives the word into his heart and another rejects it by his own thoughts. God looks not at the faith of a group but at the heart of each person. A parent's faith cannot stand in for the child, and a spouse's faith cannot remove the other's sins. Everyone must personally believe the gospel that his sins were passed on to Jesus. Therefore, the saved must not drive their loved ones impatiently, but calmly help them understand and believe the word for themselves.

What it means to watch

Jesus said to watch, because we do not know on what day the Lord will come. To watch is not to go without sleep at night or to gaze only at the sky every day. It is for the heart not to be drunk with the greed of the world or with false teachings, but to believe the word of the Lord and do the mission entrusted to us. It is a life of keeping our present faith so that we will not be ashamed whenever the Lord comes.

If the master of the house had known when the thief would come, he would have watched and guarded the house. But no one can know the hour of the Lord's coming. So the saints must not prepare for one particular day only; they must be ready always. In health or in sickness, in good circumstances or in hard ones, in youth or in old age, we must not let go of the heart that believes the gospel and serves.

The person who watches examines the state of his own soul

often. He checks not what merits he has piled up, but whether he is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit wholly. He looks back to see whether he is keeping away from the church by the thoughts of the flesh or hating a brother, and whether he is putting off the work of the gospel for the sake of worldly gain. When he finds a fault, he admits it before the word and turns from that path.

A watching faith is not a state of trembling in fear. The person who has already received the remission of all his sins waits for the Lord not merely as the Judge but as the beloved Savior. Because he believes that Jesus saved him completely with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross, he looks forward to the day of His coming as a day of glory and joy. This hope makes the saints all the more faithful.

The servant who gives out food in due season

The Lord asked who is the faithful and wise servant who gives food in due season to the people of the house. In the last age, the important work the Lord has entrusted to His servants is to give out the food of life to souls. To sinners we must preach the gospel of the remission of sins, and to the saints who are already saved we must supply the word that keeps and grows their faith.

A sinner must first know that he is a being bound for judgment before the Law of God. But if we only point out sin and do not show the way of salvation, we have not given the food of life. We must preach plainly the gospel that Jesus took over all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received the punishment in his place on the Cross.

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When a person believes this word, he receives the remission of sins and eternal life.

The saved saints also continually need the food of the Spirit. Believing the gospel does not mean that one automatically discerns everything and lives faithfully. We must learn the word of the Scriptures, receive the guidance of the church, lay down our own thoughts, and follow the will of God. We must exhort and encourage one another with the word so that we keep the faith even amid tribulation and temptation.

In the words "food in due season" lies the wisdom of looking at the spiritual condition of the other person. To the person who has not realized his sin, we must let the Law show him that he is a sinner; to the person crushed and despairing under sin, we must convey the complete remission of sins Jesus accomplished. To the newly saved we must teach the basics of the gospel again and again, and the person whose faith has grown we must exhort to take up the mission of the gospel. We are not to repeat the same words to everyone but to supply, within the word, the food each one needs.

The person who gives out the food of the Spirit must keep eating the word himself. If we try to teach others with only our own experience and old knowledge, our hearts can grow dry and proud. We must first read the Scriptures and hear the word preached in the church, and examine whether our own faith stands squarely on the gospel. When we share what we have received from the Lord, that word becomes life to other souls as well.

The ways of giving out the food are not limited to preaching. Making, translating, and delivering gospel books, supporting evangelists with material things and with prayer, teaching young souls, and looking after newly saved saints—all these are also the service of giving out the food of life. Though the gifts and

circumstances each person has received differ, when we join our hearts together for the gospel, we all take part in the Lord's work.

Faithfulness is not doing one great thing once; it is carrying to the end the work one has been given. It is preaching the gospel even when the results are slow to appear, tending to what is needed even when the body is weary, and serving in the place the Lord has entrusted even when no one recognizes it. And wisdom is not launching as many projects as possible; it is discerning the time and the circumstances and supplying souls with the right food in the right measure.

If the master, when he returns, sees the servant working like this, that servant is blessed. The Lord said He would entrust all His goods to him. The Lord does not forget even the small labors we have offered for the gospel. The sweat and tears shed on this earth are for a moment, but the reward and the glory to be received in the kingdom of God are eternal.

The servant who thought his master was delaying

The evil servant thought in his heart that his master would be delayed. This warning does not apply only to hypocrites who never believed from the beginning. Even a person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if he thinks the Master is delaying, sets the gospel aside, chases only the pleasures of the flesh, and oppresses his fellow servants, the Lord treats him exactly like an unbeliever. Therefore, we must not make a past profession of salvation our shield, but obey the Lord's will now and serve the gospel and the church.

When a person loses the faith that waits for the Lord, he easily comes to follow his own greed. He may use the authority

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entrusted to him not to serve his brothers but to force through his own will, and he may use the material things of the gospel for his private gain. Outwardly he stands in the place of a servant, but in his heart he has become the master. The Lord warned that He will certainly judge such hypocrisy.

We must not apply this word only to other people. In our hearts, too, there are the desires of the flesh—wanting to rest, to be waited on, to live as we please. Therefore, we must remember daily the gospel the Lord accomplished and never forget that we are servants saved by grace. Rather than exalting ourselves, we must serve our brothers, and we must seek the salvation of souls before our personal gain.

To beat one's fellow servants does not mean physical violence only. Pressing down on a brother with one's authority, wounding him with words, and condemning him for not following one's own will can also be the attitude of the evil servant. A true worker does not regard the saints as his own possession but treats them as souls the Lord has entrusted to him. Even when correcting a wrong, he exhorts with love and truth, remembering that he himself is also a servant under the Lord's judgment.

We must do the work entrusted to us today

Preparing to greet the Lord is not something we begin in the distant future. It is believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit today, preaching the gospel today, and giving out food today to the souls entrusted to us. We cannot know when the Lord will come, but the fact that He is certain to come is plain. Therefore, what we can do for certain is to live the time given to us now by faith.

Even if the world grows indifferent to the gospel and fills up with sin as in the days of Noah, we must not lose heart. Even if the hearers are few and the hindrances to the work of the gospel are many, we must keep giving out the food of life. God knows the souls who seek His word, and He saves them through our labors.

The person who watches also carries out his real-life responsibilities faithfully while waiting for the Lord. He cares for his family, works honestly, and serves the church, but he sets the center of all his life on the gospel. Even in the ordinary life of eating, drinking, and working, he seeks first the kingdom and the righteousness of God. This is not a faith that abandons the world and flees; it is the faith that prepares to greet the Lord in the midst of the world.

When the Lord comes, we must greet Him as those believing, keeping, and preaching the gospel. Giving the food of the remission of sins to sinners and the food of faith to the righteous, united with the church, we must live as faithful and wise servants. On that day the Lord will say to us, “Well done,” and let us take part in the joy of the eternal kingdom. ✉

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CHAPTER

25

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Matthew Chapter 25

< Matthew 25:1-46 >

“‘Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. ‘And at midnight a cry was heard: ‘Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!’ Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, ‘Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.’ But the wise answered, saying, ‘No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.’ And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. ‘Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, ‘Lord, Lord, open to us!’ But he answered and said, ‘Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.’ ‘Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming. ‘For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two

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more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 'So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 'Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 'But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.' 'When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be

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gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 'Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' 'Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 'Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'"

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 25 shows in three scenes what the command *"Watch"* given in chapter 24 actually means. The parable of the ten virgins teaches that we must be prepared to greet the Lord; the parable of the talents teaches that we must faithfully use what we have received from the Lord; and the judgment of the sheep and the goats teaches that true faith appears as love toward the least of people.

All three scenes have as their background the return of Jesus and the final judgment. Therefore, to watch is not to calculate the date of the Second Coming; it is to make our relationship with the Lord certain, carry out the mission entrusted to us, and live a life of loving our neighbors.

1. The ten virgins who went out to meet the bridegroom (verses 1–4)

All ten virgins took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Seen from the outside, they all seemed to have the same purpose. But five were wise and prepared oil in their vessels along with their lamps, while the other five were foolish and took only their lamps without preparing enough oil.

The lamp represents the Church of God. The foolish virgins also had lamps and so were inside the church, but they had not received the remission of sins in their hearts and so had not received the Holy Spirit. To greet the Lord, we must hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit within the Church of God, receive the remission of sins, and prepare the oil of the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

The oil represents the Holy Spirit, who dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins. The vessel that holds the oil refers to a person's heart. That the wise

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virgins prepared oil in their vessels means that within the Church of God they believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, received the remission of sins, and received the Holy Spirit. The foolish virgins, on the other hand, had the lamp, the church, but had not received the remission of sins, and so there was no Holy Spirit in their hearts. Therefore, the true preparation for greeting the Lord is not having some vague spiritual resolve or religious zeal, but believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of sins, and receiving the Holy Spirit into the heart.

2. The bridegroom delayed, and they all slept (verses 5–9)

When the bridegroom came later than expected, all ten virgins slumbered and slept. Here it was not only the foolish virgins who fell asleep; the wise virgins slept as well. So the point of this parable does not lie in whether they physically slept. It lies in whether they were equipped to greet the bridegroom even if he came late.

At midnight the cry was suddenly heard: *"Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!"* All the virgins arose and trimmed their lamps, but the lamps of the foolish virgins were going out for lack of oil. They asked the wise virgins to share their oil.

But no one could prepare in another's place to greet the bridegroom. No one can greet the Lord by the faith of his parents, his spouse, or his church community. We can learn the gospel and grow in faith with the help of others, but in the end each person must stand before the Lord with his own faith.

Preparation is not something that can be borrowed from others at the moment of crisis. While things are peaceful, we must hear the word of God, confirm what we believe, and form a right relationship with the Lord.

3. The shut door of the wedding feast (verses 10–13)

While the foolish virgins went to buy oil, the bridegroom arrived. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. When the virgins who came back later asked him to open the door, the bridegroom answered, *"I do not know you."*

God's invitation is open now, but that opportunity does not continue forever. When Jesus comes again, or when a person meets death, there is no more preparing. After the door is shut, no one can enter by a religious name or a belated plea.

The bridegroom's word, *"I do not know you,"* means that a true relationship with the Lord matters more than mere religious activity. Having knowledge about Jesus and being acknowledged as a person who belongs to Jesus can be two different things.

To *"watch"* does not mean to find out the date of the Lord's coming. Since we cannot know that day and hour, it means to prepare our faith now and live waiting for the Lord.

4. The master who entrusted his goods to his servants (verses 14–18)

A man, leaving for a far country, entrusted his possessions to his servants. To one servant he entrusted five talents, to another two talents, and to another one talent. The amount each received differed, but all of them were entrusted with their master's property.

In the text a talent is a unit of money of great value, but in this parable it represents the abilities God has entrusted to each person. It includes life and time, health and material things, abilities and opportunities—and above all, every condition we have received for serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The master did not entrust the talents recklessly, ignorant of

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his servants' abilities; he entrusted them *"to each according to his own ability."* Not everyone was given the same amount, but no one was given nothing at all.

The servants who received five talents and two talents used them at once, and each gained double. But the servant who received one talent dug in the ground and hid his master's money. He did not lose his master's property, but neither did he use it for the purpose for which it was entrusted.

5. The praise the good and faithful servants received (verses 19–23)

After a long time the master returned and settled accounts with his servants. When the servant who had received five talents brought five more, the master praised him: *"Well done, good and faithful servant."* The servant who had received two talents also gained two more and received the very same praise.

It is important that the servant who gained five talents and the servant who gained two received the same praise. The master did not simply compare the size of the results. He looked at whether each had been faithful within the portion entrusted to him.

Believers need not compare themselves with the abilities others have received. One person may preach the word before many people, and another may care for one person where no one sees. What matters is not how large the work looks but whether we have sincerely carried out the work the Lord entrusted to us.

The Lord entrusts more to the person who has been faithful in a few things and lets him share in his master's joy. The final purpose of serving God is not simply to obtain a great reward but to take part in what pleases the Lord and to enjoy His joy together with Him.

6. The servant who hid his one talent in the ground (verses 24–30)

The servant who had received one talent thought of his master as a strict and unjust man, *"reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed."* He excused himself, saying that he had buried the talent in the ground because he was afraid of his master.

But his fear did not lead to faithfulness. If he had really feared his master, he should at least have deposited the money so that it would earn interest. He misunderstood his master, and he used that wrong idea as an excuse for laziness.

The problem is not that he received only one talent. It lies in the fact that he did nothing, thinking he had received little. We must not bury in the ground what we have received from God just because it looks small. We can begin by comforting one person, helping with a small task, and using even a short time for good work.

The master rebuked him as a *"wicked and lazy servant"* and an *"unprofitable servant."* This does not mean that salvation is bought with works; it is a rebuke of the sin of receiving salvation and abilities from God and yet never using them for the gospel and for souls. The person who claims to have received the remission of sins yet does not unite with the church and lives only for himself comes to stand on the same road as the servant who received one talent.

Faith cannot be said to exist without any fruit at all. True faith appears as faithfulness and obedience that seek to use what God has entrusted.

7. The Son of Man who judges all the nations (verses 31–33)

Jesus said that He would come in glory with all the angels and sit on the throne of glory. When He first came, He came in

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the form of a serving servant, but when He comes again, He comes as the King who judges all nations.

All the nations will be gathered before the Lord, and the Lord will separate people as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. He will set the sheep on His right hand and the goats on the left. Now believers and unbelievers live together and the difference may not be obvious, but at the end the Lord will discern them precisely.

A person's social position, wealth, and religious fame will not be the standard of the judgment. Jesus, who knows perfectly each person's heart, faith, and the life that came from that faith, will judge.

8. The love of the righteous who stood on the right hand (verses 34–40)

The King called those standing on His right hand *"you blessed of My Father"* and told them to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. They did not create the kingdom or purchase it by their own merit; they inherited the kingdom already prepared.

The King said that when He was hungry they gave Him food, when He was thirsty they gave Him drink, and when He was a stranger they took Him in. He also said that when He was naked they clothed Him, when He was sick they looked after Him, and when He was in prison they came to Him.

The righteous asked when they had ever done such things for the Lord. They had not counted their good deeds like points, piling them up as merit for salvation. Nor did they regard serving people in need as some great achievement.

Jesus said, *"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me." "My brethren"* refers to the people of God who have believed in the gospel of the water

and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and been born again—the brothers and sisters within the church of the righteous. Among them, *"the least of these"* means the smallest of the righteous who belong to the Lord, however insignificant they may look in people's eyes. To receive and serve them is to receive and serve the Lord Himself.

At the same time, the spirit of this word applies also to everyone who is weak and in need of help. Caring for those who are hungry, thirsty, sick, and neglected is honoring people as beings created in the image of God. No one can claim to love Jesus while turning away from the suffering person before his eyes.

9. Why those on the left hand were judged (verses 41–45)

Those standing on the left hand did not care for the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, or those in prison. They, too, asked in return when they had ever seen the Lord and failed to serve Him. They may have thought that if He had appeared in the form of a glorious King, they would certainly have served Him.

But Jesus was before them in the form of the smallest and weakest of people. Rather than committing the great sin of publicly insulting the Lord, they kept turning away from those who needed help. The sin of not doing the love that ought to be done is also serious before God.

This word does not mean that failing once to help a poor person costs us our salvation on the spot. It means that a life with no mercy at all makes us look back at whether there is true faith that has received the mercy of God. Salvation is not obtained by good works, but the faith that has been saved gives birth to love for neighbors.

The sheep and the goats were not divided arbitrarily by the number of their good deeds. Their continuing attitude toward

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the least revealed how they had treated the King.

10. Everlasting punishment and eternal life (verse 46)

Matthew chapter 25 ends with the words: *"These will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life."* The return of Jesus does not bring the same outcome to everyone. Some enter the kingdom God has prepared and eternal life, while others depart from God and enter eternal judgment.

Eternal life and everlasting punishment are both actual and final outcomes. Therefore, we must not take lightly the invitation of the gospel and the opportunity to turn back that are given now. After the door is shut there is no preparing, and after the master has returned the talents can no longer be used.

But to believers, the word of judgment is not a word that remains only as terror. The Lord lets the faithful take part in His own joy and inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Because there is the hope of eternal life with the Lord, even today's small faithfulness and service are not in vain.

11. How the three parables of Matthew Chapter 25 connect as one

The parable of the ten virgins emphasizes the inward preparation for greeting the Lord. No one can borrow another's faith, and our relationship with the Lord must be made certain before the door is shut.

The parable of the talents shows what the prepared person must do while waiting for the master. The person who waits for the Lord is not someone who does nothing and only counts the days, but someone who works faithfully, using what he has received from the Lord.

The judgment of the sheep and the goats shows where that faithfulness concretely appears. True faithfulness appears as the love that feeds, clothes, receives, and cares for the smallest and weakest.

Therefore, preparation, faithfulness, and love are not separated from one another. The person who truly knows the Lord waits for the Lord, uses what he has received from the Lord, and serves the people the Lord loves.

12. The overall lesson of Matthew Chapter 25

Matthew chapter 25 is not a chapter that teaches us to buy salvation with works. The kingdom of God is the kingdom the Father has prepared from the foundation of the world, and believers inherit it. But true faith does not exist alone, without any change or fruit.

The faith that is ready to greet the Lord continues even through hardship and delay. The faith that trusts the Master faithfully uses the time, the abilities, the material things, and the gospel entrusted to it. The faith that has received God's mercy appears as love that cares for the hungry, the sick, the neglected, and the persecuted.

Therefore, to watch is not to know the date of the Second Coming but to be faithful today in the small work the Lord has entrusted to us. If what we have received from the Lord looks smaller than what others have, we must neither lose heart nor bury it in the ground, but begin the work we can do now. And we must not claim to love the Lord while turning away from the smallest person.

To sum up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 25 teaches us to prepare the true faith that can greet the Lord whenever He comes, to use faithfully what each of us has received without comparing it with others, and to show the genuineness of our

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faith by loving and serving the least of people as we would the Lord.

2) Matthew Chapter 25 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 25 makes concrete, through three parables, the word *"Watch"* given in chapter 24. The parable of the ten virgins tells us to receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts and prepare the faith to greet the Lord, and the parable of the talents exhorts us to use the salvation and the abilities we have received from the Lord for the work of the gospel. The judgment of the sheep and the goats shows that the faith of the person who has become righteous through the gospel of the water and the Spirit appears as a life of serving the Lord's brethren and the weak.

Salvation is not obtained by works. But because the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and the Cross, that faith comes to bear the fruits of preparation, faithfulness, and love.

1. All ten virgins waited for the bridegroom, but their preparation differed (verses 1–4)

All ten virgins took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Their outward appearance and purpose looked the same. They all knew the bridegroom would come, and they all said they were waiting for him. But five virgins had oil, and the other five had none.

This makes us consider that even among those who outwardly say they believe in Jesus, there can be those who

have actually received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and those who have not. Hearing the same word in the same church, singing the same hymns, and speaking of the Lord's return does not mean that all have the same faith.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the lamp represents the Church of God, and the oil represents the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart that has received the remission of sins. To greet the Lord, both the lamp and the oil are needed. That is, we must be united with the Church of God and receive the guidance of the word, and we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

To be inside the church, the lamp, and yet have no oil is the state of not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, with sin remaining in the heart as it is. The church is not a dispensable outward form; it is the place where the saints receive the guidance of the word and serve the gospel. But the outward fact of belonging to a church is not enough; we must without fail receive the remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit into our hearts.

2. How does the oil, that is, the Holy Spirit, come upon the heart?

The Holy Spirit does not come automatically because a person prays loudly or has some mysterious experience. The Holy Spirit comes as the gift of God upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in a human body. And when He turned thirty, He received baptism in the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, all

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the sins of mankind—past, present, and future—passed onto Jesus.

Jesus is without sin, but because He took upon Himself all our sins, He went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world. On the Cross the Lord shed His blood and died, receiving in our place the judgment of sin that we should have received, and He rose again from the dead in three days.

The water refers to the baptism Jesus received from John, and the blood refers to His death on the Cross, where He bore the punishment of those sins. The Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus is the Son of God and that our salvation was completed by His baptism, His death, and His resurrection.

When we believe this fact with the heart, we receive the remission of all sins and become righteous before God. In the heart thus washed of sin, the Holy Spirit dwells. This is the faith that prepared the oil along with the lamp, the faith of the person born again of water and the Spirit.

3. Oil cannot be borrowed from another (verses 5–9)

When the bridegroom came late, all ten virgins fell asleep. Since the wise virgins slept as well, the focus of this parable does not lie in whether they stayed physically awake. It lies in whether they were prepared to greet the bridegroom even if he came later than expected.

When the cry was heard at midnight that the bridegroom was coming, the virgins without oil asked the others to share their oil. But no one could prepare in another's place to greet the bridegroom.

A child is not automatically born again because his parents believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Nor can anyone enter the kingdom of heaven by borrowing the faith of a spouse, a pastor, or a church community. Others can teach us

the gospel, but each person must believe with his own heart the word that Jesus took his sins upon Himself.

Neither is the Holy Spirit something people divide among themselves like goods. When each person believes in the baptism of Jesus and the Cross and receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon that heart. Therefore, instead of feeling safe, saying, "I am inside the church, so I am fine," each of us must clearly confirm whether there is sin in his own heart and how Jesus removed that sin.

4. We must prepare the faith of salvation before the door is shut (verses 10–13)

While the virgins without oil went to prepare, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in to the wedding feast. After that the door was shut. When the virgins who came late asked him to open the door, the bridegroom answered, *"I do not know you."*

Now is the time of grace, when anyone can hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. But when a person dies, or when the Lord comes again, there is no more preparing. At the last moment no one can borrow another's faith or hold up a religious name.

The Lord's word, *"I do not know you,"* means that there was no true relationship with the Lord. To know Jesus does not mean having lived a religious life knowing only His name. It is to believe the fact that Jesus received baptism for me and died on the Cross, to receive the remission of sins, and to become a person united with the Lord through the Holy Spirit.

To watch is not to calculate the date of the Second Coming or to go without sleep. It is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now, receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit, and be prepared to greet the Lord.

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5. The talents represent everything the Lord has entrusted to us (verses 14–18)

The master in the parable of the talents makes us think of Jesus, and the servants make us think of those who have been entrusted with something by the Lord. The master entrusted five talents, two talents, and one talent, to each according to his ability, and departed.

A talent is originally a unit of money indicating a great sum. In the gospel application, we can take it to include the life and time we have received from God, health and material things, knowledge and skills, circumstances and opportunities—and above all, salvation and the gospel.

Among all the things we have, there is nothing we did not receive from God. We received life from the Lord, and we received the time and strength to work. Hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sins is also not something produced by our own wisdom but grace received from God.

Therefore, the person who has received the remission of sins must not use what has been given him only for the flesh, but for the gospel and for souls. He can preach the gospel directly; he can translate the word or make books; he can support the preaching of the gospel with material things and with prayer. Caring for the weak within the church and upholding the workers of the gospel so that they can keep working are also ways of using the talent of the gospel.

6. The servants who received five talents and two talents received the same praise (verses 19–23)

When the master returned and settled accounts, the servant who had received five talents brought five more, and the servant who had received two brought two more. The master

praised both alike: *"Well done, good and faithful servant."*

God does not compare people by the size of the abilities they have received. It is not that only the person who has preached the gospel to many people is precious, while the person who has served one person is worthless. The Lord looks at whether each has been faithful within the portion entrusted to him.

One person may have received the gift of preaching the word, and another the ability to translate or organize. One may help with material things, another may cook, care for the sick, and do the needed work where no one sees. Every work that, in its many forms, upholds the gospel so that it may be preached is precious.

Neither is faithfulness something forced out by one's own strength alone. When the Lord entrusts a work, He also gives the strength and wisdom to carry it out. The Holy Spirit, who dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins, makes him realize what to do and adds the ability he needs.

When we bear the Lord's burden by faith, the Lord rather carries us and helps us. So the faithful person does not boast of his own merit but confesses, "I have done the Lord's work with what I received from the Lord."

7. Hiding the one talent in the ground is the picture of not using the grace received (verses 24–30)

The servant who had received one talent misunderstood his master as a hard man. He did not love and trust his master but feared him, and he made that wrong thought his excuse for doing nothing.

Seen in the gospel application, hiding the one talent in the ground is like burying the salvation and the gospel one has

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received deep in one's own heart and never using them for others. If someone lives with the attitude, "It is enough that I alone have received the remission of sins and go to heaven," he does not know the heart of the Lord who saved him.

Jesus did not wash away sins with the water and the blood in order to save only one of us. He wants the gospel to be passed on through us to others who are still under sin. If we have received salvation, we must tell the news of that salvation and serve the gospel with the time and the abilities we have received.

This parable is a solemn warning to the person who, after receiving the remission of sins, does not unite with the Church of God and lives only for his own flesh without serving the gospel and souls. The servant who received one talent buried the salvation and the ability he had received in the ground, and because he returned no fruit at all to his master, he was cast away.

At the same time, this word is a solemn warning even to those who have received the remission of sins. We must not live selfishly, satisfied with the knowledge that we have believed the gospel, but use everything we have received from God for the trade of the gospel. Here 'the trade of the gospel' does not mean making the gospel a means of profit; it means diligently preaching the gospel we have received so that more souls receive the remission of sins.

8. The Lord separates all the nations into the sheep and the goats (verses 31–33)

When Jesus comes again in glory, He will gather all the nations before His throne. When He came the first time, He lowered Himself to save sinners, but when He comes again, He comes as the King who judges all people.

At that time He will not distinguish people by religious titles or worldly position. The Lord knows whether the true faith of the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are in each person's heart. The sheep make us think of those who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and been clothed with the righteousness of God; the goats, of those who have kept their own sins and their own righteousness and refused the Lord's salvation.

The deeds of the sheep and the goats are not points piled up to buy salvation; they are the fruit that reveals what faith and what life were within them.

9. The righteous inherited the kingdom because they had first been saved (verses 34–40)

Jesus first called those on His right hand *"the righteous"* and *"you blessed of My Father."* He also told them to *"inherit"* the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

An inheritance is different from wages. It is not purchased by calculating how much one has worked; it is given to family. The righteous did not become children of God as the merit of feeding the hungry and caring for the sick. Because they first received the remission of sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and the Cross and became children of God, they inherit the kingdom prepared for them.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took on all their sins, and by being judged on the Cross He made them righteous people without sin. And by rising again He completed their salvation. The Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts made them embrace the Lord's heart and serve others.

Therefore, the serving of the sheep is not the cause of their salvation but its result. Those who received great mercy

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through the gospel of the water and the Spirit came to show mercy to others.

10. What was done to the least of the brethren was done to the Lord

Jesus said, *"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."* Here the Lord's brethren refer to the righteous who have been born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—the servants of God and the people of God. The Lord receives what was done in caring for and serving them as done to Himself, and He judges what was done in turning away from them as not done to Himself.

To give food to a preacher of the Lord's gospel when he is hungry, to take him in when he is a stranger, and to visit him when he is persecuted and imprisoned is to serve the Lord whom that person preaches. What is done to the family of God who have received the remission of sins and to the workers of the gospel, Jesus receives as done to Himself.

This word points first to caring for and serving the people of God and the workers of the gospel. We must also preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who have not yet received the remission of sins, lead them into the Church of God, and care for their actual needs as far as our strength reaches. But we must not put general charitable work in the same place as the preaching of the gospel and so push back the mission of serving the gospel and the church.

To speak the gospel to a hungry person while caring nothing for his food is not whole love, and to care only for the body without preaching the gospel so that the soul may receive the remission of sins is not enough either. To look after the needs of both spirit and body together is the heart of the Lord.

11. The righteous did not count their good deeds as merit

Those standing on the right hand asked in return when they had ever served the Lord. They had not recorded their good deeds one by one to be rewarded by God. Because they served their brothers and neighbors naturally, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they did not regard their deeds as any great merit.

The person who has truly received the remission of sins knows how weak he is by nature. He confesses that even the small good things he did were possible because the Holy Spirit gave him the heart and God gave him the strength, the material things, and the opportunity.

So the righteous person does not boast of his own deeds but boasts of the Lord's righteousness. He does not say, "I am righteous because I have lived a good life," but confesses, "I am righteous because Jesus received baptism from John, took my sins away, and was judged on the Cross."

12. The indifference of the goats shows that the life of the Spirit was not in them (verses 41–45)

Those standing on the left thought that if they had seen the Lord, they too would have served Him. But turning away from the least person before their eyes was itself turning away from the Lord.

We must not understand their judgment as simply the result of a lack of charitable activity. A life continually without mercy revealed that they had never received the mercy of God by faith and that the life of the Holy Spirit was not in their hearts.

A person does not pile up good deeds in order to be saved. But if someone claims to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit while feeling no compassion at all for the suffering of

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his brothers and neighbors, and is unwilling to share anything for the gospel, he must examine his own faith.

If someone says he has received the remission of sins while taking greed and selfishness for granted and using other people, this is not the fruit of the gospel. The Holy Spirit does not let the person who has received the remission of sins live shut up in his own desires; He keeps leading his heart to live for the Lord, for the gospel, and for his neighbors.

13. Eternal life and everlasting punishment are the actual final outcomes (verse 46)

Matthew chapter 25 ends with the word that the righteous enter eternal life, and those who are not righteous enter everlasting punishment. The return of Jesus is not a day of joy for everyone.

The person who has received the remission of all sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit enters the eternal kingdom the Lord has prepared. Because Jesus already took upon Himself with His baptism the sins that would condemn them and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, the believer greets the Lord's return as the completion of salvation.

But the person who refuses God's salvation and keeps his own sins must receive the judgment of those sins himself. If anyone hears the gospel that the Lord has removed all sins and still does not believe it, at the last he cannot escape the eternal judgment.

Therefore, while the door is open, we must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now. After the Lord comes again, no one can prepare oil, use the talents, or receive again the opportunity to serve the least.

14. The order of the gospel shown by the three parables of Matthew Chapter 25

The parable of the ten virgins shows that we must first believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. With outward faith alone, without receiving the Holy Spirit into the heart, no one can greet Jesus the Bridegroom.

The parable of the talents shows that the person who has received the remission of sins must use for the gospel the salvation, the time, the abilities, and the material things he has received from the Lord. Salvation is not knowledge to bury in the ground but the news of life that must be shared with other souls.

The word of the sheep and the goats shows that the faith of the person who has believed the gospel appears as love that serves his brothers and neighbors. The person who has received the Lord's grace cares for the workers of the gospel and the weak family of God, and does not turn away from the small suffering people of this world either.

This order must not be reversed. It is not that we receive the Holy Spirit by doing good and being faithful; it is that the person who has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in the baptism of Jesus and the Cross becomes faithful and loves out of thankfulness.

15. The heart of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Matthew Chapter 25 conveys

Jesus is the Son of God, and He came in the flesh to save sinners. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist the Lord took on all our sins, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again.

The person who believes in this gospel of the water and the

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Spirit receives the remission of all sins and becomes like the wise virgins who received the Holy Spirit into their hearts. He uses the salvation he has received from the Lord and all the resources of his life for the work of the gospel, and he bears the fruit of love that serves the Lord's brethren and the least of his neighbors.

The condition of salvation is not human faithfulness and good deeds. The condition and ground of salvation are the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that Jesus completed. But because the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has believed this salvation, that faith appears as preparation that waits for the Lord, faithfulness that serves the gospel, and compassion that cares for brothers and neighbors.

To sum up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 25 tells us to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection, and so prepare the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit; to use faithfully for the trade of the gospel the salvation and the abilities we have received from the Lord; and to live as the righteous who serve the Lord's least brethren and neighbors, and so greet the Lord, our Bridegroom. ✉

Matthew Chapter 25

Only those who are prepared, having received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, greet Jesus the Bridegroom and enter eternal life

Introductory Words

Matthew chapter 25 shows in three scenes what the command *"Watch"* given in chapter 24 actually means. The parable of the ten virgins, the parable of the talents, and the judgment of the sheep and the goats all teach how believers must live, looking toward the return of Jesus and the final judgment.

The ten virgins took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom, but five prepared oil and five did not. While the bridegroom delayed, they all slumbered and slept, and at midnight the cry rang out; and while the foolish virgins, having no oil, went to buy it, the door was shut. Only the prepared virgins entered the wedding feast, and Jesus said, *"Watch therefore."*

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In the parable of the talents, the master entrusted five, two, and one talent to his servants and departed. The servants who received five and two traded and doubled them and were praised, but the servant who received one talent hid it in the ground, was rebuked, and was cast into the outer darkness. Using faithfully what we have received from the Lord is the faith that watches.

In the judgment of the sheep and the goats, the Son of Man comes in glory and separates all the nations as sheep and goats. The righteous on the right are revealed by the love that fed the hungry, gave drink to the thirsty, and took in the stranger, while the people on the left had no such love. True faith is certain to show itself in the fruit of love.

But the root of these three parables lies not in man's preparation and deeds themselves, but in the remission of sins that makes that preparation possible. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took upon Himself all the sins of the world, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising again. Only the person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit can greet the Bridegroom like the virgins who prepared oil.

Matthew chapter 25 shows that the faith which prepares for the Second Coming is not a religious form or zeal of one's own, but the true love and faithfulness that come from the person who has received the remission of sins. Now, examining the words of the text in order, let us look into the lessons of the three parables and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that truly prepares us.

The true preparation for greeting the Bridegroom is not merely holding up a religious lamp but believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the Holy Spirit into the heart

"'Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 'And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 'Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 'Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:1–13).

The parable of the ten virgins in Matthew chapter 25 continues the teaching on the Second Coming given in chapter 24. Jesus said that since no one can know the date of His return, we must always stay awake and be prepared. The parable of the ten virgins shows what it is that we must prepare.

The bridegroom in the parable refers to Jesus Christ, who is coming again. The wedding feast represents the joy of the kingdom of God that the Lord will enjoy together with the

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saved believers. Since all ten virgins went out to meet the bridegroom, outwardly they look like people waiting for the Lord's return.

All ten were virgins, and all had lamps. They all knew the bridegroom would come, and their purpose of greeting him was the same. Looking only at the outward appearance, it was hard to tell who was wise and who was foolish.

This shows the picture of those who say they believe in Jesus within the church. They can hold the same Bible, sing the same hymns, and attend the same worship. They can all confess that they believe in the Lord's return and in the kingdom of heaven.

But having the same outward religious life does not mean having the same faith in the heart. God looks not at a person's office and career but at whether the word of the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are in his heart.

That five of the ten virgins were wise and five were foolish does not mean that the proportion of those who are saved is always half. It is a parable meant to contrast clearly the difference between the person who has only the lamp and the person who has both the lamp and the oil.

The foolish virgins also had lamps. This lamp represents the Church of God. They, too, waited for the bridegroom inside the church, but because they had not received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, they had no oil of the Holy Spirit. The fact of being inside the church and the fact of having received the Holy Spirit into the heart must always be confirmed together.

A lamp cannot give light by itself. Even with a wick, without oil it burns for a moment and goes out. Likewise, religious zeal can display a measure of devoutness, but it cannot produce eternal life.

Only those who are prepared, having received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, greet Jesus the Bridegroom and enter eternal life

The wise virgins did not have lamps only. They prepared oil separately in their vessels along with their lamps. They prepared so that they could keep their lamps burning even if the bridegroom came later than expected.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the oil represents the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins. In the Bible, oil symbolizes the Spirit of God and His anointing. Therefore, to have prepared oil means not simply having started a religious life but having believed the gospel and received the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is not received through human effort or emotional experiences. Nor does He enter the heart because one prays loudly or receives the laying on of hands many times. The Holy Spirit comes as a gift upon the person who has been washed of all sins by believing in the gospel of the righteousness God has fulfilled.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind in His own body. And bearing the sin of the world, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, receiving all the punishment of sin, and He completed salvation by rising again in three days.

The person who believes with the heart in this baptism of Jesus, His Cross, and His resurrection is washed of all sins. God counts that faith as righteousness and seals the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins with the Holy Spirit. This is the faith that prepared the oil along with the lamp.

Some people confess that they are still sinners even after attending church for a long time. While believing in Jesus, they may think that only by repenting daily are the day's sins washed away. With such faith, no one can be sure of the eternal remission of sins Jesus accomplished.

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In the heart that believes its sins remain, the condemnation and fear of sin continue. Though outwardly one seems to hold up a lamp and wait for the Lord, in the heart there is no assurance of greeting the Bridegroom. If the Lord were to come today, such a person does not know whether he can enter the kingdom of heaven.

On the other hand, the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes the fact that Jesus has already washed away all his sins, even though he still has the weaknesses of the flesh. He became righteous not because his deeds are perfect but by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

In verse 5, because the bridegroom was delayed, all ten virgins slumbered and slept. The wise virgins fell asleep together with the foolish ones. Therefore, the fact of having slept is not in itself the standard that divides the two groups.

This word shows the fact that man's flesh is weak. Even believers who have received the remission of sins cannot stay tense at every moment; at times they grow weary and spiritually idle. The difference in salvation lies not in whether one never dozed but in whether one has the oil.

The salvation of believers is not maintained by their own deeds of staying perfectly awake at every moment. It is guaranteed by the perfect salvation Jesus accomplished and by the Holy Spirit who dwells in the heart. But this fact does not justify spiritual laziness.

When the Lord's return feels slow, believers easily have their hearts stolen by the world. One may wait eagerly for the Second Coming at first, and then, as time passes, live as if the Lord were not coming soon. That is why we must keep hearing the word of the gospel and renewing the faith of our hearts.

In verse 6, at midnight the cry suddenly rang out: "*Behold,*

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the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!" Midnight is the time when people are most deeply asleep and least expecting. The return of Jesus also comes suddenly, at a time when people do not expect it.

At the cry that the bridegroom was coming, all the virgins arose and prepared their lamps. At the last moment, the substance of the faith each person had is revealed. They looked alike in ordinary times, but when the lamps had to be lit, the presence or absence of oil showed itself.

The lamps of the foolish virgins were going out, for a lamp without oil cannot keep giving light. A faith maintained only by religious zeal and emotion, without the assurance of the gospel, also reveals its limits in the face of tribulation and the Second Coming.

The foolish virgins asked the wise ones to share their oil. But the wise virgins answered that they could not share their oil. This word does not mean that we should act coldly and selfishly.

The faith that has received the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit, cannot be borrowed from another. A child is not automatically saved because his parents are saved, nor does a church member enter the kingdom of heaven by the faith of his pastor. Each person must hear the gospel and believe it with his own heart.

We can preach the gospel to others, but we cannot believe in their place. We can help them receive the remission of sins, but we cannot tear off a piece of our own Holy Spirit for them. Salvation is a personal event of faith that takes place between God and each soul.

The wise virgins' word, *"Go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves,"* is not an exhortation to buy the Holy Spirit with money. It is a word of irony exposing the foolish

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faith of those who, keeping sin in their hearts, go around after revival speakers and people who claim to have received the Holy Spirit, trying to receive Him separately through the laying on of hands. The Holy Spirit is not bought from men; God gives Him as a gift when a person receives the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus has already paid the price of salvation in full. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself all sins, and on the Cross He paid the wages of sin with His own life and blood. The sinner has only to receive that completed salvation into his heart.

But the opportunity to believe the gospel is given while the flesh is alive and the door of grace is open. If anyone tries to prepare only after the Lord has come, it is too late. We must not put off salvation until tomorrow but hear and believe the word today.

In verse 10, while the foolish virgins went to buy oil, the bridegroom came. The virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. The destinies of the prepared and the unprepared were decisively divided.

Those who entered the wedding feast were not people of perfect conduct but people who had prepared the oil. Those who have received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit enter with the Lord into the joy of the kingdom of God.

The word, "*and the door was shut,*" shows that even the grace of God has its appointed time. Now anyone can hear the gospel, believe, and be saved, but after the Second Coming and the judgment have arrived, no one can demand another opportunity.

Just as God shut the door after Noah entered the ark, God Himself also shuts the final door of salvation. Because it is not

a door that man opens and shuts, once it is shut no one can open it again.

The virgins who were left came later and pleaded, *"Lord, Lord, open to us!"* They did not deny the existence of the bridegroom, and they called him *"Lord."* But the mere fact of calling on the Lord with the lips did not bring them into the kingdom of heaven.

A religious confession and the faith that saves can be two different things. One can call Jesus Lord with the lips and yet not receive into the heart the salvation He accomplished with the water and the Spirit. God looks not only at the words of the lips but at the faith of the heart.

The bridegroom said to them, *"I do not know you."* This does not mean that Jesus did not know of their existence. It means that He does not acknowledge them as His bride and His saved people.

A relationship with the Lord is not formed by church attendance and office alone. When we believe the fact that Jesus took upon Himself all our sins and was judged in our place, and so receive the remission of sins, we become people who belong to the Lord. The Holy Spirit dwelling in the heart is the evidence of belonging to the Lord.

This word does not mean that if a believer who has already received the remission of sins by believing the gospel dozes once or makes a mistake, the Lord says He does not know him. The wise virgins also slumbered and slept, but they entered the feast because they had the oil.

Even a saved person can stumble through the weakness of the flesh. But in his heart there are the word of the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished and the testimony of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit rebukes him and brings him back to the word again.

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On the contrary, however zealously one may lead a religious life outwardly, without oil no one can greet the Bridegroom. Many prayers, fastings, offerings, and services cannot take the place of the remission of sins Jesus accomplished. Good deeds are not the condition of salvation but the fruit borne by the saved.

In verse 13 Jesus commanded, *"Watch."* To watch is not to calculate the date of the Second Coming or to go without sleep. It is to confirm clearly whether one has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The believer who watches does not make his own emotions and deeds the ground of salvation. He holds on to the eternal word: the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection. He also keeps hearing and believing the word of the gospel so as not to be deceived by false teachings.

Matthew 25:1–13 tells us not to leave the preparation for greeting the Bridegroom to anyone else. We must not lean on the faith of family, church, or leaders, but each of us must believe the gospel of the complete remission of sins for himself.

Therefore, the person who still believes there is sin in his heart must examine whether he is holding only a lamp. He must believe the word that Jesus actually removed all sins with His baptism and the Cross, and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

The person who has already believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not boast of his own salvation but bring the gospel of life to others. Though we cannot share the oil itself, we can help people hear the gospel and believe for themselves and receive the Holy Spirit.

In the end, wise faith is not faith with much worldly knowledge. It is faith that knows and believes exactly the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit,

keeps the Holy Spirit in the heart, and is prepared to greet the Bridegroom with joy whenever He comes.

The person saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not hide in the ground the grace and the things entrusted to him, but use them for the gospel and for souls

"'For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 'So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 'Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering

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where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 'But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'" (Matthew 25:14–30).

The parable of the talents follows the parable of the ten virgins. If the parable of the ten virgins emphasizes the inward preparation for greeting the Lord—the remission of sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit—the parable of the talents shows how we are to carry out the work entrusted to us while we wait for the Lord.

The master in the parable refers to Jesus Christ, and the servants represent those who call on the Lord's name and say they serve Him. The master's leaving for a far country makes us think of the period after Jesus completed salvation and ascended, until He comes again.

As the master left for the far country, He entrusted His possessions to His servants. What He gave the servants was not originally theirs. The owner of the talents remains the owner to the end, and the servants are stewards entrusted to manage them for a set time.

Our life, time, health, wealth, and abilities are also ultimately given by God. The opportunity to hear the gospel, the grace of meeting the church, and the circumstances in

which we can learn the word of God are also precious assets God has entrusted to us.

In those days a talent was a unit of weight and money of very great value. In this parable, however, the talent refers to the abilities God has entrusted to each person. Body and mind, time and health, material things and skills, the grace of having heard the gospel, and even the responsibilities we hold within the church are all talents to be used in serving the gospel.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the most precious talent is the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus Christ accomplished. There is no greater grace than for a sinner to hear the gospel, believe it, and receive eternal life. The person who has received salvation must not hide this word of life for himself alone but pass it on to other souls.

The master entrusted five talents to one servant, two to another, and one to another, to each according to his ability. He did not give everyone the same amount, but neither did he give anyone nothing at all.

Even one talent was by no means a small sum. Therefore, no one can say, “I have received nothing,” or “I received less than others, so there is nothing for me to do.” God knows what each person can bear and the circumstances he is in, and so He entrusts accordingly.

One person may take on the work of preaching the word to many people, and another may serve the gospel with literature, translation, and finances. Another may preach the gospel to one soul at home and at work, and take on the work of caring for the church and the believers.

What matters is not comparing with the talents others have received. It is knowing what God has entrusted to me and using it faithfully. Comparison breeds pride or discouragement, but

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faith makes us faithful in the place entrusted to us.

The servant who had received five talents *"went at once"* and traded with them. He did not put off his master's command. Knowing that what his master entrusted was meant to be used to gain a profit, he acted immediately.

The servant who had received two talents likewise traded and gained two more. He did not compete with the one who had received five. He faithfully used the two talents entrusted to him.

It is the same with the work of the gospel. Not everyone has to do work of the same scale. God does not look only at how great a work was done, but at whether what was entrusted was used in faith.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies that Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind in His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Bearing the sins He had taken on, Jesus was nailed to the Cross and paid all the wages of sin by shedding His blood and dying, and He completed salvation by rising again in three days.

A person is washed of all sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift by believing this gospel with the heart. Salvation is not a reward for having gained many talents. It is grace received freely by believing in the righteousness of God that Jesus has already completed.

But the saved person comes to have the responsibility of passing that grace on to other souls. This does not mean that salvation is maintained by doing many good works; it means that in a heart that has received great grace, thanksgiving and the desire to serve the gospel arise naturally.

To trade with the gospel does not mean using people to gain material profit. It is to preach the remission of sins Jesus accomplished so that sinners believe and are saved. When one

soul believes the gospel and becomes righteous, and that person in turn preaches the gospel to others, the spiritual fruit keeps multiplying.

The finances, facilities, and skills of the church can also be used as instruments for preaching the gospel. But increasing the size and property of the church is not in itself gaining talents. Through all these things, the gospel of life must actually be delivered to sinners.

In verse 18, the servant who had received one talent dug in the ground and hid his master's money. He neither wasted the money entrusted to him nor had it stolen. But he did not use it according to the purpose for which his master entrusted it.

Outwardly he may look like a prudent man who kept his master's property safe. But the master did not entrust it to him merely to store it; he entrusted it to be used and to bear fruit. Doing nothing was not a neutral attitude but disobedience to the master's will.

Hiding the gospel only in one's heart is the same. If someone says he has received the remission of sins yet has no interest in the salvation of other souls, and uses the time, material things, and abilities he has received only for the flesh, he is turning away from the purpose of the gospel entrusted to him.

This does not mean that everyone must become a preacher or go abroad as a missionary. Each person can take part in the gospel in the way he can in his own circumstances. We can preach directly, help the work of preaching the gospel, pray, serve the church, and show the love of God with our lives.

Verse 19 says that the master returned *"after a long time."* Though the master's return seemed delayed, it did not fail to happen. The return of Jesus may also feel slow to human thinking, but it is certain to take place.

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When the master returned, He settled accounts with His servants. This means that each person will show before the Lord how he used the life, the time, and the grace God entrusted to him. Even saved believers are evaluated before the Lord concerning their lives and their service.

The servant who had received five talents brought five more along with the principal. He did not say, "I gained this with what was originally mine"; he confessed, *"you delivered to me five talents."* He acknowledged that what he had started with was his master's grace.

None of the fruit borne by saved believers can be their own boast either. Life, the gospel, the Holy Spirit, and the strength to work were all given by God. Believers serve diligently, but they return the glory of the results to God.

The master praised him as a *"good and faithful servant."* Goodness here does not mean innate human goodness. It refers to the attitude of trusting the master and honestly using what was entrusted according to the master's will.

The servant who had received two talents received exactly the same praise as the one who had received five. The master did not rebuke him, asking why he had not gained five talents. It was because he had worked faithfully according to the amount he received.

God does not compare the fruit of the gospel by mere numbers. The worker who has preached the gospel to many people is precious, but so is the believer who has prayed and served for one soul in a place no one notices. The Lord knows the portion entrusted to each and the faithfulness of each heart.

The word *"you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things"* means that the service of this earth is a small thing compared with the eternal glory of the kingdom of God. The Lord entrusts greater responsibility and

glory to the servant who was faithful in small things.

The word *"Enter into the joy of your lord"* is the greatest blessing given to the faithful servant. It is not merely receiving much property; it is enjoying the joy and glory of the kingdom of God together with the Lord.

In verse 24, the servant who had received one talent accused his master of being *"a hard man."* He did not know his master as a master of love and grace but thought of Him as a harsh man who reaps where he has not sown.

His words did not accurately describe his master's actual character; they revealed his own distorted thoughts about his master. Rather than admitting his laziness and disobedience, he shifted the blame onto his master's character.

If we do not know God as the God of grace, we come to think of the life of faith only as a heavy duty. Failing to see that God first gave us salvation, life, and everything, we misunderstand Him as one who demands only sacrifice and service from us.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit knows the love God gave first. Because he believes the fact that Jesus took on his sins with the baptism He received from John and was judged in his place on the Cross, he knows God not as a harsh master but as the Father who gave him salvation and life.

The person who knows that grace does not force himself to serve in order to obtain salvation. Thankful for the salvation already received, he serves the Lord with a willing heart. The work of the gospel is not labor to buy salvation but the fruit of thanksgiving offered by the saved.

The servant who had received one talent excused himself by saying he was afraid. But if he had truly feared his master, he should have done at least the smallest work according to his

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master's will. His fear was not reverence but the unbelief that distrusted his master and tried to avoid him.

The master rebuked him out of his own mouth. If he had really known his master to be a severe man, he should have deposited the money with the bankers and gained at least some interest. The fact that he did nothing revealed that his excuse was not sincere.

The word about interest in verse 27 is not a teaching that justifies all usury. Within the logic of the parable, it means that he should at least have put what was entrusted to him to use. The focus of the text is not on methods of finance but on responsibility toward the master's will.

In verse 28, the master took the one talent away and gave it to the servant who had ten. Opportunities and responsibilities left unused pass in the end to someone else. God entrusts more work to the person who faithfully carries out His will.

That "to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance" does not state the worldly principle that the rich get richer. It means that the person who uses in faith the grace and the word received from God grows ever richer in faith, discernment, and the ability to serve.

On the contrary, the person who does not believe and use the word he has received loses even what he thought he knew. If someone hears the gospel over and over yet does not believe, his heart hardens more and more, and in the end he can lose the very opportunity of salvation.

In verse 30, the unprofitable servant is cast into the outer darkness, where there is weeping and gnashing of teeth. This is not merely receiving a somewhat smaller reward; it points to the final judgment. It shows how solemnly the Lord deals with receiving salvation and abilities and yet never serving the gospel at all.

This word rebukes as the servant with one talent the person who says he has received the remission of sins yet does not unite with the Church of God and does not use the abilities he received for the gospel and for souls. Salvation is received by faith, not as the price of works, but refusing to the end the gospel mission entrusted to the saved is not to be taken lightly.

The problem of the unprofitable servant is not that his results were smaller than the other servants'. He hid the salvation and the abilities he received from the Lord for himself alone and did not carry on the trade of the gospel. Even a person who has received the remission of sins, if he leaves the church like this and lives only for his own flesh, is treated like the servant with one talent who defied the Lord.

Therefore, the person who has received the remission of sins must examine himself with a reverent fear, so as not to become the servant with one talent by following the thoughts of the flesh. He must not justify his own laziness but unite with the Church of God and use even a seemingly small ability for the preaching of the gospel. The warning that whoever refuses the Lord's will to the end is cast away at the last day must be received as it stands.

Matthew 25:14–30 does not tell the saved to compare their results with others. It asks how we will use the gospel, the time, the material things, and the abilities God has given each of us.

However small an ability or opportunity may be, if we offer it into the Lord's hands, it can be used for the fruit of the gospel. Preaching the gospel to one person, delivering a gospel book, serving the church, and helping a believer in hardship are also ways of using the precious talents the Lord has entrusted.

In the end, the good and faithful servant is not a person who earned salvation by his own effort. He is the person who knows the grace of having been saved freely through the gospel of the

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water and the Spirit, and who uses what the Lord has entrusted with thanksgiving, passing that life on to other souls.

Therefore, we must not be proud or discouraged, comparing the sizes of the talents we have received. We must keep in our hearts the grace of salvation received through the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, be faithful in the small work entrusted to each of us, and wait for the day we take part in the joy of our Lord.

What divides the sheep from the goats at the last judgment is faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and that faith appears as love that cares for the least

"'When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 'Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as

you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' 'Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 'Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'" (Matthew 25:31–46).

Matthew 25:31–46 shows the final separation and judgment Jesus will carry out after He comes again. At His First Coming Jesus came in a low and humble form to save sinners, but when He comes again, He comes as the King of glory with all the angels.

Jesus no longer stands in the place of the accused, judged by men. He sits on the throne of His glory and becomes the Judge who judges all nations and all people. Before Him, nationality, status, wealth, and religious position give no privilege at all.

All the nations will be gathered before the Lord. Whether one believed in Jesus during his lifetime or not, no one can avoid that place. The substance of each person's life and faith is fully revealed before the Lord.

Jesus separates people as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. In those days sheep and goats might graze together, but when evening came the shepherd separated them. They may look alike to human eyes, but the shepherd knows exactly

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which is a sheep and which is a goat.

Within the church, too, everyone may seem to lead a similar life of faith. People can attend the same worship, sing the same hymns, and do the same service. But Jesus knows who has truly believed the gospel and received the remission of sins, and who has only kept up an outward religious life.

Therefore, we must not rashly label anyone a sheep or a goat by outward appearance alone. The authority of final discernment belongs to Jesus Christ. Only, each person must examine before the word of God whether his own faith is true.

The sheep are set on the right hand, and the goats on the left. In the Bible, the right hand is the place of acknowledgment, glory, and authority. The sheep standing on the right refer to the righteous who receive God's blessing and inherit His kingdom.

In verse 34, the King first calls them *"you blessed of My Father."* Before speaking of the good they did, He already acknowledges them as those who have received God's blessing. This shows that it does not mean they bought the qualification of salvation with good deeds.

They also *"inherit"* the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. An inheritance is not something a laborer buys with wages; it is what a child receives from his father. The kingdom of God, too, is not a place purchased by gathering up human good deeds but the kingdom the children of God receive by grace.

The way for a person to become a child of God does not lie in his own good conduct. Because everyone has sinned in heart and in deed, no one can stand before God by his own righteousness. He must first believe the salvation God has accomplished and be washed of all his sins.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist,

Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of mankind in His own body. And bearing those sins, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood and died, receiving the punishment of sin in our place, and He overcame sin and death by rising again in three days.

The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart is actually washed of all sins and becomes a righteous person without sin. It is not because the deeds of his flesh are perfect, but because all his sins passed onto Jesus and the judgment of those sins ended on the Cross. God makes righteous the person who believes in the righteousness Jesus Christ accomplished.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit leads that person to remember the love of God and to pity and serve others. Therefore, good deeds are not the price paid to obtain salvation but the fruit that appears from the faith that has been saved.

Jesus said to the righteous on His right that they gave Him food when He was hungry and drink when He was thirsty. He said that they took Him in when He was a stranger, clothed Him when He was naked, and came to Him when He was sick and in prison.

This word shows that faith must not stay only in the thoughts of the heart or the confession of the lips. The love received from God must appear in the act of actually caring for people in hardship.

This word means, first, to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to souls who are spiritually hungry and thirsty and imprisoned in sin, and to supply the needs of God’s people and workers who meet hardship while serving the gospel. When needed, we must also give practical help with food,

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clothing, and visits, but we must not limit the meaning of the text to the relief of the body and miss the gospel mission that saves souls.

At the same time, man's most fundamental hunger is the spiritual hunger of not hearing the word of life. While providing food for the body, we must help that soul hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtain eternal life.

The righteous ask, "When did we ever do so to You, Lord?" They did not count up and boast of the good they had piled up. Nor did they use people for the purpose of receiving a reward.

Because they had received great grace from God, they cared for people in hardship as a matter of course. They showed love without even being conscious that they had done anything special for the Lord. True love does not keep a ledger of good deeds in order to be repaid.

Jesus said, *"Inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me."* Here the Lord's brethren refer first to the disciples and believers who believe in Jesus, follow Him, and preach the gospel.

To receive and care for the Lord's workers who go hungry, become strangers, are persecuted, and are imprisoned while preaching the gospel is the same as receiving and serving Jesus. For Jesus does not separate Himself from His people.

In particular, He said *"the least of these."* Being good only to people who are famous, capable, and highly placed in the world may not be evidence of true love. When we serve a weak believer who can repay nothing, the faith of our heart is revealed.

Caring for the Lord's brethren begins with serving the people of God and the workers of the gospel. At the same time, since those not yet saved are also souls made in the image of God, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to

them so that they may escape from sin and death. We can also help their fleshly needs as far as our strength reaches, but the love that comes first is bringing the gospel of life to their souls.

The greatest good is helping a sinner hear the gospel and receive the remission of sins. However much material help we give, if the soul perishes in sin, the fundamental problem is not solved. We must look after the needs of the body and at the same time bring the gospel of life.

With the baptism He received from John, Jesus took upon Himself the sins of all the people of the world, and He received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. To deliver this news of salvation so that one soul is moved from eternal death into life is the most precious love we can give that soul.

Serving the small within the church is also serving the Lord. The Lord remembers it all: visiting a sick believer, helping someone in financial hardship, bringing the word to a person weak in faith, and praying for and supporting the workers who preach the gospel.

People may think such work small and insignificant. But Jesus receives what was done to one of the least as done to Himself. To the Lord, not even one soul is trivial.

In verse 41, Jesus says to those on the left, *"Depart from Me, you cursed."* The most fearful part of the judgment is departing from God forever. To be separated from God, the source of all life, light, and love, is eternal death.

He said that the fire they will enter was originally prepared for the devil and his angels. God does not delight in the destruction of anyone; He prepared the way of salvation for sinners. But the person who refuses the gospel to the end and follows the lies of the devil comes to receive the same judgment as the devil.

The people on the left gave no food to the hungry and

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nothing to drink to the thirsty. They did not take in the stranger, and they did not look after the naked, the sick, or the imprisoned. Their indifference reveals not a simple mistake but the fact that the love of God was not in their hearts.

They, too, call Jesus "*Lord.*" They thought there was nothing in which they had failed to serve the Lord. They could claim that if Jesus had appeared in person, they would gladly have waited on Him.

But the Lord saw how they treated the least. If someone pretends to be good to the visible Jesus while despising the poor, the weak, and the powerless, he does not actually love Jesus.

The problem of those on the side of the goats does not lie only in the insufficient number of their charitable works. They had neither the true faith that believes in the grace of Jesus Christ nor the love that flows from that faith. The absence of fruit revealed that there was no life in the root.

We must not interpret this word to mean that those who do many good works go to heaven and those who do few go to hell. If salvation came by good works, the baptism of Jesus and the Cross would not have been needed. The remission of sins is received only by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

But neither must we make the words "saved by faith" an excuse for turning away from people in hardship. In a living faith, the direction of love is certain to appear. The size and speed of that fruit may differ from person to person, but if there is no compassion at all, we must examine our own faith.

Even saved believers can at times be selfish or fail to see another's suffering. But when the Holy Spirit rebukes them through the word, they admit their fault and turn back. They do not justify their indifference but seek to serve the least again.

Verse 46 clearly shows the two final paths. Those on the

left enter everlasting punishment, and the righteous enter eternal life. There is no middle ground, and no second chance to choose after the judgment.

As everlasting punishment is eternal, so eternal life is also eternal. The salvation God gives is not a life that lasts for a while and disappears. It is the eternal life given to the person who has believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The righteous enter eternal life not because they paid the wages of their sins with good deeds. It is because Jesus already took upon Himself all the wages of their sins and was judged in their place. The love they showed is the evidence that they are people who believed that grace and received the life of God.

Matthew 25:31–46 teaches us not to separate the gospel and love from each other. Good deeds without the gospel cannot wash away a person's sins, and a confession of faith without any fruit of love makes the sincerity of that faith doubtful.

Therefore, we must first believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, be washed of all sins, and become righteous. After that, following the love received from God, we must actually look after the hungry, the thirsty, the sick, and the neglected, and bring the gospel of life to souls who have not yet received the remission of sins.

In the end, the faith of the sheep is not a faith that boasts of its own good deeds. It is the faith that gives thanks for the grace received through the baptism of Jesus Christ, the Cross, and the resurrection, and in which that grace appears as humble love that cares for the least. The Lord remembers such love as done to Himself and repays it with the joy of the eternal kingdom. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 25

[Question] 1. What is the common theme of the parables in Matthew chapter 25?

The central theme of the parables in Matthew chapter 25 is that we must live watchful and faithful lives, preparing for the return of Jesus and the final judgment.

This chapter contains three parables and teachings.

1. The parable of the ten virgins (verses 1–13)

It teaches that since no one can know when the bridegroom will come, we must always stay awake and be prepared. The faith that prepares for the Second Coming cannot be borrowed from another or received in one's place at the last moment.

2. The parable of the talents (verses 14–30)

It teaches that we must faithfully use the gifts, time, material things, and mission God has entrusted to each of us. The Lord will come again and settle accounts with each person on how he used what was entrusted to him.

3. The parable of the sheep and the goats (verses 31–46)

It shows that Jesus will judge all the nations when He comes again in glory. True faith appears as the fruit of a life that loves and serves the least.

Therefore, the parables of this chapter are not a word telling us to calculate the time of the Second Coming; they tell us to

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prepare our faith so that we can greet the Lord whenever He comes, to be faithful in the work entrusted to us, and to bear the fruit of love and service. The prepared enter the kingdom of God, but those who did not prepare and abandoned the responsibility entrusted to them receive the judgment.

[Question] 2. Matthew 25:1–13—what is the core lesson conveyed by the parable of the ten virgins?

The central idea of the parable of the ten virgins is that we must always stay awake and be prepared to greet the return of Jesus.

All ten virgins waited for the bridegroom, but the five wise virgins prepared oil along with their lamps, while the five foolish virgins did not prepare enough oil. When the bridegroom was delayed they all fell asleep, but when he came suddenly, their destinies were divided according to whether they were prepared.

This parable teaches the following facts.

• No one can know when Jesus will come again.

• Even if the Second Coming seems delayed, we must keep the faith to the end.

• No one can be saved by another's faith; each person must prepare his own faith.

• Once the door is shut after His return, there is no more opportunity to prepare.

• We must not merely put on the outward appearance of waiting for the Lord but actually be ready to greet Him.

Therefore, the parable of the ten virgins is not a word telling us to calculate the date of the Second Coming, but a lesson to stay awake with true faith so that we can greet the

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Lord with joy whenever He comes.

[Question] 3. Matthew 25:1–13—what was the Jewish wedding custom that forms the background of the parable of the ten virgins?

In those days a Jewish wedding generally consisted of the stages of betrothal and the wedding feast. After the betrothal was established, the bridegroom came to take the bride on an appointed day, and the bride's friends waited for the bridegroom holding lamps. When the bridegroom arrived, a cry announced it, and those who were ready greeted him and entered in procession into the house where the wedding feast was held.

Since it was hard to know the exact hour of the bridegroom's arrival, those waiting into the night had to prepare lamps and enough oil. Once the feast began and the door was shut, latecomers could hardly join, and the wedding feast sometimes continued for several days. Cases are attested in which the wedding celebration of that time went on for a week.

Against the background of this custom, the parable of the ten virgins teaches that since no one can know the hour of Jesus' return, believers must prepare in advance and stay awake. The heart of the parable is that after the opportunity has passed, no one can borrow another's preparation or prepare belatedly and enter the wedding feast.

[Question] 4. Matthew 25:1—who are the *"ten virgins"* in the parable?

The *"ten virgins"* are the bride's friends, the attendants who hold lamps and greet the bridegroom at the wedding feast.

Spiritually, they symbolize those who confess that they are waiting for the return of Jesus the Bridegroom. Among them, the five wise virgins represent true believers who prepared by faith, and the five foolish virgins represent those who outwardly wait for the Lord but are not actually prepared. Therefore, what matters is not merely the outward form of confessing the faith, but having the true faith and preparation to greet the Lord.

[Question] 5. Matthew 25:1–13—how did the foolish virgins differ from the wise virgins?

The difference between the foolish virgins and the wise virgins lay in whether they prepared oil. The foolish virgins took only their lamps without preparing extra oil, but the wise virgins prepared enough oil in their vessels along with their lamps.

Both groups fell asleep while waiting for the bridegroom, so the difference lay not in whether they slept but in whether they prepared the oil. The lamp represents the Church of God, and the oil represents the Holy Spirit who comes upon the heart that has received the remission of sins. The wise virgins are those who received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit within the Church of God, while the foolish virgins are those who attend church and yet, because sin remains in their hearts, have not received the Holy Spirit.

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[Question] 6. Matthew 25:3–4—in the parable of the ten virgins, what do the lamp and the oil each represent in the life of faith?

In the parable of the ten virgins, the *"lamp"* represents the Church of God, and the *"oil"* represents the Holy Spirit who comes upon the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins.

The foolish virgins, who took only their lamps without preparing oil, refer to those who attend church and lead an outward religious life but have not received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so have no Holy Spirit in their hearts. Even if one seems to belong to a church and confesses to believe in Jesus, if sin remains in his heart as it is, he cannot receive the Holy Spirit, nor can he greet the returning Lord.

On the other hand, the wise virgins, who prepared oil along with their lamps, are those who heard and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit within the Church of God and received the remission of sins. They believe the fact that Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and then completed salvation by rising again. Because their hearts have been washed of all sins by this faith, they receive the Holy Spirit as a gift and prepare for the Lord's return.

Therefore, preparing the lamp and the oil together does not mean leading a private religious life, keeping only the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit in one's heart. It means that the person who has received the remission of sins unites with the Church of God, receives the guidance of the word, serves the gospel, and waits in faith for the returning Lord. The

person who has both the Church of God and the Holy Spirit is the wise person prepared to greet the Lord.

[Question] 7. Matthew 25:5–6—at what hour did the bridegroom arrive?

The bridegroom came at midnight, after delaying longer than expected, while all the virgins were slumbering and sleeping. When the cry rang out at midnight that the bridegroom was coming, all the virgins arose and prepared their lamps.

This shows that man cannot know the hour of Jesus' return, and that it takes place suddenly, at a time people do not expect.

[Question] 8. Matthew 25:7–8—what was happening to the lamps of the foolish virgins when the bridegroom arrived?

When the bridegroom came, the lamps of the foolish virgins were going out for lack of oil. They asked the wise virgins to share their oil, but they could not obtain it and had to go belatedly to buy some.

This shows that the faith and spiritual preparation for greeting the Lord cannot be borrowed from another or received in one's place; each person must prepare in advance.

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[Question] 9. Matthew 25:9—how did the wise virgins answer the request for oil?

The wise virgins answered as follows.

"No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves" (Matthew 25:9).

The answer of the wise virgins shows that the Holy Spirit and the faith of salvation cannot be shared out to others, and that each person must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. Also, the words *"go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves"* do not mean that the Holy Spirit can be obtained with money or the laying on of hands; they are a word of rebuke exposing the wrong faith that goes to revival speakers or religious leaders to receive the Holy Spirit.

[Question] 10. Matthew 25:10–12—what happened while the five foolish virgins went to buy oil, and what was the outcome after they returned?

While the five foolish virgins went to buy oil, the bridegroom came; the virgins who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. When the foolish virgins came back late and asked him to open the door, the bridegroom did not receive them, saying that he did not know them.

In the end they could not take part in the wedding feast. This shows that once the opportunity to prepare for greeting the Lord has passed, it cannot be turned back, and the unprepared cannot enter the kingdom of God.

[Question] 11. Matthew 25:12—what lesson does the word "*I do not know you*" give?

This word is a warning that even if someone outwardly seems to wait for Jesus and lead a religious life, the person who is not prepared with true faith is not acknowledged by the Lord.

The foolish virgins also waited for the bridegroom and knocked on the door belatedly, but the opportunity to prepare had already passed. Salvation is not obtained by another's faith or by the outward condition of belonging to a church; each person must believe in Jesus as his Savior and become a person who belongs to Him.

Therefore, this word teaches that we must prepare our faith while the opportunity of grace is given, and that no one can prepare belatedly after the Lord has come again. What matters is not merely that a person claims to know Jesus, but that Jesus acknowledges him as His own.

[Question] 12. Matthew 25:13—with what word did Jesus conclude the parable of the ten virgins?

The conclusion of the parable of the ten virgins is that since we cannot know the day and the hour when the Lord comes again, we must always stay awake and be prepared.

To watch here does not simply mean not sleeping; it means believing the gospel, being prepared to greet the Lord, and living while keeping the faith to the end. Each person must prepare for himself before the time of the Second Coming arrives, and no one can do that preparing in another's place.

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[Question] 13. Matthew 25:1–13—what kind of life does the parable of the ten virgins teach us to live?

The parable of the ten virgins teaches us to prepare both the lamp and the oil and live awake, waiting for the return of Jesus. That is, it is the life of receiving the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit within the Church of God, keeping the Holy Spirit in the heart, and waiting for the returning Lord while united with the church and serving the gospel.

The outward fact of attending church is not enough. We must believe with the heart the gospel that Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and then completed salvation by rising again. The person who has received the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit by this faith, and who waits for the Lord to the end in union with the Church of God, is the wise person.

[Question] 14. What is the core lesson conveyed by the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30?

The central idea of the parable of the talents is that we must faithfully use the abilities, material things, time, and the mission and opportunities of the gospel that the Lord has entrusted to each of us. What matters is not how much or how little one has received, but how faithful one has been in the entrusted work until the master returns. This parable teaches that at the Lord’s return, everyone will settle accounts concerning his life and ministry.

[Question] 15. Matthew 25:14–30—how does this parable of the talents differ from the parable of the minas in Luke 19:11–27?

The parable of the talents and the parable of the minas are similar in content, but they differ in the time they were spoken and in their details.

Both parables teach that we must faithfully use what the Lord has entrusted, and that there will surely be a settling of accounts and a judgment when the Lord returns.

However, the parable of the talents emphasizes that even though different gifts and responsibilities are entrusted to each person, we must be faithful according to the portion we have received. The parable of the minas, on the other hand, shows how differently the servants who received the same thing bore fruit, and it also emphasizes the judgment that will come upon those who reject the kingship of Jesus. The common lesson of the two parables is that what matters is not how much or how little one received, but whether one used it faithfully for the master.

[Question] 16. Matthew 25:14—what does the master's act of entrusting his possessions to his servants as he left for a far country mean?

The master means Jesus, and His leaving for a far country means the period from Jesus' ascension until His return. The servants refer to those who serve the Lord, and the master's possessions mean the gospel, the gifts, the material things, the time, and the opportunities and responsibilities God has entrusted to each person.

This shows that we are not the owners of these things but

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stewards who manage them for a while. The master's returning and settling accounts represents the return of Jesus and the final judgment.

[Question] 17. Matthew 25:15—how much was a "*talent*" worth as money in those days?

A talent was originally not so much the name of a coin as a very large unit indicating the weight of gold or silver and its value. It varied by period, region, and the kind of metal, but one talent weighed roughly 26–36 kg. One talent of silver generally corresponded to about 6,000 denarii, and since one denarius was a laborer's daily wage, it was a great sum requiring about 6,000 days—about sixteen years—of work to earn.

Therefore, even one talent was by no means a small amount. This parable shows that God has entrusted something very precious to everyone, and that no one may bury what he has received just because it seems small.

[Question] 18. Matthew 25:16–17—describe what the servants who received five talents and two talents did after being entrusted with the money.

The servant who had received five talents went at once and traded with them, gaining five more talents, and the servant who had received two talents likewise traded and gained two more.

The two servants did not simply store the money their master entrusted; they used it actively and each gained double

what he had received. This shows that we must faithfully use the abilities, opportunities, and mission the Lord has entrusted to us.

[Question] 19. Matthew 25:16–17—what does it show that the servant who received five talents and the servant who received two each gained as much as they had been entrusted with?

That the two servants gained as much again as they had received means that they used what their master entrusted faithfully and bore full fruit.

The amounts they received differed—five talents and two talents—but the faithfulness of the two servants was the same. This shows that God does not compare the sizes of the results with one another, but looks at how faithfully each person used the gifts, opportunities, and mission entrusted to him. It does not necessarily mean that we must double what we have received numerically.

[Question] 20. Matthew 25:18—what did the servant who received one talent do with his master's money?

The servant who had received one talent did not trade with it; he dug in the ground and hid his master's money.

He did not lose the talent entrusted to him, but neither did he leave any fruit. This shows the irresponsible and lazy attitude of leaving unused the abilities, opportunities, and mission the Lord has entrusted.

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[Question] 21. Matthew 25:23—what reward did the master give the faithful servants?

The master praised the two faithful servants as good and faithful servants, and said that since they had been faithful over a few things, he would entrust them with much more. He also let them enter into their master's joy.

The content of the reward is as follows.

• Receiving the master's acknowledgment and praise, • being entrusted with greater responsibilities and work, • and taking part in the master's joy and delight

Though the numbers of talents the two servants received differed, they received the same praise and reward. This shows that God regards each person's faithfulness as more important than the size of the portion entrusted to him.

[Question] 22. Matthew 25:24–25—with what words did the servant who received one talent defend himself before his master?

The servant who had received one talent excused himself by saying that he was afraid because he knew his master to be a hard man, reaping where he had not sown and gathering where he had not scattered seed. So, he said, he had hidden the talent in the ground and brought it back as it was.

Rather than admitting his laziness and unfaithfulness, he misjudged his master's character and evaded his responsibility on the grounds of fear. In the end his excuse revealed that he had not trusted his master and had not been faithful in the work entrusted to him.

[Question] 23. Matthew 25:24–25—what was the fundamental reason the servant who received one talent did not put the money entrusted to him to use?

The fundamental reason the servant who had received one talent did not put the money entrusted to him to use was that he did not trust his master and misunderstood his master's goodness and authority.

"Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours'" (Matthew 25:24–25).

He did not believe his master to be a gracious and good master; he judged him to be a harsh man trying to reap profit where he had not labored. His fear, therefore, was not the reverence that comes from a faith that honors the master, but a fear that came from a heart that distrusted and resented him. He excused his own disobedience and laziness as if they were caused by his master's severity.

The master had not entrusted him with work beyond his ability. He entrusted the talents to each according to his ability, so the servant who received one talent also had the ability and the opportunity to use it. The problem lay not in the size of the talent or a lack of ability, but in the absence of the faith that would obey the master's will and live as his servant.

Spiritually, the talents refer to the abilities, time, health, and material things God has entrusted to each person, and the offices and opportunities for serving the gospel. Even a person who has received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if he does not use the abilities and circumstances he received from God for the church and the

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preaching of the gospel but lives only for his own flesh, is like the servant who hid his one talent in the ground.

The servant who had received one talent called his master *"Lord"* with his lips, but in reality he did not follow his master's will. He did not regard himself as his master's servant but thought that the owner of his life was he himself. Therefore he did not use what he had received for his master's will but hid it away as it was.

Therefore, the fundamental reason he did not use the talent was not simple timidity or lack of ability. It was the unbelief that did not acknowledge the master's goodness and authority, the evil heart that did not treasure the grace received, and the laziness that would not unite with the church and serve the gospel but live only for his own flesh. This warning applies also to those who have received the remission of sins, and it shows how solemn a matter it is to live without using the abilities and circumstances one has received for the preaching of the gospel.

[Question] 24. Matthew 25:26–27—with what words did the master rebuke the servant who had not used the talent?

The master rebuked the servant who had hidden the talent in the ground as a *"wicked and lazy servant."*

"But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest'" (Matthew 25:26–27).

The master took up the servant's own words, that he was a hard man, and exposed his contradiction. If the servant had really believed his master to be one who reaps where he has not sown and gathers where he has not scattered seed, then instead of burying his master's money in the ground, he should at least have deposited it with the bankers so that it would earn interest.

Therefore, this servant's problem lay neither in a lack of ability nor in a fear of failure. He knew his master's will and yet did not obey it, and he did not make even the least effort to use what had been entrusted to him. The master called him "wicked" because he distorted his master's goodness and authority and shifted the blame for his disobedience onto his master. And he called him "lazy" because he never used the entrusted talent for his master's will at all.

Spiritually, even if someone lacks the ability to carry out a great work of the gospel himself, he can unite with the Church of God and the workers of the gospel, pray, serve with material things, and help the preaching of the gospel. The Lord does not demand the same ability and office from everyone, but He wants each person to be faithful according to the grace and circumstances entrusted to him.

Therefore, the rebuke *"wicked and lazy servant"* is a solemn warning to the person who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit and yet does not treasure it, neither preaches nor serves that gospel, and lives not as the Lord's servant but as the owner of his own life. The person who has received the remission of sins must not hide in the ground the salvation and the gifts he has received, but unite with the church and use them for the work of the gospel that saves souls.

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[Question] 25. Matthew 25:24—what does the expression ‘one who reaps where he has not sown,’ by which the servant who received one talent described his master, mean?

When the servant who had received one talent called his master one who “reaps where he has not sown,” it means he judged his master to be a harsh and stingy man who gives nothing and labors at nothing while demanding results from his servants. He thought his master was trying to profit from other people’s labor.

But this was not an accurate description of the master’s actual character; it was the distorted judgment of a wicked servant seeking to justify his own disobedience and laziness. The master did not demand results while giving nothing. He entrusted five talents, two talents, and one talent to his servants, each according to his ability, and gave them the opportunity and the responsibility to use them. Even one talent was by no means a small value.

This servant did not receive the talent his master entrusted as grace and trust, but regarded it as a burden and an exploitation. He did not acknowledge that he was his master’s servant, and he even thought it unjust to use what his master had entrusted for his master’s will. So he accused his master of being a harsh man and blamed his own laziness on his master.

Spiritually, God is not one who demands the fruit of the gospel from us while giving us nothing. God sent His only begotten Son, Jesus Christ; and Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and then completed our salvation by rising again. God has also enabled us to believe this gospel of the

water and the Spirit, and has given us the church, the word, the gifts, and the opportunities to serve the gospel.

Therefore, when God requires the fruit of the gospel from the person who has received the remission of sins, He is not trying to reap where He has not sown. Because God first gave the seed of salvation, the gospel, and every grace needed to serve, He tells us to believe that grace and use it for souls.

Thus the expression "one who reaps where he has not sown" does not describe the master as he really is; it reveals the wrong thinking of a servant who does not acknowledge God's grace and authority and wants to live only for himself. The person who misunderstands God as a harsh master regards the Lord's will as a burden, but the person who knows the grace of salvation received from God serves the gospel and souls with thanksgiving.

[Question] 26. Matthew 25:28–30—what punishment came upon the servant who received one talent and hid it in the ground?

Three punishments came upon the servant who received one talent and hid it in the ground without using it.

"So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth" (Matthew 25:28–30).

First, the one talent he had was taken from him. The master had entrusted the talent to give him the opportunity to bear fruit with it, but the servant ignored his master's will and hid it in

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the ground. Because he did not treasure and use what was entrusted, he lost the qualification to keep it.

Second, the talent taken from him was given to the faithful servant who had ten talents. This means that the Lord entrusts more work, grace, and responsibility to the person who carries out in faith the work entrusted to him, but from the person who does not use what he received, He withdraws even that opportunity.

Third, he was pronounced an *"unprofitable servant"* and cast out into the outer darkness, where he would weep and gnash his teeth. This is not merely losing some reward; it represents the solemn punishment of being excluded from the master's feast and joy and being judged.

This servant was not punished because he had received only one talent. The master entrusted the talents according to each one's ability. The problem was not that he received little, but that he never used what he received for his master's will at all. He did not believe his master's goodness and authority, did not regard himself as his master's servant, and lived only for himself to the end.

Spiritually, hiding the one talent in the ground represents not using the abilities, time, material things, and opportunities received from God for the church and for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even a person who has received the remission of sins, if he does not unite with the church but lives only for his own flesh without serving the gospel, receives the same rebuke and casting away as the unprofitable servant.

The remission of sins is not bought by the act of serving the gospel. Salvation is received only by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But after being saved, we must use the abilities and circumstances received from God for the church

and the gospel. Even if our ability is small, we must pray, serve with material things and gifts, and preach the gospel to other souls.

Thus the servant who hid his one talent was deprived of the talent entrusted to him, excluded from his master's joy, and cast out into the outer darkness. This is a solemn warning that no one who claims to have received the remission of sins may take lightly a life that neither unites with the church nor serves the gospel. Each person must faithfully use the abilities and circumstances received from God for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

[Question] 27. In the light of the parable of the talents in Matthew 25:14–30, how should we use the talents we have received from God?

A talent originally refers to a large sum of money. In the spiritual application of the parable, it means the abilities, time, health, and material things God has entrusted to each person, and the offices and opportunities for serving the gospel. Therefore, we must not use everything we have received from God only for our own benefit, but for the Lord's will and for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

First, we must acknowledge that the Lord is the owner of everything we have received from God. The servants received the talents from their master; they did not trade with what was their own. The life, health, abilities, and material things we have are also not originally ours but things God has entrusted to us. Therefore, we must not think that we ourselves are the masters of our lives, but believe that Jesus Christ who saved us is our Master.

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Second, we must not compare ourselves with others but be faithful, each according to the portion he has received. The master entrusted five talents to one, two to another, and one to another, according to their abilities. Not everyone has received the same ability and office, but everyone has been given talents and opportunities with which to serve the Lord's will. God does not ask the person who received five talents for the fruit of only one, nor does He demand the work of five talents from the person who received one. He wants each person to be faithful according to the portion entrusted to him.

Third, we must use the talents we have received for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The most precious thing God has entrusted to us is the gospel of the remission of sins. Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and then completed our salvation by rising again. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel must not be satisfied that he alone is saved, but must bring this gospel to the souls still under sin.

Fourth, if it is hard to preach the gospel directly, we must unite with the church and the workers who preach the gospel. Not everyone can become a preacher or a missionary. But we can take part in the preaching of the gospel by praying, serving with material things, making, translating, and proofreading literature, distributing gospel books, and helping with whatever is needed. Even small work that is hardly noticed, if it upholds the preaching of the gospel, is a precious use of the talent before God.

Fifth, we must not bury our talent using the fear of failure or the lack of our own ability as an excuse. The servants who received five talents and two talents went at once and traded.

They believed their master's will and used what had been entrusted to them. But the servant who received one talent misunderstood his master and hid his talent in the ground, using fear and laziness as his excuse. God does not look only at great results; He looks at whether we believed the Lord's will, obeyed, and used what was entrusted to us.

Sixth, the occupation, knowledge, and material things we gain in the world must also be used well for the gospel. Working life, business, and studies must not become ends in themselves. We must work faithfully at our jobs and serve our families and the church with what we earn, and benefit the preaching of the gospel with the knowledge and skills we have learned. We must not use what God has given only for the desires of the flesh and self-boasting, but for the work of saving souls.

Seventh, we must remember the fact that when the Lord comes again, there will be a settling of accounts. The faithful servants brought both the talents they had received from their master and what they had gained with them. The master praised them, saying, *"Well done, good and faithful servant,"* and let them enter into their master's joy. We too, on the day we stand before the Lord, will settle accounts on how we used the salvation, the time, and the abilities we received from the Lord.

Serving the gospel is not the price paid to obtain salvation. Salvation is received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ completed. But the person who has truly believed this gospel and received the remission of sins serves the Lord's will out of thankfulness for the grace that saved him. Faith does not remain mere knowledge in the heart; it appears as a life that serves the gospel and souls.

Therefore, we must not hide the talents we have received

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from God in the ground, but use them, each according to the portion and circumstances given him, in preaching and serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must not seek people's praise but be faithful in union with the church, and live as servants of faith who hear the praise, *"Well done, good and faithful servant,"* when the Lord comes again.

[Question] 28. Matthew 25:31–46—how is the account of the sheep and the goats structured?

The parable of the sheep and the goats is composed in a symmetrical question-and-answer form centered on the scene of the King judging the two groups.

1. The background of the judgment (verses 31–33)

The Son of Man comes again in glory, sits on His throne, and separates all the nations to the right and the left, as sheep and goats.

2. The verdict on those on the right (verses 34–40)

The King proclaims to them that they should inherit the kingdom of God, and He acknowledges the love they showed to the least as done to Himself.

3. The verdict on those on the left (verses 41–45)

The King sentences them to enter the eternal fire, and He judges their failure to care for the least as not done to Himself.

4. The final conclusion (verse 46)

The wicked enter everlasting punishment, and the righteous enter eternal life.

Thus this account is composed in the question-and-answer form of a judgment that contrasts the right and the left, serving and turning away, blessing and curse, eternal life and everlasting punishment.

[Question] 29. Matthew 25:31—at what time do the events shown in the account of the sheep and the goats take place?

The account of the sheep and the goats shows the events that will take place when Jesus Christ comes again in glory at the end of the world and judges all the nations.

"When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory" (Matthew 25:31).

This word is not about the time when Jesus first came to this earth in a low and humble form. It points to the time when Jesus comes again with all the angels in power and glory and sits on the throne of judgment. Then all the nations will be gathered before the Lord, and as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats, the Lord will divide people clearly.

Those separated as sheep stand on the Lord's right and inherit the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Those separated as goats stand on the left and enter the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Therefore, this account is not a moral story that merely sorts the people of the present into good and bad; it represents the eternal separation that will take place at the return of Jesus and the final judgment.

God knows each person's faith even now, and He discerns those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and

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those who do not, those who serve God and the gospel and those who live only for themselves. But the complete dividing of the sheep and the goats, and the verdicts of eternal life and everlasting punishment, take place on the day Jesus comes again in glory.

Therefore, the account of the sheep and the goats shows the event in which Jesus Christ comes again at the end of the world, sits on the throne of judgment, and judges all the nations. The saints must prepare for that day, believing firmly in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live faithfully serving the souls and the gospel the Lord has entrusted to them.

[Question] 30. Matthew 25:31–46—how is this teaching connected with the two preceding parables?

The third account, the parable of the sheep and the goats, shows the concrete picture of the preparation for the Second Coming that the two preceding parables taught.

• The parable of the ten virgins teaches that since we do not know when the Lord will come, we must always stay awake and be prepared.

• The parable of the talents teaches that we must faithfully use the gifts, opportunities, and mission the Lord has entrusted.

• The parable of the sheep and the goats shows that such preparation and faithfulness must appear as the practice of love and mercy toward the least.

All three accounts are connected around the return of Jesus and the final judgment. In the parable of the ten virgins, what is revealed is whether one was prepared; in the parable of the talents, whether one was faithful; and in the parable of the

sheep and the goats, the fruit of love and service that comes from faith. Therefore, the life that prepares for the Second Coming is not simply waiting; it is a life of being faithful to the entrusted mission and serving people in need with love.

[Question] 31. Matthew 25:32–33—how does He separate all people, as the sheep are set on the right and the goats on the left?

When Jesus comes again, He will gather all the nations before Him and separate each person into the righteous and the wicked, as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats.

"All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matthew 25:32–33).

The sheep refer to the righteous who have received the remission of all their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart. They are those who believed in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished, received the Holy Spirit, and became children of God. The Lord sets them on His right and lets them inherit the kingdom of God prepared from the foundation of the world.

The goats refer to those who have not believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and in whose hearts sin remains as it is. Even if they said with their lips that they believed in Jesus or performed religious good deeds, they are those who did not receive into their hearts the righteousness God accomplished. The Lord sets them on the left and judges them.

Jesus does not separate people by nationality or status, by wealth or learning, by denomination or office. Nor does He

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judge by how good a person looked to others. He looks at whether each person received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, and whether he served God and the gospel according to the grace received from the Lord.

The deeds of service seen in the sheep are not the price paid to obtain salvation. They are the fruit of faith that appeared in those who had first received the remission of sins by the Lord's grace. Conversely, that the goats had no fruit of service means, beyond a simple lack of good deeds, that they did not receive the Lord's salvation and will into their hearts.

A person cannot fully know another's heart and faith, but Jesus knows every person's heart exactly. Therefore, there is no mistake or unfairness in the Lord's discernment. The Lord clearly divides, one by one, the righteous who have truly received the remission of sins from the sinners in whose hearts sin remains, and those who served the gospel from those who lived only for themselves.

Therefore, the separation that sets the sheep on the right and the goats on the left represents the final dividing, on the day Jesus Christ comes again, of all people into the saved righteous and the sinners who will be judged.

[Question] 32. Matthew 25:34—what blessing is declared to those on the right?

The King calls those on His right the blessed of His Father, and proclaims that they should inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world.

"Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for

you from the foundation of the world'" (Matthew 25:34).

They are the righteous who belong to the Lord, and they receive the eternal kingdom of God as their inheritance.

[Question] 33. Matthew 25:34–40—why did those on the right come to inherit the kingdom prepared for them?

Those on the right are the righteous who first received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When the brothers and sisters who belong to the Lord and the workers of the gospel were hungry and thirsty, when they became strangers, were naked, sick, and imprisoned, they cared for them and served the work of the gospel together. The Lord received what was done to one of the least of these His brethren as done to Himself.

They inherit the kingdom of God not because they bought salvation with good deeds. It is because, after they first received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, their serving of the Church of God and the workers of the gospel appeared as the fruit of faith. The Lord remembers and praises the love and service shown to His people and the workers of the gospel.

[Question] 34. Matthew 25:35–36—what good deeds had the righteous on the right done?

The good deeds of the righteous are as follows.

- They gave food to the hungry.
- They gave drink to the thirsty.

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- They took in the stranger.
- They clothed the naked.
- They looked after the sick.
- They visited those in prison.

They cared with love for the actual needs of the brothers and sisters who belong to the Lord and of the workers of the gospel, and took part in the preaching of the gospel. The Lord received such service, shown to one of the least of these His brethren, as done to Himself.

[Question] 35. Matthew 25:40, 45—who is meant by *"one of the least of these My brethren"*?

"One of the least of these My brethren" refers first of all to the disciples who believe in and follow Jesus—especially the weak workers of the gospel who suffer hunger and nakedness, rejection and imprisonment while preaching the gospel. For in the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus calls those who do the will of God His brothers, and He said that to receive a disciple is to receive Himself.

This word points first to serving the people of God and the workers of the gospel. At the same time, it applies also to helping the poor, the sick, and the stranger according to one's circumstances, with a heart that pities man whom God created. But such relief cannot take the place of the duty of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit and serving the Church of God and the workers of the gospel.

[Question] 36. Matthew 25:42–45—for what reason do the wicked receive the sentence of everlasting punishment?

The wicked turned away from the brethren who belong to the Lord and the workers of the gospel when they were hungry and thirsty, when they became strangers, were naked, sick, and imprisoned. They did not serve the people of God or the work of the gospel.

The Lord judged what was not done to one of the least of these His brethren as not done to Himself. They receive the sentence of everlasting punishment not simply because they lacked social good deeds, but because they did not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and turned away from the people who belong to the Lord and from the work of the gospel.

[Question] 37. Matthew 25:46—explain the meaning of the everlasting punishment given to the wicked and the eternal life given to the righteous.

Everlasting punishment means that the wicked receive God's judgment, are separated from God forever, and that punishment continues without end.

Eternal life means that the righteous enter the kingdom of God and live with God forever, enjoying life and joy. It is not merely existing without end; it is the true and blessed life enjoyed in a right relationship with God.

The text applies the same meaning of 'eternal' to both everlasting punishment and eternal life, showing that the outcome of the final judgment is not temporary but final and eternal. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Live with your heart set on the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Matthew 25:1-13 >

"'Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 'And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 'Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 'Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

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First, I give words of thanks. Not long ago a brother met with a serious accident on a long journey. It was a dangerous accident—enough to overturn the car. But God protected his life. There was material loss, yet we thank God for protecting him to that degree. From now on, too, we must live by faith. We must live relying on God alone and believing in Him.

The intent with which the Lord gave the parable of the ten virgins

The word we have read today is a word we know well. Our Lord likened the kingdom of heaven to ten virgins. Of those ten virgins, five were foolish and five were wise. The foolish took their lamps but took no oil with them. But the wise took oil in their vessels along with their lamps.

Because the bridegroom was delayed, the virgins all slumbered and slept. At midnight a cry rang out. It was the cry, Behold, the bridegroom! Come out to meet him! At this all the virgins arose and prepared their lamps. Then the foolish said to the wise, Our lamps are going out; give us some of your oil. But the wise answered, No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.

While the foolish went to buy oil, the bridegroom came. Those who were ready went in with him to the wedding feast, and the door was shut. Afterward the other virgins came and cried, *"Lord, Lord, open to us!" (Matthew 25:11).* But the Lord answered, *"Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you."* And He said, *"Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming" (Matthew 25:13).*

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The foolish virgin tries to do something by herself

In this parable the foolish virgins and the wise virgins stand in contrast. The foolish virgins carry on a religious life without ceasing. They keep laboring—doing something themselves, preparing something themselves, endlessly. Only when the bridegroom drew near did the foolish virgins go to buy oil, and meanwhile the Lord received the wise and shut the door. Yet even then they came back with the oil they had prepared, laboring to have the door opened.

Why did the foolish virgins strive like that? The Lord has already removed all their sins. Yet they cannot believe that fact and keep trying to do something themselves. To receive the remission of sins, and to have their own faith acknowledged before God, they endlessly produce something of their own.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit accomplished by the Lord, our Bridegroom

Then who is the Bridegroom in this parable? He is our Lord. The Lord came to this earth and removed all our sins. By receiving baptism from John, the Lord took over all my sins and yours. And bearing those sins, He was nailed to the Cross. With the baptism He received from John He took on the sin of the world, and by shedding His blood and dying He received the judgment of sin in full. And He rose again from the dead. Thus He became our perfect Savior and saved us completely.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus is He who came by water and blood. He received baptism from John in the Jordan River and took over the sins of all mankind once and for all; He paid the wages of those sins on the Cross in our place;

and He rose again and became our living Savior. Though the Lord has saved us completely like this, the foolish virgins cannot believe it and still try to do something themselves.

True faith is believing in the work He has already accomplished

Then what is true faith? Believing that the Lord has already removed our sins—that is faith. What is true belief? Believing that the Lord has already removed our sins with the baptism He received from John and with the Cross—that is belief. It is not that we must strive every day to receive the remission of sins anew each day. Believing that the Lord has already removed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is true faith. The person who has received the remission of sins by that faith is the person with true faith.

Here the ten virgins are divided, five and five. How foolish are the foolish? They keep trying to do something themselves. To receive the remission of sins, and to have their faith acknowledged before God, they keep trying to do something without ceasing. But the wise did not do so.

We are now preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. Yet among the many people of the world and of this nation—even among people inside the church—there are those who have not yet been born again. They cannot believe that the Lord came to this earth and already removed their sins. So they keep preparing something, holding up their own righteousness, trying to please the Lord by doing something themselves.

But when it comes to salvation, there is nothing we can do. With the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God took on all my

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sins and yours with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment on the Cross by shedding His blood, and rose again from the dead to give us new life. Believing this fact—receiving salvation by faith—this alone is what pleases the Lord most. There is nothing that pleases the Lord more than this.

So what is it to be foolish? Though the Lord has already removed all my sins and yours, it is not holding on to that truth and not believing it. It is not resolving everything by faith within that truth, but foolishly trying to keep doing something oneself.

The person who has the lamp but no oil

Why are the foolish foolish? It is written plainly in the Bible. Verse 3 says that the foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them. Here the lamp symbolizes the outward religious life of attending church. The oil symbolizes the Holy Spirit. The foolish had the lamp but did not have the oil. That is, they attend church, but not knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they have not received the remission of sins. Because they have not been washed of sin, the Holy Spirit is not in their hearts. That is what it is to be foolish.

Only when the Holy Spirit is present does He govern our hearts, keep us, and lead us. The Holy Spirit becomes our Teacher, teaching us and guiding us. He blesses us, protects us from Satan the devil, and is with us in all our weaknesses. But the foolish do not have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. They attend church, but they have not received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because they have not settled the problem of their sins by faith, the Holy Spirit cannot dwell in their hearts. So they become the foolish—having the lamp but not the oil.

The person who attends church but has no oil—no Holy Spirit—is not the Lord's person. The Bible says plainly that such a person is not Christ's. How could a person without the Holy Spirit be one of God's people? Because they are not God's people, even when they go through many hardships they receive no help that comes from God.

The foolish virgins took their lamps but took no oil. There are people who believe in Jesus and follow Christianity and yet do not receive the remission of sins. Why is that? Because they are leading a religious life, not a life of faith. The foolish virgin is now trying to do something herself. She keeps trying to do something of her own.

A person fallen into the water cannot climb into the boat by himself

Let me give an example. A man was sailing in a boat and met a storm. He fell from the boat into the water and was drowning, flailing about. Of course, that man too must try hard to grab hold of the boat. But by his own strength he cannot climb up into it. Only when someone in the boat pulls him up can he be saved.

Have you ever been on a boat? However small the boat, once you fall off, you can hardly imagine how hard it is to climb back on. You can rarely get on by yourself. And a large ship you can never board by your own strength. Someone must let down a rope from above, or someone above must come down with some tackle and pull you up.

In the same way, when a person leads a religious life, he keeps producing something to obtain salvation for himself. Think of the chief baker and the chief butler in Genesis chapter 40. The two officers sinned against the king and were put in

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prison. In his dream, the chief baker carried on his head a basket of bread piled high with all kinds of baked food, and so went before the king. But the chief butler took grapes, pressed out their juice, and brought it. When we keep trying to pile something on, there is no salvation. When we try to add something, we only ruin the work.

When a small child keeps meddling in the building of a house, the house is not built well. Rather, everything is spoiled, for the child is not up to the work. Likewise, it does not work to believe only in the blood of the Cross, claim to be without sin, and keep stacking the rest of the word on top of that to carry on a life of faith. That way no one reaches complete salvation.

We must believe that the Lord has saved you and me with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Have you believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit? Or, apart from this, did you think you had received the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross? Each of us must examine for himself what his heart has taken hold of. If you have not received the gospel of the water and the Spirit into your heart, that is not complete salvation. That is leading a religious life. And what happens if you then just keep on striving? You only lose strength, fall into deeper and deeper hardship, and suffer more and more attacks of the devil. Since the Holy Spirit is not within, there is none of the rest and peace enjoyed by the person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells.

That is why the foolish virgins kept crying out for the door to be opened even after the Lord had shut the door of the kingdom of heaven. That is exactly what a religious life is.

Therefore, what your heart has believed matters. Did you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or only in the blood of the Cross? What you believe with the heart is your faith. What you know as knowledge remains knowledge forever, and

you can drift from this knowledge to that. But to believe with the heart is to hold on to one place. If you believe this, that cannot come in; if you believe that, this cannot come in. Then, between the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the faith that believes only in the blood of the Cross, which must we believe? Where must we set our hearts? We must incline our hearts to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, hold on to it, and believe it.

The Holy Spirit cannot be obtained by effort or money

Today many people all over the world are leading religious lives. This is the very picture of the five foolish virgins among the ten. The foolish, having no oil, kept going about to buy oil. And we said the oil is the Holy Spirit. Can the Holy Spirit be bought with money? The Spirit of God can never be bought with money.

In the Book of Acts, a man saw the apostles working miracles and tried to buy that power with money. But it cannot be done. The Holy Spirit can never be bought with money, nor obtained by diligent effort. The Holy Spirit does not come because one prays much. He does not come because one offers many prayers of repentance, or leads a diligent religious life, or speaks in tongues and serves the Lord zealously.

Nor does the Holy Spirit come upon someone because he believes only in the blood of the Cross. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By faith in the baptism Jesus received from John we must pass all our sins on to Him, by faith be washed of all sins, by faith die with Him, and by faith rise again with Him. Only then does the Holy Spirit come. The heart must be anchored fast to the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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Today throughout the whole world there are many who belong to the foolish virgins. To be foolish is not to know what one's own Bridegroom wants. The Lord, the Bridegroom, comes to take those who have both the oil and the lamp. That is, He comes to take those who have received the remission of sins, serve the Lord, know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and preach that gospel, being faithful in the small work, until the day He comes.

In the parable of the talents, too, the servant entrusted with five talents gained five more. Then the Lord said, *"Good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things" (Matthew 25:21)*. In fact, this is a small work. What God has given me I simply passed on to another, so seen before God it is a truly small work. But the man who received one talent buried it in the ground and brought it back just as it was. What is the true gospel? The true gospel is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Then what of the wise? To be wise means to have wisdom. The wise took oil in their vessels along with their lamps. To take oil in the vessel means to receive onto the tablet of one's heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that God has given to all mankind. And to take it along with the lamp means to be together with the church, together with the brothers and sisters, serving the Lord and following the Lord in union with them.

The confession of the years when I believed only in the blood of the Cross

I have told you many times about the days when I believed in Jesus trusting only in the blood of the Cross. For ten years I believed only in the blood of the Cross, and yet there was still

sin in my heart. Do you suppose I believed halfheartedly in those days? On the contrary, I believed most zealously. Nor was I without knowledge of the Bible. I lacked only the knowledge of the gospel of the water and the Spirit; all the rest I had. It was not that I did not know the Bible—I knew it all. But it was knowledge in the head; the remission of sins had not been fully accomplished in my heart.

At that time there was clearly sin in my heart. At first I supposed I had received the remission of sins, but later I found sin remaining in my heart. Because I did not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it had not in fact been the complete remission of sins. Nevertheless, in my own way I held fast to the Lord. I clung to Him, determined never to let go. I longed for the Lord to save me, and I had to believe that He had saved me. Yet since I was merely holding on to the Lord without knowing how He had saved me, I believed, but my salvation was not complete.

Therefore I tell you that with the blood of the Cross alone no one can ever reach complete salvation. This is not something I have made up. It is what the Bible says, and it is so in fact.

Those who say they have received the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross boil up hot at first. But as time passes they become like bread with leaven in it. The Bible said that no leaven was to be put into the grain offering presented to God. It also told us to eat unleavened bread. When leaven goes in, the bread swells up. But bread that has swollen turns sour after only a little while and cannot be eaten. God did not acknowledge leavened bread. Unleavened bread, on the other hand, remains as it is even after a long time and hardly turns sour.

I too supposed I had received the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross, but as time passed I collapsed completely. When I sinned, I became a sinner again.

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To become a sinner again by sinning is not complete salvation. The difference between believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believing only in the blood of the Cross looks as thin as a sheet of paper. But that thin difference in fact creates an enormous gap. While I did not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, however long I believed in Jesus, there was sin in my heart. Though I had believed in Jesus a long time, I had truly become a sinner.

I spoke in tongues, received visions, went through all kinds of burning experiences, and served with devotion. Yet there was sin in my heart. When I first sinned and repented, my heart felt relieved. The next time I sinned and repented, again the sin seemed to vanish and I felt relieved. But as two years, three years, and then some five years passed, however much I repented, the sin would not go away. However hard I tried, the heaviness of my heart would not leave.

Later the devil tormented me. Nothing was visible, but from behind me came a voice: You sinned, didn't you? You sinned, didn't you? There was sin that would not disappear no matter how I prayed in repentance, and that place was truly a torment. Think of it once. If no one is there and nothing is visible, and yet from behind a voice keeps pricking you—You sinned, didn't you?—how tormenting would that be? My conscience was so pierced I thought I would die. Though I believed in the blood of the Cross and believed in Jesus Christ as my Savior, though I prayed in repentance and believed the word, that sin did not go away.

Even though I believed only in the blood of the Cross, acknowledged all the rest of the word, and offered prayers of repentance, the sin did not disappear. The Bible says that the sin of Judah was engraved with a pen of iron and the point of a diamond on the tablet of the heart, and it seemed that sin had

been written just so on the tablet of my own heart. I wanted to live as a person without sin, but because sin was there, I was ashamed to look people in the face. I was embarrassed when anyone so much as looked at me, and I was ashamed even before heaven. That poet who wished to look up to heaven without a spot of shame—he too, perhaps, felt that way because of the sin in his heart.

I passed through many such hardships. And that is why I can tell you these things. From experience and from the word alike, I can distinguish religious belief from true faith and tell you of it. I can tell you of the faith that entrusts itself wholly to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believes it, and relies on it—true faith.

All righteousness was fulfilled through the baptism Jesus received from John

While I did not know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there was sin in my heart. But when Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River, He said, *"For thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15),* and through that word I came to understand. I came to know that when Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist, all righteousness was fulfilled. The sins of all mankind passed onto Jesus Christ. John the Baptist laid his hands on Him and passed the sins of all mankind onto Jesus. Jesus took over the sins of all mankind once and for all through John the Baptist.

And bearing those sins, He received the judgment of sin on the Cross. By shedding His blood and dying He paid the wages of sin in full. And He rose again from the dead and became our living Savior God. I came to know all this through the word.

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Through the word I came to know that when the Lord received baptism from John, He took over all my sins and yours. Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of all mankind. Since He received the judgment of those sins in full, now there is no sin. God has made us His children. Jesus has become our Savior in very truth.

After I came to know this fact through the word, the sin that had been written in my heart was washed away clean, without a trace. From then on I could look at people without a spot of shame. I could face people without any ill will. Life itself became truly worthwhile, thankful, and joyful. Just as the word says—Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks—I could truly rejoice always, pray without ceasing, and give thanks in everything.

A religious life and a life of faith are entirely different

Leading a religious life and living the life of faith are completely different. The difference is by no means small. Even now many people of the world are leading not a life of faith but a religious life.

There is a brother abroad who received this gospel and works together with us. He is young in years, but he believes this gospel wholly. He met and talked with people of his region, and they said of this gospel of the water and the Spirit that it was a fine doctrine. Then that young brother told them it is not a doctrine but the truth. The other party were older men—doctors of theology and pastors. They said to him: you are no doctor, so what do you know of the Bible to say such things? But that brother spoke boldly. Even if I have not learned much, he said, the word of God is the truth, and therefore it is right that He has

removed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The difference between believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and leading a religious life is exactly the difference between the wise virgins and the foolish. The foolish virgin leads a religious life. She considers her salvation to rest on herself and thinks she must do everything herself. That is why she went about to buy oil.

Do not think that if you do this or that in some way, you will obtain salvation. Do not think that if you lead a zealous religious life long enough, someday you will receive the Holy Spirit. However long one leads a religious life, that is not how one is born again. Some speak of being born again in a dream, or while praying, or while listening to a sermon, but a person is born again precisely and only through the word. We are born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Apostle Peter said that we have been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the living and abiding word of God. He also said, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).*

Our Lord came to this earth as our Savior. At the age of thirty He received baptism from John and took on all the sins of all mankind. Because He had taken on the sins like that, He could die on the Cross. And He rose again from the dead and became the true Savior of you and me.

Move the seat of your heart to the gospel of the water and the Spirit

How is it with your heart? How is it with your faith? Could

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it be that, while believing only in the blood of the Cross, you have merely laid the gospel of the water and the Spirit on top as knowledge? You certainly believe in Jesus as your Savior. Believing in the blood of the Cross is certainly faith. But you must consider once more whether you have truly received the gospel of the water and the Spirit into your heart. You must know that the faith which believed only in the blood of the Cross with the heart was not complete.

And you must take hold again with the heart and believe that this salvation which comes through the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the complete gospel. Not the old thing—this is the real one. The religious life is our old thing, and the life of faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the new. New wine cannot be put into old wineskins. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is new. Where does your heart stand? Does it stand in the sinner's place or in the righteous person's place? Does it stand believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or believing only in the blood of the Cross? According to the place of the heart, it is decided whether one has received salvation or not. The heart is what matters.

Today the hearts of many people in the world stand in the place of believing only in the blood of the Cross. Therefore, however they strive, they cannot please God. However hard they try, they cannot receive blessing before God. The seat of the heart must be moved. We must move from the place of believing only in the blood of the Cross and admit that this alone is not enough. We must take hold of the truth that only the gospel of the water and the Spirit saves us completely, that this alone is the truth. We must move our hearts from the incomplete place to the complete place.

This is what our Lord is saying in Matthew chapter 25. We must not cling and plead, Open to us. We must not cling, begging

to be saved now. We must believe the salvation the Lord has already accomplished for you and me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe in that salvation already accomplished in the past perfect. It does not come by my striving now, by setting my mind this way and that.

Long ago our Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John, taking over all my sins and yours. Bearing those sins He went and was nailed to the Cross, received the judgment of sin, and died. And He rose from the dead and saved you and me. You must believe in this Savior, Jesus Christ, as your Savior. You must believe the salvation He has already accomplished completely. Only, the person who has not yet received the remission of sins in his heart, or has not set his heart on the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must plead for salvation and move his heart.

You must know that He has already washed away all your sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You must know that when Jesus received baptism from John He took over all your sins, that He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and that He rose from the dead and saved you. You must take hold of that and believe it. Those who so believe are the wise who prepared their lamps. They gather together and unite. Even when hearts rub rough against one another, within the order of the Holy Spirit they bend their own hearts, pursuing peace with one another and love for one another. Uniting like this they serve the Lord, receive blessing within that union, and build the kingdom of God. Such saints are God's people and the wise.

Where does your heart stand? In the sinner's place, or in the righteous person's place? Is your heart holding on to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or only to the blood of the Cross? To keep one's heart in what is not the answer—that is foolish. So it is with many people of the world. When I look at them, I cannot

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tell you how stifling it is.

There is a kind of belief that puts signs and wonders first, holding up tongues and the healing of diseases. But that is a belief that does not fully acknowledge the word of God. Some time ago a man announced that he would give a large prize to anyone who could truly perform miracles and wonders, and he tested the miracle-workers of the whole world. He tested one by one whether the sick were really healed when hands were laid on them, and whether the gift of seeing through a person's mind was real. But not one person received that prize. Those who claimed to work powers all over the world were all exposed as false.

Such things are like hypnosis; they are the work of the devil. The devil only dulls the senses for a moment; he does not truly heal disease. It may look as if the disease was healed, but in fact it was not. Therefore such things are neither true faith nor true belief.

Many people attend Presbyterian churches and yet in fact lead religious lives. Those who believe only in the blood of the Cross—who believe in Jesus, yet believe only in the blood of the Cross—are leading a religious life. That is the picture of the foolish. Though the Lord saved us long ago, such a person does not believe that salvation, and still thinks that if he prays hard or does something, his sins will be removed—he only keeps striving. To believe what He has already removed—that is faith. To know the fact as fact and believe it is faith; changing something by my own effort is not faith.

You cannot imagine how easy faith is. Here is a yellow flower. When someone who knows this flower's name tells me what flower it is, I accept it—ah, so that flower is that one. That is faith. Faith is knowing the fact, knowing what it is, and believing what one knows just as it is. It is not difficult in the

least. Knowing and believing that the Lord has saved us from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is faith. Is it difficult? Do you know and believe in your heart that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has saved you?

To follow the Lord we must deny our own hearts. We must admit that what we believed in the old days was wrong. We must not slide over to this side quietly. We must admit, 'Ah, I believed wrongly.' We must pour it out before God. The Bible says that when I kept silent about my sin, the Lord made my vitality dry up as in the drought of summer. Therefore we must pour out that we believed wrongly and knew wrongly, and take hold of what we have now come to know rightly.

For us this is an easy thing, but moving your heart is truly important. The Lord said that He does not look at the outward appearance of a man but at the center of the heart. He looks at whether the heart has moved or not. This is invisible to the eye, but it is a matter of great weight. It is not something achieved by any psychology or learning. We must bring our hearts and set them on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You and I must set our hearts on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then are we acknowledged before God. Only then does the effect of the Lord's having removed my sins and yours come upon us. It comes at that very moment.

If you do not move your heart, nothing at all happens. But the moment you move your heart, the work happens. When you confess—I believed wrongly and knew wrongly, but now I set my heart here—and set it firmly there, the Lord works. The Holy Spirit comes into your heart. Even if there is no special sensation in the heart, from that time on you are a child of God. There is no sin in your heart. The gospel of the water and the Spirit has removed all your sins.

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Now is the time of harvest

We must truly bring our hearts and set them on the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is as fresh as the water of life. Only he who is born again of water and the Spirit can enter the kingdom of God and see it. In John chapter 3 the Lord said that unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. And 1 John chapter 5 says that Jesus Christ came not only by water, but by water and blood, and that there are three that bear witness: the Spirit, the water, and the blood.

God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit sent the Son to this earth. He had the sins of all mankind passed on to the Son through John the Baptist. Then Jesus Christ, who carried our sins, received the judgment on the Cross. He shed His precious blood and died as the wages of sin, rose again from the dead, and became the true God of salvation for you and me. Jesus Christ is the God of salvation for you and me.

Christianity is now two thousand years old. But in those two thousand years of believing only in the blood of the Cross, was there even one person who said his sins had been completely removed—one person who had truly become righteous? There was not one. But after the gospel of the water and the Spirit was known and preached, people arose in every part of the world who confess with conscience and faith that they truly have no sin.

If receiving the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of the Cross were enough, there would be nothing more for us to do. There is no one who does not know that Jesus shed His blood on the Cross and washed away our sins. Everyone in the whole world knows that much. But by that alone sin is not completely removed. Therefore I believe there are people who

must move the seat of their hearts from believing only in the blood of the Cross to believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They must pour out that the old faith was not complete. They must believe that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the real one. They must believe that the Lord saved me with this gospel of the water and the Spirit—that He received baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross bearing all my sins, and rose again to save me. Here they must set their hearts.

To believe with the heart in the Cross contained within the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that is true faith. If you have believed only in the blood of the Cross with your heart, you must admit that it was not complete faith, repent, and turn. Then your faith is fully acknowledged before God and you become God's complete people. From then on the Holy Spirit walks with you, you receive God's guidance, and your life changes, growing ever brighter like the rising sun.

When you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is much to do. There is truly much to do in the world. But if you do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe only in the blood of the Cross, there is nothing to do—there is nothing to preach again to those who already know and believe it all. We are publishing books that carry this gospel of the water and the Spirit in many languages and spreading them to the world. So far we have laid that foundation broadly. From now on there is truly much to do.

In distant countries, too, after the books of this gospel of the water and the Spirit went in, people who were changed have arisen and are establishing churches. One worker, after reading these books, realized anew that only the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can enter the holy place where God is present. He realized that one can enter there because, believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, one has

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no sin and is holy. We cannot thank the Lord enough for what He has done.

Now is the time of harvest. God is calling workers. He is calling you. Load your heart onto the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and admit that whatever was not the gospel of the water and the Spirit you believed wrongly. Then entrust yourself to God by faith and follow Him. When you do, God holds us and works together with us; He blesses us and works His work. We thank the Lord for saving us and making us the wise. That we have become the wise has come about through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We give thanks before God. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

You who have prepared the oil, ask in faith for what you need

< Matthew 25:1-13, 7:6-12 >

"'Then the kingdom of heaven shall be likened to ten virgins who took their lamps and went out to meet the bridegroom. Now five of them were wise, and five were foolish. Those who were foolish took their lamps and took no oil with them, but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. But while the bridegroom was delayed, they all slumbered and slept. 'And at midnight a cry was heard: 'Behold, the bridegroom is coming; go out to meet him!' Then all those virgins arose and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said to the wise, 'Give us some of your oil, for our lamps are going out.' But the wise answered, saying, 'No, lest there should not be enough for us and you; but go rather to those who sell, and buy for yourselves.' And while they went to buy, the bridegroom came, and those who were ready went in with him to the wedding; and the door was shut. 'Afterward the other virgins came also, saying, 'Lord, Lord, open to us!' But he answered and said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, I do not know you.' 'Watch therefore, for you know neither the day nor the hour in which the Son of Man is coming."

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Today we have looked together at the word of Matthew chapter 25 and chapter 7. In Matthew chapter 25 our Lord spoke the parable of the ten virgins. It is a word spoken concerning five virgins among these ten. Our Lord told us this parable with a heart that desires to save these five virgins.

The Lord says to us: save these five foolish virgins. Preach the gospel to these five foolish virgins and rescue them. This is the word the Lord gives us.

The foolish virgins who have the lamp but no oil

These five virgins had lamps but no oil. And yet they waited for the bridegroom to come. Having no oil, they fitted makeshift wicks to their lamps. Whether a paper wick or a thread wick, if you attach anything as a makeshift, it catches fire quickly. But after a little while it goes out. Then they raise the wick a little and light it again. It seems to burn a little better, and then it goes out again. Such is the situation of these five virgins.

These foolish virgins went about buying oil until the bridegroom came—until the Lord comes to this earth. They strove and labored to keep the flame lit. They went diligently to the mountains, to the sea, to prayer houses, to churches, to revival meetings. But even when the bridegroom finally came—even hearing the cry that the bridegroom was coming—they were still out looking for oil to the very day. This is the picture of the foolish virgin.

What God says to us through these foolish virgins is clear: save these foolish virgins; preach the gospel to them. There are truly many such people in this world now—people who, like the foolish virgins, have the lamp but not the oil. Here the lamp means the church. They attend church, but they have no oil.

They have not received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit is not in their hearts, and they have not been born again of water and the Spirit. So they gather daily and offer prayers of repentance to receive the remission of sins, and even now they strive to wash their sins away by their own strength. There are truly many such people. It is for such people that God recorded this word for us, telling us to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them and save them.

We have been saved by believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

God has given this salvation to you and me. Our Lord removed all our sins with the baptism He received from John and with the Cross, and we believed in that Lord and received salvation. We believed that the Lord came to this earth and took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John. And by that faith we received salvation.

We believe with the heart. We believe that our Lord has become the Savior of you and me. We believe that the Lord has removed all our sins and saved us. We believe that we have been saved not by our own deeds but only through the salvation of the Lord. By that love of the Lord, by the salvation the Lord accomplished, you and I have been saved. This faith is in your hearts and mine.

This age is an age of disasters. Floods are now sweeping over the whole world. Even in such an age there are many who have not yet received the remission of sins and are still trying to receive it by adding their own deeds. When we see that, we cannot tell you how grieved we are. Floods have struck many regions; great rivers have overflowed, levees have collapsed,

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and many fields and houses have been submerged. In an age that has met such calamities, there are still people who have not received salvation. We see people still attending church, striving to receive the remission of sins. How pitiful it is! And yet, on the other hand, how fortunate we are—for we believe that the Lord has become our Savior and that He has removed all our sins.

This is not some emotion. It is not our deeds or effort either. There is only, in our hearts, the faith that believes in the Lord. The word of the Lord's salvation is in our hearts.

The baptism Jesus received from John and the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Our Lord came to this earth and, to take on all our sins, received baptism from John the Baptist in the Jordan River. With this baptism Jesus took over all the sins of the world. And carrying those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross. Thus the Lord has saved us. We believe this. The word of God's truth is in our hearts, and we believed that word and were saved by that faith.

This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel the apostles preached was this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of the water and the blood. Jesus is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Jesus took on our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of the wages of those sins on the Cross and died, and rose again in three days, accomplishing our salvation once and for all. How fortunate we are! In these last days we must have this saved faith.

The world is collapsing. The floods overflow and this world is being swept away. If a person has no faith and is swept away with the sins of this world, how pitiful is that life? Therefore in

this last age our faith in God must be firm. We must examine once more whether the faith that believes the Lord's word is in our hearts. We must confirm whether the word of truth of the Lord who saved us is in our hearts. And we must kindle that faith again. We must check exactly how the Lord saved us, what that word of salvation is, and whether there is sin in us or not. Then we can live through this world.

What everyone needs first is salvation from sin

Some people say: enough now about salvation—speak about receiving the Holy Spirit, about gifts, service, and missions. Christianity came in long ago, they say, so why still talk about the basics? But what everyone needs first is his own salvation. On that salvation there is service, and on it there is mission work. On that salvation there is the work of the Holy Spirit, there is heaven, and there is the rapture. If one's own salvation is not complete, all the rest is pie in the sky. It has nothing to do with him.

In the parable of the ten virgins our Lord said five were foolish and five were wise. The wise had both the lamp and the oil, and lit the wick. That flame was so frail it seemed the wind would blow it out. But it was a flame that relied on the oil. So they could keep that flame and wait until the bridegroom came. When the bridegroom came, the flame flickered as if it would go out in the wind, but the wise virgin could take up her lamp and go out.

In Israel, weddings are held at night. So the bride must always be ready. No one knows whether the bridegroom will come at midnight, at eight in the early evening, or at three at dawn. Therefore the bride's household must stay awake, without

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sleeping, and wait. When the bridegroom appears, they must open the door, take up their lamps, and go out to greet him. This is the custom of Israel. Our Lord spoke on the basis of this custom. That the wedding is held at night means that our Lord comes again at the end of this world. It points to the Lord's return.

There are in fact churches that hold wedding ceremonies at night, following the Bible. Once a sister asked me to officiate at a wedding held at night. The wedding was set for past midnight, and it was truly hard to officiate at that hour. But they keep it so, following the weddings held at night in the Bible.

The Holy Spirit does not come and go

In the Bible, to be foolish means to have the lamp but not the oil. This is the very point. That they all dozed or fell asleep when the bridegroom came is not the problem. When sleep pours down, who would not doze? When the world is full of sin and being swept away, who would not follow the world even a little? Who, having flesh, would not go after the flesh? Everyone does. But the heart of the matter is this: they had the lamp but did not have the oil.

Not having the oil means believing in Jesus and yet having no Holy Spirit in one's heart. This is no small problem. One believes in Jesus, yet there is no Holy Spirit in the heart. That is foolish—believing in Jesus foolishly. Such people say that the Holy Spirit comes into the heart and goes out again.

There are even denominations that spread this wrong teaching. One pastor gathers all the ministers and believers at a retreat and, on the last day, has them all come forward before him. Then he lays his hands on them, claiming to drive out demons. Demons come in and out of the hearts of those who

believe in Jesus, he says, so a servant with power must lay on hands and drive them out. He is teaching that the Holy Spirit comes in and goes out.

But the Holy Spirit is not like that. Think of an oil lamp. You open the lid, pour in the oil, and close the lid again. When the wick comes up, you light it. Would the oil the owner poured in keep coming out and going back in? Certainly not. This oil means the Holy Spirit. When we believe in Jesus and believe the word of the water and the Spirit and are born again, the Holy Spirit comes upon that heart. Would the Holy Spirit, having once come, leave because we did something a little wrong, and come back in because we prayed a good prayer of repentance? He does not do so. Even people do not treat what they have poured in that way—how much less would God?

The wise virgin had the oil. She believed the word of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. The Lord saved me with the word of the water and the Spirit. The Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John for me, and took on all my sins. And He died on the Cross in my place and removed all my sins. I believed this with my heart and received the remission of sins. Because the Lord saved us, we have been saved. Salvation does not depend on us.

We were saved by believing in the Lord. We were saved by believing with the heart. We were saved by hearing and believing the word of the truth of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of the truth. The gospel the apostles preached in the apostolic age was this gospel of the water and the Spirit, the gospel of the water and the blood. Now, too, we see this word and are saved by the water and the Spirit.

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The Holy Spirit is not obtained with money or toil

What of those who have not received the remission of sins? They are always going about buying. What is it, this going about buying? It means they labor much on their own. Instead of hearing the word, knowing the truth, and obtaining salvation by faith at that moment, after hearing the word they go up again to the prayer house. Clinging to a pine tree they offer prayers of repentance and cry out for the Holy Spirit. As Jacob wrestled with the angel, they strain with all their might to obtain the Holy Spirit.

But do you suppose the Holy Spirit is like the oil sold at an oil shop or a filling station? Do you suppose He comes if we pay money and strive with our effort and zeal, and does not come if we do not? A filling station will give you oil if you only pay. But the Holy Spirit of God is not so. The Holy Spirit, the Holy One, comes only upon the person who has received the remission of sins—upon the person who believes the word of the water and the Spirit. To that person the Lord comes and helps him as the Helper.

When we believe this word of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit helps us, saying, Your faith is right. The Helper means the One who helps. When we hear, see, and believe the word of Jesus Christ, the word of God's truth, the Holy Spirit helps us, saying, Your faith is right. So the Holy Spirit is the One who helps us, and He is also the Witness. The Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts and guarantees that God has saved us. The Holy Spirit is that very guarantee.

The reason our Lord has given us this word is that we should save souls. Knowing this and believing it in our hearts, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to these souls in this latter half of the year as well.

The last days and the hope of the saved

When we say the world will perish, people call it nonsense. But no. The world will surely perish. It has already begun. Once anything begins, the end comes quickly. Only, no one knows what day the end will be. Therefore we must never fix the ending day in advance—such and such a month, day, and hour. But one thing is certain: God has begun floods, famines, and wars on this earth. The Lord prophesied in the Bible that such things would happen at the end of this world. That prophecy has come upon this earth where you and I live. We must believe this firmly and live.

When all the people of this world die, what happens to the person who has received the remission of sins? Some will die with them, and those who endure a little longer are caught up—raptured—when the Lord comes again. Hebrews 9:27–28 records: *"And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment, so Christ was offered once to bear the sins of many. To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:27–28).* The Lord comes a second time to take those who are apart from sin.

When this world perishes, there is no one who will not perish with it. Born again or not born again, this whole world collapses. But the born again have hope. When the Lord comes, He wakes the saints who have fallen asleep and leads them to the wedding feast. The saints who remain alive the Lord catches up. That is the end of this world. All these things happen within the last three and a half years. Therefore the saying that the righteous will not suffer the tribulation is not right. Do not be deceived by such talk.

Many countries are now suffering greatly from floods. Great

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rivers have overflowed and countless people have lost their lives. That vast continent bears a large part of the world's farming. If its farming collapses, the whole world suffers famine. So this is by no means another country's affair. We too must see this and prepare our hearts. However hard we strive, we do not live longer for it. If the Lord lets us live, we live; if He takes us, we are taken. So we must preach this gospel to those not yet born again. We must first be sure of our own remission of sins, and preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"Ask, and it will be given to you"

Let us look again at the word of Matthew chapter 7. Verses 7 and 8 record: *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened" (Matthew 7:7–8)*. Our God said that He will give. He said that he who asks receives, he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened. God said that He gives like this.

In the hearts of you and me, living in this last age, this faith must be present. What faith? The faith that the Lord gives us everything we need. It is not a matter of only praying, Give us, give us, and ending there. God has promised to give; so the faith that He will surely give must be in our hearts—the faith that God gives us all that we need, everything necessary for spirit and body.

Our Lord said, *"If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will your Father who is in heaven give good things to those who ask Him!" (Matthew 7:11)*. That God gives is certain. So in your heart and

mine there must be the faith that God surely gives good things. That faith is not something known only with the lips or the head. Just as we hold the assurance of salvation in our hearts, we must hold in our hearts the faith that God surely gives us what we need. God has given us that heart.

You must examine your own heart. Do you have the faith that God surely gives what we ask and desire? That heart is faith itself. Living in this last age, we must have the assurance that God surely gives us all that we ask and desire. That heart is in the heart of the born again. When we have such faith, we can live in this world without fear. Because we have faith, we can obtain much from God the Father. But without that assurance, we are too anxious to live.

I too have that assurance. I have the faith that God surely gives what I and our saints need. Because I have that faith, I stand before you and preach. And I plan how to preach the gospel in Japan, Taiwan, and the United States in this second half of the year—how to raise up interpreters and make volumes of sermons and preach. I think about how to do God's work in this short time left before the Lord comes. All this is possible because I have the assurance that God gives.

Look at the word in 2 Kings in the Old Testament. One of the sons of the prophets died, and his wife had nothing left but a little oil in a jar. The prophet told the wife to borrow vessels from all her neighbors and pour the oil into those empty vessels. When the wife shut the door and poured the oil as the servant of God had directed, the oil did not stop but kept flowing until it filled all the borrowed vessels. The wife sold that oil, paid her debt, and lived on the rest with her children. What does this little oil in the jar mean? It is faith. In the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins the Holy Spirit dwells, and through the Holy Spirit there is a gift God has given—faith. Not

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only the faith that receives salvation: God has also given the saints the faith that believes He surely provides as we live through this world.

We live through this world by this faith. When we have no food, we ask God the Father. We ask Him to give a job, to make the business go well. And when we ask, we ask holding the faith that God helps, the faith that He surely gives. The faith that He gives me all I need to eat and drink and wear, all that spirit and body require—that faith is the oil, the gift of God. We must live holding this faith in our hearts. When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must preach it by faith. When we do God's work, we must do it by faith. That the Lord has saved me must not remain a thing written in letters only; it must become faith engraved in my heart. When we preach the gospel with such faith, the soul who hears that word also comes to have the same faith and receives salvation.

Serve others and love one another

Our Lord said in Matthew 7:12, *"Therefore, whatever you want men to do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets" (Matthew 7:12).* The Lord teaches us, saying that this is the Law and the Prophets. Frankly, there is in us the desire to be treated well. We want others not to despise us, and we want to be loved. Not that we seek only to be served like the Pharisees—but no one wants to be hated.

Therefore we who are born again must love one another in these last days. If I hate the other person, the other person hates me too. If I respect the other person, the other person respects me too. This is the word of God. When saints cherish one another, and God's servants and saints cherish one another, they

are cherished in turn. It is not a matter of one person only hating and one person only loving one-sidedly. The nearer the end comes, the more we must cherish, understand, and love one another. We must benefit one another's faith, and lead and hold one another up so that the other may do well. That is the word of God.

How fortunate we are! To have faith in God in these last days—even a little faith—what a blessing it is! To have the faith that has received salvation, to have the word of salvation—what a blessing! At this time when the world is being swept away and people are dying, God has saved you and me and given us faith. He has given us faith greater than a mustard seed—how thankful we are!

Do you think you can live in this world by human means and methods? Without a believing heart—without faith—you cannot live. Try relying on your own head. However good the head, if you rely on it, you will not get far. If God does not help, we cannot live. God holds you and me who have received the remission of sins; He keeps us and gives us what we need. If God did not do so, we could not live. That we live at all is by the grace of God. Our future, too, we live because God upholds us spiritually and provides. We must keep this firmly in mind.

Last summer we went through a great flood. In one region a whole village became a sea of water. But God protected the church of God in that area most wonderfully. Everything around was submerged, but the neighborhood where our church stands was untouched. What does this show? It shows that God keeps us and protects us.

We believe in God. In your hearts there is faith that believes in God. You must live with that faith. You must live giving thanks. And you must ask. You must ask for and obtain everything you need. I will close the word here. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

We must preach the gospel while we can preach it

< Matthew 25:14-30 >

"'For the kingdom of heaven is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and delivered his goods to them. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one, to each according to his own ability; and immediately he went on a journey. Then he who had received the five talents went and traded with them, and made another five talents. And likewise he who had received two gained two more also. But he who had received one went and dug in the ground, and hid his lord's money. After a long time the lord of those servants came and settled accounts with them. 'So he who had received five talents came and brought five other talents, saying, 'Lord, you delivered to me five talents; look, I have gained five more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' He also who had received two talents came and said, 'Lord, you delivered to me two talents; look, I have gained two more talents besides them.' His lord said to him, 'Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.' 'Then he who had received the one talent came and said, 'Lord, I knew you to be a hard man, reaping where you have not sown, and gathering where you have not

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scattered seed. And I was afraid, and went and hid your talent in the ground. Look, there you have what is yours.' 'But his lord answered and said to him, 'You wicked and lazy servant, you knew that I reap where I have not sown, and gather where I have not scattered seed. So you ought to have deposited my money with the bankers, and at my coming I would have received back my own with interest. So take the talent from him, and give it to him who has ten talents. 'For to everyone who has, more will be given, and he will have abundance; but from him who does not have, even what he has will be taken away. And cast the unprofitable servant into the outer darkness. There will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'"

It has truly been a long while. Not long ago we held a conference where, as before, I preached from the Book of Revelation. In the meetings we shared the word of Revelation chapter 6 and then the word of Matthew chapter 24. We carried it through in grace and returned.

These days I am continuing the Revelation conferences. This age is an age extremely sensitive to outward appearance. If what meets the eye is even a little shabby, people pay no attention at all. It is because this present age is the age of the black horse that appears in Revelation chapter 6. So the yellow-dust winds blow fiercely, and many things are happening all over the world.

The work of publishing books that carry the gospel also continues. Bringing out books on Revelation, and translating them into other languages and publishing them, is truly hard work. When they say it is finished and we check again, there are many places left out in the translation, and the workers cling to it again to set it right. Striving like that, we mean to print them

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quickly within days, and when we go into Mongolia, to take in everything we can carry and preach the gospel.

At the Revelation conference I preached from Matthew chapter 24 through chapter 25 verse 13. So I thought it would be good today to continue from there.

In Matthew chapters 24 and 25 our Lord spoke of the things to come. In chapter 24 He told all the things that will happen in the last days. Then, entering chapter 25, through the parable of the ten virgins He spoke of those who have received the remission of sins and those who have not. Next, through the parable of the talents, He told the saints to carry out faithfully the works He has entrusted to them. After that He spoke of God giving rewards in the Millennial Kingdom after the age of the pale horse has passed. And from chapter 26 He speaks of His death on the Cross. So the word runs on in sequence.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is now being spread through the whole world. Yet there are still so many places where the gospel must be preached. We must bring this gospel to Mongolia, and not only to Mongolia but to the many nations the gospel has not yet reached.

The Lord's own goods entrusted to us are souls

Look at the word we read today. The Lord said it is like a man traveling to a far country, who called his own servants and entrusted his goods to them. To each according to his own ability he gave five talents of gold to one, two to another, and one to another, and departed. Here the Lord said that he entrusted his own goods.

The first thing that appears in the parable of the talents is the fact that he entrusted his own goods. Then what are the Lord's

own goods of which He speaks? They are the souls of this earth. God came to this earth and removed the sins of all the people of the world. There are truly many people who have received the remission of sins like this. Every person living on this earth is the Lord's possession—the Lord's own.

Then how did God remove the sins of all the people of the world? The Lord came to this earth as a man and, by receiving baptism from John, took the sins of the whole world upon Himself. And bearing those sins, He received the judgment on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again in three days. With this gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord washed away the sins of all mankind once and for all.

A human being cannot be compared with any material thing. Every person was made by God and is a being who has become God's possession. So the Lord entrusted these souls to the saints and went. He gave them abilities and entrusted to them the work of saving these souls before He went.

When our Lord went to the far country, He entrusted His own goods to His servants and departed. And He will return and reckon whether those servants worked well or not. The servants who did well He praises; the servant who did not, He punishes.

He has given us all the ability to save souls

Through this parable of the talents we can consider many things. In particular we must think of it together with the word of Revelation chapter 6. Our Lord appointed seven ages. Throughout these seven ages God has saved countless souls with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. God came to this earth and, with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, remitted all our sins—the sins of all people. And He entrusted these souls to us and told

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us to live working for these souls. We must graft this fact onto the parable of the talents as we consider it.

What does this word mean? It means that God has entrusted all the souls of this whole world to us. And it means He has given us the ability to save these souls—the ability to preach the gospel to them. He gave us that ability so that we would work with all our strength at the work of saving these souls.

The text speaks of five talents. Here the talent means money, and it also means ability—the ability to preach the gospel to the souls God has entrusted. It is the ability to preach the gospel so that those souls come to understand and know it, hear the gospel, receive salvation, and return to God. God has given this ability to us all.

Yet to one person He gave five talents—that is, He gave much ability. To another He gave two talents, and to another one. Having given thus, He departed to the far country, and He said He would return and reckon.

The master entrusted all his goods to his servants, gave each his ability, and left. The servant who received five talents went at once, traded, and gained five talents. The servant who received two did the same and gained two. But the servant who received one talent buried it in the ground and then, when the master returned, handed it back just as it was.

The servant who received five talents, the servant who received two, and the servant who received one—all had to gain. Trade means gaining. So the servant who received two talents was praised, and the servant who received five was praised for doing well. But the servant who received one talent was rebuked, and afterward met great calamity.

The servant who received five talents went at once and traded with them and gained five more talents. This gaining is important. In trade, gaining matters above all. But we must not

think of this simply in terms of trading to make money. God has made all the souls of this world His own possession. And He has entrusted to us the work of preaching the gospel to those souls. It is at this very point that we must think about what it means to gain.

Anyone who has received the remission of sins can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Anyone who has received the remission of sins—whoever he is—can preach the gospel to souls who have not. There is no one who cannot preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Whoever has received the remission of sins can preach the gospel to anyone at all. He can preach the gospel to many people, or to the people around him. And the person who has not received great ability can serve the Lord from many angles, according to what he has received. He can bring the gospel to the souls God has entrusted, and he can cooperate in many ways in the work of preaching the gospel. So each of us, laboring and serving in various ways, can do the work of God.

The person who has been entrusted with much cannot but serve much. The person who has received much ability comes to serve much. The servant who received five talents went at once, traded, and gained five talents, and when the master returned, he presented what he had gained. He who has received much cannot but serve much like that, everyone.

Each saint has his own entrusted portion of talents. Each of you serves the Lord in the circumstances entrusted to you—within the circumstances and abilities received from God, within all that you have received.

The Lord came to this earth and, with the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit, saved us—all mankind—from all sins. The Lord carried all the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, paid the wages of those sins on the Cross, and rose again, accomplishing our salvation completely. On this earth Satan the devil works, and God also works. But we must carry out this work until the age of the pale horse arrives—and even after it has come—until the Lord gives us our reward at the last in the Millennial Kingdom. Until then we cannot but be martyred, resurrected, and raptured, preaching this gospel and doing the work of saving souls. We cannot but work according to the portion God has entrusted to us.

Therefore no one can excuse himself, saying he cannot serve the gospel or has no ability. Whether entrusted with much or with little, anyone who has received the remission of sins can serve the Lord. So we must not make excuses. We must somehow do the work of saving the Lord's souls. Our churches are now bearing the work of preaching the gospel to this whole world.

Weary and worn as we may be, we cannot but preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Doing this work, we sometimes grow weary and exhausted. When something is not accomplished quickly, we even get irritated. We entrust translation work, and when they say it is done and we check, many places have been left out. When someone translates carelessly, leaving things out without even knowing that language, it grieves the heart. To do the work over we are pressed for time and much money goes into it, so it weighs on the nerves.

Being human, we sometimes feel like stopping at this point.

The thought comes that it would be nice just to live quietly among ourselves. If there were people preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit here and there besides us, we might entertain such thoughts and step back a pace. But the problem is that it is not so. Search the whole world over the Internet, and there are no people preaching the gospel like this.

We are now spreading this gospel through the Internet and through electronic books. If there were people preaching the gospel like this in place after place, we would exchange news and rejoice together. But there are no such people. That is why we cannot but do this work.

The work of preaching the gospel is truly busy. When a church somewhere in the country has much work and is hard pressed, we send brothers. This time too we sent brothers to several regions to work together. I also keep thinking about what is best for the sisters of the mission school. We are now sending news to many countries of the world over the Internet, but a few people alone have their limits. So we mean to set up several computers and entrust the work of preaching the gospel over the Internet.

We must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Whether it is hard or not, we must preach it. For God entrusted His own goods to us and went. He entrusted the souls, gave the abilities, and went; so we must preach the gospel. We cannot but preach it. This present age is the age of Revelation. Yet people believed in the pre-tribulation rapture theory and, disappointed, now sit dazed. Even those who cared about the Lord's coming are now all disheartened and dying spiritually.

I thought it was so only in our country, but many countries of the world are the same. Go onto foreign Internet sites and you find truly many questions posted about Revelation. So we have organized questions and answers on Revelation and posted the

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answers. People abroad ask many concrete questions. That is how much people want to know Revelation, and yet there is no place that expounds it rightly. In many cases only the title is grandly hung out, and inside there is no true explanation.

We are now preaching this gospel toward Europe as well. And we mean to preach the gospel to countries like Mongolia. Mongolia, as you know, is a country not yet well off—about the level of our country in the 1970s, you could say. It is hard even to know whether the Internet is properly in place there. But when we go in, we shall find out.

The people of that country are truly pure. Because they are pure, when the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached to them, they believe it as it is and receive the remission of sins. To such people we must bring the gospel. There are truly many who have not yet heard it. Look at the world through television or the Internet, and the people who need to hear the gospel are beyond counting. God has entrusted all these people to us—how could we not preach this gospel?

The age of the black horse—the beginning of sorrows

Even when we are weary and ready to fall, we must not look only at ourselves. The age of Revelation has arrived. Now is the age of the black horse. Before the age of the pale horse comes, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must spread this gospel. Hard as it is, we must gather up our hearts again and do this work—again and again. It is like a marathon: when you grow weary you do not sit down; you steady your breathing, gather strength, and run on. As one must run the forty-two kilometers to the end, you and I must preach this gospel to

the end.

God has entrusted this possession to you and me and gone. He has entrusted these souls and gone. He has entrusted many souls at home, and many souls abroad to whom the gospel must be preached. Therefore we must do this work. I am weary, and you are weary too. But we must do it.

In this age, when it is hard enough to keep one's own body going, living for the gospel of the water and the Spirit is truly not easy. If we did not know what age is coming, we too would despair and sit down like the people of the world. But go only a little farther and the age of the pale horse comes. Then the Antichrist appears. The whole world will suffer enormous calamity through natural famine. Taking advantage of that age, the Antichrist will appear and martyr the born-again saints—the many people who believe in Jesus. After that martyrdom the Lord will resurrect and rapture the saints. Because such an age has drawn near, we must do this work without fail. So we do this work. And we keep on doing it.

These days water is short and many parts of the world are suffering severe famine. When we pray, God sends rain. But I know that God is letting the world go through these things because the saints must know this age. In truth, this can come upon us very seriously. People ignore what God has said, and then, when they actually go through it, only then do they believe. If they experience it they believe; if not, they do not. That is why God lets people experience it.

Then what did the Lord say would come in this age of the black horse? Look from Matthew 24:7, where He speaks of the things that happen in this age of the black horse. *"Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. And there will be famines, pestilences, and earthquakes in various places. All these are the beginning of sorrows" (Matthew 24:7–8).*

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What does this word mean? He spoke of the things that happen in the age of the black horse—the things happening in this present age. Nation rises against nation and kingdom against kingdom, and in various places there are famines and earthquakes. Such famines and earthquakes are the beginning of sorrows, the beginning of the disasters.

We must preach quickly, before the age of the pale horse comes

Fearful calamities are coming upon this earth. When the age of the pale horse comes, with the seven trumpets fire falls from heaven and hail falls. Then the stars fall, falling on the sea and the rivers. So the plagues of the seven trumpets come upon this earth one after another. Such an age of calamity is approaching. Because such an age will continue on, we must believe this fact and, before the age of the pale horse arrives—now, while things are still a little comfortable—spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit with all speed.

They say that in a marathon it becomes very hard from about the twentieth kilometer. One hits the wall. Our gospel ministry is like that—truly hard and exhausting. But hard as it is, we must steady our breathing and gather strength and run again. What age is this, yours and mine? We must know that we have reached the age of the black horse, the age when the sorrows begin.

Because of famine, and because of the water problem, farming can no longer be carried on properly. Reservoirs are drying up, and building dams has now become a worldwide trend. In our country too, as drought grows severe, dams will have to be built even where they could not be built before. Reservoirs are appearing everywhere. From now on it will be

hard to see streams flowing with water, and we will see more and more dams.

We hear that a neighboring country has dammed a great river and the waters downstream are drying up. These things are not passing events. Seeing them, we must think of the age of the black horse of Revelation chapter 6. The age of the black horse means the age of famine of spirit and body. This present age is exactly such an age.

The age of famine has come, and people suffer famine. They suffer calamities of water, famine of food, and spiritual famine. And then to what does it pass over? To the age of the pale horse. When the age of the pale horse comes, from then on plagues fall from heaven. Because we know and believe that such an age is coming, we have no leisure to entertain private thoughts.

Let us have the faith that discerns the age rightly

So I cannot but say these things to the saints as well. In this age I cannot but preach the word of Revelation and publish books on Revelation. And every saint must keep his wits sharp. Hard and difficult as it is, we must know and believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel must look well after the souls of his own family and the souls God has entrusted to him as His possession. We must preach the gospel to those souls and live the rest of our lives for this gospel. God has said that we should live so.

Therefore you and I must stay awake. Our spirits must stay awake. We must truly pray, discern the age well, and keep our faith in step with the age. And we must live lives of faith that bring this gospel to all the people of this whole world.

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God has entrusted these works to us. I will publish this book on Revelation. In any case we will translate it into many languages and distribute it so that all the people of the world can read it. For without seeing this age accurately, there is no future either. If one does not know his own present accurately, he cannot secure the future.

It is the same with the faith of you and me living in this age. Only when we discern this present age accurately can we know the age that comes next. Only then can we lead a right life of faith in the present. We must bring the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. So we must throw away private thoughts. You must throw away the thought of living like a prince or a princess.

Let us throw away private thoughts and live bound to God

We must be bound to God. We must preach the gospel to this possession God has entrusted—the souls that are God's own. With the abilities God has given us we must serve this gospel and live as God's servants who spread the gospel to the whole world.

There is so much to do now. It is hard, but there is truly much to do. I hope the brothers and sisters entering the mission school this time will live the rest of their lives by faith. Whenever the Lord may come, until that day, I hope many people of faith will enter this eighteenth class of the mission school—people who devote themselves wholly to the gospel, who, whether they eat or drink, are with the Lord, who suffer with the Lord when suffering comes, and who desire to live together with the Lord. Workers are truly lacking. People who live wholly for the Lord

are truly few.

Nevertheless, you and I must make good use of the abilities God has given and spread this gospel. We must live for this work. When we enter Mongolia this time, we will spend a week from the day we go in to the day we come out. Take away the day going in and the day coming out, and the days we can actually work are five. How much we can do in those five days I do not know. But my heart's desire is that God will join souls to us so that we may preach the gospel to them, lead them to receive the remission of sins and be born again by faith, and establish a church there.

If a church of God is established in Mongolia, we can send living expenses and books and preach the gospel. And through that base we can spread the gospel throughout that whole region—northern and western Europe, China, and beyond. Mongolians can travel freely to many countries. So my desire to make that place a base for preaching the gospel is truly great.

On the other hand, to countries we need not enter directly, we mean to share the gospel by e-mail and by electronic books. Some countries are in great turmoil, with endless political strife and conflict between peoples. Compared with such places, public order in our country is truly well kept. People from many countries say our country is good to live in. Foreigners, too, are well protected in our country.

There is great power when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Truly, you and I must keep our wits sharp and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And we must preach this gospel to the whole world. Do you believe in the gospel of the

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water and the Spirit? If you believe this gospel, has God remitted all your sins and mine, or has He not? He has remitted them all. But we must also know the gospel of the water and the Spirit in detail. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is a simple truth, but there are many who preach this truth falsely.

Therefore, to know this gospel of the water and the Spirit truly and believe it rightly, you must read the books here again and again. The content repeats, but all of it was made because it is needed. What is the heart of this gospel? It is that our Lord came to this earth and, by receiving baptism from John, carried all the sin of the world—that He became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And bearing that sin, He received the judgment on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again in three days. Thus the Lord, who came by water and blood, washed away all our sins once and for all and accomplished salvation.

It is not only for their own sins that those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit have received the remission. The Lord has already remitted even the sins of those to whom you must preach the gospel—all of them. That is why, when you preach this gospel, you receive truly great strength. You experience the power of the Holy Spirit. Then you must preach the gospel with faith and pour still more strength into this work of preaching it.

For my part, rather than making books, I want from now on to travel about preaching the gospel and leading conferences. I mean to take the mission school students along and pour strength into that work. For it is when preaching the gospel that the greatest strength rises and the greatest joy is felt. Is it so with you as well?

When you preach the gospel and tell someone that Jesus has removed all his sins, how much strength rises in you! How

exciting it is! When is there greater joy than when preaching the gospel? Serving the gospel is truly hard. Preaching the gospel is serving, and many other works are serving too, but among them the best is when we preach the gospel.

This time we will go to Mongolia and preach the gospel, and there must be souls to preach to. They say many Koreans have also gone in there. There, too, we must fight the spiritual fight. Do you suppose the people of this whole world know this gospel of the water and the Spirit? They do not. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is also a mystery. That the seven ages are set out in Revelation is also a mystery. People do not even know these things.

Publishing this book, I felt anew how utterly lacking the books are that one might consult. When people publish a book, they ought to unfold their argument on the basis of the Bible text, but instead they leave the text untouched and string together useless, private talk. One ought to read the text of Scripture and expound that text rightly, and in many cases it is not done. That is a failure to guide souls rightly.

I hope the book comes out quickly. I mean to present it to you soon. We plan to bind Revelation chapters 1 through 13 as the first volume and chapters 14 through 22 as the second, and give them to you. In truth you have all made it together, but I want to finish it quickly and put it in your hands. I hope you will read it and know this age. When such an age comes, water will become truly precious. But we do not put our hands to such business, lest our hearts be stolen by money. The heart must not be stolen by money.

Hard as it is, you must serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit, live on the gospel, and spread it. Do you understand? Truly, the world is wide and there is much to do. This year and next we will work hard. If God brings a time when we cannot

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work abroad, then we will work among ourselves at home. Even then it is not that nothing can be done. At home we will work until the age of the pale horse comes. It is hard, but you must take heart and do so.

I know the Lord has raised us up to do this work. The sisters of the mission school, too, must put aside idle thoughts and diligently carry out the work of preaching the gospel over the Internet. Sending e-mail is truly easy; you can learn it quickly and all do it. We will set up several computers and carry on together the work of preaching the gospel over the Internet.

Our brother workers also must have faith and seek first His kingdom and His righteousness. The nearer the last time comes, the more we must think of this gospel first and live for the gospel first.

I hope many workers will come in. I hope there will be many workers within our church as well. All our saints are like soldiers. Our church numbers some three hundred, yet we are working with the whole world as our field. So the people of the world regard us as a very large organization.

Hearing the workers' reports this time, I learned that the mission organizations abroad at first thought little of us. But as we sent the Revelation books one volume after another—one, two, three—and they came to know how we work, they have now changed their attitude and treat us with respect. It is a remarkable thing. This is because we work believing in God. It is because the gospel we preach is the truth.

If people all knew and all believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there would be no need for us to labor like this. If all the people of the whole world believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we would not have to do this. But because it is not so, we do this work.

I too am weary these days and under stress, and there are

truly many moments when it feels too hard to bear. Even so, on June 1 I will enter Mongolia. Please pray that we may preach the gospel in Mongolia. We mean to preach the gospel there right away, raise up one or two workers, and soon establish a church. If we guide it, or send in a couple from among the workers here to nurture them and preach the gospel, the work will get going quickly.

In Mongolia the yellow-dust wind is blowing very hard now, so we must be sure to take glasses. They say the seasons come about two months later than in our country—warm by day and very cold at night. This is by no means a pleasure trip. In a country of hard circumstances there is no place to rest at ease. I only ask you to be with us in prayer. In a few days the workers will gather to spend time together and discuss the work.

Let us seek first His kingdom and His righteousness

It is hard, is it not? Still, let us take heart. Would I say this for nothing if it were not hard? In truth it is hard. Do you believe in this age of famine of which the Lord spoke? Now is the age of famine. You must believe it. You must believe it without fail.

From now on this world will only grow harder; a good world never comes again. It is truly so. Keep your faith well. When you seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, you prosper in the flesh as well and receive blessing. If you do not seek first His kingdom and His righteousness, there is no gain at all. I believe that God feeds His workers, clothes them, and fills up all that they need. I have finished the word. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The faith that served the least of the brethren

< Matthew 25:31-46 >

"'When the Son of Man comes in His glory, and all the holy angels with Him, then He will sit on the throne of His glory. All the nations will be gathered before Him, and He will separate them one from another, as a shepherd divides his sheep from the goats. And He will set the sheep on His right hand, but the goats on the left. Then the King will say to those on His right hand, 'Come, you blessed of My Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was hungry and you gave Me food; I was thirsty and you gave Me drink; I was a stranger and you took Me in; I was naked and you clothed Me; I was sick and you visited Me; I was in prison and you came to Me.' 'Then the righteous will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry and feed You, or thirsty and give You drink? When did we see You a stranger and take You in, or naked and clothe You? Or when did we see You sick, or in prison, and come to You?' And the King will answer and say to them, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did it to one of the least of these My brethren, you did it to Me.' 'Then He will also say to those on the left hand, 'Depart from Me, you cursed, into the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels: for I was hungry and you gave Me no food; I was thirsty and you gave Me no drink; I was a stranger and you did not take Me in, naked and you did not clothe Me, sick

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and in prison and you did not visit Me.' 'Then they also will answer Him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see You hungry or thirsty or a stranger or naked or sick or in prison, and did not minister to You?' Then He will answer them, saying, 'Assuredly, I say to you, inasmuch as you did not do it to one of the least of these, you did not do it to Me.' And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.'"

The last verdict opened before all people

The last part of Matthew chapter 25 tells of the final judgment the Son of Man will carry out when He comes again in glory. When Jesus first came to this earth, He came in a low and humble form, but when He comes again, He sits on the throne of glory with all the angels. Then all the nations are gathered before the Lord, and He separates people as a shepherd divides the sheep from the goats. In this world faith and unbelief are mixed together and the inner heart of man is hidden, but on the last day no one can escape the Lord's judgment.

The Lord sets the sheep on the right and the goats on the left. Those standing on the right He calls the blessed of His Father and tells them to inherit the kingdom prepared for them from the foundation of the world. But to those standing on the left He says to enter the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Eternal life and eternal punishment are real, and faith in this life leads to an eternal outcome.

But we must not understand this text to mean simply that those who do many good deeds go to heaven and those who lack good deeds go to hell. The righteous of whom the Bible speaks are not people who became righteous by their own deeds.

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However many good works a sinner does, he cannot remove the sin of his heart by himself. Those standing on the right are people who first received God's blessing, and the kingdom for them was also prepared from the foundation of the world. They did not buy the kingdom with their own merit; they became righteous by believing the salvation God bestowed, and the life that came from that faith was revealed on the last day.

Who is the righteous person standing on the right?

Every person carries a sinner's heart from birth. Out of man's heart come evil thoughts, greed, pride, and hatred, and no one can wash away this fundamental sin by self-cultivation. To become righteous before God, one must believe in the remission of sins God Himself accomplished. Jesus came in the flesh to save sinners, and by receiving baptism from John the Baptist He received the sins of all the people of the world passed on to Him and took them upon Himself.

The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was not a mere ceremony to display humility. With that baptism the sins of all mankind passed onto Jesus. Jesus bore those sins and received all the punishment of sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again in three days and became the perfect Savior. To believe in the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection is to believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The person who believes this gospel with the heart is washed of all sins, becomes righteous, and receives into his heart the Holy Spirit whom God gives.

The sheep standing on the right are the very people who have received this grace. They are called righteous not because they

were born with perfect characters, but because they are people whose sins were removed by believing in the Lord's righteousness. They know there is nothing in themselves to boast of. They believe that what saved them was not the number of their prayers of repentance or the amount of their service, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord completed. Therefore their good deeds are not a transaction to obtain salvation but fruit that comes from thankfulness for the grace already received.

The people the Lord calls His brothers

The Lord said to the righteous on His right that when He was hungry they gave Him food, when He was thirsty they gave Him drink, when He was a stranger they took Him in, when He was naked they clothed Him, and when He was sick and in prison they looked after Him. The righteous, not knowing when they had done so to the Lord, ask Him in return. Then the Lord says that what they did to one of the least of His brethren, they did to Him.

The Lord's brothers are the believers who have become children of God by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They did not become the Lord's brothers because their names are high in the world or their abilities great. However lacking in the flesh and insignificant in society one may look, the person who believes the same gospel and has received the remission of sins is family of God. The Lord does not despise them but regards them as members of His own body. So He receives even the love shown to one smallest believer as done to Himself.

This word includes the life of serving the Church of God and the workers of the gospel. Helping the servants who preach the

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gospel to eat and be clothed and continue their ministry, praying and taking part with material things so that the word may be preached to souls far away, warmly receiving an unfamiliar believer, visiting and caring for a sick or discouraged brother or sister—all these are done to the Lord. The world may think little of such service, but the Lord forgets none of it.

The work of sharing the food of life with souls

The food a person needs is not only the food of the body. The soul dying in sin needs the food of the gospel that gives the remission of sins. The person who fears the judgment because of the sin in his heart, the person who has found no peace despite all kinds of religious toil, the person held by false teachings who does not know the way of salvation—these are the spiritually hungry and thirsty. To preach to them the gospel that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross is to share the bread and water of life.

When we preach the gospel, some may not believe at once. Some misunderstand or refuse, and some look humanly hopeless. But God counts every soul precious. When one person receives the word and receives the remission of sins, he becomes God's people and our brother or sister. Here is why preaching the gospel to a person becomes, in the end, a work done to the Lord who made that person and desires to save him.

Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not mere religious promotion. It is delivering the good news that Jesus already took on the sins of all people with His baptism and was judged on the Cross, so that the hearer believes that gospel and obtains the remission of sins and eternal life. It is taking part in the purpose for which God created mankind and sent His only

begotten Son, and leading souls who lived as sinners, deceived by the devil, into the kingdom of God. Therefore translating, publishing, and preaching the gospel, sending and supporting evangelists, and calmly explaining the word to those near us are the services the Lord delights in most.

We must not turn away from visible needs either

Emphasizing the spiritual meaning does not mean we may treat lightly the care of those who are actually hungry and sick. The Lord made both soul and body, and during His earthly ministry He fed the hungry crowds and had compassion on the sick. If a brother or sister beside us suffers hardship of livelihood, we must share food and clothing; when they are sick we must visit and comfort them; and we must warmly receive the lonely stranger. Such love is not preaching the gospel with words only but actually showing the heart the gospel has borne.

In particular, we must not turn away from workers and believers who meet hardship while serving the gospel. If someone faces his family's opposition because of the gospel, suffers financial loss, or lies in sickness or loneliness, the church must bear the burden together. One phone call, one warm meal, a little material help, a prayer offered at someone's side—these too become great strength to that person. The Lord does not look only at whether we can do great things; He looks at what heart we carry toward the least of the brothers.

Serving believers is not currying favor with people. If we help in order to be recognized or expect a return, we are soon disappointed. But if we serve looking to the Lord who is in that brother, we can give thanks regardless of people's response. Taking on the small tasks of the church—cleaning, preparing

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meals, helping the preaching of the word, praying behind the scenes—all this toil is offered to the Lord. When we believe this, our ordinary daily lives change into lives for the kingdom of God.

Why the righteous did not remember their own good deeds

The righteous on the right, even while hearing the Lord's praise, ask when they ever did such things. They had not written their good deeds in a ledger and demanded a reward. Because they had been saved freely through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, they counted it only natural to share the love they had received. The Holy Spirit gave their hearts the will to love souls, and they served the gospel naturally, together with the church. So they did not think they had done anything great for the Lord.

In true service there is this humility. Even if a soul is saved through our preaching, it is Jesus who washed away that person's sins. Even if we gave material things, it is God who gave us those things, and the Lord who granted the health and time to work. We have only done the Lord's work with what we received from the Lord. And yet the Lord remembers everything done to the least, and acknowledges it as done to Himself. This is God's reward added upon grace.

The person with this faith does not look only for conspicuous places. However unnoticed a task may be, if it benefits the gospel he can take it up with joy. Even without great ability he can unite with the church in one heart, and he finds what he can do within his own circumstances. The Lord does not use only the person with five talents; He delights in the person who offers even a little strength in faith. What matters in service is not scale but the faith that has become one with the Lord's heart.

The delusion of those standing on the left

Those standing on the left also ask the Lord when they ever failed to serve Him. They may have thought that if the Lord had appeared before their eyes, they would of course have waited on Him. But they turned away from the Lord's brothers. They despised the church that preaches the true gospel, did not look after the needs of the small believers, and sought only their own religious honor and profit. The Lord passes the verdict that what they did not do to one of the least, they did not do to Him.

A person can deceive himself into thinking he has served the Lord with religious office and activity. However great a chapel someone builds and however much relief work he does, if sin remains in his heart as it is and he rejects the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he is a person who has nothing to do with the Lord's righteousness. And if someone claims with his lips to know the gospel while hating the church and the brothers and hindering the preaching of the gospel, he must look back at the substance of that faith. For true faith makes us love the souls and the church the Lord loves.

The problem of the people on the left does not lie merely in having missed a few good deeds. They did not believe the salvation the Lord gave, and as a result they could not serve the Lord's brothers with the heart of the Spirit. Not knowing the gospel of life, they had no food to share with hungry souls, and they could not escape self-centered lives. The lack of deeds revealed the lack of faith. At the last judgment the Lord judges exactly, not by the outward appearance, but by a person's faith and the fruit that faith has borne.

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We must throw away the misunderstanding that we are saved by works

If, hearing this word, we conclude that we must do many good deeds to stand on the right, we miss the heart of the gospel. It is not that a sinner piles up good deeds and becomes righteous; it is that the person who has become righteous by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does good works following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. A tree does not become a living tree by bearing fruit; it bears fruit because it is alive. If salvation is the root, service is the fruit that comes from that root.

The ground on which we inherit the kingdom of God is the righteousness of Jesus. Because Jesus took over all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and received the punishment on the Cross, the person who believes this fact becomes a righteous person without sin. The Holy Spirit dwells in the person who has this faith and leads him to live according to God's will. Therefore in the service of the saved there is thanksgiving rather than compulsion, and confession of the Lord's grace rather than self-boasting.

Of course, even the born again are weak in the flesh; there are times when they are selfish and fail to care enough for their brothers. But the Holy Spirit makes them realize their fault through the word and unites them with the church again. The righteous person does not become a sinner again because of his shortcomings; he receives rebuke within the gospel, turns, and follows the Lord's will. God does not demand perfect flesh; He wants us to live led by the Holy Spirit, with hearts that believe the gospel.

Living for the gospel is our proper duty

There is a purpose in God's leaving us in this world. It is so that even one more soul may hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins. We live at our jobs and in our homes, but the central purpose of life must be set on the gospel. We must preach the gospel to family and neighbors, help the work of sharing the word, look after the needs of the church, and join our strength so that the evangelists of the gospel can keep working. This is the life that serves the Lord's brothers and serves the Lord Himself.

Not everyone can work in the same way. One preaches the word up front, another translates or edits, another helps with material things, another prepares meals and lodging. Another cares for sick believers and holds up discouraged souls. Our roles differ, but the purpose is the same: that sinners hear the gospel and become righteous, and that saved believers grow in faith within the church. The Lord receives all this toil as done to Himself.

Serving the gospel, there are times when we are weary and worn. The fruit may look small compared with the toil, or we may feel that no one recognizes us. But the Lord's verdict differs from the world's appraisal. Even small service forgotten by people, the Lord remembers, and on the last day He acknowledges it openly. We must not look only at the results before our eyes but look toward the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. The person who believes the eternal kingdom is real endures the brief hardship and takes heart again.

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The people who look toward the prepared kingdom

For the righteous on the right there is a prepared kingdom, and for the people on the left there is prepared everlasting fire. There is no middle ground. Life in this world is short, but the outcome that follows is eternal. The righteous enter eternal life and enjoy unfading joy with God, and sinners enter everlasting punishment. Therefore the person who still has sin in his heart must not rely on his own good deeds but believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. While the door of salvation stands open, he must receive the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

The person who has already received the remission of sins must know how blessed he is. We are not people piling up points with good deeds in fear of the judgment; we are children of God who will inherit the prepared kingdom. With this assurance we serve the Lord's church and brothers all the more gladly. Though the world shakes and life grows hard, our eternal dwelling is prepared in the Lord.

Now we must remember that our attitude toward the least of the brothers is our attitude toward the Lord. We must honor those who preach the gospel, never despise weak believers, and share the word of life with hungry souls. We must reach out a hand to those in actual hardship and be faithful even in the small tasks of the church. Such a life is not merit for obtaining salvation but the fruit of thanksgiving that returns the love received from the Lord.

On the last day the Lord will bring to light all our hidden faith and toil. Then we will stand on the right, not as people who hold up their own deeds, but as the righteous who were saved through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have lived following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must love the

souls and the brothers the Lord has entrusted to us, unite with the church and preach the gospel to the whole world, and live looking toward the kingdom prepared from the foundation of the world. Holding in our hearts the word that what was done to one of the least was done to the Lord, we must take up in faith the small service set before us today. ✉

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CHAPTER

26

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Matthew Chapter 26

< Matthew 26:1-75 >

“Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, ‘You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.’ Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, ‘Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.’ And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.’ But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, ‘Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.’ Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, ‘What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?’ And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to

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Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?' And He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, 'My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'''' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, 'Lord, is it I?' He answered and said, 'He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.' Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, 'Rabbi, is it I?' He said to him, 'You have said it.' And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives. Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.' Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the

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rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And so said all the disciples. Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.' And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.' And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.' And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.' Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on

Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?' In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled. And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, 'This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'' And the high priest arose and said to Him, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He

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has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.' Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?' Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.' But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying.' And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.' But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!' And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.' Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly."

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 26 is the chapter in which the suffering of Jesus on the Cross begins in earnest. The religious leaders plot to kill Jesus, Judas Iscariot sells Him, and the other disciples pledge their loyalty but all run away at the decisive moment. Yet Jesus, though He already knew everything that was going to happen, did not avoid it; He obeyed the Father's will in order to fulfill the Scriptures and save mankind.

In this chapter, the devotion of the woman who poured the

fragrant oil and the betrayal of Judas, the obedience of Jesus and the weakness of the disciples, and the true testimony of Jesus and the accusations of the false witnesses stand in sharp contrast.

1. Jesus foretells His death on the Cross once again (verses 1–2)

After Jesus finished speaking on the Mount of Olives about the last days, He told His disciples that after two days it would be the Passover and that He would be handed over to be crucified.

The death of Jesus was not an unfortunate accident that happened suddenly. Jesus knew exactly what would happen to Him. There was the plot of the Jewish leaders and the betrayal of Judas, but above all of that, Jesus was walking the way of the Cross of His own accord, according to God's plan of salvation.

The Passover is the feast commemorating the event in which the people of Israel were saved from the judgment of death by the blood of the lamb and came out of Egypt. That Jesus died precisely on this Passover shows that He is the true Passover sacrifice who saves people from sin and judgment.

2. The religious leaders plot to kill Jesus (verses 3–5)

The chief priests and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest Caiaphas and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they intended to put the matter off, since an uproar could break out among the people during the feast.

The religious leaders, who outwardly claimed to serve God, were in fact plotting to kill the Son whom God had sent. They did not try to discern the truth but sought to protect their own

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authority and vested interests. This shows that having a high religious position does not necessarily mean knowing the will of God.

They thought they were seizing Jesus according to their own plan, but in reality events unfolded according to the time Jesus had spoken of and according to the will of God.

3. A woman pours fragrant oil on Jesus' head (verses 6–13)

When Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came with an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil and poured it on Jesus' head. The disciples criticized the woman's act as a waste, saying it could have been sold for a high price and given to the poor.

But Jesus protected the woman, saying, *"Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me."* The woman gave to Jesus without reserve the precious thing she had. People saw her act as an inefficient waste, but Jesus received it as a beautiful devotion that prepared for His burial.

The words *"You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always"* mean that human charity must not be placed on the same level as serving the gospel. Opportunities to help the poor of the world would continue, but the opportunity to prepare for the burial of Jesus, who stood before the Cross, and to serve the gospel came only at that time. Believers must first give what they have for the people of God and for the preaching of the gospel.

Jesus said that wherever the gospel is preached in the whole world, what the woman had done would also be told as a memorial to her. Indeed, even today the devotion of this woman is being passed down together with the Gospels.

4. Judas Iscariot agrees to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver (verses 14–16)

Unlike the woman who poured the fragrant oil and gave to Jesus the precious thing she had, Judas Iscariot tried to use Jesus to get money. He went to the chief priests and asked how much they would give him if he handed Jesus over to them, and they gave him thirty pieces of silver.

The woman knew the worth of Jesus and offered what was precious to her, but Judas put a price on Jesus and sold Him. The woman seemed to be wasting in people's eyes, yet she came to be remembered forever; Judas seemed to gain an immediate profit, yet he entered the path of a betrayer.

Judas was one of the twelve disciples. The outward condition of having been close to Jesus did not guarantee him true faith. Going about with Jesus and believing in and following Jesus from the heart are two different matters.

5. The disciples prepare the Passover meal (verses 17–19)

On the first day of the Feast of Unleavened Bread, the disciples asked Jesus where they should prepare the Passover meal. Jesus had them go to a certain man in the city and tell him, *"My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples."*

The disciples obeyed just as Jesus had directed them and prepared the Passover. *"My time,"* of which Jesus spoke, refers to the time when He would accomplish the work of salvation through the Cross. Even knowing that His death was near, Jesus prepared the last meal with His disciples.

6. Jesus speaks of the betrayer (verses 20–25)

During the meal, Jesus said that one of the twelve disciples would betray Him. The disciples were sorrowful, and each of

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them asked, *"Lord, is it I?"*

Jesus said that the one who dipped his hand in the dish with Him, someone close to Him, would betray Him. This meant that it was not an enemy from outside but a disciple who sat at the table with Jesus who would betray Him. Judas was already planning his betrayal, yet he sat among the other disciples as if nothing were happening.

Jesus said that He would die just as it is written of Him in the Scriptures, and yet He warned that woe would come to the man who betrayed Him. The fact that the death of Jesus takes place within God's plan does not remove Judas's responsibility for his betrayal. The sovereignty of God and the responsibility of man appear together.

When Judas asked, *"Rabbi, is it I?"* Jesus answered, *"You have said it."* Jesus already knew Judas's heart and his scheme.

7. Jesus institutes the Lord's Supper (verses 26–30)

Jesus took bread, and after blessing it He broke it and gave it to the disciples, saying, *"Take, eat; this is My body."* Then He gave them the cup, saying, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*

The bread refers to the body of Jesus, which took on all the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and the cup represents the blood He shed for the remission of sins on the Cross while bearing those sins. The death of Jesus was not a mere martyrdom but a substitutionary death in which He received the judgment of the sins He had taken on at the Jordan River. With His own body and blood, Jesus established a new covenant between God and man.

The Lord's Supper is not a rite that mystically worships the bread and the cup themselves; it is believing in and commemorating the grace of Jesus, who gave His body and

blood to save sinners.

Jesus spoke of the day when He would drink it new with His disciples in His Father's kingdom. It is a promise showing that the death on the Cross is not the end, but that the resurrection and the completion of the kingdom of God are waiting. When the meal was over, Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn and headed for the Mount of Olives.

8. Jesus foretells the disciples' desertion and Peter's denial (verses 31–35)

Jesus said that all the disciples would forsake Him that night. The word of the prophet, that when the shepherd is struck the sheep of the flock will be scattered, was going to be fulfilled.

But Jesus did not speak only of the disciples' failure. He said, *"After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."* Though He knew the disciples would fall, He promised to meet them again after the resurrection. Even within the declaration of judgment there was a promise of restoration.

Peter declared that even if all the other disciples forsook Jesus, he himself would never forsake Him. But Jesus said that before the rooster crowed, Peter would deny Him three times.

This does not mean that Peter's heart was false from the beginning. He sincerely thought he could die with Jesus. But he did not know his own weakness. Fervent zeal and loud claims alone cannot overcome temptation, and man must rely on God's help rather than on his own resolve.

9. Jesus prays in agony in Gethsemane (verses 36–46)

Jesus went with His disciples to Gethsemane. Taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee farther with Him, Jesus said, *"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death."*

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Facing the Cross, Jesus actually agonized and sorrowed. This shows that Jesus did not meet death like a being who feels no pain, but as a true man bore in full the weight of suffering and death.

Jesus fell on His face to the ground and prayed, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me."* Here the cup refers to the suffering of the Cross and the judgment of sin that Jesus had to receive. But Jesus immediately prayed, *"Not as I will, but as You will."*

The obedience of Jesus was not possible because He felt no pain. Though He clearly knew that pain, He put the Father's will before His own. Jesus prayed three times with the same intent and accepted the way of the Cross.

Meanwhile the disciples, being tired, fell asleep. Only a little while earlier they had declared they would die with Jesus, but they could not stay awake with Him even for one hour. Jesus said, *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* Because man cannot overcome spiritual temptation with his good will alone, he must stay awake and pray.

When Jesus finished praying, He did not flee but said, *"Rise, let us be going."* Jesus accepted the Father's will and went out boldly toward those who were coming to seize Him.

10. Judas betrays Jesus with a kiss (verses 47–50)

While Jesus was still speaking, Judas Iscariot appeared, leading a great multitude armed with swords and clubs. Judas had arranged a signal in advance: the man he kissed was Jesus, so they should seize him.

A kiss was originally an act expressing respect and affection, but Judas used it as the signal of betrayal. Outwardly he greeted Jesus, saying, *"Greetings, Rabbi!"* but in his heart

he was handing Jesus over into the hands of His enemies. Even an act that looks devout and affectionate can become a tool of hypocrisy if there is no truth in the heart.

Jesus said to Judas, *"Friend, why have you come?"* Jesus knew what Judas was about to do, but He did not resist with violence.

11. Jesus does not allow the sword to be used (verses 51–56)

One of those who were with Jesus drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. The Gospel of John reveals that this man was Peter.

But Jesus told him to put his sword back in its place, saying, *"All who take the sword will perish by the sword."* The salvation of God is not accomplished by human violence. Jesus could have asked the Father and mobilized more than twelve legions of angels, but He did not do so.

Jesus was not seized because He lacked power. He gave Himself up to be seized in order to fulfill the Scriptures and save mankind. Jesus pointed out to the multitude that although He had taught openly in the temple every day, they had now come out armed, as if arresting a robber.

Jesus said that all this had happened so that the writings of the prophets might be fulfilled. Then all the disciples forsook Jesus and fled. The gap between the words of the disciples, who had confidently promised loyalty, and their actual conduct was exposed.

12. Jesus is interrogated before the high priest (verses 57–63a)

Jesus, having been seized, was led away to the house of Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. Peter followed Jesus at a distance and entered the

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courtyard of the high priest.

The council did not try to investigate the facts fairly. Having first reached the conclusion that Jesus must die, they sought false evidence to use for a death sentence. Many false witnesses came forward, but their testimony did not properly hold together.

At last two men came forward and accused Jesus, saying that He had said He was able to destroy the temple of God and build it in three days. This was a distortion of Jesus' words. Jesus did not defend Himself against their false testimony but kept silent.

The silence of Jesus did not mean that He had nothing to say because He was guilty. In a false trial whose conclusion had already been fixed, He did not make excuses to save Himself, but accepted the suffering according to the Father's will.

13. Jesus reveals that He is the Christ, the Son of God (verses 63–68)

The high priest put Jesus under oath by the living God and demanded, *"Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"*

Jesus answered, *"It is as you said,"* and declared that hereafter they would see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power and coming on the clouds of heaven. Jesus revealed that He is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Judge who will come again in power and glory.

For the moment Jesus stood before them like a defendant, but one day they will stand before the judgment seat of Jesus. Judging only by His present appearance, Jesus looked like a captured, powerless man, but in reality He is the Christ who possesses the power of God.

The high priest branded Jesus' words as blasphemy, and the

council judged Jesus deserving of death. They spat in His face, struck Him with their fists and slapped Him with their palms, and mocked Him. But the very One they mocked was truly the Christ, the Son of God.

14. Peter denies Jesus three times (verses 69–75)

While Jesus was testifying before the council without hiding His identity, Peter was out in the courtyard denying his relationship with Jesus.

When a servant girl said that Peter had been with Jesus of Galilee, he denied it before them all. When another servant girl pointed him out again, this time he swore an oath that he did not know Jesus. A little later, when the people said that his accent clearly showed he was a disciple of Jesus, Peter cursed and swore that he did not know Him.

At that moment a rooster crowed. Peter remembered the word of Jesus, that before the rooster crowed he would deny Him three times, and he went outside and wept bitterly.

Peter's tears were the tears of a man who had realized his own weakness. He loved Jesus, but he had relied on his self-confidence and collapsed before fear. Yet Peter's failure was not his end. He would later meet the risen Jesus, be restored, and become a man who relies not on his own strength but on the grace of the Lord.

15. The whole message Matthew chapter 26 shows

In Matthew chapter 26, different attitudes toward Jesus appear. A woman poured out costly fragrant oil without reserve, while Judas sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. The disciples pledged their loyalty but all fled, and Peter denied Jesus three times. The religious leaders gathered false evidence to put Jesus to death.

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But Jesus was not shaken. Knowing He would be betrayed, He still shared the table with His disciples and spoke of giving His body and blood. In Gethsemane He obeyed the Father's will even in extreme anguish, and when He was arrested He did not resist with violence. Even while receiving a false trial, He did not hide the fact that He is the Christ, the Son of God.

The people all exposed their weakness and sin, but Jesus fulfilled the will of God to the end. Matthew chapter 26 shows that salvation does not come from man's loyalty or willpower, but is accomplished by the faithful obedience and sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who gave His own body and blood for sinners.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 26 is the passage showing how, amid the weakness of those who betray, flee, and deny, Jesus gave His own body and blood for the remission of sins and, obeying the Father's will, walked the way of the Cross.

2) Matthew Chapter 26 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 26 shows the process in which Jesus, facing the Cross, gives His own body and blood. Although the baptism of Jesus is not directly recorded in this chapter, to understand fully the meaning of Jesus' words, *"This is My body"* and *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins,"* we must look back as far as the baptism He received from John in Matthew chapter 3.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Jesus took the sins of mankind onto His own body, and bearing those sins, He was crucified, shed His blood, and died. And by rising from the dead, He saved us from sin,

judgment, and death. The Holy Spirit testifies of this truth of salvation and dwells in those who have received the remission of sins by believing this gospel with the heart. This is the center of understanding Matthew chapter 26 in the dimension of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. Jesus knew the time when He would be crucified (verses 1–2)

Jesus told His disciples that after two days it would be the Passover and that He would be handed over to be crucified. The death of Jesus was not an unforeseen political incident or a failure. Jesus knew why He had come into the world, and when and what kind of death He would meet.

The reason Jesus had to be crucified is, first of all, that He had taken the sins of mankind onto His own body. Jesus is the Son of God, originally without sin. But when He was baptized by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness."* Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus received all the sins of everyone in the world passed on to His own body, and He went to the Cross to pay the price of those sins.

Therefore, the baptism of Jesus and the Cross can never be separated. The baptism is the event in which He took on the sins of mankind, and the Cross is the event in which He received the judgment of the sins He had taken on. Jesus knew all these things in advance, and yet He walked the way of the Cross to save us.

2. The religious leaders tried to kill Jesus, but God's plan of salvation was fulfilled (verses 3–5)

The chief priests and the elders assembled at the palace of Caiaphas and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him.

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They claimed to serve God, yet they failed to recognize the Son whom God had sent. It becomes evident that knowing the Bible and holding a religious position cannot in themselves save anyone.

It is the same with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The fact that a person has attended church for a long time or has much biblical knowledge does not remove that person's sins. One must believe with the heart the gospel that Jesus came in the flesh of a man, took on our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again.

The religious leaders thought they were killing Jesus by their own scheme, but Jesus voluntarily gave up His life according to the will of God. Even the wicked schemes of men could not bring down God's good plan of salvation.

3. The woman who poured the fragrant oil prepared for Jesus' death (verses 6–13)

A woman poured very costly fragrant oil on Jesus' head. The disciples regarded it as a waste, but Jesus said, *"For she has done a good work for Me,"* and accepted the woman's act as preparing for His burial.

It is not that this woman's act brought her the remission of sins. She was not saved because she offered costly fragrant oil; rather, her heart that treasured and believed in Jesus was expressed in her act. True devotion is not a price paid to obtain salvation but the fruit of gratitude for grace already received.

Jesus said that the act of the woman who prepared for His death and burial would be told together with the gospel. The gospel is the news that Jesus took on our sins, died, and rose again. This woman did not spare what was precious to her for the sake of that work of salvation.

It is the same with those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They do not try to complete their salvation with their own service. Because Jesus has already completed salvation, they gratefully use their time, possessions, and talents for the preaching of the gospel.

4. Judas Iscariot was beside Jesus, but he did not receive the gospel into his heart (verses 14–16)

Judas Iscariot was one of the twelve disciples, yet he agreed to sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. He had heard the words of Jesus, seen His miracles, and lived together with the other disciples. But he did not believe in Jesus as his Savior and receive Him into his heart.

This shows that being inside the church and being born again are two different things. A person can attend worship, take part in the Lord's Supper, and hear words about the gospel, while in his heart loving the world's profit and his own desires more.

To Judas, Jesus was not the Savior who takes on all his sins and gives up His life, but a means of gaining money and satisfying his desires. Believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not using Jesus as a means of religious help or worldly blessings. It is receiving into one's heart the truth that Jesus is the Savior who actually took on my sins and received the judgment in my place.

5. The Passover was a feast that showed Jesus' salvation in advance (verses 17–19)

The Passover is the feast commemorating how the people of Israel escaped the judgment of death by the blood of the lamb and were released from slavery in Egypt. It was precisely

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on this Passover that Jesus gave His own body and blood.

The sacrifices of the Old Testament showed in advance the salvation of Jesus Christ who was to come. The sinner passed his sins onto the sacrificial offering, and that offering shed its blood and died in the sinner's place. The substance of this sacrificial system is Jesus. Jesus received the sins of sinners onto His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing those sins, He was crucified and shed His blood.

When Jesus said to His disciples, *"My time is at hand,"* it meant that the time had now come for the Lamb of God, who had taken on the sins of mankind, to pay the price of those sins.

6. Judas sat at the same table, yet he sold Jesus (verses 20–25)

While Jesus was eating, He said that one of His disciples would betray Him. Judas, though he already had a plan to hand Jesus over, was sitting at the table with the other disciples.

The outward act of sitting at the same table and eating the same bread does not guarantee salvation. Nor does the act of eating the bread and drinking the cup of the Lord's Supper itself wash away a person's sins. One must believe with the heart in the saving work of Jesus to which the bread and the cup point.

Judas did not call Jesus *"Lord"*; he called Him *"Rabbi."* He treated Jesus as a teacher, but he did not receive Him as God and the Savior who remits his sins. Knowing the gospel is not a matter of having knowledge about Jesus. It is receiving as one's own salvation the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that Jesus carried out for me.

7. The words *"this is My body"* contain the salvation Jesus accomplished with His body (verse 26)

Jesus broke the bread and gave it to His disciples, saying, *"Take, eat; this is My body."* These words mean that Jesus gives His body for us.

Jesus did not come as a spirit only; He came clothed in the actual flesh of a man. Because He came in the flesh, He could go down into the Jordan River and take on our sins through the baptism He received from John. And He gave up on the Cross the very body that had taken on those sins.

Therefore, when we think of the body of Jesus, it is not enough to think only of the body nailed to the Cross. That body was first the body that had taken on the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. If Jesus had not taken on sins through His baptism, His death on the Cross could not have been the judgment borne in place of our sins.

When Jesus said, *"Take, eat,"* it does not stop at the ceremonial meaning of simply eating bread with the mouth. It means to receive into the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished with His body. That is, it is accepting by faith the fact that Jesus took on all my sins with His own body.

8. *"My blood of the new covenant"* means that He received the judgment of sin in our place (verses 27–28)

Jesus gave them the cup, saying, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."*

Because the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had taken on sins, had to shed His blood and die on the Cross. Jesus did not shed His blood because of His own sins. Jesus originally had no sin at all. But because He had borne all our sins on His own

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body through the baptism He received from John, He received the curse and the punishment in our place.

The words “the blood of the covenant” mean the promise God established to remit the sins of those who believe, through the sacrifice of Jesus. God did not promise to remit sins on the basis of how many tears, repentances, and good deeds we offer. He promised to give the remission of sins and eternal life to those who believe the fact that Jesus took on sins with His baptism and received the judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not take the blood of the Cross lightly. On the contrary, it makes clear why Jesus had to shed His blood on the Cross. Jesus took on our sins by receiving baptism at the Jordan River, and precisely because of those sins He was judged on the Cross. If there were only the baptism and no Cross, the judgment of sin would not have been settled; and if we speak only of the Cross without knowing how sins were passed on to Jesus, His death and my sins are not fully connected.

The body and the blood of Jesus are not two separate salvations. They are one complete salvation, in which Jesus took on sins with His body and gave that body over to the Cross to shed His blood.

9. The Lord’s Supper is believing in and commemorating the salvation already accomplished (verses 26–28)

The bread we eat and the cup we drink at the Lord’s Supper do not themselves remove sin. The Lord’s Supper is the ceremony in which we remember and believe what Jesus did in giving His own body and blood to save us.

When we receive the bread, we must think of how Jesus came in the flesh and took on our sins with the baptism He

received from John the Baptist. When we receive the cup, we must believe that Jesus bore those sins and received the judgment on the Cross, shedding the blood of the covenant. And we must give thanks that He rose from the dead and gave us new life.

Taking part in the Lord's Supper frequently does not automatically make a person born again. Rather, the person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart remembers again, through the Lord's Supper, what sacrifice the Lord paid for him, and gives thanks.

10. Jesus promised those who are saved the life of the eternal kingdom of God (verses 29–30)

Jesus said that He would not drink of the fruit of the vine until the day when He drinks it new with His disciples in His Father's kingdom. This means that the death of Jesus is not the end.

Jesus would soon die on the Cross, but He would rise again and be with those who believe, forever in the kingdom of God. The remission of sins does not end with simply removing the guilt of the past. It leads to a new life lived with God and to the life of the eternal kingdom of God.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe the fact that Jesus removed their sins with His baptism and the Cross and gave them new life through His resurrection. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the one who believes this truth and testifies that he has become a child of God.

11. Peter's pledge shows that no one can follow the Lord with human resolve alone (verses 31–35)

Peter declared that even if all the other disciples forsook

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Jesus, he would never forsake Him. But Jesus said that Peter would deny Him three times that very night.

Peter loved Jesus, but he trusted too much in his own will and loyalty. Even after receiving the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a person's flesh does not suddenly become perfect. Even a believer can be afraid, can make mistakes, and can stumble while chasing his own interests.

To say that we have received the remission of sins and become righteous does not mean that the flesh has become a perfect being that never sins again. It means that because Jesus, who received all of that person's sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, was judged for those sins on the Cross, the sins that were in the believer's heart have actually disappeared and he has become a righteous person without sin.

Therefore, the saved do not boast of their own will and godliness. They know how weak they are, and they rely on the salvation Jesus accomplished and on the help of the Holy Spirit.

12. Jesus promised the resurrection and restoration even before the disciples' failure (verse 32)

After saying that all the disciples would forsake Him, Jesus immediately said, *"After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."*

Even before they failed, the disciples had already received the promise of meeting the risen Jesus again. The Lord knew their weakness, yet He did not cast them away. This shows that salvation does not depend on man's perfect loyalty but on the salvation Jesus has completed.

The resurrection of Jesus is an indispensable part of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus took on our sins

through His baptism, paid the full price of those sins on the Cross, and by rising from the dead He overcame sin and death. The resurrection is the proof that Jesus paid the wages of sin in full, and the declaration that new life and eternal life have been given to those who believe.

13. The cup of Gethsemane was the judgment of sin Jesus had to receive (verses 36–46)

In Gethsemane Jesus said, *"My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death,"* and prayed with His face to the ground. He prayed, *"If it is possible, let this cup pass from Me,"* but in the end He prayed, *"Not as I will, but as You will."*

The cup Jesus had to drink was the suffering and death of the Cross, the cup of judgment for the sins of mankind. Jesus is God, but at the same time He came clothed in the flesh of a man, and so He actually felt the pain of the Cross. It was not because the pain meant nothing to Him that He obeyed. Though He clearly knew that unbearable suffering, He followed the Father's will in order to save us.

The reason Jesus could not avoid this cup is that He had already taken on our sins at the Jordan River. The sacrificial offering that had taken on sins had to receive the judgment of those sins. Because God is righteous, He cannot pass over sin without a price. So God the Father judged on the Cross the sins of mankind that His Son Jesus had taken on.

Jesus did not drink the cup because of His own sins. Because the sinless One had taken on our sins, He drank in our place the cup of judgment that we should have drunk. Jesus bore with His own body the punishment and the curse that we should have received in hell.

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14. The words *"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak"* are needed by believers as well (verses 40–46)

While Jesus was praying in anguish, the disciples fell asleep. The very people who had said only a little while earlier that they would die with Jesus could not stay awake even for one hour.

In the believer's heart there is a desire to follow the Lord and serve the gospel, but the flesh is still weak. That is why Jesus said, *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."* The person who has received the remission of sins does not take the weakness of the flesh lightly on the ground that he is saved. Rather, he acknowledges his shortcomings and seeks the help of the Holy Spirit.

That the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart does not mean that a person, like a machine, no longer makes mistakes. The Holy Spirit brings the word to mind, turns us back from wrong paths, and leads us to rely on the gospel Jesus accomplished. Believers must live relying not on their own resolve but on the word and the Holy Spirit.

15. Jesus was not seized because He was powerless; He gave Himself up (verses 47–56)

Judas came leading a multitude and handed Jesus over with a kiss. When Peter swung his sword, Jesus said, *"Put your sword in its place."* Jesus could have asked the Father to send more than twelve legions of angels, but He did not do so.

Jesus was not taken away because He lacked power. He gave Himself up because He had to be judged on the Cross for our sins, which He had taken on with His baptism. For us to be saved and receive eternal life, Jesus had to die, and so He gave Himself over.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel spread

by the sword or by worldly power. People cannot be made to believe by being forcibly subdued or ruled by fear. Just as Jesus saved sinners with the word and with His sacrifice, the gospel too must be spread by the word of truth, by love, and by service.

The disciples all forsook Jesus and fled, but Jesus remained alone and walked the way of salvation to the end. Man's loyalty crumbled, but the faithfulness of Jesus was unshaken.

16. Jesus was without sin, yet He was interrogated in the place of sinners (verses 57–68)

The chief priests and the council sought false evidence to put Jesus to death. But even though many false witnesses came forward, they could not find a legitimate charge. It is because Jesus is the One who originally has no sin.

Yet Jesus, who was without sin, was tried in the place of sinners and suffered spitting, punches, and mockery. This is the image of Him standing in our place. We were the ones who should have been accused and judged before God, but Jesus bore our sins on His own body and stood in that place.

Jesus revealed, in answer to the high priest's question, that He is the Christ, the Son of God. He said that although He was now being interrogated and mocked by men, He would one day sit at the right hand of the Power and come on the clouds as the Judge.

Jesus is not merely a righteous man who died unjustly. He is the Son of God who came in the flesh of a man, and the Christ who saved sinners through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. People condemned Jesus as deserving of death, but through that death the condemnation of those who believe was brought to an end.

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17. Peter's denial shows that salvation does not depend on human loyalty (verses 69–75)

Peter denied three times that he knew Jesus. At first he simply denied it, but later he denied Jesus even with oaths and curses. At that moment the rooster crowed, and Peter remembered the word of Jesus and went outside and wept bitterly.

It was not Peter's tears that washed away his sin. The tears he shed could never take the place of the baptism and the Cross of Jesus. Even Peter's sins had already been taken on by Jesus through the baptism He received from John, and Jesus received the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

Nevertheless, we cannot regard Peter's denial lightly just because he had received the remission of sins. Peter realized his wrong and wept bitterly. The saved do not think it does not matter if they sin. They realize that their conduct has grieved the Lord's heart, turn back, and seek to walk the right path again within the gospel.

Peter fell when he trusted his own loyalty, but afterward he met the risen Jesus and was restored by grace. He did not become an apostle because he was a strong man; he became a preacher of the gospel by the grace of the Lord, who remitted his weaknesses and sins and raised him up again.

18. The whole flow of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Matthew chapter 26 shows

In Matthew chapter 26, Jesus says that He will give His own body and blood. That body is the body that came in the flesh of a man and took on the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. That blood is the blood of the covenant, shed as He was judged on the Cross for our sins, which He had shouldered through the baptism He

received from John.

Jesus did not avoid that cup of judgment in Gethsemane but obeyed the Father's will. He gave Himself up to be seized, not because He was powerless, but to save us. Though without sin, He received condemnation and mockery in the place of sinners, and even after all the disciples had fled, He walked the way of salvation alone to the end.

This salvation is not completed by man's devotion or loyalty. Even the devotion of the woman who poured the fragrant oil was not a price paid to buy salvation but the fruit of gratitude from believing in Jesus. On the other hand, like Judas, a person may stay close to Jesus and sit at the table of the Lord's Supper, yet if he does not believe the gospel with his heart, he cannot be born again. Even one who loves the Lord, like Peter, can fall because of the weakness of the flesh, but salvation depends not on Peter's perfect conduct but on the righteousness Jesus has completed.

To believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is to receive into the heart the fact that Jesus, the Son of God, came in the flesh of a man; that He took on the sins of everyone in the world, including me, with the baptism He received from John the Baptist; that bearing those sins, He shed His blood and was judged on the Cross; and that He rose from the dead and completed salvation.

The one who believes this gospel receives the actual remission of all the sins of his heart and becomes a righteous person without sin—not because his own deeds are perfect, but because Jesus has dealt with sin completely. The Holy Spirit comes into that heart thus made clean, testifies that he has become a child of God, and leads him to live following the word of the Lord without relying on his own weakness.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 26 is the

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passage showing the scene in which Jesus, shouldering all our sins that He had taken on with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, passed through the prayer of Gethsemane and went on to give His body and the blood of the covenant to the Cross, to accomplish the salvation of the remission of sins and eternal life. ✉

Matthew Chapter 26

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

Introductory Words

Matthew chapter 26 is the chapter in which the suffering of Jesus on the Cross begins in earnest. The religious leaders plot to kill Jesus, Judas Iscariot sells Him for thirty pieces of silver, and the other disciples pledge their loyalty but all run away at the decisive moment. Yet Jesus, though He already knew everything that was going to happen, did not avoid that path.

A woman poured an alabaster flask of very precious fragrant oil on Jesus' head. The disciples rebuked it as a waste, but Jesus said that she had done it for His burial, and that wherever the gospel is preached, what this woman had done would also be told. In this devotion was the faith that knew the death and burial of Jesus.

Jesus ate the Passover with His disciples, spoke of the betrayer, and instituted the Lord's Supper, giving them the bread and the cup. He said that the bread was His body and the cup was the blood of the covenant, shed for many for the remission of sins. Jesus is the true Passover Lamb who saves

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His people from their sins.

In Gethsemane Jesus was deeply distressed and sorrowful, and He prayed that if it were possible, this cup might pass from Him. But He soon entrusted Himself wholly to the Father's will, praying, *"Not as I will, but as You will."* This was not a death He was dragged to against His will, but a path He took in voluntary obedience.

Judas came with a multitude and handed Jesus over with a kiss, and Jesus stopped the disciple who tried to use the sword, saying that all this was to fulfill the Scriptures. When He was interrogated with false evidence before the high priest, Jesus revealed that He is the Christ, the Son of God. Peter denied Jesus three times and went outside and wept bitterly.

At the center of all these events is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of all mankind onto His own body, and as the true Passover Lamb bearing those sins, He went on toward the Cross. Now, examining the words of the passage in order, let us look into the process by which the suffering of Jesus began and the meaning of salvation contained in it.

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, was judged on the Cross for the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

"Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, 'You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.' Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery

and kill Him. But they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.'" (Matthew 26:1–5).

Matthew chapter 26 is the chapter in which the suffering of Jesus on the Cross begins in earnest. After Jesus finished all His words on the Mount of Olives about the Second Coming and the final judgment, He once again told His disciples that His death was near.

Jesus said, *"After two days is the Passover."* It is no coincidence that the death of Jesus on the Cross was joined to the Passover. The Passover of the Old Testament was an event that showed in advance how Jesus would save sinners.

When the people of Israel were slaves in Egypt, God said that He would judge all the firstborn of Egypt. But He made the judgment of death pass over every house that slaughtered a lamb without blemish and put its blood on the doorposts and the lintel.

What God looked at was not the good deeds of the people living in that house. He looked at whether the blood of the lamb was on the door. However good a person might be, without the blood he could not escape the judgment; and however lacking a person might be, if he believed the word of God and applied the blood, he was protected.

The Passover lamb represents Jesus Christ, who would die in the place of sinners. Jesus is the sinless Son of God and the unblemished sacrificial offering who would take on the sin of the world and be judged.

But for the blood of the Passover lamb to have meaning, the sinner's sins must first be passed on to the sacrificial offering. In the sacrifices of the Old Testament as well, the sinner laid his hands on the head of the offering to pass his sins onto it, and then the offering shed its blood and died. A death without the transfer of sin cannot be a death in the sinner's place.

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From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus took all the sins of mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. John the Baptist, as the representative of mankind sent by God, baptized Jesus, and by this Jesus fulfilled all righteousness.

Jesus did not receive baptism because He had sin. He received baptism in order to receive all the sins of sinners passed on to His own body and to become the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

The baptism of Jesus and the Cross can never be separated. The baptism is the event in which Jesus took on our sins, and the Cross is the event in which He received the punishment of the sins He had taken on. Because Jesus had received sins passed on to Him, He shed His blood and died in the sinner's place.

Just as the blood of the Passover made the judgment of death pass over, the blood of Jesus on the Cross testifies that all the sins He had taken on were judged. Whoever believes in this baptism, this blood, and this resurrection is saved from the judgment of God.

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."* The Lord was not a helpless victim seized without knowing what would happen to Him. He knew fully who would betray Him and what death He would suffer.

Even so, Jesus did not avoid it. To save us from sin and death, He went that way of His own accord. People sold Jesus and killed Him, but Jesus gave up His life according to God's plan of salvation.

The expression *"to be crucified"* shows that there was a clear purpose in the death of Jesus. He did not merely fall victim to unjust power; He died to receive in our place God's righteous judgment on the sin of the world.

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

Because the wages of sin is death, sin must surely be judged. God is love, but at the same time He is righteous, and so He cannot overlook sin without any price. Therefore Jesus took on our sins and received the punishment of those sins in our place.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus took on all our sins—past, present, and future. And by declaring on the Cross, *"It is finished!"* He brought the judgment of those sins completely to an end, and by rising again He gave eternal life to those who believe.

Therefore, there is no need to add human merit to the sacrifice of Jesus in order to receive the remission of sins. If we try to pay the price of sin again with our own good deeds, fasting, offerings, and repeated prayers of repentance, we are failing to believe fully in the salvation Jesus has completed.

What man must do is believe with the heart the fact that Jesus took on all sins with the water and was judged for them with His blood. To the one who has received the remission of sins by this faith, God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift.

In verse 3, the chief priests and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of Caiaphas the high priest. These were the religious leaders who knew the Scriptures, the Law, and the sacrificial system better than anyone.

They were the ones who should have taught the people the meaning of the Passover and presided over the sacrifices. Yet when Jesus, the substance of the Passover lamb, came before them, they did not recognize Him but sought instead to kill Him.

This shows that religious knowledge and office cannot automatically save anyone. Even a person who knows the Bible well and holds a high office can stand against Jesus if he does not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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Those who held the office of high priest gathered to kill Jesus, the true High Priest. People who claimed to serve God tried to do away with the Son of God. This is the dreadful contradiction shown by a religion that has lost the life of the gospel.

They did not attempt any legitimate investigation of whether Jesus had taught falsehood. They plotted *"to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him."* They had already reached the conclusion of killing Him and only looked for a way to achieve that goal.

The person who loves the truth of God examines before the word whether his own thinking is wrong. But the person who loves his own power and profit, when the truth exposes his fault, tries to get rid of the truth rather than receive it.

That Jesus was respected by the people was a threat to the religious leaders. His words exposed their hypocrisy and greed and shook the religious system built around possessions and honor.

They feared the people's reaction more than they feared God. They did not ask whether killing Jesus was right before God; they only worried *"lest there be an uproar among the people."* They were anxious, not about the sin itself, but about the disadvantage that sin might bring upon them.

They said, *"Not during the feast."* Since a riot could break out during the Passover season when so many people gathered, they meant to kill Jesus at another time. But God's plan of salvation was fulfilled ahead of men's plans.

The religious leaders tried to avoid the Passover, but Jesus had to die as the true Lamb of the Passover. Men tried to set a time convenient for themselves, but Jesus accomplished the salvation of the Cross at the time God had appointed.

This does not mean that the sins of wicked people are

justified. Those who betrayed Jesus and killed Him unlawfully are responsible for their own choices. Yet even the wicked plans of men could not bring down God's plan of salvation.

On the Cross, the greatest sin of man and the greatest love of God were revealed together. People hated the Son of God and killed Him, but God saved sinners through that very death.

This passage is not meant to condemn any whole nation. The root of the sin that killed Jesus is the self-righteousness, greed, and unbelief that are in every human being. Had it not been for the grace of God, we too would have been people who put our own thoughts first and rejected Jesus.

Therefore, rather than criticizing only the chief priests and the elders, we must examine whether we ourselves are clinging merely to religious forms. However long we may have attended church and however much we may have read the Bible, if we do not believe in the remission of sins accomplished through the baptism of Jesus and His Cross, we have missed the center of the gospel.

Matthew 26:1–5 shows that the Cross of Jesus was not an accidental tragedy but the work of salvation God had prepared long beforehand. The type of the Passover lamb was actually fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

Jesus knew His death and still loved us and went that way. With His baptism He took on all our sins, on the Cross He paid the full price of those sins, and by rising again He opened the way of eternal life.

Therefore, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have no need to fear the judgment of sin. We must believe the word that the baptism and the blood of Jesus, the Passover Lamb, have resolved all our sins and punishment, and live in gratitude for that great grace.

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The person who knows the gospel counts the death and burial of Jesus most precious and offers to the Lord with gratitude for the grace he has received

"And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.' But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.'" (Matthew 26:6–13).

This event took place just before Jesus was crucified. Jesus had already told His disciples that after two days He would be betrayed and crucified. The woman's pouring of the fragrant oil, therefore, happened at a crucial time, just ahead of the death and burial of Jesus.

Jesus was eating at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany. In those days leprosy was a serious disease that cut a person off from the community. The passage calls him *"Simon the leper,"* yet Jesus entered such a man's house and ate with him.

This shows that Jesus does not turn away from sinners or from the sick and marginalized. Jesus did not judge people by outward appearance or social standing but drew near to those who needed grace.

Then a woman came to Jesus with an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil. The Gospel of Matthew does not give this

woman's name. What matters is not her identity but the act of faith she performed toward Jesus.

Fragrant oil was very expensive and precious. It was not a perfume for everyday use; it may have carried the value of savings gathered over a long time. The woman did not use just a little of it; she poured it on Jesus' head.

Pouring fragrant oil on the head expressed honor and devotion, and it was also something done for kings and special persons. But Jesus gave this act a deeper meaning. He said that the woman had prepared for His burial in advance.

This woman knew by faith that Jesus had taken on the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and that He would now die on the Cross, be buried, and rise again to accomplish salvation. So she poured the fragrant oil with a heart that prepared for the death and burial of Jesus and longed for this gospel to be preached to all the world. Jesus received this act of faith as a good work that prepared for His burial.

Seeing this, the disciples were indignant. They said, *"Why this waste?"* In their eyes, the oil poured on Jesus' head looked like a waste that left no practical result.

The reason the disciples gave was helping the poor. They thought the very costly oil could be sold for a great sum and the money distributed to the poor. On the surface it sounds like a reasonable and good argument.

But helping the poor in the flesh can never come before the preaching of the gospel. Charity done to win people's praise or to look good cannot save a soul. Believers must first serve the people of God and the work of the gospel, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those not yet saved. While carrying out that work, as strength allows, they can also help with fleshly needs.

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Yet in all things there is a time and a priority God has set. At that time Jesus was soon to die on the Cross and be buried. The opportunity for this woman to pour oil on the Lord's body was a special opportunity that would never come again.

The disciples knew the general good of helping the poor, but they did not fully know the work of God's salvation that was unfolding right in front of them, or its worth. By rational calculation they knew the price of the oil, but they did not see the eternal worth of the death of Jesus.

People easily calculate the value of visible things, but they may not know the value of the gospel that saves a soul from sin. Seen from a worldly point of view, spending much money to preach the gospel may also look like a waste.

Giving people the food of eternal life comes before giving them the food of the flesh. Material help can relieve hardship for a while, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives eternal life to a soul imprisoned in sin. Therefore, we must first use our limited time, possessions, and strength for preaching the gospel and serving the people of God.

Jesus knew that the disciples were troubling the woman. She had offered her most precious thing to the Lord, yet because of the disciples' criticism she was being treated like someone who had done wrong. So Jesus protected her, saying, *"Why do you trouble the woman?"*

We must not condemn, by human calculation alone, a person who serves the gospel out of gratitude for the grace received from God. Even if others think it a waste, the Lord, who knows that person's heart and faith, may receive it as a good work.

However, these words must not be used to demand that people hand over great wealth unconditionally to religious leaders. The woman did not pour out the oil to satisfy anyone's

greed; she offered it for the body and the burial of Jesus, who stood before the Cross.

To follow this event today does not mean making a particular leader rich. It means believing in the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished and gratefully using one's time, possessions, and talents so that the gospel of this salvation may be delivered to other souls.

Jesus said that the woman had done *"a good work"* for Him. What God acknowledges as good is not necessarily what the people of the world rate as efficient. The good work is what is done in faith, knowing the Lord and following His will.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the death of Jesus that this woman prepared for was not simply the unjust death of one righteous man. Jesus was already bearing all the sins of mankind on His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

Jesus, carrying the sin of the world, was crucified, shed His blood, and died, receiving the punishment of sin in our place. And after being buried, He rose again on the third day, overcame sin and death, and gave eternal life to those who believe.

Therefore, the burial of Jesus is important in the history of salvation. It testifies that Jesus actually died and was laid in the tomb. And by His rising from that tomb, it was revealed that He had completely overcome sin and death.

Fragrant oil was also an article used to prepare a dead body for burial. The woman's act became a sign testifying in advance to the death and burial of Jesus. Jesus, knowing that He would soon die and be buried, gladly received her devotion.

In verse 11 Jesus said, *"You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always."* This means that we must not put helping the poor ahead of the gospel, but must first seize

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the special opportunity to prepare for the death and burial of Jesus, who was present in the flesh.

Opportunities to help the poor of the world would continue, but the time to pour fragrant oil on Jesus and prepare His burial, as He faced the Cross, was that moment only. The woman counted the work of God's salvation and the preaching of the gospel more precious than worldly charity, and she did not miss the opportunity of faith that would never come again.

For us also, the opportunity to serve the gospel does not continue forever. While we have health, time, and possessions, we must use them for the gospel. When the Lord returns or the death of the body arrives, the opportunity to preach and serve the gospel on this earth comes to an end.

If we believe the love of Jesus, who took on our sins with the baptism He received from John and gave even His life on the Cross, we too become grateful for that grace. We come to serve voluntarily, not because of a command to give up possessions, but because the salvation of the Lord is so precious.

The woman counted the grace of Jesus more precious than her fragrant oil. She judged that offering it to the Lord was more valuable than keeping it. This is the sense of value of faith that appears in the person who knows the gospel.

In verse 13 Jesus said that wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman had done would also be told as a memorial to her. In fact, today we too read of this woman's act through the word of the Gospels.

The reason she is remembered is not only that her oil was expensive. It is because her act points to the death and burial of Jesus and shows the faith that counted the worth of the gospel greater than the wealth of the world.

The woman's act itself did not wash away anyone's sins.

She too is saved not by the merit of offering fragrant oil but by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. Her devotion was not a price paid for salvation but a fruit that came from faith in His grace.

True devotion is not an act performed to be seen by people. It is offered out of gratitude for the salvation received from Jesus. Even if others do not recognize it or misunderstand it, the Lord knows and remembers that heart.

Matthew 26:6–13 asks what is truly valuable. By worldly calculation alone, sacrifice for the gospel may look like a waste, but the Lord remembers forever the work of the gospel that saves a soul.

Therefore, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must first use their time, possessions, and talents for preaching the gospel and serving the people of God. To those who have not yet received the remission of sins we must deliver the gospel of life, and as strength allows, we must also look after their fleshly needs. Above all, we must offer ourselves with gratitude so that the remission of sins accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, His Cross, and His resurrection may be preached to all the world.

Judas Iscariot counted thirty pieces of silver more precious than Jesus

"Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him" (Matthew 26:14–16).

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The passage begins with the word *"Then."* This connects it with the preceding event, in which a woman poured very precious fragrant oil on Jesus' head. That woman counted Jesus more precious than costly fragrant oil, but Judas Iscariot counted money more precious than Jesus. One offered her precious thing to the Lord; the other tried to gain his own profit by selling the Lord.

Judas Iscariot was not a man who knew little about Jesus. He was *"one of the twelve."* He had heard the words of Jesus at close quarters and had seen countless miracles as Jesus healed the sick and raised the dead. He had even been sent out with the other disciples to preach the gospel. But such outward experiences did not save his heart.

Staying long inside the church, hearing the word, and holding an office do not automatically make a person born again. Even Judas Iscariot, who followed Jesus closely in the flesh, did not become one with Jesus in his heart. Salvation is not obtained by sitting close to Jesus; it is received by believing with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

Judas Iscariot was not dragged before the chief priests; he went to them himself. And he asked, *"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?"* In his heart, Jesus was no longer the Son of God or the Savior but an object that could be priced and traded.

He did not first ask whether he should hand Jesus over; he asked how much he could receive as the price of handing Him over. This shows that his interest lay not in the truth or in the will of God but in his own fleshly gain. He tried to use Jesus to fill his own greed, and when he judged that he could no longer get what he wanted, he decided to sell Jesus.

The chief priests gave him thirty pieces of silver. In the

Law, thirty pieces of silver appears as the compensation paid when a servant died. Judas Iscariot valued the Son of God, who had come to save the world, at about the price of a slave. To his money-loving eyes, the true worth of Jesus was invisible.

But Jesus is not One whose price can be set at thirty pieces of silver. He is God who created the heavens and the earth, and the Savior who came in the flesh to save mankind from sin and death. Nevertheless, Judas abandoned the Lord of eternal life for money that would briefly pass through his hands.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, before Jesus was betrayed by sinners, He had already taken all the sins of mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. That baptism was not a mere ceremony of humility; it was the work of fulfilling the righteousness of God, by which all the sins of sinners were passed on to Jesus.

Jesus shouldered the sins He had thus taken on, went to the Cross, and received the judgment of those sins. And He rose from the dead and overcame sin and death. Therefore, our salvation was not accomplished because Judas handed Jesus over; it was accomplished because Jesus Himself took on our sins and received the punishment of the Cross.

Jesus knew in advance that Judas Iscariot would sell Him. But the fact that Jesus knew does not mean that He forced Judas to sin. Judas, following his own greed, went to the chief priests himself and made the deal, and from then on he sought an opportunity to hand Jesus over. Therefore he had to bear the responsibility for his own choice and sin.

At the same time, the wicked plans of men could not bring down God’s plan of salvation. The chief priests and Judas sought to kill Jesus with evil intent, but Jesus accomplished the salvation of mankind even through their evil. That does not

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make their evil good. It is that God is greater than human evil and used even that in accomplishing the history of salvation.

Judas Iscariot saw the teaching and the miracles of Jesus, but he did not believe that Jesus was the Savior who had taken on even his own sins through the baptism He received from John. If he had believed with his heart that Jesus was the Lamb of God who had shouldered his sins, he could never have weighed Jesus against thirty pieces of silver.

This event makes us look back at why we are following Jesus. If the purpose of believing in Jesus lies only in gaining money, success, health, and worldly blessings, then when what we want is not granted, we can easily resent the Lord or leave Him. The faith of Judas Iscariot was centered not on Jesus Himself but on the fleshly profit he hoped to gain through Jesus.

Today as well, people do not literally sell Jesus for thirty pieces of silver, but they can alter the truth of the gospel for money, honor, and position. If, to win people's favor, we hide the baptism of Jesus, or speak only of the Cross without preaching how Jesus took on the sin of the world, we damage the whole gospel. Using the gospel as a means of gaining one's own profit and power is also walking the way of Judas Iscariot.

To the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus is the Savior who cannot be exchanged for anything in the world. For Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, paid the full price of those sins on the Cross, and gave us eternal life by rising again. The person who knows this salvation does not count his possessions, time, and talents more precious than the Lord.

Of course, even the born-again can err and stumble because of the weakness of the flesh. But the conduct of Judas Iscariot did not stop at a momentary mistake. He set his heart on selling

Jesus, agreed on the price with the chief priests, and kept looking for a suitable opportunity. This shows that his heart was ruled not by the truth of the gospel but by greed and unbelief.

Seeing the sin of Judas Iscariot, we must not condemn others only. In the heart of man there is by nature the sin of loving money and the profit of the world more than God. Without the grace of God, we too are sinners who can only choose what is passing and abandon what is eternal.

Therefore, we must not boast of our own will and loyalty but believe in the salvation Jesus has completed. Jesus took on even our sins of greed, betrayal, and unbelief. He received those sins passed on to Him with His baptism, was judged for them on the Cross, and rose again to give the remission of sins and new life to those who believe.

Matthew 26:14–16 warns that being near Jesus and believing in Jesus can be two different things. True faith is not making Jesus a means to fulfill one's own desires; it is receiving the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit as the most precious truth.

We must not exchange Jesus for the small profits of the world as Judas Iscariot did. Rather, like the woman before him, we must know the grace of Jesus and use what we have to serve the gospel and the Lord. The thirty pieces of silver soon disappeared, but the remission of sins and the eternal life that Jesus gives through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection never pass away.

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Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, gave His own body and blood and established the new covenant of the remission of sins

"Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?' And He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, 'My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.''' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, 'Lord, is it I?' He answered and said, 'He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.' Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, 'Rabbi, is it I?' He said to him, 'You have said it.' And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.' And when they had sung a hymn, they went out to the Mount of Olives" (Matthew 26:17–30).

This passage records how Jesus kept the Passover with His disciples just before He was crucified. Through this last

Passover meal, Jesus revealed that He is the true Savior foreshown by the Passover lamb of the Old Testament. And giving the bread and the cup to His disciples, He proclaimed the new covenant of the remission of sins that He would accomplish with His own body and blood.

The Passover is the feast commemorating the deliverance of the people of Israel from slavery in Egypt. When God was about to judge all the firstborn of Egypt, He commanded the people of Israel to slaughter an unblemished lamb and put its blood on the doorposts and the lintel. When God saw that blood, the judgment passed over that house.

As the blood of the Passover lamb saved the people of Israel from death, the blood of Jesus Christ saves sinners from the judgment of God. But the lamb of the Old Testament was a model showing in advance the Jesus who was to come. The only One who can actually and eternally remove people's sins is Jesus Christ, the Son of God.

The disciples asked Jesus, *"Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?"* Jesus told them to go to a certain man in the city and say, *"My time is at hand."* Here the time of Jesus refers not simply to mealtime but to the time when He would be crucified to redeem the sins of mankind.

Jesus did not enter Jerusalem without knowing what would happen to Him. The Lord knew fully that He would be betrayed, seized, and crucified. Yet He did not avoid it but went forward willingly toward the time of salvation God the Father had appointed.

The disciples prepared the Passover *"as Jesus had directed them."* The salvation of God is accomplished not by man's plans or wisdom but according to the word of God. When we come to understand salvation as well, we must not put human thoughts first but believe just as it is the salvation Jesus

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accomplished by His word and His deeds.

When evening came, Jesus sat down with the twelve disciples. At that table sat Judas Iscariot, who had resolved to sell Jesus. Jesus knew all of Judas's heart and plans, yet to the last moment He gave him the opportunity to repent and turn back.

When Jesus said, *"One of you will betray Me,"* the disciples were exceedingly sorrowful and each asked, *"Lord, is it I?"* This question makes a person examine himself rather than suspecting others first. The heart of man is weak, and without the grace of God anyone can fall by fleshly greed and fear.

But Judas Iscariot, unlike the other disciples, did not call Jesus *"Lord"* but *"Rabbi."* Rather than believing in Jesus as the Lord who rules his life and salvation, he was treating Him merely as a teacher. A person can have knowledge about Jesus, but without believing that Jesus is the Savior who has resolved his sins, he cannot arrive at true faith.

Jesus said, *"He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me."* Sitting at the same table and eating bread together signifies close fellowship and trust. Yet Judas, though he stayed near Jesus, heard His words, and saw His miracles, did not believe in Jesus in his heart.

The outward life of staying in the church and hearing the word does not by itself make a person born again. Even a person who bears the name of a disciple of Jesus and has experienced the work of the gospel cannot receive the remission of sins unless he believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit with his heart. Salvation comes not from being physically near Jesus but from believing the gospel the Lord accomplished.

Jesus said, *"The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written*

of Him." The suffering and death of Jesus were not a tragedy that happened by chance. They were the event that fulfilled the promise of God and the plan of salvation recorded in the Old Testament.

But the fact that Jesus dies within God's plan does not justify Judas's sin. Judas loved money and sold Jesus by his own will. God's sovereign plan of salvation and man's moral responsibility do not collide. God uses even the evil deeds of men in accomplishing His saving will, but the person who chooses evil must bear the responsibility for his choice.

Then, *"Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.'"* The bread points to the body of Jesus, who came to this earth in the flesh to save us. Jesus gave His body wholly to save sinners.

The body of Jesus first became the body that took on the sins of mankind. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took all the sins of mankind onto His own body according to the will of God. And by giving over to the Cross that body which had shouldered sins, He received in our place the punishment of our sins.

Therefore, the words *"this is My body"* are not words that make us think only of the physical death of Jesus. They point to the whole saving work of Jesus, who came in the flesh, took on our sins with His baptism, and gave that body over to the Cross.

To take and eat the bread does not mean that the bread itself washes away a person's sins. It represents believing with the heart and receiving the salvation Jesus accomplished with His body. The person who believes the fact that the body of Jesus became the body of salvation that took on our sins is the person who eats the true food of the soul.

Jesus then gave them the cup, saying, *"Drink from it, all of*

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you." And He explained, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* The blood of Jesus is the blood of life He would shed on the Cross, and the proof that He received the judgment of sin in our place.

The Bible says that the wages of sin is death. Where there is sin, there must be death and judgment. God is love, but at the same time He is righteous, and so He cannot pass over sin without judgment.

Jesus shed His blood on the Cross because our sins had been passed on to Him. Jesus took on the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, and bearing those sins, He went up to the Cross and shed His blood and died. If the baptism is the event in which He took on sins, the blood of the Cross is the event in which He paid in full the punishment of the sins He had taken on.

Therefore, the baptism of Jesus and the Cross can never be separated. If we speak only of the Cross without the baptism of Jesus, we cannot explain how sins were passed on to Jesus. If we speak only of the baptism without the blood of the Cross, we cannot explain how He completed the judgment of the sins He had taken on.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that Jesus came in the flesh, took on the sins of mankind with His baptism, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and saved us completely by rising from the dead. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sins not by his own deeds but by the righteousness Jesus accomplished.

Jesus called His blood *"My blood of the new covenant."* Under the old covenant the blood of animals was shed over and over, but that blood could never remove people's sins forever. But the sinless Son of God gave His own body and blood once

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

and for all and established the new covenant of the eternal remission of sins.

The heart of the new covenant is not that we obtain the remission of sins by piling up good deeds. It is the promise that God Himself has removed our sins through the baptism of Jesus and His blood, and that He gives the remission of sins and new life to everyone who believes this fact.

The words *"for the remission of sins"* show clearly the purpose for which Jesus shed His blood. The Cross of Jesus is not a sacrifice meant to move people's hearts, nor a mere martyrdom. It is the substitutionary death by which He received the judgment of God in the place of sinners and remitted their sins completely.

The words *"for many"* show that the sacrifice of Jesus was not needed by just a few special people but was for countless sinners. Jesus took on the sins of everyone in the world. But this grace of salvation is received as the effect of the remission of sins by those who hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe it with the heart.

The Lord's Supper, in which we eat the bread and drink the cup, is not an act that produces the salvation of Jesus over again. Jesus has already completed salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The Lord's Supper is the confession of faith that believes, remembers, and gives thanks for that completed grace.

Therefore, in taking part in the Lord's Supper we must not treat only the rite of the bread and the cup as important. We must believe how the body of Jesus represented by the bread and the blood of Jesus represented by the cup saved us from sin. Without faith in the gospel, sins are not washed away by mere participation in a ceremony.

Jesus spoke of *"that day when I drink it new with you in My*

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Father's kingdom." This means that the death on the Cross is not the end of everything. Jesus would rise from the dead, and He will enjoy the eternal joy of the kingdom of God together with the saved who believe.

The Passover meal stood before the suffering of the Cross, yet at the same time it held the hope of the kingdom of God. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also go through suffering in the world, but in the end they enter the eternal kingdom of God with the risen Lord. The Lord's Supper not only commemorates the salvation that is past but also makes us look toward the kingdom of God that will be completed.

When the meal was over, Jesus and His disciples sang a hymn and went out to the Mount of Olives. Jesus knew that He would soon be arrested and suffer mockery, scourging, and the pain of the Cross. Even so, He praised God and went forward on the way of salvation entrusted to Him.

This shows that the salvation of Jesus was not a life taken from Him by force but a life given in love. The Lord willingly gave His own body and blood to save us sinners. With that love and obedience He completed our salvation.

The true food our souls must eat today is also the gospel made of the body and blood of Jesus. If we look only at our own weakness and failure, our hearts are pressed down by sin; but when we believe the fact that Jesus took on all sins with His baptism and ended the judgment with the blood of the Cross, our souls gain strength again.

Therefore, we must always keep the body and blood of Jesus in our hearts. We must not leave the gospel of the water and the Spirit as a mere doctrine or past knowledge, but make it the food of the soul that we eat and drink daily by faith. And we must deliver this gospel of the remission of sins to those

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

who do not yet know it.

Matthew 26:17–30 shows that Jesus is the true Passover Lamb. The Lord took our sins onto His body with His baptism, shed the blood of the covenant on the Cross, and saved us from sin and death by rising again. Whoever believes this completed gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of sins, becomes a child of God, and will one day take part with the Lord in the eternal feast of the kingdom of God.

Jesus knew the disciples' failure, and yet He first promised to meet them after His resurrection

"Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.' Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And so said all the disciples" (Matthew 26:31–35).

After the Passover supper, Jesus went with His disciples to the Mount of Olives. At that moment, with the suffering of the Cross right before Him, Jesus said to His disciples, *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night."* The disciples knew how much they thought they loved Jesus, but Jesus knew exactly their faith and the weakness of their flesh.

Jesus did not say that one or two of them would fall; He said, *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me."* Judas Iscariot sold Jesus, and the rest of the disciples, when

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Jesus was seized, fell into fear and ran away. This shows that however firmly a man resolves, he cannot follow the Lord to the end by his own strength alone.

Jesus said, *"For it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.'"* This shows that the word foretold through the prophet Zechariah would be fulfilled. Jesus was not arrested and killed by accident. He was going to the Cross according to the will God had appointed to save mankind from sin.

Here the Shepherd is Jesus, and the scattered sheep are the disciples. When Jesus the Shepherd was seized and made to suffer, the disciples would be gripped by fear and scattered. The disciples said they would stand with Jesus, but when danger actually came, their flesh chose to protect itself.

But Jesus did not end with the word that the disciples would forsake Him. He went on at once to say, *"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."* Jesus spoke of the disciples' failure and at the same time promised His resurrection and their meeting again.

In the word *"But"* an amazing grace is contained. The disciples forsake Jesus, but Jesus does not forsake the disciples. The disciples scatter out of fear, but Jesus, after rising again, gathers them together again. He showed that His salvation and love are greater than the disciples' weakness.

Jesus already knew that the disciples would run away, but He did not give up the way of the Cross because of them. He went to the Cross to take on even their sins of betraying, denying, and deserting Him. The salvation of Jesus does not depend on man's loyalty; it rests on the righteousness of God that Jesus Himself accomplishes.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, before Jesus was crucified He had already received all

the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Included there were the sin of the disciples in forsaking Jesus and running away and the sin of Peter in denying Him three times. Jesus is the Savior who already knew and took on even their sins that had not yet been revealed.

Jesus carried the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism, was crucified, shed His blood, and died. The death of the Cross was not some vague sacrifice made without any transfer of sin; it was the judgment in which He received in our place the punishment of all the sins He had taken on with His baptism. And by rising from the dead, He overcame sin and death and completed salvation.

Therefore, the words *"after I have been raised"* are not merely a foretelling that Jesus would live again. They are the declaration that even despite the disciples' failure, salvation would surely be completed. Man stumbles and fails to keep his word, but Jesus accomplishes without the slightest failure the work of salvation the Father entrusted to Him.

Hearing the words of Jesus, Peter said, *"Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."* In his words there was a heart that loved the Lord. But at the same time there were also the self-confidence and pride of thinking himself more loyal than the other disciples.

Peter believed his own judgment of himself more than the word of Jesus. When Jesus said, *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me,"* Peter should first have received that word and acknowledged his own weakness. But he did not say "Amen" to the Lord's word; he insisted that he alone would be the exception.

People easily see the weakness of others but do not know their own. The moment we think, 'Others may forsake the Lord,

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but I never will,' we are already setting up our own righteousness. True faith is not boasting of one's resolve but acknowledging the word of God and relying on the grace of the Lord.

Jesus said plainly to Peter, *"Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* It is not that there was no desire in Peter's heart to love the Lord. But his resolve was not strong enough to overcome the threat of death and fear. Though the heart wants to follow the Lord, the flesh can deny the Lord to preserve its own life.

Peter again declared, *"Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"* And all the disciples said the same. But that night their words were not kept. This shows that man's fervent emotion and firm vows cannot be the true foundation of faith.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit makes us believe first not what we promise to do for the Lord, but what the Lord has accomplished for us. Salvation is not received by our resolution, "I will never forsake the Lord." It is received by believing the facts that Jesus took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again.

Peter's failure does not mean that Jesus failed to take on his sins. Rather, it shows that Jesus knew in advance even the sins Peter had not yet committed, took even those on Himself, and went to the Cross. Peter was not saved by his loyalty; he was a man who came to live by the grace of the salvation Jesus completed.

This does not mean that we may treat sin lightly. After Peter actually denied Jesus, he realized his sin and wept bitterly. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not justify his sins on the ground that he has received the remission of all his sins. Rather, he realizes how

much suffering his sins brought upon Jesus, grieves over them, and turns back.

Nor should we despair and leave the Lord altogether after seeing our own failure. Jesus knew Peter's failure and still promised, *"After I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee."* The Lord sought out the failed disciples again, established their faith, and used them again in the work of preaching the gospel.

There was an important difference between Judas Iscariot and Peter. Both committed great sins, but Peter returned to the risen Lord and received grace. He came to entrust himself to Jesus, who knew all his weakness, without relying on his own deeds. Judas Iscariot, on the other hand, did not believe that Jesus was the Savior who had taken on even his sins, and he did not return to the Lord.

Even in the born-again, the weakness of the flesh remains. Even after receiving faith, we can be afraid, we can err, and we can put our own thoughts first. But the remission of sins Jesus completed is not canceled because of such weakness. For our salvation is built not on our changing deeds but on the unchanging righteousness of Jesus.

Yet the more a born-again person realizes his weakness, the more he must lay down his self-confidence and rely on the gospel. Instead of declaring, "I will never fall," we must confess, "I am weak, but the Lord has taken on all my sins and saved me." And we must seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit and follow the Lord within God's Church and His word.

Jesus knew that Peter would deny Him three times, and He did not cast him away. After His resurrection He met Peter again, confirmed his love three times, and entrusted him with the care of His sheep. When Peter, who had boasted of his own ability, was broken, he became a man who served the gospel

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relying not on his own strength but on the grace of the Lord.

This passage teaches us where the strength to follow the Lord comes from. That strength does not come from human courage or firm resolve. It comes from believing in the salvation Jesus completed by taking on our sins with His baptism and by the Cross and the resurrection. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who believes this gospel, holds up the weak, and leads them to serve the gospel.

Therefore, rather than trusting ourselves and speaking loudly like Peter, we must humble ourselves before the word of Jesus. Instead of boasting how loyal we can be, we must boast of the grace of the Lord, who loved us weak ones to the end and saved us.

Matthew 26:31–35 shows the love of Jesus, who speaks of the resurrection and restoration even before the disciples' failure. We can fall, but the salvation accomplished through the baptism of Jesus, His Cross, and His resurrection is never shaken. The person who believes this gospel does not give up the Lord because of his own shortcomings; rather, he acknowledges his weakness and lives relying all the more on the righteousness and grace of the Lord.

The Gethsemane prayer of Jesus is the prayer in which He obeyed the Father's plan of salvation to the end, above His own will

"Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.' And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even

to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak.' Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.' And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.'" (Matthew 26:36–46).

Jesus came with His disciples to Gethsemane. Soon Judas Iscariot would come leading soldiers, and Jesus would be arrested, interrogated, mocked, scourged, and crucified. Jesus knew all these things in advance.

Jesus told His disciples to sit there while He prayed. And He took Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, James and John, a little farther with Him. These were the disciples who only a little while earlier had declared that even if they had to die with Jesus, they would not deny Him.

But the heart of Jesus before His death was deeply distressed and sorrowful. Jesus is true God, but at the same time He came to this earth as a true man without sin. Therefore He did not accept without any feeling the suffering of the Cross, in which His body would be torn and His blood shed in death.

Above all, the Cross set before Jesus was not a mere physical death. It was the death in which He would receive in

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our place the curse and the judgment for the sins of everyone in the world. Because Jesus, who knew no sin at all, had to take on the sins of mankind and receive the punishment in the place of sinners, the anguish of His heart was beyond all description.

"*This cup,*" of which Jesus spoke, refers to the judgment He was to receive because of the sins of mankind and to the suffering of the Cross. Jesus knew exactly what cup He had to drink. It was the cup of receiving in the sinners' place the wrath of God and the punishment of death that they deserved.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, long before Jesus came to Gethsemane, He had taken all the sins of mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. When Jesus was baptized, all the sins of mankind—past, present, and future—were passed on to Him. Therefore Jesus had to go to the Cross as the Lamb of God carrying the sin of the world.

It is not that the Gethsemane prayer of Jesus caused Him to take on sins. The taking on of sins had already been accomplished through the baptism He received at the Jordan River. The prayer of Gethsemane was the prayer in which He committed Himself to the Father's will, in order to receive fully on the Cross the judgment of the sins He had taken on.

Jesus fell on His face and prayed, "*O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me.*" These words do not mean that Jesus tried to disobey the Father's plan of salvation. They reveal how great and dreadful the suffering of the Cross was, and at the same time show that even in all that suffering He entrusted Himself wholly to the Father.

The most important words in Jesus' prayer are "*nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.*" Jesus chose the Father's will for the salvation of mankind before His own comfort or the survival of His flesh. This is the perfect

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

obedience of Jesus.

Adam, the first man, brought sin and death into the world by following his own thought instead of God's command. But Jesus obeyed the Father's will to the end and so opened the way that saves sinners. We are saved not because our obedience is perfect but because the obedience of Jesus was perfect.

When Jesus returned to His disciples, they were sleeping. Peter had declared only a little while earlier that he would die with the Lord, yet he could not stay awake with Jesus even one hour. There was a great gap between the resolve spoken in words and the actual capacity of the flesh.

Jesus said to Peter, *"Could you not watch with Me one hour?"* This was not simply a rebuke; it was a word meant to make Peter know himself rightly. Peter thought he was strong enough to overcome even death, but in reality he was a weak man who could not overcome even drowsiness.

Jesus said, *"Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation."* When a man trusts only his own resolve, he easily falls in temptation. It is the person who acknowledges his weakness and seeks the word of God and His help who can watch and pray.

But the act of watching and praying does not itself wash away a person's sins. Even if a man prays all night and sheds tears, the sins of the heart are not removed by that. Sin was washed away only when Jesus took it on with His baptism and paid its price on the Cross.

Prayer is not an act of piling up merit to obtain the remission of sins. It is the person who has already received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit acknowledging his weakness and seeking the Lord's help to obey the will of God. True prayer is not moving God to

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fulfill one's own greed but submitting one's heart to the will of God.

Jesus said, *"The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak."* In the disciples' hearts there must have been the desire to stay with Jesus. But their flesh was tired and easily ruled by fear and the instinct of self-preservation.

This weakness of the flesh remains in the born-again as well. With the heart we desire to serve the gospel and live rightly, but the flesh seeks comfort and tries to avoid hardship. That is why we must not overtrust our own resolve, but hold to the word and seek the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

In His second prayer Jesus said, *"If this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done."* He accepted the Father's will, saying that if there were no other way to save mankind, He would drink that cup in full.

Because the wages of sin is death, sinners cannot be saved without the judgment of sin. If God, on the ground that He is love, simply covered over sin without any judgment, His justice would collapse. That is why the sinless Jesus had to take on our sins and be judged in our place.

The baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross can never be separated. Because He had received all the sins of mankind passed on to Him through His baptism, He received the punishment of those sins on the Cross. And by rising from the dead, He overcame sin and death and made us righteous.

If we leave out the fact that Jesus took on sins with His baptism and speak only of the Cross, it does not become clear what sins Jesus bore and was judged for. Nor can we speak only of the baptism of Jesus and leave out the blood of the Cross and the resurrection. His taking on sins with the baptism, His being judged on the Cross, and His rising again are joined as one and accomplish the complete salvation.

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

When Jesus returned after His second prayer, the disciples were sleeping again. The passage says the reason: *"their eyes were heavy."* Jesus was alone, bearing the sins of mankind and obeying the Father's will, and the disciples could offer no help at all to that work of salvation.

This scene shows that salvation is not a joint work of man and Jesus. It is not that salvation was accomplished because the disciples stayed awake and helped Jesus. While the disciples slept, ran away, and denied Him, Jesus alone obeyed the Father's will and accomplished salvation.

Jesus went away a third time and prayed the same words. Praying the same content three times was not repeating out of unbelief. It was a true and earnest prayer, entrusting Himself wholly to the Father's will before the Cross.

After Jesus finished praying, the situation had not changed. Judas Iscariot was still coming with the soldiers, and the suffering of the Cross still remained. But Jesus fully accepted the Father's will and no longer sought to avoid it.

Jesus said to His disciples, *"Are you still sleeping and resting?"* and then said at once, *"Rise, let us be going."* The time for prayer had ended, and the time had come to carry out the Father's will. Jesus did not flee from those who were coming to seize Him but went out boldly to meet them.

The words *"See, My betrayer is at hand"* show that Jesus knew the whole situation. Jesus was not a helpless victim seized against His will. He is the Savior who gave Himself up to fulfill the Father's will and the salvation of mankind.

In Gethsemane, the appearance of Jesus and that of the disciples stand in sharp contrast. The disciples declared they would stay with Him even to death, but they fell asleep and soon ran away. Jesus was deeply distressed and sorrowful, yet through prayer He accepted the Father's will and went forward

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to the Cross to the end.

The reason our salvation is secure is not that we have a stronger will or better loyalty than Peter. It is that Jesus took on all our sins and weaknesses and obeyed the Father's will perfectly. The ground of salvation is not our wavering hearts but the completed righteousness of Jesus.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not despair and leave the Lord when he discovers his own weakness. He looks to Jesus, who already took on even that weakness, and rises again by faith. At the same time, he does not make the remission of sins an excuse for following the flesh, but watches and prays and seeks to serve the gospel.

Our prayer must also follow the prayer of Jesus. We must not stop at prayers that try to push our own will through with God, but pray, *"Not as I will, but as You will."* We must seek the spreading of the gospel and the fulfillment of God's will above our own honor and profit.

Matthew 26:36–46 shows with how great a suffering and obedience Jesus saved us. Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, obeyed the Father's will fully in Gethsemane, received the judgment of sin on the Cross, and rose again.

Therefore, we must not make our own resolve or our prayers the ground of salvation. We must believe in the righteousness Jesus completed with the water and the Spirit. And within that grace we must acknowledge our weakness, seek the will of God, and follow the gospel and the Lord in every circumstance.

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

Jesus was not captured; He gave Himself up to fulfill the Scriptures

"And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.' Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?' In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matthew 26:47–56).

When Jesus had finished praying in Gethsemane, Judas Iscariot came leading a great multitude. Jesus had already said, *"My betrayer is at hand."* The appearance of Judas, therefore, was not at all an unexpected event to Jesus.

The passage records Judas again as *"one of the twelve."* This emphasizes that it was not an enemy who knew nothing of Jesus, but a disciple who had walked with Him, heard His words, and eaten bread with Him, who sold the Lord. A person can be outwardly near Jesus and still not believe in Him with

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the heart.

Judas stood with the crowd that came to seize Jesus. He no longer stood as a disciple of Jesus but on the side of the chief priests and the elders who opposed Him. In the end, which side a person stands on is decided not by outward office but by what he believes and loves in his heart.

That they came to arrest Jesus with swords and clubs means they treated Him like a dangerous criminal. But Jesus had never used violence or incited the people. He had only taught the word of God openly in the temple.

They sent an armed crowd at night, not because Jesus' crimes had been exposed, but because they wanted to carry out their evil plan in secret. Those who follow the truth walk in the light, but those who plot evil seek the darkness for fear their deeds will be exposed.

Judas had arranged a signal with the crowd: the one he kissed would be Jesus, and they should seize Him. A kiss was originally an act expressing respect and affection. But Judas used the sign of love as the signal of betrayal.

He came up to Jesus, greeted Him, saying, *"Greetings, Rabbi!"* and kissed Him. His lips were calling Jesus a teacher, but his heart had already sold Jesus for money. This shows that a person can speak devout words and act piously outwardly while opposing the gospel in his heart.

Today too, a person can call Jesus Lord with his lips while using the gospel for his own profit. Distorting the words of Jesus to gain wealth, honor, and power, and hiding the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is walking the way of Judas. What matters is not devout words but believing with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Jesus said to Judas, *"Friend, why have you come?"* Jesus already knew what Judas intended to do. Judas tried to conceal

his act with a kiss, but his heart and purpose were fully exposed before Jesus.

That Jesus called him *"Friend"* was not an approval of Judas's betrayal, nor a declaration that he was without sin. Even with the betrayer before Him, Jesus did not curse him in anger, but exposed to the end what Judas was doing in selling Him. Judas received an opportunity to turn back, but in the end he followed his own greed and the temptation of Satan.

The crowd laid hands on Jesus and seized Him, but Jesus was not captured for lack of power. He knew the time of His arrest, and He neither fled nor resisted. He gave Himself up according to the Father's will to save mankind.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus had already taken the sin of the whole world onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Jesus was seized not because He had sin, but in order to receive on the Cross, in our place, the judgment of all our sins that had been passed on to Him through His baptism.

The baptism of Jesus, His arrest, and the Cross are not separate events. Jesus took on the sin of the world with His baptism, and to receive the punishment of those sins He gave Himself into the hands of sinners. He shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again, and so saved us from sin and death.

One of those who were with Jesus drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. He tried to protect Jesus by his own strength. He had zeal in loving the Lord, but he did not understand the will of God that Jesus was going to fulfill.

Jesus commanded him, *"Put your sword in its place."* For the salvation Jesus accomplishes is not achieved by human force or violence. The gospel is not subduing people with the sword; it is the power of God that makes people hear the word

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of truth and believe it with the heart.

The words *"all who take the sword will perish by the sword"* are a warning not to try to accomplish the work of God by the strength of the flesh. Man's anger and violence may briefly suppress an opponent, but they can never make his heart born again. What saves a sinner is only the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed.

The disciple's swinging of the sword was not helping the saving work of Jesus but rather hindering it. If the disciples had kept on fighting, the sinlessness of Jesus and His voluntary sacrifice would have been obscured. Human zeal that does not know the will of God may look like work for the gospel while actually blocking the gospel.

Jesus said, *"Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels?"* Jesus was not a helpless one who needed the protection of a disciple's small sword. Had He wished, He could have mobilized countless angels and delivered Himself at once.

But Jesus did not use that power to protect Himself. If He had called the angels and destroyed the crowd that came to seize Him, He could have avoided the way of the Cross, but God's promise to save sinners could not have been fulfilled.

The reason Jesus did not avoid the Cross was to fulfill the Scriptures which said that it must happen thus. The sacrifices and prophecies of the Old Testament pointed to the sinless Messiah who would suffer and die in the place of sinners. Jesus came as the Lamb of God who fulfills all those words.

If Jesus shouldered the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, He now had to pay on the Cross the wages of that sin, which is death. If He had taken on sins with His baptism and not received the judgment of the Cross, the

price of our sins would still remain. Conversely, if He had died on the Cross without taking on the sins of mankind, it could not be clearly explained how that death was in our place.

Therefore, the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection are one complete work of salvation. Jesus took on all our sins once and for all with His baptism, received the punishment of those sins in our place on the Cross, and by rising from the dead gave new life to those who believe. This is the righteousness of God that saves sinners.

Jesus pointed out to the crowd that although He had sat daily in the temple teaching openly, they had not seized Him then. It means that they did not arrest Him lawfully because they had found sin in His words, but sought to remove the Lord in secret to protect their religious authority and their desires.

But the evil deeds of men could not bring down God's plan of salvation. Jesus said, *"But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled."* Judas and the religious leaders acted with evil intent, but God is greater than their evil and fulfilled the salvation promised in the Scriptures.

This does not mean that the sins of Judas and the religious leaders are justified. Nor does the fulfillment of God's plan mean that He forced them to sin. They rejected Jesus of themselves, following greed, envy, and unbelief, and so they must bear the responsibility for their sins.

This word shows that even human evil cannot make God's plan of salvation fail. Judas betrayed, and the leaders sought to kill Jesus, but in all those circumstances Jesus fulfilled the Scriptures and saved sinners. The promise of God is stronger than the failures and evil deeds of men.

When Jesus was arrested, the disciples all forsook Him and fled. Only a little while earlier they had declared they would die with the Lord, but when danger actually came they ran

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away to save their own lives. The word of Jesus, *"All of you will be made to stumble because of Me,"* was fulfilled exactly.

The disciples' flight shows how weak human resolve is. They had hearts that loved Jesus, but they could not overcome the fear of the flesh by their own strength. No one can be saved on the basis of his own loyalty and courage.

But Jesus had already taken on even the sin of the disciples who would forsake Him and run away. Salvation was not accomplished because the disciples protected Jesus. While the disciples fled, Jesus was seized alone, received the judgment of the Cross, and completed salvation.

After His resurrection, Jesus came again to the disciples who had deserted Him. Though He had known their failure in advance, He did not cast them away, but gave them the Holy Spirit and entrusted them with the mission of preaching the gospel. This shows that salvation depends not on man's perfection but on the perfect righteousness of Jesus.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can also at times fear and stumble because of the weakness of the flesh. But we must not doubt our salvation while staring only at our own failures. We must look to the finished work of Jesus, who took on all our sins and was judged on the Cross.

At the same time, we must not make the fact that we have received the remission of sins an excuse to justify fleshly anger and violence. Jesus stopped the disciple's sword. The person who believes the gospel does not try to subdue others by the strength of the flesh, but preaches the gospel with truth, love, and patience.

Matthew 26:47–56 shows that Jesus was not a helpless victim dragged away by men. Though Jesus had the power to escape by mobilizing angels, He laid down His rights to save us and chose the way of the Cross recorded in the Scriptures.

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

Therefore, we must not, like Judas, kiss Jesus in a devout appearance while following the profit of the world in our hearts. Neither should we try to accomplish the work of God with our own zeal and the sword of the flesh, like the disciple. We must believe with the heart the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and put the word of God before our own thoughts.

Jesus bore the betrayal, the arrest, and even the flight of His disciples, and saved us. The person who believes this grace does not boast of his own strength but relies on the love of Jesus, who gave Himself up. And in every circumstance he keeps and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, living according to the will of God.

Jesus, who was tried in a false trial, is the Son of God and the true Christ who saves sinners

"And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, 'This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'' And the high priest arose and said to Him, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!'

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Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.' Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?'" (Matthew 26:57–68).

Those who had seized Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest. The scribes and the elders were already assembled there. This was not a gathering to examine fairly the words and deeds of Jesus, but a religious trial prepared to fabricate grounds for killing Him.

They did not try to investigate the facts first and then pass judgment. The passage records that the chief priests and all the council *"sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death."* They reached the verdict of death first, and then looked for evidence to fit that verdict.

The religious leaders, who should have taught the Law of God, sought false witnesses instead. Outwardly they claimed to act for God and the Law, but in reality they sought to kill the Son of God to protect their own authority and position. Having religious knowledge and office does not necessarily mean following the will of God.

Jesus had taught the word openly in the temple every day. Even so, they could not find in Him any real sin deserving death. The fact that many false witnesses came forward and yet their testimony did not agree rather proves that Jesus was without sin.

Jesus is the sinless Son of God. He was not seized because

of His own sins. Precisely because He was without sin, He could become the perfect sacrificial offering in the place of sinners.

Two men came forward and testified that Jesus had said, *"I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days."* They twisted the words of Jesus into something different from their meaning and used them as material for accusation. The temple Jesus spoke of ultimately pointed to His own body, His death, and His resurrection.

Jesus did not incite anyone to destroy the temple built by human hands. He foretold that His own body would be killed and would rise again in three days. But those who did not believe took the spiritual word only in a fleshly way and distorted it to condemn Jesus.

This word about the temple is deeply connected with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of all mankind onto His own body. He was saying that this body would be killed on the Cross and would rise on the third day, overcoming sin and death.

The body of Jesus was the body of the sacrificial offering onto which all our sins had been passed. That Jesus, after taking on sins with His baptism, gave that body over to the Cross was to pay the price of our sins in our place. And by rising on the third day, He showed that He is the Son of God and the Christ who completed salvation.

The high priest demanded that Jesus answer the false testimony. But Jesus kept silent. It was not because He had no answer. Making excuses to people who had already fixed their conclusion with falsehood was meaningless.

Jesus did not compromise with the false trial to save Himself. To fulfill the word of Scripture that the sinless One

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would suffer and die in the place of sinners, He accepted that way in silence. This brings to mind the prophecy that He would be silent like a lamb led to the slaughter.

Yet Jesus did not remain silent before every question. When the high priest asked, *"Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!"* He answered clearly. He was silent before false accusations, but He did not hide His identity or the truth of salvation.

When Jesus said, *"It is as you said,"* He was declaring, just as the high priest had spoken, that He is the Christ, the Son of God. Jesus is not merely a prophet or a fine moral teacher. He is the only begotten Son whom God sent to save sinners, and the Christ.

The word *"Christ"* means the Anointed One. In the Old Testament, kings, priests, and prophets were anointed and took office. Jesus is the true Christ who fulfills all three offices completely.

As King, Jesus triumphs over the power of sin, death, and Satan. As Prophet, He makes known to us the will of God and the truth of salvation. As High Priest, He took on the sins of sinners and offered His own body as the eternal sacrifice of atonement.

Caiaphas, the high priest of that day, condemned Jesus, but Jesus was the true High Priest who took on the sins of all mankind. The high priest of earth committed the contradiction of handing over the High Priest of heaven to death as a criminal. Yet Jesus accepted the suffering in order to take on even their sins and save them.

In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the office of Jesus as High Priest is very important. Just as the high priest of the Old Testament laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering and passed the people's sins onto it, Jesus received the

sin of the whole world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. And bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross.

The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are not two separate salvations. The baptism is the event in which our sins were passed on to Jesus, and the Cross is the event in which He received in our place the punishment of the sins He had taken on. Jesus showed that this salvation was completed by rising from the dead.

Jesus went on to say, *"Hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven."* Though He was now being interrogated, bound, before them, this appearance was not His last.

Jesus would die on the Cross, rise again, ascend, and sit at the right hand of the Power of God. And at the last day He will come again on the clouds of heaven in glory and authority. Those who were then judging Jesus will one day stand before Jesus, who comes as the Judge.

Judging by appearances at that moment, Caiaphas and the council seemed to hold power and to be trying Jesus. But from the eternal viewpoint, Jesus is the Judge, and Caiaphas and those who followed him are the ones to be judged. The power of earth lasts a moment, but the authority of Jesus is eternal.

To those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the return of Jesus is an eternal hope. Because Jesus removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, believers can greet the Lord not as a dreadful Judge of condemnation but as the King who saved them.

But to the person who rejects this gospel and keeps his sins, the return of the Lord becomes the day of judgment. When Jesus first came to this earth, He came in the form of a lowly servant to save sinners, but when He comes again, He comes as

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the King who judges all.

Hearing the words of Jesus, the high priest tore his clothes and condemned Him for speaking blasphemy. If Jesus were not really the Son of God, that claim would indeed have been blasphemy. But Jesus is truly the Son of God, and so His words were not blasphemy but the truth.

The high priest did not try to confirm and believe the fact that Jesus is the Son of God. Instead he made it the pretext for the death sentence he wanted. The person who does not want to know the truth does not believe even the clearest word; rather, he uses that word as a ground for opposing it.

Those gathered in the council also answered, "*He is deserving of death.*" They sentenced the sinless Jesus to death. But the ones who actually deserve death are all of us human beings who have sin.

Because the wages of sin is death, we were the ones who had to be judged and die. But Jesus received in our place the death sentence that should have been passed on us. The sinless One stood in the place of sinners, and we sinners, believing in the righteousness of Jesus, are justified.

The people spat in Jesus' face and struck Him with their fists and palms. To spit in someone's face is an act of extreme contempt. The creatures committed the horrendous sin of spitting in the face of the Creator and striking Him.

They mocked Jesus as they beat Him, saying, "*Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?*" Jesus did not fail to answer because He did not know who had struck Him. He knew all their thoughts, their deeds, and their sins, but He endured that insult to accomplish our salvation.

We must not attribute the suffering of Jesus to a particular nation or a few individuals only. The people present there struck and mocked Jesus directly, but the fundamental reason

Jesus suffered is the sin of all mankind. Our sins of falsehood, pride, greed, and unbelief brought the suffering of judgment upon Jesus.

Therefore, rather than condemning only those who struck Jesus, we must realize that Jesus received such suffering because of my sins. We must not stop at looking on Jesus as a pitiful victim, but believe in Him as the Savior who took on my sins.

The remission of sins is not obtained by shedding emotional tears at the sight of the suffering of Jesus. We must believe with the heart the facts that Jesus took on all my sins with His baptism, received the punishment of those sins in my place on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

The false witnesses condemned Jesus, but God testified to His righteousness through His resurrection. People killed the body of Jesus, but Jesus rose again on the third day. The word about the temple, which they used falsely, was truly fulfilled through the resurrection of Jesus.

Matthew 26:57–68 warns that people can oppose the righteousness of God even while wearing the outward form of religion. The high priest and the scribes knew the Scriptures, but they did not believe in Jesus, of whom the Scriptures testify. To protect their own doctrines, authority, and desires, they condemned Jesus, who is the truth.

We too must not put human tradition or our own thoughts above the word of God. In particular, we must not speak only of the Cross of Jesus while ignoring how He took on the sin of the world. The baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection together form the complete gospel of salvation.

Jesus silently endured the false trial, the spitting, and the beating. It was not because He was powerless, but to save us from sin. Because the sinless Son of God stood in the place of

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sinners, the way was opened for us sinners to become the children of God by faith.

Therefore, we must not judge Jesus by our own standards as Caiaphas and the council did. We must believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who removed all our sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. The person who has this faith waits for Jesus, who will come again on the clouds, not in fear but in hope.

Peter's three denials show that we must rely not on human resolve but on the perfect salvation of Jesus

"Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.' But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying.' And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.' But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!' And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.' Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:69–75).

While Jesus was receiving the accusations of the false witnesses and being mocked before Caiaphas the high priest, Peter was sitting in the courtyard outside. That Peter, who had fled with the other disciples, came back and followed Jesus at a distance shows that there was in him a heart that loved the Lord.

But Peter could not stand openly at Jesus' side; he watched

the outcome from afar. The desire to follow Jesus and the fear of being seized himself were both at work within him. This is the weakness of man's flesh.

Not long before, Peter had declared, *"Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble."* He had also said, *"Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!"* But when the threat to his life actually drew near, his confidence quickly collapsed.

First, a servant girl said to Peter, *"You also were with Jesus of Galilee."* That woman was not a judge with authority to interrogate him, nor an armed soldier. But to Peter, gripped by fear, even the words of one servant girl felt like a great threat.

Peter denied it before them all, saying, *"I do not know what you are saying."* At first he evaded his relationship with Jesus by pretending not to understand the question. He lied to hide his identity and escape danger.

Peter moved from that place toward the gateway. This can be seen as an attempt to get out of a dangerous place. But another servant girl recognized him and said to the people there, *"This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth."*

The second time, Peter went beyond simple denial and swore an oath, saying, *"I do not know the Man!"* He certainly knew Jesus and had long gone about with Him as His disciple. Yet when he thought his life might be in danger, he called Jesus *"the Man"* and tried to cut off the relationship.

A little later, those standing nearby heard Peter's speech and realized he was a Galilean. The words *"your speech betrays you"* mean that his accent revealed where he was from. Peter changed places and tried to cover himself with words, but he could not completely hide the trace of having been with Jesus.

The third time, Peter cursed and swore, saying, *"I do not*

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know the Man!" The first time he said he did not understand the question; the second time he denied with an oath; and the third time he even added curses. His denial, surrendered to fear, grew stronger and stronger.

Peter thought he loved Jesus, but in the actual situation he tried to protect his own life more than Jesus. In times of peace a person may think his faith is strong. But when hardship, loss, and persecution come, the weakness hidden within him is revealed.

Just then the rooster crowed. The rooster's crowing was not a sound heard by chance; it became the sign that reminded Peter of the word Jesus had spoken beforehand. Jesus had known exactly how many times Peter would deny Him and when it would happen.

This shows that Jesus knew Peter's heart and his future conduct completely. Peter did not know himself, but Jesus knew him fully. Peter judged himself to be a man who would be loyal to the end, but Jesus knew that he would collapse before the fear of the flesh.

Jesus knew Peter's denial in advance, and yet He accepted him as a disciple and washed his feet. He was not surprised by the sins Peter would later commit, nor did He cast him away. Rather, He went to the Cross to take on even those sins and save him.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus took on even Peter's sin of denying Him three times through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. When Jesus was baptized, not only the sins Peter had already committed but also the sins he would commit were passed on to Jesus together.

At the very hour Peter was denying Him, Jesus did not defend His innocence to be released. To be judged on the Cross

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

bearing even Peter's sins of lying, swearing, and cursing, He quietly accepted the suffering.

The baptism of Jesus did not take on only the past sins of man. If Jesus took on all the sins of mankind once and for all, that includes every sin a person commits from birth to death. If it were not so, we would have to be saved anew every time we sinned.

Jesus took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John, and He paid the price of those sins with His blood on the Cross. And by rising from the dead, He overcame sin and death. Therefore, our salvation depends not on how long our loyalty lasts but on how completely Jesus accomplished salvation.

The salvation of Jesus is not an incomplete salvation that was valid before Peter denied Him and vanished after he denied Him. When Peter did not know his own weakness, and when he denied three times, the scope of the sins Jesus had taken on did not change. The righteousness of Jesus is not shaken by man's deeds.

But this does not make Peter's sin light. Peter's denial was clearly a great sin. To save himself he said he did not know the Jesus he loved, and he lied even with oaths and curses.

When Peter heard the rooster crow, he remembered the word of Jesus: *"Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times."* In that moment Peter realized that the word of Jesus was right and his own thinking was wrong. Before the light of the word, his self-confidence and his righteousness collapsed.

Peter went outside and wept bitterly. He did not weep merely because his conduct had been found out. He wept because he had discovered that he, who had declared he would follow the Lord to the end, was in fact a weak sinner who had

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denied the Lord three times.

But Peter's tears did not wash away his sin. However bitterly he wept, tears themselves could never pay the price of sin. What washed away Peter's sin of denial was not his tears but the baptism of Jesus, who took on that sin, and the blood of the Cross.

Tears of repentance are not the price of the remission of sins; they are the expression of a heart that has realized its wrong before the word. True repentance is not merely weeping much; it is acknowledging that one's own judgment was wrong and returning to the word of salvation Jesus accomplished.

Peter had been relying on his self-righteousness: "I will never forsake the Lord." But through the event of denying Him three times, he came to realize thoroughly how weak his flesh was. This experience became an important turning point, changing him from a man who relied on himself into a man who relies on the grace of the Lord.

Afterward the risen Jesus came to Peter again. Jesus did not condemn and abandon him; He asked, *"Do you love Me?"* and entrusted His sheep to him. He raised up the failed Peter again as a worker of the gospel.

At that time Peter could not boast of his loyalty as before. He confessed to the Lord, who knew him completely better than he knew himself, *"You know that I love You."* His self-confidence had crumbled, but his faith that the Lord loved him and had saved him became all the more clear.

Peter's denial and Judas Iscariot's betrayal were both great sins, but the paths that followed were different. Peter remembered the word of Jesus, acknowledged his sin, returned to the risen Lord, and remained in His grace. But Judas did not believe that Jesus was the Savior who had taken on even his sins, and he did not return to the Lord.

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

The difference in salvation lies not in whether one has sinned less or more. It lies in whether one believes in Jesus, who took on his sins, or not. However great the sins one has committed, whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can receive the remission of sins by the righteousness of Jesus.

The born-again also, like Peter, can sin because of the weakness of the flesh. There are times when they lie to avoid loss, hide the gospel for fear of people's criticism, or turn from the Lord's will for the profit of the world. Such conduct is clearly wrong, and it must be acknowledged before the word and turned from.

But we must not think that the salvation Jesus accomplished has vanished just because we have discovered our own weakness. If we look only at ourselves, we can only despair; but when we look to Jesus, who took on all our sins, we can rise again by faith.

Neither must we make the fact that we have received the remission of sins an excuse for sinning. Peter did not think, 'My sins are remitted anyway, so it is all right to deny Him.' He grieved deeply over his sin, and later, by the power of the Holy Spirit, he became a man who boldly testified of Jesus Christ.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not excuse his sins. He acknowledges his wrong before the word of God, yet he does not give up his salvation because of his sins. He believes that Jesus took on even those sins completely, and with the help of the Holy Spirit he follows the will of the Lord again.

Peter was raised up again not merely because his resolve grew stronger. It was because he met the risen Jesus, came to know the grace of the Lord who loved him to the end, and was

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clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit. The Lord does not cast away the weak, but refines them and uses them as workers fit for the gospel.

Matthew 26:69–75 shows that human will and loyalty cannot be the foundation of salvation. Even Peter, who had said, "I will never deny You," denied Jesus three times before fear. Man's resolve collapses with circumstances, but the salvation of Jesus never collapses.

Therefore, we must not boast that our faith is strong. Rather, we must know how weak our flesh is and stay awake within the word and the Church. And whenever we meet temptation, we must rely not on our own will but on the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the power of the gospel.

Peter's bitter weeping was the weeping in which his self-righteousness was broken. Only then did he come to know that he was not the one who protects the Lord but the one who must receive the Lord's salvation. We too, before boasting of what we have done for the Lord, must believe what the Lord has accomplished for us.

Jesus knew Peter's denial in advance and took even that sin upon Himself. He received all sins passed on to Him with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again and came to Peter once more. In this way the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel of grace that completely saves weak sinners and enables them to serve the Lord again. ✉

Jesus, as the true Passover Lamb, went to the Cross
bearing the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism

Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 26

[Question] 1. How does Matthew chapter 26 convey the preparation Jesus made as He faced the Cross?

Before Jesus bore the Cross, He prepared as follows.

1. He told His disciples of His death on the Cross in advance.

"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2).

2. He received the anointing of fragrant oil and had His burial prepared.

"For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial" (Matthew 26:12).

3. He kept the last Passover with His disciples and instituted the Lord's Supper.

Sharing the bread and the cup, He taught them of His body, and of the blood of the covenant He would shed for the remission of sins.

"Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26).

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

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4. He prayed in Gethsemane and entrusted Himself wholly to the will of God.

"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

Thus Jesus knew His death on the Cross beforehand, taught His disciples its meaning as He kept the Passover and the Lord's Supper, and then, through prayer, prepared to obey the will of God.

[Question] 2. Matthew 26:1—explain the meaning shown by the words *"when Jesus had finished all these sayings."*

"When Jesus had finished all these sayings" means that Jesus had completed His long teaching on the Mount of Olives concerning the last days, that is, all the words of chapters 24 and 25.

"Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples" (Matthew 26:1).

The Gospel of Matthew closes each of Jesus' long discourses with the same formula (Matthew 7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1). In Matthew 26:1, however, it is recorded that He had finished all these sayings, showing that this is not simply the end of one discourse but the conclusion of the whole public teaching He had carried on throughout His public ministry.

This expression therefore marks a turning point: the ministry of the word was completed, and now the ministry of the Cross begins. As soon as Jesus finished His teaching, He said that after two days, at the Passover, He would be betrayed to be crucified.

[Question] 3. Matthew 26:2—explain what distinguishes this Passion prediction from the earlier ones.

The fourth Passion prediction of Jesus has the following features.

• He revealed the exact time of the Passion: *"after two days is the Passover."*

• He said plainly that He would be betrayed and crucified.

• By joining His death to the Passover, it shows that Jesus is the true Passover sacrifice who dies bearing the sins of mankind.

• Unlike the earlier predictions, He focused on the event of the Cross now immediately at hand, rather than mentioning the resurrection again.

"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified" (Matthew 26:2).

The fourth Passion prediction is therefore the prophecy that reveals the time and the manner of the Cross in the most imminent and concrete way. It shows that the death of Jesus was not an accident but a work He accomplished voluntarily according to God's plan of salvation.

[Question] 4. Matthew 26:3–4—what did the members of the Sanhedrin discuss when they assembled?

The members of the Sanhedrin discussed how to seize Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But fearing that an uproar might break out among the people during the Passover feast, they tried to avoid that time.

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"And plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people'" (Matthew 26:4–5).

Here "*trickery*" means a cunning scheme, and "*an uproar*" means a riot or disturbance breaking out among the people.

[Question] 5. Matthew 26:5—explain the time the council members tried to avoid for seizing and killing Jesus, and the reason.

They did not intend to seize and kill Jesus during the Passover feast, for fear that an uproar would break out among the people.

"But they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people'" (Matthew 26:5).

But contrary to their plan, Jesus was seized and crucified at the Passover, just as He had foretold. This shows that everything was accomplished according to the will of God rather than the plans of men.

[Question] 6. Matthew 26:6–13—for what purpose is the anointing of Jesus recorded at this point?

The event of Jesus being anointed is recorded for the following purposes.

• It shows that the act of the woman who poured the fragrant oil was a work that prepared in advance for the death and burial of Jesus.

• It reveals once again that the death of Jesus on the Cross was imminent.

• It teaches the love and devotion of the woman who offered the precious oil without reserve.

• In contrast with the murderous plot of the chief priests and the treacherous attitude of Judas, it shows the posture of one who truly believes in and serves Jesus.

• It causes what this woman did to be told and commemorated wherever the gospel is preached.

"For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (Matthew 26:12–13).

This event, therefore, is not simply a matter of pouring oil. Mary believed that Jesus would take on the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, die on the Cross, and rise again to save mankind; knowing His death and burial, she prepared for them in advance. Grateful for the grace of salvation she had received, she offered her most precious thing and served the work of the gospel.

[Question] 7. Matthew 26:7—who is *"a woman"*?

The Gospel of Matthew does not give her name and records her only as *"a woman,"* but according to the parallel passage in the Gospel of John, this woman is Mary, the sister of Lazarus and Martha.

"A woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table" (Matthew 26:7).

"Then Mary took a pound of very costly oil of spikenard, anointed the feet of Jesus, and wiped His feet with her hair. And the house was filled with the fragrance of the oil" (John 12:3).

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Therefore, *“a woman”* is Mary, who lived in Bethany. She believed that Jesus would take on the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, die on the Cross, and rise again to complete salvation; knowing the death and burial of Jesus, she poured out the precious fragrant oil without reserve. This woman is a different person from the sinful woman who appears in Luke chapter 7.

[Question] 8. Matthew 26:8–9—what did the disciples think when they saw Mary’s anointing?

When the disciples saw Mary pour the costly fragrant oil on Jesus, they thought she had wasted it in vain and were indignant. They said the oil could have been sold at a high price and the money given to the poor.

“But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, ‘Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor’” (Matthew 26:8–9).

The disciples calculated only the material value of the oil, but Mary believed that Jesus would take on the sins of mankind, die on the Cross, and rise again to complete salvation. Knowing the death and burial of Jesus, she poured out the oil and served the work of the gospel.

[Question] 9. Matthew 26:10–12—what did Jesus say about Mary when she was criticized by the disciples?

Jesus told the disciples not to trouble Mary and defended her, saying that she had done a good work for Him. He also

explained that Mary's pouring of the fragrant oil was a work that prepared His burial in advance.

"But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial'" (Matthew 26:10–12).

The disciples judged it a waste, but Jesus acknowledged as a good and precious service what Mary had done in faith, knowing His death and burial. Grateful for the grace of the salvation she had received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Mary offered her most precious thing for the Lord and for the work of the gospel.

[Question] 10. Matthew 26:12—what does it mean that Mary's anointing was for the burial of Jesus?

Here *"burial"* refers to the funeral and interment of laying a dead person's body in the tomb. In those days, a body was prepared for burial by applying spices and fragrant oil.

"For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial" (Matthew 26:12).

Mary knew and believed that Jesus would soon die on the Cross and be buried. She also believed that Jesus had taken on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and that He would be judged on the Cross and rise again to save mankind. So she poured the fragrant oil on Jesus' body in advance and prepared for His death and burial, and Jesus received this act as precious faith that served the work of the gospel.

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[Question] 11. Matthew 26:13—how is the prophecy *"wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her"* being fulfilled today?

The prophecy of Jesus is being fulfilled as the event of Mary's anointing is recorded in the Gospels, and as the Bible is translated into many languages of the world and preached to all the earth.

"Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her" (Matthew 26:13).

Today as well, wherever the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached, the story of how Mary, knowing the death and burial of Jesus, poured out the precious oil and served Him is told together with it. And like Mary, the service of the workers of faith who have given their time, possessions, and lives to the preaching of the gospel is also remembered before the Lord. Thus the word of Jesus is fulfilled just as it is, beyond ages and nations.

[Question] 12. Matthew 26:15–16—how much money was the thirty pieces of silver Judas received as the price of handing Jesus over?

"Thirty pieces of silver" is generally understood as thirty shekels of silver, the same amount as the compensation paid under the Law of the Old Testament for the life of a male or female servant.

"If the ox gores a male or female servant, he shall give to their master thirty shekels of silver, and the ox shall be stoned"

(Exodus 21:32).

"And said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him" (Matthew 26:15–16).

Thirty pieces of silver, therefore, was the price of one servant's life in those days. Judas Iscariot appraised Jesus, the Son of God, at the price of a servant and sold Him. In today's currency it is difficult to convert exactly, since the weight of silver and its purchasing power in those days differed from today's.

[Question] 13. Matthew 26:20–22—in what situation did Jesus foretell Judas's betrayal?

Jesus foretold Judas's betrayal at the last Passover supper, while He was eating with the twelve disciples.

"When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me'" (Matthew 26:20–21).

The Passover supper was the most intimate place of fellowship, where teacher and disciples shared the bread and the cup at one table. By speaking of the betrayal at that very table, Jesus revealed that the one who would sell Him was not an enemy outside but one of the disciples eating with Him.

Hearing this word, the disciples were exceedingly sorrowful and each asked, *"Lord, is it I?"* Jesus did not immediately reveal Judas's name. This was to give Judas the opportunity to turn back until the last moment. But Judas never turned back.

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[Question] 14. Matthew 26:24—to which passages of the Old Testament do the words *"The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him"* point?

The words *"The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him"* do not point to only one verse; they point to the many Old Testament prophecies concerning the betrayal, suffering, and death of Jesus.

• The betrayal by a close companion—Psalm 41:9

"Even my own familiar friend in whom I trusted, Who ate my bread, Has lifted up his heel against me."

• Being sold for thirty pieces of silver—Zechariah 11:12–13

"So they weighed out for my wages thirty pieces of silver."

• The scattering of the disciples—Zechariah 13:7

"Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered."

• The suffering and death in the place of sinners—Isaiah 53:5

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities."

• His hands and feet pierced and lots cast for His garments—Psalm 22:16, 18

"The congregation of the wicked has enclosed Me. They pierced My hands and My feet."

"They divide My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots."

These words, therefore, mean that the whole course in which Jesus is seized through Judas's betrayal, suffers, and dies on the Cross is accomplished according to God's plan of salvation prophesied in advance in the Old Testament.

[Question] 15. Matthew 26:24—what is the woe that will come upon Judas Iscariot, who sold Jesus?

The *"woe"* that will come upon Judas Iscariot does not mean mere misfortune in this world; it means the judgment of God and eternal destruction for the sin of betraying Jesus.

"The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born" (Matthew 26:24).

The death of Jesus was accomplished according to God's plan of salvation recorded in the Scriptures, but that does not remove Judas's sin and responsibility. Judas heard the warning of Jesus and still betrayed Him voluntarily for money. As a result, he fell into remorse and despair and took his own life, and in the end he was not saved but came under the judgment of God.

The words *"It would have been good for that man if he had not been born"* emphasize how dreadful and eternal the punishment Judas would receive is.

[Question] 16. Matthew 26:26–29—how did the ceremony of the Lord's Supper begin, and what does it mean?

The Lord's Supper is the ceremony Jesus Himself instituted on the night before He bore the Cross, while having the last Passover meal with His disciples. Jesus gave the bread and the cup of the Passover to His disciples and taught them their new meaning.

"And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and

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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).

The meaning of the Lord's Supper is as follows.

• The bread points to the body of Jesus. With that body Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, and went to the Cross. To eat the bread means to believe this fact with the heart.

• The cup points to the blood of Jesus' covenant. Because of the sins He had taken on with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus shed His blood and was judged on the Cross, and so completed the remission of sins.

• The bread and the cup make us remember together the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood He shed on the Cross. To believe in the body and the blood of Jesus is to receive the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith.

• The Lord's Supper is a ceremony commemorating the grace of salvation. The bread and the wine do not themselves remove anyone's sins; what matters is believing with the heart the saving work of Jesus they represent.

• The Lord's Supper shows the hope of the kingdom of God.

"I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

The Lord's Supper, therefore, is the ceremony in which we remember and believe that Jesus saved us with His own body and blood, and look forward to being with the Lord in the coming kingdom of God.

[Question] 17. Matthew 26:26–29—with what heart should the saints take part in the Lord's Supper?

The believer who comes to the Lord's Supper must first clearly know and believe the meaning of salvation that the bread and the cup represent.

"Take, eat; this is My body" (Matthew 26:26).

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

The fitting posture is as follows.

• Receiving the bread, we must believe that Jesus received all our sins passed on to His body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist.

• Receiving the cup, we must believe that Jesus paid the price of sin in our place on the Cross and completed the remission of sins.

• We must not take part as a mere religious rite, but remember with gratitude the grace of the One who saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

• We must not boast of our own deeds, but rely only on the remission of sins received through the body and blood of Jesus.

• We must take part with a heart of peace and unity with other believers.

• We must hold the hope of being with the Lord in the coming kingdom of God.

"I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29).

A fitting posture for the Lord's Supper does not mean that a person must become morally perfect. It is taking part with gratitude and reverence, believing the fact that Jesus took on all

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our sins with the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment of those sins with the blood of the Cross.

[Question] 18. Matthew 26:28—what covenant thought is contained in "*My blood of the new covenant*"?

In the Bible, a covenant is the promise and the relationship God established with His people, and blood was the sign that confirmed that covenant.

In the covenant at Mount Sinai in the Old Testament, Moses sprinkled the blood of the sacrifices on the people and established the covenant.

"And Moses took the blood, sprinkled it on the people, and said, 'This is the blood of the covenant which the LORD has made with you according to all these words'" (Exodus 24:8).

But God promised a new covenant, in which He would completely remit the sins of His people and remember them no more.

"For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more" (Jeremiah 31:34).

Jesus fulfilled this new covenant by taking on the sins of mankind with His baptism and shedding His blood on the Cross.

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

Therefore, *"My blood of the new covenant"* means the blood of the new covenant by which Jesus bore the price of sin with His own life and guaranteed, to everyone who believes this fact, the complete remission of sins and the grace of becoming God's people.

[Question] 19. Matthew 26:31—with what word of the Old Testament did Jesus foretell that the disciples would forsake Him?

When Jesus said that the disciples would forsake Him and be scattered, He quoted Zechariah 13:7.

"'Awake, O sword, against My Shepherd, Against the Man who is My Companion,' Says the LORD of hosts. 'Strike the Shepherd, And the sheep will be scattered; Then I will turn My hand against the little ones'" (Zechariah 13:7).

"Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: "I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered"'" (Matthew 26:31).

Here *"the Shepherd"* refers to Jesus, and *"the sheep of the flock"* to the disciples. This prophecy was fulfilled when Jesus was seized and made to suffer, and the disciples, gripped by fear, forsook Him and fled.

[Question] 20. Matthew 26:32—explain the lesson of the resurrection promise given after the Passion and the scattering of the disciples.

Immediately after foretelling that all the disciples would forsake Him and be scattered, Jesus gave them the promise of His resurrection and of meeting them again.

"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee" (Matthew 26:32).

This prophecy teaches, first, that the Passion and the scattering are not the end. Whenever Jesus spoke of His death, He always spoke of the resurrection with it. The Cross is not a

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failure but God's plan of salvation, and that plan does not end in death but is completed in the resurrection. Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross receiving the judgment of those sins, and completed salvation by rising from the dead just as He had said.

Second, it shows the love of the Lord, who knew the disciples' failure in advance and yet did not cast them away. Jesus knew that the disciples would forsake Him and run away, and even that Peter would deny Him, but He did not condemn them and cut them off; He promised to meet them again in Galilee. According to this promise, the risen Jesus met His disciples in Galilee (Matthew 28:16).

This resurrection promise, therefore, teaches the faithfulness of the Lord, who restores those who have fallen. Before their own weakness and failure, believers must not despair but hold on to the promise and grace of the Lord who rose from the dead.

[Question] 21. Matthew 26:39—what does *"this cup"* refer to?

"This cup" refers to the arrest, insult, scourging, the suffering and death of the Cross that Jesus was about to undergo, and the judgment of God upon the sins of mankind.

"He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will'" (Matthew 26:39).

When Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River, He took all the sins of mankind onto His own body, and so He had to shed

His blood and die on the Cross to pay the price of those sins. Therefore, "to drink this cup" means to receive in our place all the punishment for the sin of the world and to complete salvation.

That Jesus prayed for this cup to pass from Him does not mean that He refused the work of salvation; it shows that as a true man He felt the extreme pain of the Cross. Even so, He obeyed the will of God the Father above His own will.

[Question] 22. Matthew 26:39—what can we learn from the prayer of Jesus, "*Not as I will, but as You will*"?

The lesson we learn from the prayer of Jesus is that we should tell God our earnest desires honestly, but in the end we must seek and obey God's will before our own.

"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will" (Matthew 26:39).

Jesus did not hide His human anguish and His desire to avoid the suffering of the Cross. But through prayer He accepted the will of God the Father and obeyed the way of the Cross.

True prayer, therefore, is not forcing our own will on God; it is telling Him our desires and then entrusting ourselves to His will, believing that His will is the best and the most right. Even when there is suffering on the path of following God's will, we must learn the posture of obeying in faith.

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[Question] 23. Matthew 26:45— what did Jesus mean by the words *"Are you still sleeping and resting?"*

The words *"Sleep on now and take your rest"* are not permission for the disciples to keep on sleeping; they point out that the opportunity to watch and pray has already passed. It is an expression carrying the sense of the rebuke, *"Are you still sleeping and resting?"*

"Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand'" (Matthew 26:45–46).

Since Jesus said at once, *"Rise, let us be going,"* it cannot actually mean to sleep more. While Jesus was praying, the time for the disciples to watch and pray came to an end, and now Judas and the crowd had arrived and the hour for Jesus to be seized had come. Therefore, these words teach us that once a spiritual opportunity is missed, the time comes when we must face reality through our actions.

[Question] 24. Matthew 26:49–50—explain the attitude Jesus showed before Judas's kiss and His arrest.

When Judas greeted Him, saying, *"Greetings, Rabbi!"* and kissed Him, Jesus did not become angry or resist, but called him *"Friend."* And He showed that He already knew what Judas had come to do.

"Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings,

Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him" (Matthew 26:49–50).

Jesus did not suffer Judas's betrayal in ignorance; He knew everything. Yet He did not curse Judas or meet him with violence, but allowed Himself to be seized in order to accomplish the saving work recorded in the Scriptures. The words *"do what you have come to do"* were not an approval of Judas's conduct; they revealed that Jesus already knew his intent and his deed.

[Question] 25. Matthew 26:52—what can we learn from the words *"all who take the sword will perish by the sword"*?

The words *"all who take the sword will perish by the sword"* teach that the person who tries to solve problems by violence ends up perishing in the vicious circle of violence and revenge.

"But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword'" (Matthew 26:52).

Peter used the sword out of zeal to protect Jesus, but his act did not accord with God's will and God's way. Jesus could have called more than twelve legions of angels, yet He did not save Himself by violence but obeyed the way of the Cross to fulfill the plan of salvation recorded in the Scriptures.

Therefore, the will of God and the gospel are not accomplished by man's anger or force. Rather than repaying evil with violence, believers must follow the word of God and righteous ways, and leave the final judgment to God.

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[Question] 26. Matthew 26:56—why did all the disciples run away?

The direct reason the disciples forsook Jesus and fled was that, when the armed crowd arrested Jesus, they were afraid that they too would be seized and killed. Moreover, having failed to watch and pray, they were spiritually unprepared to withstand the sudden temptation.

"'But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled" (Matthew 26:56).

The disciples had declared that they would not forsake Jesus even if they had to die, but when real danger came, they all fled in the weakness and fear of the flesh. At the same time, this was the fulfillment of Zechariah's prophecy, *"I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered."* This event, therefore, teaches that human resolve alone cannot overcome temptation, and that we must believe the word of God and stay awake in prayer.

[Question] 27. Matthew 26:58—explain Peter's conduct when Jesus was led away to the house of the high priest.

Peter could not draw near to Jesus but followed Him at a distance, as far as the courtyard of the high priest's house. And he went inside to see the end, and sat with the servants.

"But Peter followed Him at a distance to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end" (Matthew 26:58).

Peter followed because he was anxious about Jesus, but

fearing that he too might be seized, he kept his distance without revealing that he was a disciple. This shows that the desire to follow Jesus and the fear that made him want to avoid danger were both in him.

[Question] 28. Matthew 26:59—what does the fact that the chief priests and the council sought false testimony show about the character of that trial?

The fact that the chief priests and all the council sought false testimony shows that their trial was not a fair trial to establish truth and justice, but an unjust trial whose conclusion had been fixed in advance in order to kill Jesus.

"Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death" (Matthew 26:59).

They did not investigate whether Jesus had actually sinned; they sought false testimony to create a pretext for the death penalty. The judges even played the role of accusers and tried to fabricate evidence, which shows that the trial was carried out in prejudice, envy, and malice. At the same time, it shows that however hard they looked for false evidence, they could find no true sin in Jesus.

[Question] 29. Matthew 26:62–63—what does it mean that Jesus answered nothing during the interrogation?

Jesus kept silent, not because He was guilty or had nothing to say. It shows that He did not defend Himself against the

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false testimony to escape the Cross, but voluntarily obeyed God's plan of salvation.

"And the high priest arose and said to Him, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But Jesus kept silent" (Matthew 26:62–63).

This silence fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah.

"He was oppressed and He was afflicted, Yet He opened not His mouth; He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, And as a sheep before its shearers is silent, So He opened not His mouth" (Isaiah 53:7).

Jesus was silent before the false accusations, but when the high priest asked whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, He answered clearly. The silence of Jesus, therefore, was not helplessness but conscious obedience, bearing the false trial in order to accomplish salvation on the Cross.

[Question] 30. Matthew 26:64—what does Jesus' testimony about Himself, *"hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven,"* declare?

To Caiaphas's question Jesus answered, *"It is as you said,"* clearly acknowledging that He is the Son of God and the promised Christ.

"Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven'" (Matthew 26:64).

These words carry the following meaning.

- Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.
- After dying on the Cross, He rises again, ascends, and

shares in the power and glory of God.

• He will come again in glory on the clouds of heaven.

• Now He stands in the place of the accused, interrogated by men, but in the end He comes as the Judge who judges the world.

These words, therefore, are a testimony that proclaims together the deity and messianic identity of Jesus, His resurrection and ascension, His return and the judgment. Even those who were condemning Jesus will one day see that He is the true Son of God.

[Question] 31. Matthew 26:65–66—explain the conclusion and the sentencing process of the Jewish religious trial of Jesus.

When Jesus revealed that He is the Christ, the Son of God, the high priest Caiaphas tore his clothes and declared that Jesus had spoken blasphemy. He then asked the council members for their opinion, and they judged that Jesus deserved death.

"Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death'" (Matthew 26:65–66).

They branded the words of Jesus as the crime of blasphemy against God. But Jesus had not made a false claim; He had revealed His true identity. This verdict, therefore, was an unjust judgment that condemned the truth as falsehood and sentenced the sinless Jesus to death.

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[Question] 32. Matthew 26:67–68—what insults and humiliation did Jesus suffer after the trial?

After receiving the death sentence, Jesus was spat on in His face and struck with fists and slapped with palms. People also mocked Him as a prophet, telling Him to guess who had struck Him.

"Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?'" (Matthew 26:67–68).

Spitting in someone's face is an act of extreme contempt and insult. Jesus suffered not only physical violence but also the mental humiliation of having His identity and authority as the Christ mocked. Yet He did not resist or retaliate, but silently bore all these insults and sufferings to save mankind.

[Question] 33. Matthew 26:69–75—compare how the event of Peter's denial appears in this account and in the other Gospels.

All four Gospels record that Peter denied Jesus three times in the courtyard of the high priest's house, and that a rooster soon crowed and the prophecy of Jesus was fulfilled. However, there are differences in the details each Gospel emphasizes.

The Gospel of Matthew emphasizes that Peter's denial grew progressively worse.

"Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed" (Matthew 26:74).

The Gospel of Luke records that when the rooster crowed, the Lord turned and looked at Peter; the Gospel of Mark

records more specifically that the rooster crowed a second time. The Gospel of John emphasizes that the third questioner was a relative of Malchus and had seen Peter directly in the garden of Gethsemane.

Though the details differ, the heart of all four Gospels is the same. Contrary to his bold claim, Peter denied Jesus three times, and when the rooster crowed, he remembered the word of Jesus and realized his weakness and his sin.

"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75).

[Question] 34. Matthew 26:70, 72, 74—how did Peter's denial of Jesus grow progressively worse?

Peter's denial grew worse in the following stages.

1. The first was a simple denial.

Peter evaded before them all, saying he did not know what the woman was talking about.

"But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying'" (Matthew 26:70).

2. The second was a denial accompanied by an oath.

To make people believe his words, he swore an oath and said he did not know Jesus.

"But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!'" (Matthew 26:72).

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3. The third was a vehement denial accompanied by curses and an oath.

Peter declared that he did not know Jesus, with the attitude that he would accept a curse upon himself if he were lying.

"Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed" (Matthew 26:74).

Peter's denial thus deepened from evasive words to an oath, and again to an obstinate denial that even mobilized curses. When a small denial made in fear was not corrected, it led to greater lies and denials.

[Question] 35. Matthew 26:73—explain the meaning of the statement that Peter's speech revealed his identity.

That Peter's speech revealed his identity means that his manner of speaking was that of a Galilean.

"And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you'" (Matthew 26:73).

The people of Galilee differed in accent and pronunciation from the people of the region of Judea, where Jerusalem was. Since Jesus and His disciples were mostly from Galilee, the people gathered in the courtyard of Caiaphas's house could tell from Peter's speech alone that he was a Galilean, that is, one of Jesus' company.

Peter tried to hide his identity, but every time he opened his mouth, it was revealed instead. This shows that however much a person tries to hide it, who he belongs to comes out in his words and his life.

[Question] 36. Matthew 26:74—what kind of conduct is meant by Peter denying with curses?

That Peter began to *"curse"* means, not that he cursed Jesus, but that he denied Him vehemently, calling a curse down on himself, as if to say he would accept a curse if his words were false.

"Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed" (Matthew 26:74).

When the people around him became convinced that he was a disciple of Jesus, Peter used even curses and oaths to make them believe that he did not know Him. This shows that his denial had gone beyond mere evasion and reached its strongest and most obstinate stage. But when the rooster crowed, he remembered the word of Jesus, realized his sin, and wept bitterly.

[Question] 37. Matthew 26:75—how did Peter respond when the rooster crowed and he remembered the word of Jesus?

When Peter heard the rooster crow, he remembered the word of Jesus, that before the rooster crowed he would deny Him three times. And he went outside and wept bitterly, repenting of his wrong.

"And Peter remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly" (Matthew 26:75).

Peter's bitter weeping was not mere emotional sorrow; it was tears of repentance, shed as he realized that, contrary to his bold claim, he had denied Jesus three times. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Offer your alabaster flask of fragrant oil to the Lord

< Matthew 26:1-29 >

"Now it came to pass, when Jesus had finished all these sayings, that He said to His disciples, 'You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified.' Then the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of the people assembled at the palace of the high priest, who was called Caiaphas, and plotted to take Jesus by trickery and kill Him. But they said, 'Not during the feast, lest there be an uproar among the people.' And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.' But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.' Then one of the twelve, called Judas Iscariot, went to the chief priests and said, 'What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?' And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. So

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from that time he sought opportunity to betray Him. Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?' And He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, 'My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'''' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, 'Lord, is it I?' He answered and said, 'He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.' Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, 'Rabbi, is it I?' He said to him, 'You have said it.' And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.'"

Our Lord already knew everything that was going to happen to Him. The Lord knew in advance that He would be sold to the chief priests and crucified. So He told His disciples of it Himself.

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Jesus, who knew His death in advance

In Matthew 26:2 the Lord said, *"You know that after two days is the Passover, and the Son of Man will be delivered up to be crucified."* As the Passover drew near, the chief priests and the religious leaders gathered at the palace of Caiaphas. They meant to avoid the Passover, lest there be an uproar among the people, but Jesus had to die as the true Passover Lamb.

The Passover of Israel was originally the great feast commemorating that nation's exodus from Egypt. Every feast has its customs. Just as we have the custom of the whole family, scattered far and wide, gathering to share food together on our holidays, Israel had the custom of releasing one prisoner at a great feast like the Passover.

Israel had already become a vassal state of Rome. So on a good day like the Passover, one criminal was specially released. Just as in our country prisoners are sometimes released by special amnesty on great national days, that nation also had such a custom. It seems there was also the practice of executing an utterly wicked criminal on that day. As a result, Barabbas was released, and Jesus was crucified and died on this Passover. But according to the time God had appointed, this came to pass at the Passover after all.

While they were devising their scheme, Jesus already knew it all. The Lord knew that at this Passover He would be sold into men's hands as the sacrificial Lamb, and He told His disciples this fact.

The woman who poured out the alabaster flask of fragrant oil

Around that time, Jesus was at the house of Simon the leper in Bethany, having a meal. Then a woman came with an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil and poured the oil on the head of Jesus as He was eating. Jesus remained still.

This fragrant oil was so precious that its fragrance filled the air. The amount held in one alabaster flask was not small either. The woman broke the flask and poured all that precious oil on Jesus' head at once. The oil ran down His head, and the whole room was filled with the fragrance. It was a fragrance so strong one could hardly breathe.

Jesus remained still, but the disciples grew angry and their faces changed. In Matthew 26:8–9 the disciples said indignantly, *"Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor."* In the disciples' eyes, the woman had poured out the costly oil all at once without sparing a drop, and they simply could not understand it.

But Jesus rather rebuked the disciples and defended the woman. The Lord said, *"You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always" (Matthew 26:11).* And He said that this woman's pouring of the oil on His body was a work that prepared for His burial.

In Matthew 26:13 the Lord promised, *"Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."* In fact, this woman knew that Jesus would soon die. She knew that Jesus would take on all our sins, die on the Cross, and save all mankind completely. So she prepared the Lord's burial in advance.

In Jewish custom, when a person died, precious fragrant oil

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was applied to the body so that it would not give off the smell of decay. It was with that heart that this woman poured the oil. This woman's heart was joined to the heart of Jesus. Jesus had said He would be sold to be crucified at the Passover, and at that very time this woman came and poured the fragrant oil. She wanted this joyful news—that Jesus received baptism from John, took on all the sins of the world, died on the Cross, and saves herself and all mankind from sin—to be preached to everyone. With that heart she poured the fragrant oil on Jesus' head.

Judas Iscariot, who sold the Lord for thirty pieces of silver

This woman did this to serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But on the opposite side another person appears: Judas Iscariot. Judas was one of the twelve disciples of Jesus. After the woman poured the fragrant oil, Judas slipped out alone and went to where the chief priests were gathered.

Judas went there and said, *"What are you willing to give me if I deliver Him to you?" (Matthew 26:15)* And they counted out to him thirty pieces of silver. Thirty pieces of silver was enough to buy a field, so it was no small sum. Judas took the advance payment on the spot, and from then on he sought an opportunity to hand Jesus over.

Would our Lord not have known this? Our Lord is God. The Lord knew fully when and in what manner He would die. He knew what Judas had done, and what Judas was going to do.

The Passover supper and the bread and the cup of the Lord's Supper

Jesus had His disciples go to a certain man in the city and tell him that the Teacher's time was at hand and that He would keep the Passover at his house with His disciples. When the disciples did as the Lord had directed, that man had the whole Passover table prepared. He set out the bread and the wine and welcomed Jesus and the disciples.

While eating there, Jesus said, *"One of you will betray Me" (Matthew 26:21)*. The disciples fell into great sorrow. Each of them asked in fear whether he himself was the one who would sell the Lord. Jesus said, *"He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me" (Matthew 26:23)*. The one who was just then dipping bread in the dish with Jesus was Judas.

When Judas asked, *"Rabbi, is it I?"* Jesus answered, *"You have said it" (Matthew 26:25)*. How plain this is! Judas had already made his plan to sell Him and had even received the advance payment. Now, when the Passover day came, he was going to hand Jesus over. Jesus told that very Judas that he was the one. But Judas did not turn back to the end; he pretended not to know. Because Jesus knew all this, He said that it would have been better for the man who sells Him if he had not been born.

At that Passover table our Lord instituted the Lord's Supper. *"Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body'" (Matthew 26:26)*. He also took the cup of wine, gave thanks, and gave it to the disciples, saying, *"Drink from it, all of you" (Matthew 26:27)*. In Matthew 26:28 the Lord said of this cup, *"For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* The disciples took the bread and the cup and ate and drank.

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Dear fellow believers, there is one fact we must know. In this world there are people who do the spiritual work of serving the gospel of Jesus, and there are people who, like Judas, sell Jesus. Whether he means to or not, every person belongs to one of these two. Either he lives selling Jesus to satisfy the desires of his own flesh, or he lives preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to everyone and serving the work of saving souls—one of these two lives.

People like Judas, who sell Jesus, are still many in this world today. It was not only Judas. Those who lead a merely religious life without being born again, and those like the chief priests who sought to seize Jesus and kill Him, are such people. Those who are not born again sell Jesus. There are people who make and sell books that do not even contain the gospel of the water and the blood, selling Jesus. There are also many who become rich in the name of Jesus.

There are also those who, while claiming to help the poor, establish mission organizations under the name of ministers and demand vast land and great buildings. Under them there are people like that woman who poured the fragrant oil, who truly want to serve the Lord. There are those who offer to give up their own possessions. Yet some leaders use such devotion, appearing even on broadcasts to display themselves and being pleased with themselves. Dear fellow believers, that is precisely the act of selling Jesus.

Then what about us who are born again? How could we born-again people sell Jesus? We cannot. But before us also lies a fork in the road: will we live for our own flesh, or will we live serving the gospel?

Judas sold Jesus and gained thirty pieces of silver. He meant to build a house with it and live on. This woman, on the contrary, lost everything she had. This fragrant oil was originally what the

women of Israel laid up as the resource for their marriage. They would sell it and marry with that money. This woman broke open her whole marriage portion and poured it on the Lord. In serving the gospel, this woman lost all she had, while Judas, who had been a disciple of Jesus, sold Him and gained thirty pieces of silver.

In the Old Testament there is an ordinance by which a person paid a ransom for his own life to receive the remission of his sin. The ransom for a man and for a woman were each fixed. In Christ, a man and a woman are exactly the same. But what I want to speak of here is not the price but the heart. Will we live for the prosperity of our own flesh, or will we live serving the gospel?

We born-again people stand at this very fork in the road. After being born again, if we think according to the flesh, the thought comes: if I live this way, my flesh will be comfortable. But one side of the heart is pricked. For to serve the gospel, it seems we must give everything. It seems we must break open our whole marriage portion like this woman. So a conflict arises in the heart. Shall I live this way or that way—can I not adjust somewhere in the middle? But in serving this gospel there is no such middle ground. And so it is truly distressing.

The question we must decide after receiving salvation

In the end we must decide whether we will live for the flesh or for the preaching of the gospel. It is the question of how we will live our whole life. Will we live a life that serves the gospel, pouring out fragrant oil for the Lord's burial, so that this gospel spreads through the whole world like fragrance and everyone receives the remission of sins—or will we live for our own flesh?

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This is a question we must decide after receiving salvation. It is like school, where there are required subjects and elective subjects. Having received salvation, we have now come to the place where we must set our hearts on how we will live the rest of our lives.

Dear fellow believers, after this woman poured out all her fragrant oil, did she marry afterward or not? It is not recorded in the Bible, but she certainly would have married. For the Lord said that whoever desires to lose his life for His sake will save it, and whoever desires to save his life will lose it.

From what I have seen in my life so far, and from the many coworkers who serve together with me, it has been so. Those who sought to die lived, and those who sought to live rather died. Those who said they hated serving the Lord invariably went wrong. But those who resolved, "If I perish, I perish," and served the Lord, lived well instead. The answer is clear. We too must stand where this woman stood, and follow that path.

This is not something finished with a single decision. It is not a matter of a single day. It is the matter of setting in our hearts how we will live our whole lives. Therefore we must think deeply, and someone must teach us what is right. If no one teaches us, it is truly hard to reach this decision alone.

Even if we give all we have, it does not amount to much. If we give even that, we may go hungry at once. But our heart must be like this: if the Lord desires it, we give. The person who serves the gospel is the person who has set his heart in this way. Serving the gospel in the Lord, receiving supply in due season, receiving the Lord's blessing, giving and receiving with one another—this is how we live our whole life.

Dear fellow believers, this is not a word telling you to do it one hundred percent in deeds. It is telling you to offer your heart in this way, to have the faith that this is right. The Lord wants us

ourselves more than our possessions. He wants our faith, and He wants us to follow Him.

The Lord deals with this matter of the heart. The Lord asks us. Here are both Judas Iscariot and the woman who poured the fragrant oil—which side is right? We answer that this woman is right. Then the Lord asks again. Are you Judas, or are you this woman? Do you want to give your whole self so that the gospel may be preached, or do you want to be saved alone and live only for your flesh, with no concern for the preaching of the gospel? The Lord asks you and me this question.

Dear fellow believers, the answer is clear. We must do as this woman did. We Christians must live for the preaching of the gospel. When the oil was poured, the fragrance filled the whole room. The Lord said that wherever the gospel is preached, what this woman did is to be told as a memorial. This means that this is right. Whatever we eat or drink, whatever occupation we have, whether we form a family and live—amid all that life, it is right to live serving the work of preaching the gospel of Jesus to the whole world.

The meaning of the name Jesus Christ

Those who are not born again still sell Jesus today. They sell Jesus to enlarge seminaries and become professors, to build chapels and buy land, to gain honor and buy cars. In the name of Jesus they sell all kinds of things and take their own profit. Those who have lived that way all regret it. If only they were not leaders, they could cast off their honor, confess that they too are sinners, and believe in Jesus; but because of the honor and dignity of being a leader, they cannot even do that.

And so they fail to receive the remission of sins. Laymen

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receive the remission of sins, while some elders and pastors fail to receive it. Why is that? Because of their honor. Once, a certain sister asked a pastor whether he knew the meaning of the name Jesus. The pastor answered that it means the Savior. That sister who asked a pastor the meaning of the name Jesus is remarkable indeed. In fact, there are people who do not know even that meaning.

Then what does the word Christ mean? We know who Jesus is, but do you know what the word Christ means? There are truly many who do not know this. They know it if they look at a book, but most people do not know when suddenly asked. Probably, among the Christians of the whole world, 98 percent would not know if suddenly asked like this.

The word Christ means the Anointed One. On whom is oil poured? Oil is poured on kings, priests, and prophets. Jesus carried out these three offices. As King, as Prophet, and as Priest, He fulfilled those duties. As Prophet He taught us how we must believe to receive the remission of sins; as Priest He took on all the sins of mankind; and as the High Priest He offered His own body and saved us. That is why we call the Lord Jesus Christ. If a person only knows rightly the meaning of this name, the possibility is great that he will receive the remission of sins. Yet people do not know it. They may know it by rote, but when asked concretely what it actually means, those who do not know are beyond counting.

That pastor cannot receive the remission of sins without giving up his honor. It is the same for an elder, and the same for a doctor of theology. Before Jesus we must first humble ourselves. Some say, is it not rude to ask such a question of me, a doctor of theology? But what rudeness is there? One asks because one truly does not know, and one asks because one has not received the remission of sins.

The Lord who came by water and blood

Our Lord came to this earth and remitted the sins of you and me. He gave His body and He gave His blood. Breaking the bread, He said, take, eat; this is My body given for you. At the Passover this bread must be taken and eaten. Just as we take and eat it when we hold the Lord's Supper, it must enter one's own mouth and one must eat it oneself. Taking and eating the bread and the wine—that is the true purpose of the Passover ceremony.

He also gave the cup and said, this is My blood. My blood shed for many, the blood of the covenant—take and drink it, He said. He was promising: I will die like this and save you. He was saying: with the baptism I received from John, I will remove your sins.

Dear fellow believers, our Lord came by water and blood. He came with the body of Jesus and the blood of Jesus. And He told us to eat that body and blood. Everyone who has taken and eaten the body and blood of Jesus receives salvation. This is the work that Jesus, who is God, came to this earth and accomplished. Jesus received baptism from John, shouldered all the sins of the world on His own body, received the judgment on the Cross, shed His blood, and died. Who accomplished this salvation? God accomplished it. It is the work by which God caused us to be born again of water and the Spirit.

Just as He said, take and drink, take and eat—this work of saving us with the water and the blood is what God has done. It is God who washed our sins away clean, and God who delivered us from the judgment of sin. This water, too, is the work of the Holy Spirit, and our deliverance from sin is all the work of God.

Our Lord also said, *"But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom" (Matthew 26:29)*. What the

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Lord says is the most exact. We must not imagine or speculate. Paradise certainly exists. The Lord said that He would not drink on this earth before drinking that new fruit of the kingdom of heaven.

Our Lord saved us human beings with the water and the blood. Coming in person as a man by water and the Spirit, He took on the sins of mankind onto His own body with the baptism He received from John, gave His body over to the Cross to receive the judgment in our place, and by shedding His blood and giving up His life, He delivered all mankind from sin and judgment. This is how He saved you and me.

Do you and I want this gospel, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to be preached, or not? After receiving the remission of sins, will we live for our own flesh, or will we offer ourselves and our most precious things for the preaching of the gospel? This is the very point the Lord is speaking of today. We can only live one of these two lives. There is no middle. The person who stays ambiguous in the middle will one day leave altogether.

Even among those who have received the remission of sins, there are some who leave like this. Some do so because no one taught them and they did not know; others know but leave because a conflict arises in their hearts. Having received salvation, one ought to go to a born-again church; but on going and hearing the word, it seems one must live according to that word. To do so, one must grow distant from those who are not born again, and must spend time serving. The thought comes that living that way will lead to ruin. Such thoughts come because there is no faith. So they quit, saying they would rather not lead a life of faith at all. To live like that is precisely to live for one's own flesh and to have no interest in the preaching of the gospel.

The disciples, who did not know the heart of that woman who poured the fragrant oil, grew indignant. They said how good it

would have been to sell it and give to the poor. Today in our Church the brothers keep the accounts, but at that time Judas alone kept the accounts. Since the oil could fetch a great price if sold, Judas calculated inwardly that with it one family could live comfortably for a year, and so he was all the more vexed. But Jesus told them not to trouble the woman, and instead sternly rebuked the disciples.

Jesus said that what this woman did is to be commemorated. To commemorate means to regard this work as great. Serving the gospel after receiving the remission of sins and salvation, offering one's body for the preaching of the gospel, sacrificing oneself and offering what one has—He is saying, regard this as great. To the person who has received the remission of sins before God, this is what is truly great. We too must always commemorate this work. We must often look back at what that woman did.

We must at all times offer our lives for the preaching of the gospel. We must offer our lives to preach this gospel by which He saved us with the water and the Spirit. After we receive salvation, our life must be a life lived for the preaching of the gospel. There is no other meaning in it than this.

The poor you have with you always

Jesus said, *"You have the poor with you always" (Matthew 26:11)*. Dear fellow believers, the whole world says it will help the poor. Our country does so, many other countries do so, and international organizations do so. Yet however much they help, the poor do not disappear. It is because God has placed the poor here.

In some countries, grain is left over, and to control prices

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they even carry the surplus grain out and dump it into the sea. Even while it is thrown away like that, the poor are always there. However much people help, the poor do not disappear. God has deliberately left the poor as they are. For only when one is poor does one become poor in heart, and only then does one believe in Jesus. When the belly is full, people tend instead to act however they please.

God has spoken to us. The poor are always here; even if we help the poor in a human way, poverty does not disappear, nor is that the most right thing. The disciples of Jesus also had good intentions. The thought of selling that oil and giving to the poor looks good. But Jesus told them not to trouble the woman, and said that this woman had done what is right.

Dear fellow believers, we must live for the preaching of the gospel. We must not think, "Once I prosper, I will help the poor and also serve the gospel a little." That is not right. To live our whole lives preaching this gospel, by which He saved people and remitted sins with the water and the Spirit—this is the good work. It is a work many times better than helping the poor. It is thousands, tens of thousands of times better than helping the people of poor nations. For it is the work by which souls receive salvation.

We must draw a clear line in our hearts as to what the right life is. We must live with it clearly settled: this is what is right. Though we still carry the flesh, we must hold in our hearts that we are to live for the preaching of the gospel, and live by faith. We must not drift back and forth across this line. God does not bless the double-minded. However lacking we may be, our hearts at least must be clearly set.

We must set our hearts now, like this woman, and live as this woman did. This is not a word telling you to make your deeds one hundred percent like hers. It is to offer the heart, to have

faith in the heart. If we have the faith that this is right, then even without being told to do this or that, it comes about like taking grain out of the storehouse in due season to cook rice. What we have is our storehouse. Managing that storehouse well like stewards, distributing in due season, we must serve the gospel in this way. If we have nothing at all, how could we serve the gospel? We must live like this woman. We must live for souls, for the preaching of the gospel to the whole world.

We are the light and the salt of the world

Good deeds that look good in a human way are, on closer inspection, nothing. They can rather be hypocrisy. To take part truly in the work of saving souls, to put one's heart into that work, to set one's heart and live by faith—that is what is right. Even the disciples of Jesus did not know this at first. They did not know what it meant that what this woman had done was to be commemorated wherever the gospel is preached.

But after Jesus died, rose again, and ascended into heaven, the disciples must finally have realized it. They must have realized that living for the gospel of the water and the Spirit after receiving the remission of sins is the right life. They must have recalled how, when a woman broke open her alabaster flask and poured out the oil at the meal, they had thought her mad and rebuked her, and how Jesus had sternly rebuked them. At the time they did not know why they were rebuked, but the disciples must later have testified that they had come to realize that living for the preaching of the gospel is truly the right life.

Dear fellow believers, we must not bring shame on Jesus and on our God. Having received the remission of sins, we must not live only in the flesh—failing to live for the preaching of the

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gospel and living only for our own flesh—and so dishonor God. We are the light of this world. We are the salt of this world. If we born-again people do not serve the gospel, the whole world rots. It is because salt acts as a preservative that this world does not rot.

The Lord said, *"You are the salt of the earth" (Matthew 5:13)*, and He said, *"You are the light of the world" (Matthew 5:14)*. He did not say, become salt. The moment we received salvation we already became salt, and we already became light. The person who has received the remission of sins is a righteous person and a light. We have only to shine this light on people. To shine the light is precisely to preach the gospel. You and I must not live the life of Judas, but live the life of that woman who poured the fragrant oil. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Do the precious work of serving the Lord

< Matthew 26:6-13 >

"And when Jesus was in Bethany at the house of Simon the leper, a woman came to Him having an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil, and she poured it on His head as He sat at the table. But when His disciples saw it, they were indignant, saying, 'Why this waste? For this fragrant oil might have been sold for much and given to the poor.' But when Jesus was aware of it, He said to them, 'Why do you trouble the woman? For she has done a good work for Me. For you have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always. For in pouring this fragrant oil on My body, she did it for My burial. Assuredly, I say to you, wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.'"

The woman who poured an alabaster flask of fragrant oil on the Lord

Our Lord said, *"What this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her."* He said that wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.

This word is none other than the word that reveals why this woman poured the fragrant oil on Jesus' head. This woman

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poured the oil for the burial of Jesus. And this woman poured the oil out of gratitude for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John and took the sin of the world on His own body, died on the Cross, rose from the dead, and saved all mankind from sin. Grateful for this gospel, this woman poured the precious fragrant oil on Jesus' head and served the Lord.

The Bible says that this woman poured an alabaster flask of very costly fragrant oil on Jesus' head. An alabaster flask of very costly oil, to put it in our terms today, is a large sum of money equal to the wages a grown man receives for working a whole year in another's house.

This woman heard the news that Jesus was at the house of Simon the leper and came to Him. At that time Jesus was having a meal. The Jews eat reclining, half lying down. Jesus also was reclining like that, eating comfortably and conversing. Into that place a woman entered.

The woman came into the room, went to the head of Jesus, and poured a whole alabaster flask of oil on His head. Since she poured it on the head of Jesus while He was eating, the oil probably flowed down over His face. This woman brought a flask of precious oil and poured it on the head of Jesus.

"What this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her"

Some of the disciples who were watching this scene were so indignant that they said, *"Why this waste?"* They regarded this as a waste.

But Jesus did not speak of this woman's pouring of the oil in that way. Jesus said this: this woman has poured oil on My body

and made it fragrant for this gospel—for My death on the Cross and My burial. He said that this woman had poured this oil in advance for His body after death.

And Jesus said this about this woman: wherever this gospel is preached in the whole world, what this woman has done will also be told as a memorial to her.

The viewpoint from which Jesus saw it and the viewpoint from which the disciples saw it were very different. Some of the disciples saw it as waste, asking why the oil was wasted like that. But Jesus saw that this woman had poured the oil in advance for His body that would die on the Cross—for the work of cleansing His dead body and sprinkling it with fragrant oil for burial.

What this woman poured on Jesus' head was the perfume held in the alabaster flask. Do you know perfume? This woman poured out a very large and precious flask of perfume without leaving a single drop. Jesus saw that with that oil this woman had served the gospel. He said that this woman had served the Lord for the preaching of the gospel; she had not wasted it.

"But Me you do not have always"

Jesus said to the indignant disciples, *"You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always."* In fact, our Lord is not always with the disciples. Before long, He would bear the sin of the world that He had taken on through the baptism He received from John, be crucified, die, rise from the dead, and ascend to the right hand of the throne of God. Thus He saves all mankind. The poor are around us at all times. But our Lord is not with us always.

To put this word another way: serving this gospel is a work a hundred times better, thousands of times better, than helping

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the poor. And this gospel is not something we can serve at any time we please; there is an appointed time when we can serve it.

That this woman poured the fragrant oil on Jesus' head and served this gospel was a truly precious thing she did. Do this work, you also. The Lord said that He would commemorate everyone who does this work.

The Lord who commemorates the work of serving the gospel

That we believe in the Lord, receive the remission of sins, and serve the Lord—that is, serve this gospel—is a truly worthwhile and precious work. It is an exceedingly precious work. Ruling ourselves and serving the Lord as we serve the gospel is precious, and serving the Lord with material things while living in society, like this woman, is also very precious.

The Lord said that He would commemorate those who serve this gospel and devote themselves to the gospel in whatever form. What our Lord means is that those who serve this gospel are people doing a truly precious work, people who have done what the Lord counts worthy of commemorating and of establishing forever.

The gospel preached to the whole world through literature

We too are serving this gospel now. Through literature we are now distributing books to the whole world. We are preaching the gospel through e-books, paper books, and audiobooks.

Every morning I receive the mission report, and these days

many people visit our websites, and many are downloading the e-books and audiobooks. In this way we are preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world through literature.

For this work of carrying the gospel in these books to come this far, there have been saints who served the Lord like that woman who poured out the precious alabaster flask of oil. Among the men and women servants of God as well, then as now, there are those who serve the Lord. Because there are such people, this gospel is preached.

And every time this gospel is preached, just as the Bible commemorates that woman, those who served the Lord before us, and you and I who serve the Lord now, and all the saints of the churches across the country, and all the workers, men and women, become a memorial before the Lord. I tell you this fact.

From prisons as well, requests come asking us to send books, and the books are going in. These days they ask for them by the dozens. Having read them, they say the books are truly useful and truly good.

One person says this: in the old days I thought the baptism Jesus received and the baptism we receive were merely a ceremony, but now I have come to know that it is not a mere ceremony but has such a deep meaning. He says he has now realized the deep meaning of Jesus receiving baptism from John and taking on the sin of the world. He says this ministry of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a truly precious work.

So many people respond. And many people, through these books, come to know how Jesus removed their sins. And they believe. And those who have read the books say that they too will distribute them. Even if they cannot do much at once, they say they want to take a few dozen copies, or at least a few, and hand them to others. In this way the gospel of the water and the

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Spirit is being preached in all the world.

Every time this gospel is preached, the Lord commemorates those who served the gospel. Because they served the gospel, this gospel was preached to you, and you heard this gospel and received the remission of sins.

This gospel of the water and the Spirit has been preached because there were those who served the Lord like that woman. Because there have been such saints and such men and women servants of God, this gospel is preached. The Lord commemorates those who do this work, those who serve the gospel, and counts them precious.

The flower of the gospel that bloomed on the sacrifice of the born-again

Dear fellow believers, until this gospel was preached, there were truly many saints like that precious woman. The flask of oil this woman poured on Jesus' head was worth a year's wages. Such a thing is by no means easy.

In fact, until this gospel is preached, the pledged offerings you have given to the Lord are being used. What do we do with the offerings pledged from all across the country? We print books, translate books, make and ship books, and pay the freight to distribute those books to people all over the world, preaching the gospel.

Every time this gospel is preached, there is something I think of and the Lord also thinks of. It is those who served the Lord like the ones who poured that precious oil on Jesus' head. The Lord remembers such people.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not preached without sacrifice. Only with sacrifice is it preached. It is like a grain of

wheat that falls into the ground and dies and decays, and so sprouts and bears much fruit. Someone sacrificed himself in this way. Someone sacrificed himself, served the Lord, and laid his precious things before the Lord and served Him. Thus the flower of the gospel bloomed and the gospel was preached to the whole world.

Dear fellow believers, this gospel is not preached merely by saying we must preach it, merely by saying we must strive, merely by praying. It is because someone actually sacrificed. Because someone, like this woman, laid down material things for the gospel, and someone laid down his life and his youth, and offered many sacrifices for this work, this gospel has been preached.

They say this gospel has entered 160 countries of the world. This gospel is being preached to the whole world. Even in the English-speaking world alone, the gospel has been preached like this. This year alone we will do much work. If we continue about two more years, the gospel will have entered most countries. The gospel is entering Europe as well.

It is because there are those who serve the gospel that this gospel is preached; if there were no one serving the gospel, the gospel would not be preached. Among you also there are souls receiving the remission of sins these days. But that is because those who went before you served this gospel for your sake. This gospel was not preached all by itself.

That this gospel is preached to all the world is a truly thankful and precious thing.

The literature ministry that began in weakness

When I really think back, it was so very hard. Making the

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books was also so very hard. When I was making the books in English, some in the church who were not born again even mocked us. Who would ever read such things, they said, sneering and mocking.

But whatever they said, I declared that if only this book could be made properly and preached to people, if only someone would translate it faithfully into line with this Korean sermon text, I would kneel even before a person who is not born again. For this work I would bow in any way whatever.

I had such a heart, and our workers had such a heart too. One worker said this: Pastor, if you bow your head to someone who is not born again in order to make this book, how will you bear it when the day of martyrdom draws near?

So I said to that worker: if this gospel can be well preached by my crawling on the ground, I can crawl on the ground even before someone who is not born again. This is qualitatively different from martyrdom. Since I do it to serve the gospel, whatever mockery, whatever price, I will pay it all.

We were unskilled in making books. Even what English we knew was Korean-style English, so we polished and revised it over and over to correct it into American and British expressions. And so, at any rate, we made the book. It was not perfect, but we made it sufficient for people to read and receive the remission of sins.

Having made it, we put it up prominently on the Internet bookstores from the very start. There is a word: though your beginning was small, your latter end would increase abundantly. Truly, at first people asked who could ever make this work succeed. Who would have believed that the gospel would be preached to the whole world through these books? Even our workers only sighed. But God delighted in this work, and we did it by faith.

For this we made a great many pledged offerings for literature. We made literature pledges, and offerings for planting churches. I cannot count the literature pledges one by one, but I believe we made them more than ten times.

Even before you came into this church, we were making pledged offerings for literature. At first we pledged in order to buy one small copier for copying simple documents in the office. The pledged offerings then came to some 700,000 won. A copier like that cost from 800,000 to 1,000,000 won.

So we went to the electronics market and looked at this machine and that. There was one place with very cheap prices. A large machine could be bought for some 600,000 won. So we bought it. But it cost 40 won to copy a single page. The machine was cheap, but the ink was too expensive. They sold the machine cheap and sold the ink dear. That is how we began the literature ministry.

At that time we were only a few people and had nothing, but we made that pledge. One young sister had a few million won saved up for her marriage. She did not have much money, yet she had set that aside. In those days we worshiped sitting on floor cushions. As we prayed thirty minutes, an hour at a time, that money she had saved for marriage kept weighing on the sister's heart. Her conscience was troubled, and at last she put that money into the offering box. With it we did the work.

And some brothers and sisters gave lump sums of tens of millions of won, nearly a hundred million. Other brothers and sisters laid before the Lord sums of about two hundred million won. Known and unknown, many people did this work. They offered material things to the Lord.

And so even the Korean books you now see were all printed in that way. They were all printed with that money. We printed them and distributed them, giving almost all of them free.

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Through those books many people received the remission of sins. In other countries too, people received the remission of sins through these books, and with the offerings we kept printing and distributing again.

Dear fellow believers, a book may seem like nothing, but it is not so. People receive the remission of sins through these books. Through these books they keep their faith. Not attending churches that are not born again, they keep their faith alone at home with the books, and when a Church of God is established nearby, they come to that church, serve the Lord, and maintain their faith. There are truly many such cases.

One brother says this: Pastor, while I keep shop and do business, there are times my heart strangely wavers. The strange thought comes—can all these many people really have failed to receive salvation? Would they not be saved just by believing? Once a wrong thought enters, that thought breeds another thought, and at last he is even tempted about his own salvation.

Then what should he do? That brother says that when he goes home, he reads a sermon book without fail before he sleeps. Then he says, that is right—the Lord has saved me this clearly—and reading the book once more, he sets his heart in order and sleeps. Whenever his heart wavers even a little, he reads the books daily. Looking at the book, he confesses: that is right—the Lord has surely saved me by water and the Spirit.

And others come to know and believe through the books. Some come to church and some cannot, and some maintain their faith. Through the books they not only maintain their faith; there are also many who resolve the many questions of their faith and receive nurturing.

The gospel ministry, more precious than any good deed of the world

Now you and I preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit. We preach the gospel with our mouths as well. Through the preaching of the gospel many people receive the remission of sins. And through the books also, many people encounter the gospel and receive the remission of sins.

There is a sister in Japan who has received the remission of sins. That sister is hearing the gospel through our Japanese books. She reviews our Japanese books faithfully and closely. If a native speaker corrects them once, and a sister among us who knows Japanese well looks over and polishes them again, it will be a great help to the mission in Japan.

Through these books the gospel is now being preached even to the Han Chinese of China. The gospel is being preached in Japan as well. Dear fellow believers, in places we cannot go ourselves, this gospel is being preached through literature.

There are many saints who have served the Lord like that woman who poured the precious alabaster flask of oil on the Lord's head. They serve the Lord and offer material things; with those gathered offerings the books are printed, shipped, and distributed. Through the books people come to know this gospel, receive the remission of sins, are nurtured and grow, and keep their faith. Whenever such things happen, the Lord remembers and commemorates those who served Him.

The Lord says: what you did in serving the Lord now sprouts and bears fruit like this. That these people have received the remission of sins is because I came to this earth, received baptism from John for them, died on the Cross, rose from the dead, and live to be their Savior. It is true that I saved you; but because you served this gospel, these people, just like you, are

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receiving the remission of sins today. This the Lord keeps in His heart.

Truly, because there is this work of serving the Lord and because there are those who have served the gospel, this gospel is preached. Those who seek the gospel today, those wandering pressed down by sin, are saved from sin.

They say there are many good works in this world. There are truly many nursing homes and orphanages, the disabled, those in need of help, and the poor. But the work more precious than those, the work the Lord truly remembers, is serving this gospel. It is delivering to people the work the Lord did when He came to this earth, received baptism from John, shouldered the sin of the world, and died on the Cross.

Does not fragrant oil, even a single drop, fill the whole room and beyond with its fragrance? In the same way, God delights in and commemorates the work of serving the gospel.

Dear fellow believers, there have been truly many precious people who served the Lord. I will not name them one by one, but in my heart there are many truly precious ones who served the Lord. There are still many now. Known and unknown, there are many who have served the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, that you and I serve the gospel like this—receiving the remission of sins and serving the gospel—is right. It is a truly precious work, a work acknowledged before the Lord, and a work we ought to do.

The born-again must live for the gospel

"You have the poor with you always, but Me you do not have always." In the situation of that time, the Lord would leave in a little while, and the poor would always be on this earth. But to

speak of this spiritually, it means that there is an opportunity and a season in which we can serve the Lord. Dear fellow believers, we must serve when we can serve, in that time. We must not miss that time.

Dear fellow believers, it is right for the born-again to serve the Lord. It is right for me also to serve the Lord; I served the Lord even before I was born again, and the workers serve the Lord. Among our workers, one worker does this work in an official capacity, and the other workers help prepare the national conference, run various errands, make books, and support the work in these ways. The workers of the churches across the country all do this work.

The workers solve the problem of their own food and drink for themselves, earn money there, and out of it give their pledged offerings to the Lord. Then all the churches of the country gather it together, and the Lord uses it to make these books, send out overseas missionaries, and supply the money used for that work. The brothers and sisters do the same. It is right for the born-again to serve the Lord.

I am not saying, let us make pledged offerings at this hour. This is the truth that is in the Bible. The Lord said that what this woman did would be commemorated wherever the gospel is preached. Because this woman poured out the oil and served this gospel, this gospel is preached; and whenever that gospel is preached and people receive the remission of sins, our Lord commemorates the work this woman did in serving Him.

Serving the Lord with material things is what the person who has received the remission of sins does out of gratitude to the Lord, who has removed all his sins and all the sins of everyone in the whole world. It is not done under compulsion, nor as a mere ceremony. It is serving the Lord because we are truly thankful, truly grateful, because we want the gospel to be

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preached, and because preaching the gospel is right.

Everyone who is born again must serve the Lord as this woman did. Because those who went before you all served the Lord, you received the remission of sins, and all the people of the whole world have received the remission of sins. Therefore, like those who went before, we too must serve the Lord. It is right to serve the Lord. It is right to serve not the world but the Lord.

Because you and I served the gospel, many people have received the remission of sins. Here are young people, married sisters, and older adults. Because you and I serve the Lord, the gospel is preached to the whole world. The twelve disciples of Jesus served the Lord and preached this gospel, and under them many saints served the Lord, laying down even their own lives. And so this gospel has been preached to the whole world until now.

We must commemorate those who received the remission of sins, served the Lord, and lived in union with the church. We must acknowledge them as truly precious. And you and I must set the direction of our lives rightly. We must hold a great purpose.

Dear fellow believers, you and I, who used to think only of ourselves and our families eating and drinking, must now change our thinking. We must set the goal of earning much and serving the Lord much. With such a heart and such faith, praying such prayers, we must live such lives. We must set our hearts. Having received the remission of sins, we must now hold the faith and the heart that we are to live not only for ourselves but for the souls of others.

At first we are very weak. But He said our latter end would increase abundantly. When we first serve the Lord after being born again, we are truly weak. But as faith grows, in the end it

increases abundantly. We must earn money and work to save all the people of the whole world. The purpose for which I live, the purpose for which I breathe, must be in this gospel. Now we must have the heart to earn money not merely to solve our own food, clothing, and shelter, but to save those not yet saved from their sins, to preach the gospel and serve the gospel. To serve the gospel we must be healthy and live diligently. Now we must become people who no longer live for themselves alone.

This woman was exactly the same as you and me. She knew that Jesus is the Savior. She knew that Jesus is the Lamb of God and the Son of God, who took on all her sins through the baptism He received from John. She knew that this Jesus would soon be crucified. So, believing in faith that He had come to this earth to save her from sin and had saved her, she poured out on Jesus' head her most precious thing, the fragrant oil. Because He is so precious, the One who brought her life back to life, she poured the oil on Jesus' head to preach to the whole world the work He had done. She did it because she was so deeply thankful and grateful.

You and I also become like this as our faith grows. After being born again, if you and I have surely received the remission of sins, then the goal of our life must change. We must think of the Lord and know how to give thanks. We must become people of faith who can overflow with gratitude for that one fact alone—that the Lord has removed the sins of you and me. How thankful a thing it is that a dead life has been brought back to life! It is a thing to be thankful for beyond measure. The Lord is a Lord so gracious and so worthy of our thanks.

So now we must live the rest of our lives in this way. Even if we cannot do great things, even if we cannot stand in front and preach and lead, those who have such gifts go forward in that direction; and the one who cannot must say, I will earn and serve

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the Lord. Even if I cannot open my own mouth to preach, then—like the pouring of this oil on Jesus' head—my offering of material things, my labor of service, and my offerings are truly things worthy to be commemorated and are used most usefully for the preaching of the gospel. We must make this our goal and live by that faith.

Dear fellow believers, if a born-again person has no goal—if he does not set the goal of preaching and serving the gospel—he ends up falling. What happens if, after being born again, a person does not set the goal of serving the Lord? He has no sin, his heart is at ease, and there is nothing to do. Since he has no more remission of sins to receive, he has nothing left to do. Then this person chases the world, loves the world, enjoys himself in the world, and seeks recognition only from the world. At last he becomes corrupt, and even becomes one who adulterates the gospel. Far from leading countless people to heaven, he mixes other things into the gospel and produces a strange gospel, becoming a forerunner of the Devil who makes many people believe in Jesus and yet go to hell.

Dear fellow believers, the born-again must live purely loving Jesus Christ, setting the precious goal of serving the gospel that saves souls. We must resolve: I too have been born again and the Lord has saved me, so I too will live for the gospel, that others may believe this gospel and obtain salvation.

Even counting only the pure printing cost the printers charge without adding anything else, printing ten thousand books costs about thirty-five million won. Counting all the logistics costs, it comes to forty million won. Distributing all those ten thousand books costs about twenty or thirty million won. So if I resolve to preach the gospel to five thousand people, I can reckon about twenty million won. If you serve the Lord with twenty million won, the servants of God do that work, and it is the same as

preaching the gospel to two thousand people.

When those two thousand of books go out, they do not sit still. Some books may end up in the wastebasket, but other books pass from hand to hand, and countless people receive the remission of sins. Therefore, that you and I serve this gospel and give offerings before the Lord is a truly precious work. It is the work of saving lives.

This is not merely gathering money to lay bricks and buy chairs. Dear fellow believers, it is the work of saving lives, and serving that work. It is a truly precious work. That is why the Lord said He would commemorate those who have done this work.

It is not because the Lord lacks money that He uses people. The Lord is the Owner of the whole universe and all things. The Lord could do all this work alone. But because the Lord is God and is Spirit, He does the work of saving souls and preaching the gospel through people's bodies, through people. In that work you and I take part. In this precious work of the gospel, the work of building the kingdom of heaven, you and I take part. By serving the Lord we have been given such an opportunity. How precious a thing this is!

The person who has truly received the remission of sins must set the goal of preaching the gospel to others, for the sake of other souls, and live the rest of his life for that purpose. We must live with this faith. Dear fellow believers, do you see?

Dear fellow believers, many people have sacrificed. Some have served the Lord not only with material things but have given up even their youth and offered it before the Lord. Among the brothers and sisters there are truly many precious ones who serve the Lord preciously. It is truly worthy of commemoration.

Among the workers also there are many precious ones. They not only give all their material things to the Lord but offer even

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their youth. Just as the word says, *"Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God,"* they offer their lives and their youth before the Lord as living sacrifices. Dear fellow believers, this is a very precious work. Serving the Lord is a truly precious work. The person who takes part in this work takes part in a truly precious work.

You must take part in this precious work. I am not telling you to take part right at this hour. You must have faith, and as your faith grows, you must gradually become those who take part in serving the Lord. Then God, through you who take part in serving the gospel, preaches the gospel powerfully to the whole world.

Dear fellow believers, I am not saying at this hour that we should make pledged offerings or that you should give money. I am saying, let us engrave on our hearts this word of Jesus—that what this woman did is to be commemorated wherever the gospel is preached—and let us come to know a little of the Lord's heart. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

Commemorate what this woman has done

When I came to know this gospel, and knew that the Lord had removed my sins and removed the sins of all the people of the whole world, the first prayer I offered as soon as I was born again was this: God, the whole world has no gospel. Let me preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the world. After the sins in my heart had disappeared, the first prayer I offered was that very prayer.

When we are born again, we are all like little children. Our hearts are young too; we think, I must live on this—how shall I live if this is gone?—as if we would die without it. But the whole

world has no gospel; since I know this gospel, how could I pretend not to know? As the word says that to whom much is given, from him much will be required, God exhorted me with the word: do you not know it? Have you not received so much? Preach this gospel.

I was so thankful that, though I had no ability at all, I offered that prayer and preached the gospel to each person I met, one by one. There was no system yet. I simply met people and spoke, and people received the remission of sins. I hardly know how my youth passed after I was born again, until I reached this age. Even before I was born again, I believed in Jesus and lived for Jesus. After I was born again, with the whole world without the gospel, how could I just live on? So I began to preach this gospel, and while preaching the gospel I began the literature ministry.

Why did I begin with literature? However loudly I proclaim, if I sit down with just three or four people who are not born again, I must cry out until my voice grows hoarse. I must draw out that person's thoughts, learning, and religion, answer with the truth, and prevail with the word. Doing so, my voice gives out. And as I went about evangelizing, the thought often came: I cannot tell that person everything now, and there is no time—if only there were a book like this to hand him, he could read it and it could be done. The thought often came that foreigners too could receive the remission of sins if they read this book.

So we began in truly feeble weakness. At first a little literature offering came in, and with it we bought one copier worth some six hundred thousand won, ran the mission school, evangelized, and went home after worship. With the copier set up in a small rented room, running it all night, I would fall asleep beside it. Waking in the morning, I would find the machine still running, and when the paper ran out it simply stood still. Taking what was printed, I went out and gave the printouts to the

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mission school students and had them paste them behind utility poles with powerful glue. We stuck them fast so they would never come off. Though printed in only one color, they lasted more than a year. Even when the cleaners scrubbed with brushes, they hardly came off, because we had pasted them with powerful glue.

Still, a desire arose. Since it was in one color, we thought how good it would be to print in two colors. So we bought ink, put it in, and printed again, striving in every way. The documents we made then are probably still in the literature department. The very first ones we made were put in a big bag, and now dust has settled on them and people think little of them. But they are truly precious antiques.

We began like that—and how much has it grown now? The sister in Japan is also reading these books and believing the gospel. Dear fellow believers, through the books people learn what this word means, and hearing the gospel preached once more, they encounter the gospel. We can preach the gospel to all the Japanese people as well—to those who believe in Jesus and to those who do not. Once I visited a park in Japan; lotus flowers were blooming in abundance and it was clean. There too, when we distributed books as we do in Korea, people liked it very much. They truly enjoyed the giving and receiving.

Dear fellow believers, the gospel is preached to all the Japanese people as well. Because you and I give offerings, serve the Lord, and labor, all in Japan who are going to believe in Jesus come to believe. So it is with the people of the English-speaking world, and with those who speak the languages of each country of Europe. The many peoples of Asia also hear the gospel through what this woman did. They also receive salvation.

The Lord said that wherever this gospel is preached, what this woman did will be commemorated. God remembers and

commemorates this work of you and me serving the Lord. Because someone served this gospel of the Lord, that soul receives salvation.

Therefore, you and I must serve the Lord after receiving the remission of sins. For we are born-again people. Everyone must know how precious the salvation he has received is, and, like what this woman did, serve the Lord so that not only he himself but all the people of the whole world may obtain salvation. Let me close the word here. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Let us use everything we have for the gospel

< Matthew 26:17-29 >

"Now on the first day of the Feast of the Unleavened Bread the disciples came to Jesus, saying to Him, 'Where do You want us to prepare for You to eat the Passover?' And He said, 'Go into the city to a certain man, and say to him, 'The Teacher says, 'My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.'''' So the disciples did as Jesus had directed them; and they prepared the Passover. When evening had come, He sat down with the twelve. Now as they were eating, He said, 'Assuredly, I say to you, one of you will betray Me.' And they were exceedingly sorrowful, and each of them began to say to Him, 'Lord, is it I?' He answered and said, 'He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me. The Son of Man indeed goes just as it is written of Him, but woe to that man by whom the Son of Man is betrayed! It would have been good for that man if he had not been born.' Then Judas, who was betraying Him, answered and said, 'Rabbi, is it I?' He said to him, 'You have said it.' And as they were eating, Jesus took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to the disciples and said, 'Take, eat; this is My body.' Then He took the cup, and gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, 'Drink from it, all of you. For this is My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. But I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that

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day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom.'"

Dear fellow believers, have you been at peace? Today we share the word about our Lord instituting the Lord's Supper with His disciples before the Passover.

When our Lord prepared the Supper, He sent His disciples into the city. And He told them to go to a certain man and say this: the Teacher says, My time is at hand; I will keep the Passover at your house with My disciples.

The disciples went into the city as the Lord had directed and spoke to that man. And that man gladly gave up his house.

In old sacred paintings we can see the scene of Jesus and the twelve disciples sitting together at the supper. The house in those paintings is quite spacious, and the table is very long and unusual. It is not the table of an ordinary home but one that would be found in a great banquet hall. The place the Lord had prepared was that ample.

Our Lord is the God of creation, who made all things and knows all things. Therefore He already knew that this man in the city had such a table.

The Lord more than once told His disciples things that are hard to understand with the eyes of the flesh. For one example, there was the time He told them to go into the city, untie a donkey's colt that was tied there, and bring it. To enter another's village and untie and lead away a tied colt without the owner's permission—by human thinking it is truly an absurd word. Moreover, He said that if the owner said anything, they were to say that the Lord has need of it.

Such words are not something anyone can imitate. It is a work only the Lord can do. Only God who made the universe, Jesus Christ who came in the flesh, could do it. And so, just as

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the Lord had said, the donkey's colt was provided, and the Passover table also was provided just so. When the disciples went into the city and spoke, everything came to pass according to the Lord's word.

"One of you will betray Me"

So the first supper was held in the evening. The Lord seated His disciples and said, *"One of you will betray Me."*

The disciples were exceedingly sorrowful, murmuring among themselves, and each asked, Lord, is it I? Lord, is it I? Then the Lord answered, *"He who dipped his hand with Me in the dish will betray Me."*

At that time there was bread on the table. The disciples were dipping that bread in the dish and eating. When Jesus put His bread into the dish, the hand of one disciple must surely have gone into that dish with His.

The Lord went on to say: the Son of Man goes as it is written of Him, but it would have been better for the man who sells the Son of Man if he had not been born into this world.

The disciples said many things, but it was Judas who at that moment asked Jesus: Rabbi, is it I? And the Lord answered: You have said it. How plain a word this is! He asked, is it I?—and the Lord said, it is just as you have said.

Yet even then Judas did not grasp its meaning. In fact, Judas already carried the intent to sell Jesus. Though the Lord told him plainly, it is you, Judas showed nothing and just sat there. He was harboring the thought of selling Jesus for thirty pieces of silver and pocketing the money.

Judas never once called Jesus Lord. He always called Him only Teacher. To him, Jesus was merely one very excellent man

among men. Judas was a man more interested in the honor and power of this world.

In those days many people hated Jesus. They said that a man had appeared from Nazareth and all the people of the whole nation were following him. So the chief priests of the religion that professed to believe in the LORD God, the scribes, and those in high office hated Jesus intensely.

Judas was a man who followed that majority. Having attended and lived with Him, he knew the Teacher was not a bad person. Yet since so many spoke against Him and called Him bad, Judas thought like this: those people are trying to seize Jesus, and if I hand Him over, I will be greatly recognized by them. Thus Judas stood not on the side of the truth but on the side of the people. Such a heart was always in him.

Now the Passover was drawing near, two days away. Since the feast was the day after next, it must have been about this day that He shared this supper. To Judas's question, is it I?, the Lord answered, you have said it. Does not a person know for himself what he is harboring in his own heart?

Judas sold Jesus and had Him stand in Pilate's court, and at last had Him crucified to death. When Judas saw that Jesus had been condemned, he was remorseful that he had betrayed innocent blood, and returned the thirty pieces of silver. But it was already too late. Everything was fulfilled as it was written, and Jesus went just as it was written.

The plan of salvation appointed before the foundation of the world

God determined before the foundation of the world to save us. He appointed that He would come to this earth in person,

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receive baptism from John, die on the Cross, and give His body and blood to save mankind. This was the plan God had established beforehand.

Therefore our Lord spoke to His disciples at this table of the Supper. He took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to the disciples, saying, take, eat; this is My body. He also took the cup, gave thanks, and gave it to them, saying, drink from it, all of you. This is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins, He said.

"This is My body"; "My blood of the new covenant"

Our Lord gave His body and His blood to save all the people of this world, to deliver you and me from sin.

Let us put ourselves for a moment in the Lord's place and think. Giving the body is something we can do to some degree. For we too can bear, to some extent, the labor and sacrifice of the body. Of course, the Lord's giving of His body is wholly different from our serving the Lord with our bodies. That the Lord gave His body means that He came to this earth in the flesh and, by the baptism He received from John, received all the sins of mankind passed over onto Himself.

The Lord also lifted the cup of wine and spoke. Take and drink this, all of you. For this is My blood of the covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins. That is, He was saying that He gave His own blood.

What is blood? Blood is life itself. That the Lord gave His blood means He gave His own life. Dear fellow believers, let us enter that place and think. We can sacrifice with our bodies. But could we be nailed to a cross for someone else, shedding blood and giving up even our life? To give blood is to give life.

Because our Lord gave His body and His blood for us like this, you and I have received salvation.

The baptism He received from John, and the blood of the Cross

Truly, because our Lord gave His body and blood for you and me, we have received the remission of sins and obtained salvation. If the Lord had not done this for us, how could we have been saved? We could never have been saved. But the Lord saved us by doing this for us.

The Lord came to this earth and received baptism with His own body. He gave His body over to be baptized by John the Baptist. With the baptism He received from John, Jesus received all the sins of the world passed over onto Himself. And three years after He was baptized, He was crucified, pouring out on the ground all the blood of His heart and giving it to us. Three days after He died, He rose again, and so He has remitted all the sins of mankind. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Therefore we have been saved by faith. Without this sacrifice of the Lord we could not have been saved. But because the Lord sacrificed Himself like this, we have obtained salvation. Jesus, as the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world, as the One who came by water and blood, accomplished our salvation once and for all.

As I serve the Lord, I always think on these things. Truly the Lord has shown us grace, giving us His body and His blood and saving us. The Lord removed all the sins we commit until the end of the world, and so saved us.

Thus He caused us to receive the remission of sins, made us the children of God, and enabled us to come boldly before God

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the Father. Whenever I think of this grace, I come to hold the heart that I must serve the work of preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world.

Living on this earth, we have truly many hard and difficult things. In Matthew 26:6 and following, there appears a woman who poured fragrant oil on Jesus—the woman who poured the oil on His head and on His feet. The Lord said that wherever this gospel is preached, what this woman did is to be commemorated.

The most rewarding labor is the labor of serving the Lord

Let us think for a moment about serving the Lord. The Lord has given us so plain a remission of sins and so plain a salvation—how could we not serve Him? As we serve the Lord, when one work is finished we want to take up another new work, and the desire to serve more and more springs up. The grace of the remission of sins the Lord has given us has given us strength enough to serve Him all our lives and still have more.

Born into this world, we labor much as we live. Among all those labors, the labor that is least regrettable and most rewarding is the labor of serving the Lord. When a person labors only for himself, it is truly wearying. I too have lived in this world. If one labors only for oneself, there is nothing to show for it; it is only tiring and vexing, without any reward. When a person labors only to solve the matters of food, clothing, and shelter, there is no true reward in it.

But if we do that labor for the Lord, the body is weary but the heart is not. Rather, new strength springs up in the heart and thanksgiving flows out. After receiving the remission of sins, whatever work you and I do, we must labor for the Lord. Then

you will experience new strength springing up within your heart.

It is written in the Book of Isaiah: even the youths shall faint and be weary, and the young men shall utterly fall, but those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles. That those who wait on the LORD gain new strength speaks of exactly this. The person who labors for the Lord and works for the Lord can live always gaining new strength in his heart.

I have this desire in my heart. I have served overseas much, but the domestic churches I have visited are rather few. So I want to go around and serve the domestic churches as well with a new heart. Just as the Lord gave this body and gave His life, I too want to offer my body and work for the Lord. And I want to keep well the life the Lord has given, with thanksgiving, and do the work of sharing that life with others as well.

We must not vainly inflate our hearts but truly renew them. And so we must become people who can share this salvation with others, deliver life to them, and give up something to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

We obtain new life by believing in the Lord

Do you also have such a heart? The Lord has removed all the sins of the whole world and set us sinless before Him. So we too must do what pleases God and become people who can do something for others. We must hold the heart that asks, what shall I do for you?—the heart that can give something and wants to give.

The Lord said in verse 29: I say to you, I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom. In the Father's kingdom

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also there is a place where wine is drunk. We do not exist as spirits only; we put on spiritual bodies, and with those spiritual bodies we drink wine as well.

Dear fellow believers, do you know these things well? When we go to the kingdom of God, whoever wants to eat will eat to his heart's content. On that day, when we reach that kingdom after doing the Lord's work, we will enjoy that abundance.

But I do not believe people's testimonies or dream stories. I believe only what is in the word of God. I do not believe things like someone's testimony or a story from a dream that is not the word of God. Looking at the word recorded here, He said, *"I will not drink of this fruit of the vine from now on until that day when I drink it new with you in My Father's kingdom."* The Lord drank wine at this time, and after that He did not drink. On the Cross He tasted a little of the sour wine and then took His lips away.

What does wine signify? It signifies joy and it signifies life. Where there is wine, is there food also, or not? Food is there together. Looking at the Book of Revelation, it says that by the river of the water of life the tree bears fruit in every season. What is on this earth and what is in the sea—all these things are in heaven as well. I want to serve the Lord until the day comes when we enjoy them.

Do you believe that our Lord shed the blood in His body and, with His own body, has remitted all our sins? That the Lord received baptism from John with His body declares that He took on the sins of you and me, the sins of mankind, all of them. And His shedding of blood on the Cross means that He received the punishment of sin in our place and gave His life to us, bringing back to life the life we had lost. Therefore we obtain new life by believing in the Lord. And when the Lord's kingdom comes, we live together with Him forever.

"The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives"

Until that day comes, I have the heart to give my body and blood for others, just as the Lord gave us His body and blood. I want to preach the way of life, and I want to serve this gospel with my body. Dear fellow believers, you must not think that you labor only for yourself. If it is labor you must do anyway, change your thinking and regard all the work you do with your body as done for the Lord. Then you will not only receive new blessing, but new strength will spring up in your heart. Though the body is weary, the heart is made new and the heart gains new strength.

Who but the person who believes this truth would give his own body for another? Only the one who believes the truth, only the one who has received the remission of all his sins by believing in the Lord, can give his body and blood for the Lord and for others. Only such a person can truly sacrifice. We are people who cannot bear not to give, and we share with truly many people.

It is written in the Bible: *"The wicked borrows and does not repay, But the righteous shows mercy and gives."* Do we not call an evil person wicked? Then what of the righteous? The righteous gives to others without stint. He labors and gives, always thinking of what he can do for others.

If there were no righteous in this world, this world would be nothing. It would already have perished. Because the righteous are here, holding the heart that asks what they can do for others, God upholds and sustains this world. In this world there are many poor, many sick, and many pitiable people. To give something for them is also precious. But above all, we must become people who truly give for the gospel of the water and

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the Spirit.

The Lord said that what the woman who poured fragrant oil on Jesus' head and feet did is to be commemorated wherever the gospel is preached. Yet the disciples disparaged what this woman did. They spoke against her, saying it would have been good to sell that oil and distribute to the poor. But Jesus said this: the poor and the sick and the pitiable are always with you in this world, but the Son of Man is not with you always.

Indeed, as He had said, before long the Lord was crucified and died, rose from the dead, and ascended into heaven. And so His body could no longer be seen on this earth. This word spoken to the woman who poured the oil teaches that there is an appointed time for serving the gospel. Now not much remains. When this gospel has been preached to all the world and all who are to be saved have been saved, then whoever has received this gospel—rich or poor or sick—reaches the eternal kingdom of the Father, and whoever has not received it enters the fire that is not quenched. Therefore the Lord told us to labor for the food which does not perish.

Let us give our all for the gospel of the water and the Spirit

We are born into this earth and labor for food, clothing, and shelter in any case. If we must labor anyway, we should hold the heart that labors according to the will of God. When the sisters wash dishes and clean the rooms, when the brothers work and earn material things, when we preach the gospel—in all these works we must hold the heart that says, I do this work to serve the Lord.

Then we come to do more work, receive more blessing, the

heart grows light, and new strength springs up. The body is weary, but the heart is not. We receive power. The Lord pours living water into the heart, and the heart becomes refreshed and enjoys satisfaction. When that work is done, we want to take up new work again, and like the eagle mounting up with beating wings, we gain new strength.

Therefore, if we must labor anyway, we must labor for the Lord. The person who has received salvation must hold the heart that does this and that, all for the Lord. Then faith grows of itself, we come to hold precious hearts and precious desires, and everything becomes good.

I always think of how the Lord gave us His body and blood. And so I want to serve, not inflating things vainly, but very quietly and substantially. I know that you also want to do whatever you can do for others, and that when there are people who have not yet encountered this gospel of the water and the Spirit, you want to give something to them as well.

Is it not so? We truly are like that. The time is not far off. Within this period the Lord has allowed us to serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we must become people who can give something for the Lord and for others. We must live holding such a heart and such faith. Then God rejoices and the Holy Spirit rejoices, and He gives you many blessings.

Truly I give thanks before God. The time we can serve this gospel is not so long now. What does the farmer do? In spring and summer, when he can sow and tend, he must work diligently. We too want to serve diligently like that.

Before long, new steps will follow to carry this gospel to many countries. We intend to preach the gospel also to the countries that were once in the communist bloc. Just as the Lord gave us His body, we mean to go there and labor and share this life. Just as the Lord shared His life with us, we also mean to

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share that life.

Now our books are being translated into many languages and coming out. Then, following the work done so far, another new chapter opens. If until now we have preached the gospel, now a new work arises: clearing away the tares Satan the Devil has sown and planting the gospel more firmly. Then people will realize they have been deceived, come to know how sure this gospel of the water and the Spirit is, and more people will encounter and believe this gospel. In the end, all who are going to believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit will come to believe.

For this, the workers of the churches across the country will gather and take counsel together; where there is no worker, we will send one, and we will also strive to serve one another with material things. Over the years to come we intend to preach the gospel to all the world. And even after preaching it to all, we will keep on doing new work as we serve the gospel.

I intend to offer this body for the gospel. Among you also, whoever, however lacking, wants to offer his body for the gospel and wants to give something to others must plunge together into this front line of the gospel. When we unite and serve like this, we accomplish truly many things.

Dear fellow believers, I truly give thanks. Though my health was poor for a while, God has given me much new strength, and I am truly glad to have finished this work. I want to take up new work again. Before the Lord comes, I want to offer this body all the more, becoming a grain of wheat that brings much benefit to others, and then go before the Lord. I pray that the Lord will make it so, and that all of us may become people who give not little but much. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who laid down His own will and followed the way of suffering

< Matthew 26:31-75 >

"Then Jesus said to them, 'All of you will be made to stumble because of Me this night, for it is written: 'I will strike the Shepherd, And the sheep of the flock will be scattered.' But after I have been raised, I will go before you to Galilee.' Peter answered and said to Him, 'Even if all are made to stumble because of You, I will never be made to stumble.' Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you that this night, before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' Peter said to Him, 'Even if I have to die with You, I will not deny You!' And so said all the disciples. Then Jesus came with them to a place called Gethsemane, and said to the disciples, 'Sit here while I go and pray over there.' And He took with Him Peter and the two sons of Zebedee, and He began to be sorrowful and deeply distressed. Then He said to them, 'My soul is exceedingly sorrowful, even to death. Stay here and watch with Me.' He went a little farther and fell on His face, and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me; nevertheless, not as I will, but as You will.' Then He came to the disciples and found them sleeping, and said to Peter, 'What! Could you not watch with Me one hour? Watch and pray, lest you enter into temptation. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is

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weak.' Again, a second time, He went away and prayed, saying, 'O My Father, if this cup cannot pass away from Me unless I drink it, Your will be done.' And He came and found them asleep again, for their eyes were heavy. So He left them, went away again, and prayed the third time, saying the same words. Then He came to His disciples and said to them, 'Are you still sleeping and resting? Behold, the hour is at hand, and the Son of Man is being betrayed into the hands of sinners. Rise, let us be going. See, My betrayer is at hand.' And while He was still speaking, behold, Judas, one of the twelve, with a great multitude with swords and clubs, came from the chief priests and elders of the people. Now His betrayer had given them a sign, saying, 'Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him.' Immediately he went up to Jesus and said, 'Greetings, Rabbi!' and kissed Him. But Jesus said to him, 'Friend, why have you come?' Then they came and laid hands on Jesus and took Him. And suddenly, one of those who were with Jesus stretched out his hand and drew his sword, struck the servant of the high priest, and cut off his ear. But Jesus said to him, 'Put your sword in its place, for all who take the sword will perish by the sword. Or do you think that I cannot now pray to My Father, and He will provide Me with more than twelve legions of angels? How then could the Scriptures be fulfilled, that it must happen thus?' In that hour Jesus said to the multitudes, 'Have you come out, as against a robber, with swords and clubs to take Me? I sat daily with you, teaching in the temple, and you did not seize Me. But all this was done that the Scriptures of the prophets might be fulfilled.' Then all the disciples forsook Him and fled. And those who had laid hold of Jesus led Him away to Caiaphas the high priest, where the scribes and the elders were assembled. But Peter followed Him at a distance

to the high priest's courtyard. And he went in and sat with the servants to see the end. Now the chief priests, the elders, and all the council sought false testimony against Jesus to put Him to death, but found none. Even though many false witnesses came forward, they found none. But at last two false witnesses came forward and said, 'This fellow said, 'I am able to destroy the temple of God and to build it in three days.'' And the high priest arose and said to Him, 'Do You answer nothing? What is it these men testify against You?' But Jesus kept silent. And the high priest answered and said to Him, 'I put You under oath by the living God: Tell us if You are the Christ, the Son of God!' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you said. Nevertheless, I say to you, hereafter you will see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the Power, and coming on the clouds of heaven.' Then the high priest tore his clothes, saying, 'He has spoken blasphemy! What further need do we have of witnesses? Look, now you have heard His blasphemy! What do you think?' They answered and said, 'He is deserving of death.' Then they spat in His face and beat Him; and others struck Him with the palms of their hands, saying, 'Prophesy to us, Christ! Who is the one who struck You?' Now Peter sat outside in the courtyard. And a servant girl came to him, saying, 'You also were with Jesus of Galilee.' But he denied it before them all, saying, 'I do not know what you are saying.' And when he had gone out to the gateway, another girl saw him and said to those who were there, 'This fellow also was with Jesus of Nazareth.' But again he denied with an oath, 'I do not know the Man!' And a little later those who stood by came up and said to Peter, 'Surely you also are one of them, for your speech betrays you.' Then he began to curse and swear, saying, 'I do not know the Man!' Immediately a rooster crowed. And Peter

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remembered the word of Jesus who had said to him, 'Before the rooster crows, you will deny Me three times.' So he went out and wept bitterly."

Peter, who did not know himself

Jesus told His disciples that they would all forsake Him that night. The time was near for the word to be fulfilled, that when the shepherd is struck the flock of sheep will be scattered. But the Lord did not speak only of the disciples' failure. He said that after He had risen, He would go before them to Galilee. Though He knew the disciples would flee and fail, He had already promised to meet them again after His resurrection and restore them.

Peter said that even if everyone else forsook the Lord, he himself would never forsake Him. When the Lord said that he would deny Him three times before the rooster crowed, Peter declared that even if he had to die with the Lord, he would not deny Him. In his words there was a sincere heart that loved the Lord. But he did not know the weakness of his own flesh. He thought that with sincerity and resolve alone he could follow the Lord to the end.

Before meeting a trial, a person easily thinks himself strong. In times of peace he says he can keep his faith whatever hardship comes, but when life, reputation, and property are actually threatened, the heart wavers. Peter's failure is not a special problem of his alone. It shows how weak the flesh of every human being is. We must leave the faith that trusts our own resolve and hold the faith that relies on the word and the help of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord knew Peter more exactly than Peter himself did.

He rebuked his bold claim but did not cast him away. Though He knew his failure in advance, He promised to meet him after the resurrection. This is the grace of the Lord. The Lord did not call us in ignorance of our shortcomings. Knowing all our weaknesses, He saves us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and through our failures He leads us to lay down the heart that relied on itself and to believe in the Lord alone.

The prayer offered in deep sorrow

Jesus went with His disciples to Gethsemane. Taking Peter and the two sons of Zebedee deeper in, the Lord was deeply distressed and sorrowful. Though He was the sinless Son of God, He had put on true flesh, and so He actually felt the weight of the coming suffering and death. The blood the Lord would shed and the curse He would receive were no light symbol but the judgment on all the sins of mankind.

Jesus fell with His face to the ground and prayed that, if it were possible, this cup might pass from Him. But He soon said, not as I will, but as You will. In His second prayer He said that if the cup could not pass unless He drank it, He desired the Father's will to be done, and the third time also He prayed the same words. The Lord's prayer was not a prayer trying to change the Father's will to fulfill His own desire. It was a prayer confirming the Father's will and offering Himself wholly to that will.

The Father's will was that Jesus drink the cup of the Cross. If Jesus had avoided that cup, mankind could not have been saved from sin. The Lord did not go to the Cross because He liked suffering. Because He loved us and obeyed the righteous will of the Father, He chose the way of death. By that obedience

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our salvation was completed.

The life of faith is not a matter of pushing our own will through with God. Nor is the goal of faith to pray much and obtain everything we want. Through prayer we must seek what God's will is, and accept that will even when it differs from our own thoughts. At times, on the path of following the Lord's will there may be loss, toil, and suffering. But if it is the way God desires, that way is in the end the safest and the most blessed way.

Why we must watch and pray

Jesus told His disciples to stay awake with Him, but they fell asleep. The Lord asked Peter whether he could not watch with Him even one hour, and told them to watch and pray lest they enter into temptation. Even when the heart holds the desire to follow the Lord, the flesh is weak. If we do not admit this fact, we can trust our own will like Peter and collapse before the trial.

To watch and pray is not merely to stay up all night saying many words. It is to distrust one's own flesh and to examine one's heart before the word of God. It is the work of discerning what is profitable to the gospel and what thought comes from one's own greed, and of seeking the guidance of the Holy Spirit. When we hold the gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts and hear the word in union with the church, we can stay awake out of spiritual sleep.

Even the born-again, if they neglect prayer and drift from the word, can be dragged along by the thoughts of the flesh. They can insist that their own judgment is right, put their own comfort and profit before the church's exhortation, and when hardship comes, step back from the place of serving the gospel. Therefore

we must not pretend to be strong but admit our weakness and seek the Lord's help. We must pray that the Holy Spirit will hold our hearts and enable us to discern the temptation.

Even as He watched His sleeping disciples, the Lord alone sought the Father's will to the end. He did not accomplish salvation with the disciples' help. When all slept and fled, Jesus obeyed alone. Our salvation is not built on human loyalty and merit but on the Lord's perfect obedience. Knowing this fact, we do not despair over our own weakness but rely all the more on the Lord's righteousness.

The almighty Lord who let Himself be seized

Judas came to Gethsemane leading a great crowd. He had set the kiss as the signal and approached Jesus. He used the kiss, a sign of love and affection, as the sign of betrayal. It shows that one can speak and act religiously while opposing the Lord in one's heart. What matters is not drawing near to the Lord outwardly, but believing the true gospel in the heart and obeying the Lord's will.

One of the disciples drew his sword and struck the servant of the high priest. He tried to protect the Lord with human strength, but Jesus told him to put his sword back. The Lord was the Almighty who could ask the Father and have more than twelve legions of angels sent. He was not seized because He was powerless, nor was He overpowered by the soldiers and dragged off helplessly.

Jesus gave Himself up voluntarily to fulfill the Scriptures and to save us. Had He wished, He could have driven off the crowd and left that place, but He did not. After confirming the Father's will, He said, rise, let us be going, and went forward toward the

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one who was selling Him. The Lord's obedience was not passive resignation but active love for accomplishing salvation.

The suffering He received as the Christ

Jesus was led away to Caiaphas the high priest, and the religious leaders sought false evidence to kill the Lord. Many false witnesses came, but they could find no legitimate charge. For Jesus is without sin. Yet they were not trying to establish the truth; they were looking for evidence to fit the conclusion of death they had already fixed. The very people who held religious authority stood against the Son of God.

When the high priest demanded that He say whether He was the Christ, the Son of God, the Lord did not deny it. He said that He would sit at the right hand of the Power and come again on the clouds of heaven. They branded this true confession as blasphemy and judged Him deserving of death. They spat in the Lord's face, struck Him with fists and palms, and mocked Him, telling Him to prophesy if He were the Christ.

In the word Christ are contained the offices of King, Priest, and Prophet. Jesus is the King of kings, the High Priest of heaven who takes on the sins of mankind, and the Prophet who makes known the true way of salvation. The Lord fulfilled these three offices completely and saved us from sin. It was to complete that very mission of the Christ that He bore the insult and the suffering.

Jesus, as the High Priest of heaven, received baptism from John the Baptist. Through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, all the sins of mankind were passed over onto His body. Bearing those sins, the Lord went to the Cross and received in our place the curse and the punishment we deserved.

By rising from the dead He overcame sin and death and gave us eternal life. This is the reason Jesus suffered, and the salvation He accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Peter, who followed the Lord at a distance

The disciples all forsook Jesus and fled. Peter could not leave entirely, and followed the Lord at a distance as far as the courtyard of the high priest. He was anxious for the Lord, but he had no courage to reveal that he was a disciple. If he stayed near the Lord, he feared being seized; if he left entirely, his heart was in anguish. So he mingled among the people and watched the outcome.

When a servant girl said that Peter also had been with Jesus, he denied it before them all. When another spoke again, he denied with an oath that he knew the Lord, and the third time he even cursed and swore. From the mouth of the man who a little before had declared he would die with Him, the words that he did not know the Lord came out three times. Even a person born again by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can come to stand in the place of hiding his faith, if he follows the Lord at a distance for fear of persecution and loss. Therefore we must stay near the church, hearing the word and keeping our faith.

When the rooster crowed, Peter remembered the word of the Lord, went outside, and wept bitterly. His tears were tears shed at the place where his self-confidence had collapsed. He now knew that he was not the strong man he had thought himself to be. He acknowledged that the Lord's word was right and his own judgment wrong. This realization was not meant to drive him to despair but to establish him afterward as a man who relies only on the grace of the Lord.

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The gospel that holds up the one who has failed

Peter's failure and Judas's betrayal were both grave, but the directions of the two men were different. Judas did not abandon his own plan even before the word of the Lord, but Peter, remembering the word of the Lord, wept bitterly. It was not Peter's tears that washed away his sin. What washed away his sin was the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross. But those tears show the heart that lays down its own righteousness and returns to the grace of the Lord.

We too can fail in our life of faith. There are times when, out of fear, we fail to speak the gospel and follow the desires of the flesh. At such times we must not hide the wrong or try to wash the sin away again with endless prayers of repentance. We must turn back before the word and believe again the gospel—that Jesus took on even that sin with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and judged it on the Cross. The person who believes in the complete remission of sins does not take sin lightly; rather, grateful for the grace that saved him, he forsakes the wrong and desires to follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The Lord went to the Cross for the disciples, knowing that they would all flee. Knowing that Peter would deny Him three times, He promised first to meet him in Galilee. Our salvation and our mission do not depend on our perfection. They depend on the grace of the Lord, who knew everything and loved us still, and on the righteousness He has completed. Therefore, when we fail, we must not drift away from the Lord but return before the word and the church.

The faith that follows the Father's will

In the latter part of Matthew chapter 26, the humans who put their own will first and Jesus who obeyed the Father's will stand in contrast. Peter trusted his own strength, the disciple who drew the sword tried to solve the matter by human means, and the religious leaders sought false evidence to protect their position and their desires. Jesus, on the other hand, put the Father's will and the salvation of sinners before His own suffering.

The true life of faith is not a matter of building ourselves up; it is the life in which the Lord is honored in us. Being recognized by people and achieving our own ideas must not become the goal. God's purpose in saving us is that we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that other souls also receive the remission of sins. Though we are lacking, we must follow this will in union with the church and serve the gospel in the place entrusted to us.

Following the Father's will, we may at times have to lay down our own plans and go through hardships of the flesh. But on the way the Lord walked there were the resurrection and glory. Just as the Cross was not the end, the toil and loss we bear for the gospel are not in vain. God upholds the person who lives according to the Lord's will, gives him the strength he needs, and repays him with an eternal reward.

We must not boast of our own will like Peter, but look to the Lord who prayed in Gethsemane. We must tell the Father our desires honestly, yet in the end obey His will. We must watch and pray lest we enter into temptation, and rely not on the strength of the flesh or the methods of the world but on the word and the Holy Spirit. When we fail, we must return to the Lord's perfect salvation and rise again by faith.

Jesus took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the suffering and the judgment on the

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Cross, and rose from the dead, in order to make us the children of God and the workers of the gospel. We must believe that love and put the Lord's will before our own. Let us not follow the Lord at a distance but follow Him closely together with the church, and boldly preach the gospel of Christ, who received all that suffering for us. ✉

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CHAPTER

27

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Matthew Chapter 27

< Matthew 27:1-66 >

“When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, ‘I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.’ And they said, ‘What is that to us? You see to it!’ Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, ‘It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.’ And they consulted together and bought with them the potter’s field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, ‘And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter’s field, as the LORD directed me.’ Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, ‘Are You the King of the Jews?’ Jesus said to him, ‘It is as you say.’ And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, ‘Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?’ But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the governor

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was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.' But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'Barabbas!' Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let Him be crucified!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him,

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they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'' Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing. Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This Man is calling for Elijah!' Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a

reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be

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worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 27 records the process in which Jesus is handed over to the Roman governor Pilate and tried, suffers the mockery and scourging of the soldiers, is crucified and dies at Golgotha, and is buried in a tomb.

People condemned Jesus as a criminal, but the passage reveals His innocence again and again. On the other hand, the prisoner Barabbas is released. This scene, in which the sinless Jesus stands in the place of a sinner and an actual criminal goes free, shows vividly the substitutionary meaning of the Cross.

1. The Jewish leaders hand Jesus over to Pilate (verses 1–2)

When morning came, the chief priests and the elders plotted to put Jesus to death, bound Him, and handed Him over to the Roman governor Pilate.

The Jewish leaders had condemned Jesus for blasphemy, but before the Roman governor they needed a political charge. So they accused Jesus as though He were a man who claimed to be a king in defiance of Rome.

Jesus appears to be seized and dragged away by men, but in reality He was walking the way of the Cross, fulfilling the Scriptures just as He had foretold.

2. Judas Iscariot regrets his sin and dies (verses 3–5)

Judas, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, confessed

that he had betrayed innocent blood and tried to return the thirty pieces of silver. But the chief priests and the elders said coldly, *"What is that to us? You see to it!"*

They had used Judas to arrest Jesus and then shifted all the responsibility onto him. Sin uses a person for its own ends and then discards him. Even among those who had planned the sin together there was no true love or responsibility.

Judas knew that what he had done was wrong, but he did not return to Jesus and seek forgiveness. He bore his guilt alone, fell into despair, and took his own life. Regret can stop at agonizing over one's wrong, but true repentance goes as far as admitting the wrong and returning to God to receive His grace and forgiveness.

Peter also denied Jesus three times and wept bitterly, but he returned to the Lord and was restored. Judas, however, thought his sin too great and despaired. What saves a person is not the size of his feelings of guilt or the amount of his tears, but the grace of God, who remits the sins of sinners.

3. The potter's field is bought with the thirty pieces of silver (verses 6–10)

The chief priests gathered up the thirty pieces of silver Judas had thrown into the temple. Judging that it was not lawful to put them into the treasury because they were the price of blood, they bought with them the potter's field and used it as a burial place for strangers. So the field came to be called the Field of Blood.

There is a grave contradiction in their conduct. They had no scruples about killing the sinless Jesus, yet they were careful that putting blood money into the temple treasury would violate the Law. While committing a great sin, they tried to keep the religious forms.

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Matthew explains that this too fulfilled what was spoken through the prophet. Even the fact that Jesus was sold at the price of thirty pieces of silver and that the money bought the potter's field had been foretold within the word of God.

4. Jesus is interrogated before Pilate (verses 11–14)

Pilate asked Jesus, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* Jesus answered, *"It is as you say."* Jesus is indeed a King, but He was not a king seeking to establish a political kingdom by force against Rome.

Though the chief priests and the elders accused Him of many things, Jesus did not defend Himself. Pilate marveled that Jesus made no answer at all.

The silence of Jesus did not mean that He was guilty and had nothing to say. He did not compromise with the false trial to save Himself, but accepted the suffering according to the will of God. Jesus was not a helpless victim dragged along by force but the One who gives up His own life to accomplish the work of salvation.

5. The prisoner Barabbas is released and Jesus is condemned (verses 15–26)

At the Passover feast there was a custom that the governor released one prisoner at the people's request. Pilate asked whom they wanted him to release, Barabbas or Jesus.

Pilate knew that the religious leaders had handed Jesus over out of envy. His wife also sent word, saying she had suffered because of a dream: *"Have nothing to do with that just Man."* But the chief priests and the elders incited the crowd to demand that Barabbas be released and Jesus be crucified.

Barabbas was an actual criminal, yet he was released; the sinless Jesus was handed over to the Cross as if in his place.

Barabbas gained his freedom without any merit of his own. It was because Jesus stood in his place. This is a scene that shows concretely the meaning of the Cross, on which the sinless Jesus receives punishment in the place of sinners.

Pilate could find in Jesus no crime deserving death. Even so, fearing that a riot would break out, he washed his hands with water and turned the responsibility over to the crowd. But washing one's hands does not remove responsibility. Knowing Jesus was innocent, he permitted the death sentence to protect his position and political stability.

The words of the crowd in verse 25, *"His blood be on us and on our children,"* do not mean that all Jews and their descendants may be condemned or persecuted. These words expose the responsibility of the leaders and the crowd who demanded the death of Jesus in that place. To use this verse as a ground for hating the whole Jewish people is contrary to the teaching of Jesus and the spirit of the gospel.

6. The soldiers mock Jesus as a king (verses 27–31)

The governor's soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium, stripped Him, and put a scarlet robe on Him. They put a crown of thorns on His head, placed a reed in His hand like a king's scepter, and bowed the knee before Him, mocking Him: *"Hail, King of the Jews!"*

They spat on Jesus and struck His head with the reed. Their conduct was meant to ridicule the kingship of Jesus, but in a paradoxical way they were kneeling before the true King. The One who wore the crown of thorns and was mocked is in fact the King of the whole world.

The kings of the world protect their own lives with power, but Jesus gave up His life to save His people. The kingship of Jesus was revealed not through domination and violence but

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through sacrifice and love.

7. Jesus is crucified at Golgotha (verses 32–38)

As the soldiers led Jesus out, they met Simon of Cyrene and compelled him to bear the cross of Jesus. Jesus must have been utterly weakened by the scourging and the torture.

When they arrived at Golgotha, people offered Him wine mingled with gall, but Jesus would not drink it. It seems to have served to dull the pain. Jesus did not evade the suffering of the Cross with a clouded mind but bore it in full consciousness.

The soldiers crucified Jesus and divided His garments among themselves by casting lots. Over His head was put the accusation, *"JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."* Two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and one on the left. The sinless Jesus was treated as one among criminals.

8. People mock Jesus hanging on the Cross (verses 39–44)

Those passing by, and the chief priests, scribes, and elders, mocked Jesus, telling Him to come down from the cross if He was the Son of God. They said they would believe if He came down from the cross.

But if Jesus had come down from the cross, He could not have saved anyone. That Jesus did not save Himself was not because He lacked the power, but because He was saving others.

In the mockery *"He saved others; Himself He cannot save"* the truth of the Cross is contained, contrary to their intent. Jesus did not choose the way of saving Himself but the way of saving sinners. By not using His power for Himself and bearing the suffering to the end, He accomplished the work of salvation.

9. Darkness comes over all the land and Jesus dies (verses 45–50)

From about noon until three in the afternoon, darkness came over all the land. This darkness shows that the death of Jesus was not simply the execution of one man but an event bound up with God's judgment on sin.

Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* which means, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* These words are also the first verse of Psalm 22.

This cry reveals the depth of the suffering Jesus endured on the Cross. Jesus, the sinless Son of God, had received all the sins of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John. And bearing those sins, He hung on the Cross and bore in our place the judgment of sin and the agony of being forsaken. But just as the whole of Psalm 22 moves at last to God's salvation and victory, Jesus, who completed all the judgment of sin on the Cross, rose again on the third day and overcame the power of death.

People misunderstood, thinking Jesus was calling for Elijah. Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. The death on the Cross was an actual death. Jesus did not feign death or faint; He gave up His life completely.

10. The veil of the temple is torn and the earth quakes (verses 51–54)

At the moment Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. This veil was the curtain dividing the holy place from the Most Holy, showing that a sinner could not come carelessly before the holy presence of God.

That the veil was torn from the top means that God Himself opened the way to heaven. Jesus received all the sins of

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mankind passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing those sins, He shed His blood on the Cross and finished the judgment. Because this complete salvation broke down the wall of sin that blocked the way between God and man, anyone can now come to God, not by human merit or religious standing, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The earth also quaked, the rocks were split, and the graves were opened. The sign of the dead rising appeared as well, and Matthew records that after the resurrection of Jesus they came out of the graves, went into the holy city, and appeared to many. This is a special sign showing in advance that the death and resurrection of Jesus is the event that shatters the power of death.

The centurion and the soldiers who watched all this feared greatly and confessed, *"Truly this was the Son of God!"* The religious leaders who mocked Jesus failed to recognize Him, but the Gentile soldiers, seeing what happened at the Cross, acknowledged that Jesus is the Son of God.

11. Many women watch the Cross from afar (verses 55–56)

Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee and served Him watched the scene of the Cross from afar. Among them were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons.

Most of the twelve disciples had scattered, but these women would witness the Cross, the burial, and then the resurrection that followed. Matthew records them as important witnesses linking the death and the resurrection of Jesus.

They had no power to change the situation at once, but they did not leave the suffering Jesus altogether. Faith does not always appear in the form of doing great things; it also appears

as the faithfulness that stays near the Lord in the midst of suffering.

12. Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus in a new tomb (verses 57–61)

When evening came, Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He was a rich man and a disciple of Jesus.

Joseph wrapped the body of Jesus in a clean linen cloth and laid it in his own new tomb, hewn out of the rock. Then he rolled a large stone against the entrance of the tomb. Mary Magdalene and the other Mary sat opposite the tomb, watching the place.

The record that Jesus was buried in a new tomb confirms the fact that He actually died. Moreover, since the women saw exactly where the tomb was, it cannot be said that they later mistook the empty tomb for another.

Joseph of Arimathea revealed his discipleship in action at the very time when following Jesus had become dangerous. He gave up his own tomb and went before the Roman governor to ask for the body of Jesus.

13. The religious leaders seal the tomb and set a guard (verses 62–66)

The chief priests and the Pharisees remembered that Jesus, while still alive, had said He would rise again after three days. Saying that the disciples might steal the body and claim He had risen, they asked Pilate to have the tomb guarded.

They set a guard and sealed the stone, making the tomb secure. They mobilized every means humanly possible to shut up the tomb of Jesus.

But this measure rather strengthens the historicity of the

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resurrection that follows. The tomb was clearly sealed and the guard was watching it. If Jesus rose nevertheless, it cannot be explained as an incident in which the disciples secretly moved the body.

People tried to prevent the resurrection with a stone, a seal, and soldiers, but they could not block the power of God who overcomes death.

14. The whole message Matthew chapter 27 shows

In Matthew chapter 27 the sins and weaknesses of many people appear. Judas despaired in his guilt; the religious leaders sought to kill Jesus out of envy; Pilate, knowing Jesus was innocent, handed Him over for the sake of political stability. The soldiers mocked Jesus cruelly, and the crowd chose Barabbas and demanded the crucifixion of Jesus.

But Jesus walked the way of salvation to the end. Though without sin, He was tried in the place of sinners, condemned in place of Barabbas, and crucified between robbers. People told Him to come down from the cross, but Jesus did not come down, in order to save others.

When Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. This shows that by the sacrifice of Jesus the way to God has been opened. And Jesus was buried in a new tomb, and the tomb, blocked with a stone and sealed, became the stage of the resurrection that appears in the next chapter.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 27 is the passage showing how Jesus, the sinless Son of God, received in the place of sinners the condemnation, the mockery, and the death of the Cross, opening the way of salvation to God, and, having been buried, now stands before the resurrection.

2) Matthew Chapter 27 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 27 shows the process in which Jesus is tried in the place of sinners, scourged, crucified to die shedding His blood, and buried in a tomb. If we look at this chapter alone, it is easy to understand it as though Jesus took on our sins at the Cross; but when we follow the flow of the whole Gospel of Matthew, Jesus first took on the sins of mankind at the Jordan River and then was crucified bearing those sins.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus received all the sins of everyone in the world passed on to His own body. After that, He received on the Cross the curse and the judgment of those sins in our place, and rose from the dead and completed salvation. The Holy Spirit testifies of this salvation of the water and the blood, and dwells in the person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel with the heart.

1. The sinless Jesus was bound in the form of a sinner (verses 1–2)

After deciding to put Jesus to death, the chief priests and the elders bound Him and handed Him over to the governor Pilate. Jesus had no sin at all, yet He was tied up and led away like a criminal.

Jesus is the Son of God, originally without sin. But when He was baptized by John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He took on all the sins of mankind onto His own body. He shouldered, not His own sins, but all the sins mankind commits from Adam to the last person of this world.

Therefore the sight of Jesus bound is the sight of Him standing in the place of us who were bound to sin. We had to

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be judged and bound to eternal punishment because of sin, but Jesus took on our sins and stood in the sinner's place. Because Jesus was bound, those who believe are released from the bonds of sin and judgment.

2. Judas's remorse and death show that guilt alone cannot solve sin (verses 3–10)

Judas Iscariot, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, said, *"I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."* He tried to return the thirty pieces of silver he had received, but the chief priests and the elders evaded the responsibility. In the end Judas threw the money into the temple and took his own life.

Judas knew his wrong, but he did not come to Jesus and seek the remission of his sins. Regretting sin, agonizing over it, and shedding tears do not remove sin. Nor can a person pay the price of his own sins. Even if he ends his own life, his sin before God is not settled.

The power to wash away sin does not lie in man's remorse or self-affliction. It is when we believe the fact that Jesus took on even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross that we can receive the remission of sins. If Judas had seen the salvation of Jesus as greater than his own sin, he could have returned to the Lord instead of ending his life in despair.

True repentance does not end with reproaching oneself, saying, "I have committed a great sin." It is acknowledging that one is a sinner and returning to the gospel—that Jesus has resolved that sin with His baptism and the Cross.

3. Pilate's water could not wash away sin (verses 11–26)

Pilate knew that Jesus was innocent. He also knew that the religious leaders had handed Jesus over out of envy. Even his

wife called Jesus *"that just Man"* and told him not to be involved in the trial.

But Pilate handed Jesus over to the Cross to protect his own position and political stability. He washed his hands with water before the crowd and declared himself innocent of the blood of Jesus. But washing his hands with water did not remove his sin and responsibility.

This scene makes us consider that the water that washes the body is different from the water of the salvation Jesus accomplished. No ceremony or religious act can cleanse a person's conscience and sins. The water spoken of in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a rite by which a person washes his own body to become righteous; it points to the saving event in which Jesus, by receiving baptism at the Jordan River, took on our sins.

Just as Pilate could not escape his sin however much he washed his hands, so man cannot wash away his sins with his own good deeds and religious ceremonies. We must believe the fact that Jesus took on our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and paid the price of those sins on the Cross.

4. The places of Barabbas and Jesus were exchanged (verses 15–26)

Barabbas was a notorious prisoner. He was a man who deserved condemnation, but he was set free at the demand of the crowd. On the contrary, the sinless Jesus was scourged and handed over to be crucified.

The figure of Barabbas shows our own selves, sinners before God. Barabbas did not gain his freedom by defending himself or piling up good deeds. He was released because Jesus stood in his place. The sinner was set free, and the Righteous

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One was condemned in his place.

This is the substitutionary atonement. Because Jesus had taken on our sins through His baptism, He could stand in our place and receive the punishment. If our sins had not been passed on to Jesus, no direct relation would hold between His death and us. But Jesus took on our sins completely with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and bearing those sins, He received in our place the judgment we deserved.

Barabbas was released from death because of Jesus. In the same way, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is released from sin and judgment because of the atonement of Jesus. It is not because we have done many righteous deeds, but because the sinless Jesus took our place.

5. The scourging and mockery Jesus received were the suffering by which He bore our curse (verses 27–31)

The soldiers stripped Jesus, put a scarlet robe on Him, and set a crown of thorns on His head. They made Him hold a reed like a king's scepter, knelt before Him, and mocked Him, saying, *"Hail, King of the Jews!"* They also spat on Him and struck His head with the reed.

Jesus did not suffer these insults because He was powerless. He is the Creator who raised the dead and stilled the sea, the Son of God. Had He willed it, He could have driven off all the soldiers, but He accepted the suffering to save His people from sin, the curse, and judgment.

Thorns remind us of the curse the ground received after man sinned. The crown of thorns Jesus wore was the soldiers' mockery of a king, but from the viewpoint of salvation it shows Jesus bearing the curse we deserved.

Jesus was wounded not for His own wrongdoing but for our iniquities. His being scourged, spat upon, and mocked was in

order to bear with His own body our sins and our curse, which He had taken on with His baptism.

6. Simon of Cyrene carried the cross, but the One who atoned for sin is Jesus (verse 32)

Simon of Cyrene was seized by the soldiers and made to carry the cross of Jesus. He carried the wooden beam for a stretch of the road, but he could not take the place of mankind in bearing sin.

However much suffering a person bears, and however faithfully he carries his own cross, he cannot wash away his own sins or the sins of others. The only One who can atone for sin is Jesus, who is without sin and who lawfully took on the sins of mankind.

The sacrifice and suffering a person bears cannot be the price of obtaining salvation. Salvation is received by believing what Jesus has done. The labor and sacrifice of the person who has received the remission of sins for the sake of the gospel is not a condition for being saved but the fruit of gratitude for the salvation already received.

7. Jesus received on the Cross the judgment of the sins He had taken on with His baptism (verses 33–38)

Jesus was crucified at Golgotha. People drove nails into His hands and feet and divided His garments by casting lots. Jesus was treated as one among criminals, between two robbers.

What must be made clear here is that the Cross is not the place where sins passed over to Jesus. Jesus had already taken on the sins of mankind at the Jordan River, with the baptism He received from John. The Cross is the place where He received the punishment of the sins He had thus taken on.

The sacrificial offering of the Old Testament also first

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received the sinner's sins and then shed its blood and died. In the same way, Jesus first received our sins onto His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and afterward paid the price of sin with His blood on the Cross.

The baptism of Jesus accomplishes the transfer of sin, and the blood of the Cross accomplishes the judgment of that sin. Therefore the water and the blood are not two separate gospels but one complete salvation that Jesus accomplished.

8. The accusation *"JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS"* revealed that He is the true King (verse 37)

Over the head of Jesus was put the accusation written, *"JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."* People made His claim to be a king the charge against Him, but what was written on that board was the truth.

Jesus is not only the King of the Jews but the King of all mankind and the Creator. The kings of the world demand sacrifice from their people, but Jesus gave His body and His life to save His people. Seeing His people dying because of sin, He came in the flesh of a man, took on their sins with His baptism, and received the judgment on the Cross.

To believe in Jesus is not merely to respect Him as a great teacher or a religious leader. It is to believe in Him as the God who created me, the Savior who took on all my sins and received the judgment in my place, and the true King of my life.

9. That Jesus did not come down from the cross became our salvation (verses 39–44)

People mocked Jesus, saying that if He was the Son of God He should save Himself and come down from the cross. The chief priests also sneered, "*He saved others; Himself He cannot save.*"

But it was not because Jesus lacked the power to save Himself that He did not come down. He stayed on the Cross to the end because if He saved Himself, He could not save us.

If Jesus, who had taken on all our sins with His baptism, had come down from the cross midway, the judgment of sin would not have been finished. Jesus received to the end the punishment we deserved. Instead of saving Himself He saved us, and by choosing the way of being forsaken He opened for us the way to live with God.

People said they would believe if He came down from the cross, but what must truly be believed is the fact that Jesus did not come down from the cross but obeyed unto death and so completed salvation.

10. The darkness that came over all the land shows the judgment on sin (verse 45)

From noon until three in the afternoon, darkness came over all the land. This shows that it was the solemn moment of the death of the Son of God, and that the judgment on the sins of mankind was falling upon Jesus.

Sin is not a simple mistake or a flaw of character. The result of sin is severance from God, death, and judgment. People take their sins lightly, but when we see the suffering Jesus had to receive because of our sins, we can know how heavy sin is.

At the same time, that darkness shows the fact that our judgment passed over to Jesus. The reason the punishment of sin can no longer be demanded of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is that God has already judged all those sins in Jesus.

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11. *"Why have You forsaken Me"* is the cry of Jesus bearing the forsakenness we deserved (verse 46)

On the Cross Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* Why did the sinless Son of God have to suffer this agony of being forsaken? Because He had taken on our sins.

Jesus bore our sins on His own body through the baptism He received from John, and on the Cross He endured in our place the judgment and the forsakenness that sinners deserved. We should have been forsaken by God and punished forever, but Jesus stood in that place.

This cry does not mean that Jesus originally had sin. Jesus was without sin to the end. He actually received the judgment of sin as the atoning sacrifice that bore our sins.

Because Jesus was forsaken, those who believe have been received as the children of God. Because Jesus bore the curse, we have escaped the curse; and because Jesus died, we have come to have eternal life.

12. The death of Jesus was real, and the price of sin was paid in full (verses 47–50)

Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. The death of Jesus was not a faint or a pretense; it was an actual death.

Because the wages of sin is death, Jesus had to die in fact for our sins, which He had taken on with His baptism. Blood stands for life, and Jesus gave His own life to pay the price of our sins.

In Matthew chapter 26 Jesus said of His blood, *"My blood of the new covenant, which is shed for many for the remission of sins."* Matthew chapter 27 is the chapter in which that promise is actually fulfilled. Jesus did not merely speak; He

gave His body to the Cross and shed the blood of the covenant.

Therefore the believer's remission of sins does not rest on feelings or conjecture. It rests on the historical facts that Jesus actually took on sins with His baptism and actually shed His blood and died on the Cross.

13. The torn veil of the temple shows that the way to God has been opened (verse 51)

When Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. This veil was the curtain showing that a sinner could not enter carelessly before the holy God.

That the veil was torn not from bottom to top but from the top down means that God Himself opened the way. It was not man's religious effort that made a way to God. Jesus opened the blocked way by giving His own body and receiving the judgment of sin.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not need to stand far off in fear. Because Jesus has resolved all sins with His baptism and the Cross, he can come before God by faith.

It is not that a person has become perfect by his own deeds. Because Jesus took on all that person's sins with the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment on the Cross, whoever believes this gospel receives the actual remission of all the sins of his heart and becomes a righteous person without sin before God. He comes to God relying not on his own righteousness but on the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished.

14. The opened graves show that the death of Jesus leads to life (verses 51–54)

When Jesus died, the earth quaked, the rocks were split, and

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the graves were opened. Many bodies of those who slept arose, and after the resurrection of Jesus they came out of the graves and appeared to many people.

This sign shows that the death of Jesus does not end in defeat. Jesus would shatter the power of death and rise again, and He would give those who believe new life and the resurrection to come.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not stop at the remission of sins. Jesus accomplished the work of His baptism and the Cross to remove our sins, and He rose again to give us new life. The remission of sins and the life of the resurrection are within one salvation.

The centurion and the soldiers, seeing all these things, confessed, *"Truly this was the Son of God!"* The One they saw on the Cross was not a mere martyr but the Son of God who saves mankind from sin and death.

15. The women who watched the Cross became witnesses of the death and the resurrection (verses 55–56)

The women who had followed and served Jesus from Galilee watched the scene of the Cross. They would come to confirm not only the death of Jesus but also the place of the tomb where He was buried and, later, the empty tomb.

The gospel is not a human imagination or a myth but an event accomplished in actual history. Jesus actually received baptism, actually died on the Cross, and was actually buried and rose again. The eyewitnesses testified to that death, that tomb, and that resurrection.

Faith is not positive thinking that vaguely hopes good things will happen. It is receiving into the heart the fact of the salvation God actually accomplished through Jesus Christ.

16. The burial of Jesus shows that He actually bore even our death (verses 57–61)

Joseph of Arimathea received the body of Jesus, wrapped it in clean linen, and buried it in his own new tomb. Jesus actually died and entered the tomb.

That Jesus entered the tomb means that He bore completely the death we deserved because of sin. Man's salvation is not a psychological comfort that briefly eases guilt. It is the settling of the actual problems of sin, judgment, and death.

Jesus took on our sins with His baptism, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and by being buried in the tomb went down even to the place of death. But the tomb was not the last place for Jesus. It was the place that stood before the resurrection.

17. Even the sealed tomb could not prevent the resurrection of Jesus (verses 62–66)

The chief priests and the Pharisees remembered the word of Jesus, that He would rise after three days. Saying the disciples might steal the body, they blocked the tomb with the stone, sealed it, and set a guard.

People guarded the tomb with every means they had, but they could not block the power of God. The stone, the seal, and the soldiers rather became the evidence that made it all the more clear that the resurrection of Jesus was not the disciples' fabrication but the work of God.

If we speak only of the baptism and the Cross of Jesus and leave out the resurrection, we do not reach the conclusion of the gospel. The resurrection of Jesus is the proof that the price of sin has been paid in full and the power of death has been broken. It is also the promise that eternal new life has been given to whoever believes in Jesus.

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18. The Holy Spirit testifies of the salvation of the water and the blood that Jesus accomplished

When Jesus was baptized at the Jordan River, the Holy Spirit descended on Him like a dove, and God the Father testified that Jesus is His beloved Son. What the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit did for the salvation of mankind was clearly revealed at that baptism.

Jesus carried the sins He had taken on with that baptism all the way to the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose from the dead. The Holy Spirit still testifies of this word of salvation today, and dwells in the person who has received the remission of sins by believing this gospel with the heart.

To receive the Holy Spirit is not the same as having a special emotional experience or seeing a supernatural phenomenon. Because the Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth, He comes into the heart of the person who believes the truth that Jesus has completely resolved sin with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The Holy Spirit leads the believer to rely not on his own deeds but on the righteousness of Jesus, and to live serving the gospel and loving his neighbors out of gratitude for the grace of salvation already received.

19. The whole meaning of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Matthew chapter 27 shows

Matthew chapter 27 is not a passage given merely so that we would grieve over the suffering of the Cross. It is a passage given so that we would believe because of whose sins Jesus received this suffering, and what He accomplished through it.

The sinless Jesus took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Then He was condemned in our place in Pilate’s court and stood in the

sinner's place as if in the stead of Barabbas. Through the scourge and the crown of thorns He bore our curse, and on the Cross He shed the blood of the covenant and received the judgment of sin in full.

Because Jesus was forsaken, we have been received as the children of God; because He died, we have obtained eternal life. By the tearing of the veil of the temple the way to God was opened, and the opened graves and the coming resurrection show that new life and the hope of eternal resurrection have been given to those who believe.

The person who believes this fact has not become righteous because his own deeds are perfect. Because Jesus took on all his sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and ended the judgment on the Cross, whoever believes this gospel receives the actual remission of all the sins of his heart and becomes a righteous person without sin before God. Receiving the remission of sins does not mean that the flesh never errs again. Believers are still weak, but with the help of the Holy Spirit they acknowledge their wrongs, return to the gospel Jesus accomplished, and live following the Lord's will with thanksgiving.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 27 is the passage showing how Jesus, shouldering all our sins that had passed over to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received in our place—and in Barabbas's place—the condemnation, the curse, and the judgment of the Cross, and so opened completely the way of the remission of sins, and would soon give new life through the resurrection. ✉

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Matthew Chapter 27

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

Introductory Words

Matthew chapter 27 records the process in which Jesus is handed over to the Roman governor Pilate and tried, suffers the mockery and scourging of the soldiers, is crucified and dies at Golgotha, and is buried in a tomb. People condemned Jesus as a criminal, but the passage shows again and again that He is the sinless Son of God.

Judas Iscariot, who had sold Jesus, said he had betrayed innocent blood, threw the thirty pieces of silver into the temple, and went and hanged himself. His remorse stopped at admitting his sin; it did not go on to the faith that receives the remission of sins. Guilt and the faith of the remission of sins are entirely different things.

Pilate found no fault in Jesus, yet pressed by the demand of the crowd, he released the prisoner Barabbas and handed Jesus over to be crucified. That the criminal Barabbas was set free

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and the sinless Jesus was condemned in his place shows, just as it is, the picture of substitution: the sinner released and the Righteous One dying in his stead.

The soldiers put a crown of thorns on Jesus, clothed Him in a scarlet robe, mocked Him as the King of the Jews, and led Him to Golgotha and crucified Him. Those passing by and the chief priests also mocked Him, saying He could not save Himself, but Jesus chose the way of saving us by not saving Himself.

From the sixth hour darkness came over all the land, and Jesus cried out with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. At that moment the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom. This shows that by the death of Jesus the wall of sin between God and man collapsed, and the way was opened for anyone to come to God by faith.

The death of Jesus was the event that ended the judgment of the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and shouldered the sins of all mankind, and bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the punishment of all sins. Joseph of Arimathea buried His body in a new tomb. And on the third day He rose from the dead and completed salvation. Now, examining the words of the passage in order, let us look into the salvation the death of Jesus on the Cross accomplished.

The sinless Jesus was handed over to Pilate to be judged in our place

"When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to

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Pontius Pilate the governor" (Matthew 27:1–2).

Matthew chapter 27 begins with the words *"When morning came."* All night long Jesus had endured the accusations of false witnesses and interrogation at the house of Caiaphas the high priest. People spat in His face, struck Him with fists and palms, and mocked Him.

When day broke, the chief priests and the elders of the people gathered again. They did not assemble to examine fairly whether Jesus was really guilty. The passage records plainly that they *"plotted against Jesus to put Him to death."*

It was a trial whose goal had already been fixed. They sought not the truth but a way to kill Jesus. A fair judgment would confirm the evidence and then decide guilt or innocence, but they first reached the conclusion of death and then discussed the procedure for carrying it out.

The chief priests and the elders were the people who should have known the word of God and guided the people in the right way. Yet they sought to kill the Son of God to protect their religious authority and position. Having a religious office and biblical knowledge does not automatically make one a person who believes God.

They agreed together, but the fact that they consulted together did not make their decision the will of God. However many people consent and however high the rank of those who resolve it, if it goes against the word of God, it is an unrighteous decision. Neither the number of people nor their authority determines the truth.

Jesus had no sin deserving death. Many false witnesses came forward, but their testimony did not agree enough to condemn Him. Jesus was the holy and righteous One, who had never committed falsehood, violence, or injustice.

Even so, the chief priests and the elders bound Jesus.

Human creatures tied up the Son of God, the Creator, like a criminal. They thought they had subdued Jesus, but Jesus was not bound for lack of power.

In Gethsemane Jesus had resolved to obey the Father's will and gave Himself up to the crowd that came to seize Him. He could have asked for more than twelve legions of angels, but He did not. To save us from sin, He accepted the binding and the suffering.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus took on all the sins of all mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. That Jesus, who had no sin at all, was bound like a sinner was in order to receive in our place the punishment of our sins, which had been passed on to Him through His baptism.

Included in the sins Jesus took on are the envy, the lies, and the murderous sin of the chief priests. Not only the unrighteous scheming of the elders, Pilate's compromise, the soldiers' mockery and violence, Judas's greed and betrayal, and Peter's denial, but the lifelong sins of us all passed over to Jesus.

Jesus was not bound because of His own sins; He stood in the sinner's place because He had taken on our sins. We, the actual sinners, had to be released, and the sinless Jesus had to be bound and judged in our place. This is the grace of the atonement Jesus accomplished.

The chief priests and the elders handed Jesus over to the governor Pilate. The land of Judea was then under Roman rule, and to have Jesus crucified they needed the verdict of the Roman governor. The religious leaders dragged Jesus to Pilate to carry out in fact the death sentence they had decided.

Before Caiaphas they had charged that Jesus' saying He is the Christ, the Son of God, was blasphemy. But before the Roman governor this alone could hardly draw out a death

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sentence. So they went on to accuse Jesus as though He were a king challenging the political order of Rome.

They sought to kill the Son of God by handing Him over to the power of the world. The religious power that professed to serve God and the political power that ruled the world met in the work of killing the sinless Jesus. This shows how wickedly man, fallen in sin, can oppose the truth to protect his own desires.

But the responsibility for killing Jesus must not be laid on one particular nation of that time only. The leaders who appear in the passage sought to kill Jesus directly, and so they bear responsibility for their sin. But the fundamental reason Jesus had to go to the Cross is the sin of all mankind.

We too have the same sins as the chief priests. We have the sins of rejecting the word of God to protect our own thoughts and interests, of distorting the truth to prove ourselves right, and of condemning those who displease us. Jesus took on all these sins of ours.

People thought they had "handed over" Jesus to Pilate, but Jesus gave up His life of His own accord. Judas handed Jesus over to the chief priests, the chief priests handed Him over to Pilate, and Pilate handed Him over to the soldiers. But above this whole process, Jesus went voluntarily toward the Cross according to the Father's plan of salvation.

From man's viewpoint, envy, injustice, and a murderous plot drove Jesus to death. But from God's viewpoint, Jesus walked the way of atonement already promised, to save sinners. The evil conduct of men did not turn into God's good will, but neither could that evil bring down God's plan of salvation.

That Jesus was handed over to Pilate was part of the process of receiving the death of the Cross. In the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Cross is the place where Jesus

received the judgment of the sins He had taken on with His baptism. Because the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had shouldered our sins, had to shed His blood and die.

The baptism Jesus received from John, His being handed over to Pilate, and the death of the Cross are joined as one. He received the sin of the world passed on to Him through His baptism, went through Pilate's verdict and hung on the Cross receiving the punishment of those sins, and rose again on the third day and completed salvation.

If we leave out the baptism of Jesus and speak only of the Cross, it does not become clear what sins Jesus bore and was judged for. Conversely, we cannot speak only of His taking on sins with His baptism and leave out the Cross and the resurrection. To believe all together—the baptism of Jesus, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection—is to believe the whole gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The chief priests plotted to kill Jesus, but Jesus died to save sinners just like them. People bound Jesus, but Jesus released us who were bound to sin and death. By receiving the sinner's verdict, Jesus gave to us who believe the verdict of righteousness.

While Jesus was being bound, Peter and the other disciples could offer no help at all. Salvation was not accomplished by the disciples protecting Jesus. It was accomplished by Jesus alone bearing all the suffering and obeying the Father's will to the end.

Neither can we complete salvation by adding our good deeds or loyalty. Salvation is what Jesus has already accomplished. We receive the remission of sins by believing with the heart the facts that Jesus took on all sins with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and rose again.

Yet as we watch the wicked plotting of the religious leaders,

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we must not condemn others only. We too can put our own judgment before the word of God, listen only to what favors us, and turn away from the truth for the profit of the flesh even while knowing it. Therefore we must acknowledge our own wickedness before the word and return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

True faith does not rely on the title of a religious leader or on the agreement of many people. It believes the word that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, who took on all our sins and accomplished the complete salvation. We must exalt the word of God above the authority of man.

Matthew 27:1–2 is only two verses, but it is an important turning point on the way to the Cross. The sinless Jesus was bound by the decision of sinners and handed over to Pilate. But that whole process was the way for Jesus to receive on the Cross the judgment of our sins, which He had taken on with His baptism.

Therefore, in the bound Jesus we must see not a helpless failure but the Savior who gave Himself up as the sacrificial offering. Jesus received in our place the condemnation and the death we deserved, and rose again, releasing us from the bonds of sin and death.

The person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit no longer remains under condemnation because of his sins. He believes that Jesus took on all his sins and received the punishment, and gives thanks to God. And unlike the chief priests and the elders, he does not oppose the truth for his own profit, but stands on the side of God’s word and the gospel in every situation.

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

Judas's remorse stopped at admitting his sin and did not lead to faith in the salvation of Jesus

"Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.' And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me.'" (Matthew 27:3–10).

Judas Iscariot saw Jesus being condemned. He must have realized that things were proceeding far more gravely than he had expected. The Jesus he had handed over was heading at last for the death sentence and the death of the Cross.

Only then did Judas regret what he had done. He tried to return the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. He may have thought that by returning the money he could undo what he had done, or at least escape the torment of his conscience.

But the act of handing Jesus over could not be erased by refunding the money. Returning the gain of a sin may be necessary, but that alone does not wash away the sin itself. The problem of sin is a spiritual problem deeper than restoring material things.

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Judas said, *"I have sinned by betraying innocent blood."* He admitted that his act was sin. He also testified that Jesus had no sin deserving death.

Judas Iscariot had followed Jesus closely for about three years. Having watched His words and His deeds, he knew that Jesus was without sin. Even the man who sold Jesus testified that His blood was *"innocent blood."*

Jesus was not condemned because of His own sins. He was the sinless Son of God, who committed neither falsehood nor injustice. Because He was without sin, He could become the unblemished sacrificial offering that bears our sins in our place.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus received all the sins of all mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Jesus Himself had no sin, but because He had taken on our sins, He had to be condemned in the sinner's place and receive the judgment of the Cross.

The sins of betrayal, greed, and falsehood that Judas committed were also included in the sin of the world Jesus took on with His baptism. Jesus shouldered even the sins of Judas Iscariot. Therefore, even for Judas there was a way to believe in Jesus, who had borne his sins, and to come to grace.

But Judas, while admitting his sin, did not rely on Jesus as his Savior. He went to the chief priests and returned the money, but he did not look in faith to Jesus, who had taken on his sins. He had guilt, but he did not take hold of the word of salvation.

Admitting sin and saving faith are not the same. A person can say, "I have done wrong," and regret deeply. But unless he believes in Jesus, who bore his sins and was judged for them, he cannot move from the torment of conscience to the eternal remission of sins.

True repentance is not punishing oneself for one's sins. It is

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

admitting that one's own thoughts and ways were wrong, and returning to the salvation God accomplished through Jesus Christ. The sinner must not try to pay the price of his sins himself, but believe the gospel that Jesus paid it in his place.

The chief priests and the elders said to Judas, *"What is that to us? You see to it!"* They had planned with him to kill Jesus and had used him, giving him the thirty pieces of silver. But when Judas came back tormented with guilt, they shifted all the responsibility onto him.

Those who sin together do not truly love one another. To achieve their ends they use each other, but when trouble comes they abandon each other, saying, *"You see to it."* The world, sin, and Satan hold out sweet rewards, but they take no responsibility whatever for the consequences.

Judas Iscariot sold Jesus to gain thirty pieces of silver. But the money gave him neither joy nor satisfaction, and in the end it became money he threw into the temple. The thirty pieces of silver he had counted more precious than Jesus remained as the evidence accusing him of his sin.

The material things of the world are not evil in themselves. But if a person loves material things more than Jesus and the gospel, he can sell the truth because of them. The profit gained for a moment vanishes, but the consequence of forsaking the gospel leaves a heavy anguish on a person's soul.

Judas threw the silver into the temple, went away, and hanged himself. He thought the sin he had committed was too great, but he did not believe in the salvation of Jesus, which is greater than that sin. He heard only the voice of his conscience condemning him and failed to grasp the grace of the Lord who saves sinners.

Taking one's own life is not the way to resolve sin. Life is what God has given, and even if a man makes himself the final

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judge of his own sins and punishes himself, the price of sin is not thereby settled before God. The more one despairs over sin, the more one must come to Jesus the Savior instead of drawing a conclusion by one's own strength.

Peter also denied Jesus three times and wept bitterly. But Peter did not end staring only at his own failure. He returned to the risen Jesus and was raised up again within the love and salvation of the Lord, who had borne even his sins.

The difference between Peter and Judas does not lie simply in who committed the greater sin. Both committed grave sins and suffered deeply. But Peter came back into the word and the grace of Jesus, while Judas chose the path of judging himself within his own guilt.

The baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross are sufficient to save even a sinner like Judas. Jesus took on all sins with His baptism, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead and completed salvation.

Therefore a sinner's salvation does not come from thinking his sin small. It comes from believing that the salvation of Jesus is greater and more complete than his sin. However shameful and heavy the sin one has committed, one must believe the gospel that Jesus bore even that sin.

The chief priests, gathering up the silver Judas had thrown, said, *"It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood."* They knew that the money was blood money used to kill an innocent man. Yet they did not stop their plan to kill Jesus.

Their conduct shows religious hypocrisy. They said it was not right to put blood money into the treasury, while they went on shedding the blood of the innocent. They tried to keep the small regulation of not putting the money into the treasury

while forsaking the greater will of God—justice, mercy, and truth.

A person can keep religious forms and still commit great sins in his heart. Having the forms of worship, offerings, and office does not make the heart righteous before God. A faith that keeps only outward ordinances without believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot make a person's sins clean.

The chief priests consulted again and bought the potter's field with the thirty pieces of silver, and made it a burial place for strangers. The money received for selling Jesus was spent in the end on land for burying the dead. The money for which the Lord of life was sold remained as a mark of death and the grave.

That field was called *"the Field of Blood."* People tried to justify their decision, but the name went on testifying to the event that had shed innocent blood. Though man tries to hide the traces of sin, before the word of God that sin is exposed.

But the blood of Jesus must not be seen merely as blood shed unjustly through men's evil deeds. Jesus gave His own life of His own accord to pay the price of our sins. His blood is the blood of atonement, by which He received in our place the judgment of all the sins He had taken on with His baptism.

Thirty pieces of silver was the price people set on Jesus. They valued the Son of God at about the ransom of a slave. But the true worth of Jesus cannot be reckoned with the silver and gold of the world. The life of Jesus is precious enough to save all mankind from sin and death.

Our salvation was not made with perishable things like silver or gold. It was accomplished with the precious blood that the sinless Jesus shed, bearing our sins. And that blood could become the judgment of our sins because Jesus had first

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received all our sins onto His own body with His baptism.

Matthew records that the matter of the thirty pieces of silver and the potter's field was the fulfillment of what was spoken through the prophet. People acted out of greed and evil intent, but even their actions did not escape the bounds of what God had foreknown and spoken.

That God foreknew it does not mean He compelled Judas to sin. Judas sold Jesus following his own greed, and the chief priests and the elders sought to kill Jesus following their own envy and power. Therefore each person is responsible for his own choice.

At the same time, it is also revealed that man's sin and failure cannot bring down God's plan of salvation. Jesus was sold for thirty pieces of silver and handed over into the hands of sinners, but through that very path He was judged for our sins and accomplished salvation. God's salvation is greater and stronger than men's evil.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not destroy himself in guilt as Judas did. When his sin is exposed, he admits it without excuse, but at the same time he looks to Jesus, who bore all those sins. He believes not his own feelings but the word of the salvation Jesus completed.

It is the same when we do wrong after being saved. We must not leave the church and the Lord in despair over our sins, but believe that Jesus bore even those sins, and turn back before the word. And we must receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit and the help of the church so as not to repeat the same sins.

A heart that grieves over sin is needed, but grief itself is not salvation. Many tears, self-reproach, and regret cannot take the place of the gospel of Jesus. Salvation is received when we believe with the heart the fact that Jesus removed all sins with

His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Matthew 27:3–10 shows why Judas, who had followed Jesus closely, went the way of destruction. He knew Jesus was innocent and admitted his own sin, but he did not believe in Jesus as the Savior who had borne his sins. He had knowledge and remorse, but not the faith of salvation.

Therefore, when we see our sins, we must not despair like Judas but come to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The sinless Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism and was judged on the Cross, and by rising again He gave us eternal life.

The thirty pieces of silver could not save Judas, but the innocent blood of Jesus saves everyone who believes. However great one's sin may look, it cannot be greater than the salvation of Jesus. The person who believes this gospel escapes condemnation and despair and lives again within the grace of the Lord.

The release of the sinner Barabbas and the condemnation of the sinless Jesus show the gospel of substitution

"Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say.' And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together,

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Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.' But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'Barabbas!' Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let Him be crucified!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified" (Matthew 27:11–26).

Jesus was transferred from the house of Caiaphas the high priest to the judgment seat of the governor Pilate. The religious leaders had condemned as blasphemy His saying that He is the Christ, the Son of God. But before the Roman governor they had to accuse Jesus as a political rebel to obtain a death sentence.

Pilate asked Jesus, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* From the standpoint of a Roman governor, the title of king could carry the political meaning of challenging the emperor's rule. The religious leaders tried to use exactly this point to make Jesus look like a dangerous rebel.

Jesus answered, *"It is as you say."* Jesus is indeed a King.

He is not only the King of the Jews but the King of kings, the Son of God who created and rules all mankind.

But the kingdom of Jesus is not a kingdom established by worldly force and political rivalry. Jesus did not raise a revolt against Rome or gather an army to seize the throne of the world. He came to save His people from the power of sin, death, and Satan and to establish the kingdom of God.

The chief priests and the elders accused Jesus of many things. But Jesus made no answer. It was not because He had nothing to refute or because He was guilty that He kept silent.

Their accusations had already come from envy and falsehood. Rather than defend Himself and avoid the Cross, Jesus stood silent as the Lamb of God who suffers in the place of sinners. He was obeying the Father's will to accomplish our salvation.

Pilate marveled greatly to see that Jesus, though facing so many accusations, answered not a single word. A man on the brink of a death sentence would normally defend himself vigorously. But Jesus did not try to save His own life; He gave Himself up to save our lives.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus had already taken on all the sins of all mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Jesus Himself had no sin, but because He had shouldered our sins with His baptism, He accepted condemnation and punishment in the sinner's place.

That Jesus was silent before Pilate does not mean He admitted the charges for which He would be crucified. He did not refuse that path, in order to receive in our place the condemnation we deserved. For only when the sinless One stands in the sinner's place can we sinners stand in the place of the righteous.

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At the feast there was a custom that the governor released one prisoner whom the crowd wished. At that time a notorious prisoner called Barabbas was being held. Pilate tried to use this custom to release the innocent Jesus.

Pilate asked the crowd, *"Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?"* On one side was Barabbas, imprisoned for actual crimes; on the other was Jesus, who had no sin at all. Of these two, one would be released and the other would receive the punishment of death.

Pilate knew that the chief priests and the elders had handed Jesus over because of envy. He perceived that it was not from any conviction that Jesus was guilty, but because they envied the many people following Jesus and wanted to remove Him.

Envy blinds a person to the truth. When he feels his position and honor threatened, he comes to hate and seeks to remove even an innocent man. The religious leaders loved their own authority and popularity more than the glory of God.

While Pilate was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, *"Have nothing to do with that just Man."* Even his wife called Jesus a *"just Man."* The innocence of Jesus was being revealed from many directions.

Judas Iscariot testified that the blood of Jesus was *"innocent blood"*; Pilate could find in Jesus no crime deserving death; and Pilate's wife called Him a just Man. All these testimonies show that Jesus died not for His own sins but for the sins of others.

Yet the chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to destroy Jesus. The leaders who should have guided the people with the word of God instead incited the people to make the wrong choice.

The responsibility of a spiritual leader is very great. If a leader distorts the truth to protect his own greed and doctrines,

he can lead many people astray together with himself. Therefore we must not follow a person's office and authority only, but examine whether his teaching agrees with the word of God.

The crowd answered, *"Barabbas!"* They demanded that the guilty Barabbas be released and the sinless Jesus be killed. The sinfulness of man made them choose a sinner like themselves rather than the Lord of life.

The release of Barabbas is a clear picture of the gospel of substitution. Barabbas, the actual criminal, was set free without receiving any punishment. The sinless Jesus, on the other hand, was handed over to the place of death that Barabbas deserved.

Barabbas was not released because he did a good deed. His sins had not suddenly vanished, nor had the verdict changed to not guilty. He gained his freedom because Jesus was handed over to death in his place.

Spiritually, we too are people like Barabbas. We actually sinned before God and deserved judgment and death because of those sins. But because the sinless Jesus was condemned in our place, we have come to receive freedom by faith.

However, the exchange of places between Barabbas and Jesus is not itself the event that passed the sins of mankind onto Jesus. It is a historical picture showing substitution. What actually passed all our sins onto Jesus was the baptism He received from John.

By receiving baptism at the Jordan River, Jesus took on all our sins, and bearing those sins, He stood in Pilate's court. And by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He received in our place the punishment of our sins. On the third day He rose again and completed salvation.

Pilate asked the crowd, *"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"* As judge, he had the duty to declare

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Jesus innocent and release Him. But he did not render the right verdict; he shifted the final decision onto the mob.

The crowd cried out, *"Let Him be crucified!"* When Pilate asked, *"Why, what evil has He done?"* they could produce no crime of Jesus. They only shouted the louder, *"Let Him be crucified!"*

A loud voice does not decide the truth. Nor does a lie become truth because many people repeat the same claim. Truth must be judged not by public opinion but by the word of God.

Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, knew the envy of the religious leaders, and had even heard his wife's warning. Yet fearing that a riot would break out, he abandoned justice. Knowing the truth, he did not act on it, in order to keep his position and his safety.

Pilate took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying, *"I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it."* But a judge's responsibility does not disappear through a ceremony of pouring water on his hands. Knowing Jesus was innocent, he sentenced Him to be scourged and handed over to the Cross.

A person does not become innocent before God by declaring with his own mouth, "I am innocent." Even if he shifts the responsibility to others or performs an outward ceremony, the sins of his heart and conduct are not washed away. Pilate's hands were washed with water, but his sin could not be washed by that water.

The water Pilate used here is entirely different from the water spoken of in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Pilate's water was an outward sign meant to deny his own responsibility. The water of the gospel points to the saving event in which Jesus, by the baptism He received from John the

Baptist, took all the sins of mankind onto His own body.

What washes away our sins is not the act of a man washing his own hands. It is the righteousness of God, by which Jesus received our sins passed on to Him through His baptism and was judged on the Cross. We receive the remission of sins by believing that fact.

All the people answered, *"His blood be on us and on our children."* This was a dreadful saying, by which they took upon themselves the responsibility for demanding the death of the innocent Jesus. But this verse must never be used as a ground for cursing or hating all Jews and their descendants.

Jesus and His disciples were also Jews, and many believers of the early Church were Jews. The responsibility in the passage exposes the unbelief and sin of those who rejected Jesus and cried out for His death. Seen more broadly, the death of Jesus came about because of the sins of all mankind, not of one nation only.

We too are not unrelated to the sin of crucifying Jesus. Our sins of falsehood, greed, lust, pride, and unbelief passed over to Jesus, and Jesus received the punishment of those sins on the Cross. Therefore, rather than condemning others, we must realize that the Lord suffered because of my sins.

Pilate released Barabbas and had Jesus scourged. The sinner gained freedom and the Righteous One was beaten. That the body of Jesus was torn and bled was His bearing in our place the punishment we deserved.

After being scourged, Jesus was handed over to be crucified. Jesus did not come down from that place or refuse the work of salvation. He went to the Cross to be judged to the end for all our sins, which He had taken on with His baptism, and to accomplish the complete salvation.

The Cross of Jesus is not merely a moving sacrifice that

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displays love. It is the judgment in which God's justice—that the wages of sin is death—was actually executed. Only, that judgment was received not by us sinners but by Jesus, who had taken on our sins.

The Cross is the place where God's love and justice appeared together. God did not overlook our sins without any price. By passing those sins onto His only begotten Son and judging them in Him, He saved us righteously.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is released, like Barabbas, from the punishment he deserved. He comes to accept the fact that Jesus stood in his place and was condemned, and that by believing in the righteousness of Jesus he has received freedom and life.

This does not mean that the saved may keep living after their own greed like Barabbas. If we know the grace of Jesus, who received the scourging and the Cross in our place, we can no longer serve sin and the desires of the flesh as our master. Looking to the Cross, we must deny our own thoughts and follow the will of the Lord.

Pilate's conduct also shows that knowing the truth is not enough. He knew to some extent that Jesus was in the right, but he did not stand on the side of that truth. Fearing men and the world, he rendered an unrighteous verdict.

We must not only know and believe the gospel clearly, but also put the word of God before the opinions of people in our lives. We must not compromise the truth of the gospel for fear of loss and opposition, nor shift our responsibility onto others.

Matthew 27:11–26 shows that we were all sinners like Barabbas. We deserved condemnation and death, but the sinless Jesus stood in our place. Jesus took on our sins with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins through the scourging and the Cross, and rose again and completed

salvation.

Therefore, what washes away our sins is not pouring water on our hands and declaring ourselves innocent like Pilate. It is believing with the heart the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit. The person who believes this gospel is released from sin and condemnation, becomes a child of God, and lives serving Jesus the King, who died in his place.

Jesus, who wore the mocking crown of thorns, is the true King who bore our curse

"Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified" (Matthew 27:27–31).

Pilate found no fault in Jesus, yet he yielded to the demand of the crowd and handed Him over to be crucified. Barabbas was released, and the sinless Jesus, after being scourged, was handed over to the governor's soldiers.

The soldiers took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison. They meant to mock at will the Jesus who had been handed over as a condemned man. It was not the impulsive act of one or two men; many soldiers together made a spectacle of insulting Jesus.

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They knew that Jesus had been sentenced to crucifixion on the charge of being the King of the Jews. So they mocked Him by imitating a royal enthronement. They falsely staged the robe, the crown, the scepter, and the homage of subjects that belong to a king.

First the soldiers stripped Jesus. Stripping off His clothes was an act that not only inflicted bodily pain but trampled on a person's dignity and put him to shame. Jesus suffered shame before many people.

Man tries to cover his shame after he has sinned. Adam and Eve also, after sinning, knew they were naked and covered their bodies. But the sinless Jesus had His own clothes stripped off in order to bear even our sin and our shame.

The soldiers put a scarlet robe on Jesus. The scarlet robe was a garment of mockery imitating the splendid robe a king wears. They did not clothe Him because they believed He was a real king, but to jeer that a powerless man had claimed to be king.

But there was a fact they did not know. Jesus, who wore the scarlet robe and was mocked, was in fact the true King. Jesus is not only the King of the Jews but the King of kings, who rules all mankind and all creation.

The kingship of Jesus is not the kingship of worldly politics competing with the Roman emperor. Jesus is the eternal King who triumphs over the power of sin, death, and Satan and saves His people. The kings of the world sacrifice their people to keep their thrones, but Jesus sacrificed His own life to save His people.

The soldiers twisted a crown of thorns and set it on the head of Jesus. A crown originally displays the glory and power of a king, but the crown of thorns was an instrument of pain and disgrace. As the thorns pierced His head, blood must have

flowed.

Thorns call to mind what sprang from the ground cursed because of man's sin. It was man who sinned, but it was Jesus who wore the crown of thorns. He bore in our place the curse and the pain of sin that we deserved.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, before He received this suffering Jesus had taken on all the sins of all mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. The crown of thorns set on His head was not a misfortune that happened by chance to a sinless man, but part of the process by which the Savior, who had taken on our sins, bore the curse of those sins.

Jesus bore not only our pride, greed, falsehood, lust, murder, and hatred, but even the sins of the soldiers' cruelty and mockery. He received passed on to Him with His baptism the sins of those who insulted Him—and even our sin of condemning others as we watch that scene.

The soldiers put a reed in Jesus' right hand. It was an imitation of the scepter a king holds as the symbol of power. Handing Him a reed that breaks easily, they mocked Him as a false king without any power.

But Jesus is the One who actually holds all authority in heaven and on earth. The reed the soldiers put in His hand could neither create nor take away His true authority. Had He willed it, Jesus could have judged all those soldiers on the spot, but He did not use His power, and endured the suffering to save us.

The soldiers knelt before Jesus. Their kneeling was not true worship but a play staged to ridicule Him. With their mouths they said, *"Hail, King of the Jews!"* but in their hearts they did not acknowledge Jesus as King.

This scene makes us look back at formal faith today. A

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person can kneel at worship and call Jesus Lord with his lips, while in his life he serves his own greed as king. If the confession of the lips and the faith of the heart do not agree, he can remain in an outward worship like the soldiers' mockery.

To believe in Jesus as the true King means to believe the salvation He accomplished and to be governed by His word. It is not using Jesus to fulfill one's own wishes, but laying down one's own thoughts and following the will of the Lord the King.

The soldiers spat in the face of Jesus. Spitting in someone's face is one of the most contemptuous acts of all. Human creatures failed to recognize the Son of God who had created them and spat in His face.

They snatched back the reed they had put in His hand and struck His head with it. Since they beat the head that wore the crown of thorns, the thorns must have sunk deeper. The soldiers did not stop at seeing the pain of Jesus; they rather enjoyed it.

This shows the cruelty of man in the grip of sin. People can watch and mock the suffering of the weak even when they themselves have suffered no harm. When many act together, they can forget the pangs of conscience and grow still more cruel.

But we must not condemn the soldiers only. In us also are the sins of despising others, wounding them with words, and enjoying the shame of the weak. Because of the sins of blame, ridicule, and insult we have committed with our mouths, Jesus was spat on and beaten.

Jesus did not answer the soldiers' mockery with curses or revenge. It was not because He lacked strength that He endured. He accepted that shame and pain in full, in order to carry all our sins, which He had taken on with His baptism, to the Cross and be judged for them.

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

The baptism Jesus received from John, the crown of thorns, and the Cross are one connected work of salvation. Jesus took on the sin of the world with His baptism, passed through the curse and the shame of sin under the crown of thorns and the beating, and paid the punishment of sin in full by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross.

And on the third day He rose from the dead. The soldiers mocked Jesus as a powerless false king, but the resurrection testified that Jesus is the true King who has conquered sin and death. Jesus is alive now and sits at the right hand of the power of God.

The scarlet robe the soldiers put on Jesus was a robe of mockery, but Jesus is the King who will indeed be clothed in glory. The crown of thorns they set on Him was a crown of suffering, but Jesus is the One who will wear the crown of glory and honor. The reed they put in His hand was a false scepter, but the true authority of Jesus is eternal.

They knelt before Jesus in jest, but one day every person will actually kneel before Him. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will worship Jesus with joy as the King who saved him. But the person who has rejected the gospel will stand before Jesus the Judge.

When the mocking was over, the soldiers took off the scarlet robe and put His own clothes back on Him. For them it was a moment of cruel play, but for Jesus it was real suffering leading to the Cross. They led Him out of the Praetorium to crucify Him.

The suffering Jesus received in the Praetorium is not an event separate from the Cross. After bearing the scourging, the stripping, the mockery, the crown of thorns, the spitting, and the beating, He finally gave up His life on the Cross. To save us from sin, He avoided none of the pains of body and heart.

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When we think of the suffering of Jesus, we must not stop at the feeling of pity. Jesus did not suffer to receive our sympathy; He suffered to save us from sin and judgment. We must know because of whose sins that suffering came.

Jesus wore the crown of thorns and went to the Cross because He had received my sins passed on to Him with His baptism. When we believe this fact, the suffering of Jesus is no longer a tragedy of long ago but the righteousness of God that saved me.

The crown of thorns of Jesus also shows us how dreadful sin is. God did not treat sin lightly or pass over it. He laid our sins on His only begotten Son and had Him actually receive the curse and the judgment.

At the same time, the crown of thorns shows how great the love of God is. Jesus did not immediately judge the sinners who insulted Him, but bore even their sins and opened the way to save them. It is the love that endured shame and pain for the sake of enemies.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make the glory and high places of this world the goal of his faith. For Jesus our King was despised, wearing the scarlet robe and the crown of thorns. To follow the Lord is not to exalt one's own honor but to lower oneself for the gospel and for other souls.

Moreover, we must not insult people with words and deeds. We must know that the sin of the soldiers who spat in Jesus' face and struck His head is the very shape of the sin we carry. To respect others, to care for the wounded, and to preach the gospel even to those who oppose us—this is the life of one who has received the grace of the Lord.

Looking at the Cross, we must also lay down our pride and the desires of the flesh. If the King of kings was brought so low

for us, we must not weary the church and others because of our own pride and honor. Remembering the shame the Lord bore, we must exalt the gospel above our own thoughts.

Matthew 27:27–31 is the scene in which people mocked Jesus as a king, yet paradoxically it shows what kind of King He is. Jesus is not a king who reigns over his people and receives their service, but the King of salvation who shoulders His people's sin and curse and gives up His own life.

Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, received the curse and the shame of those sins under the crown of thorns, and paid the price of sin completely on the Cross. And He rose again and gave those who believe eternal life and the kingdom of God.

Therefore we must not call Jesus King with our lips only while mocking Him in our hearts like the soldiers. We must believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts, and receive Jesus, who bore our sin and curse in our place, as our true King. And we must live humbly serving the gospel, following the grace and the word of that King.

Jesus saved us sinners by not saving Himself but remaining on the Cross

"Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.'

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Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'' Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing" (Matthew 27:32–44).

After being scourged and mocked by Pilate's soldiers, Jesus was led out of the Praetorium to be crucified. His body was already severely weakened by the scourging, the crown of thorns, and the beatings.

On the way the soldiers met Simon, a man of Cyrene, and compelled him to bear the cross of Jesus. Simon did not carry the cross because he had planned or wanted to. Unexpectedly he came to share in the suffering of Jesus.

Simon shouldered the wooden cross in Jesus' place, but he did not also shoulder the sins of mankind. Only Jesus can bear the burden of our sins. Simon carried the wooden frame of the cross, but Jesus bore the sins of everyone in the world and the judgment of those sins.

This scene makes us think that those who follow the Lord also have a life of taking up their own crosses. But the suffering we receive is not the suffering of atonement that redeems sin. The cross that atones for sin was borne by Jesus

alone, once and for all.

For a believer to take up his own cross does not mean that he supplements the saving work of Jesus. It means that a person who has received the grace of the already completed salvation lays down his own greed and pride and labors for the gospel and for other souls. Salvation was completed not by our suffering but by the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus.

Jesus arrived at Golgotha, that is, the place called the Place of a Skull. The name Place of a Skull calls to mind death and punishment. The Lord of life was dragged to the place of death.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus did not go to Golgotha because of His own sins. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had taken on all the sins of all mankind onto His own body. He went to the place of death to pay the wages of those sins in our place.

The baptism of Jesus was the event in which sins passed over to Jesus, and the Cross was the event in which the sins He had so taken on were judged. Since the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had shouldered the sin of the world, had to shed His blood and die on the Cross.

People tried to make Jesus drink wine mingled with gall. This drink may have had the character of dulling to some degree the pain of the Cross. But Jesus, after tasting it, would not drink it.

Jesus did not try to avoid the pain by clouding His consciousness. To bear in full the judgment of sin we deserved, He accepted the suffering of the Cross with a clear mind. It was His obedience to accomplish the work of salvation perfectly to the very end.

The soldiers crucified Jesus. The Scripture records this

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horrific scene briefly, but contained in it are the extreme physical pain and shame Jesus bore. His hands and feet were pierced with nails, and His body hung on the cross.

But we must not look only at the physical pain of the Cross. Other criminals also suffered crucifixion, but their deaths could not save mankind. The reason the Cross of Jesus becomes our salvation is that He is the sinless Son of God who bore all our sins with His baptism.

The blood Jesus shed on the Cross is the blood that paid the punishment of the sins passed on to Him through His baptism. Jesus died as the sacrificial offering that had shouldered all our sins. Therefore His death is not a mere martyrdom but the judgment of atonement for all mankind.

The soldiers divided the garments of the crucified Jesus by casting lots. While Jesus was suffering extreme pain, they were more interested in His clothes than in His life. Man's greed and callousness were laid bare even beneath the Cross.

Jesus, possessing nothing, gave up even His own life for us. The kings of the world collect riches from their people, but Jesus gave up His clothes, His body, His blood, and His very life. This is the image of the King of salvation who loved us.

After crucifying Jesus, the soldiers sat down and kept watch over Him there. They guarded Him so that He could not escape and no one could take Him down. But Jesus was not looking for a chance to escape.

Jesus had the power to come down from the cross by Himself. Yet He remained in that place. It was not because anyone held Him there by force, but because He intended to receive the judgment of our sins to the very end.

Over the head of Jesus was put the accusation *"THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS."* From Rome's viewpoint, the charge was that Jesus had claimed to be a king and rebelled

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

against the emperor. But what was written on that sign was, paradoxically, the truth.

Jesus is truly the King of the Jews and the King of all mankind. His throne was not the throne of a splendid palace but the Cross. On His head He wore a crown of thorns instead of a crown of gold, and instead of receiving the service of His people, He gave up His own life to save His people.

The kingship of Jesus is not an authority that oppresses people by force. It is the authority of salvation that defeats the power of sin and death and makes sinners God's people. Through the Cross and the resurrection, Jesus established the eternal Kingdom of God.

Two robbers were crucified with Jesus. Though Jesus had no sin, He was treated like one among criminals. He stood in the midst of sinners and received the sinner's punishment.

The robbers on the right and on the left were being punished for their own sins, but Jesus in the middle was being punished for the sins of others. Outwardly all three were condemned men, but Jesus alone was the sinless sacrificial offering of atonement.

This scene shows that Jesus lowered Himself even to the same place as sinners. The most exalted Son of God stood in the lowest place of the sinner. He received in our place the curse and the shame we deserved.

Those who passed by wagged their heads and blasphemed Jesus. They did not pity the suffering One; rather, they mocked the seemingly weak appearance of Jesus. The sin of man sometimes makes a spectacle of another's suffering.

People said, *"You who destroy the temple and build it in three days."* Jesus had spoken of His body dying and rising again in three days, but they did not understand what He meant and repeated the distorted accusation.

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They thought that if Jesus died on the cross, everything would be over. But just as Jesus had said, His body rose again in three days. The word about the temple, which people used as words of mockery, was actually fulfilled through the resurrection of Jesus.

They said, *"Save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross."* They thought that if Jesus were the Son of God, He should display His power and escape the suffering. It was the attitude of saying they would believe if He showed them a miracle before their eyes.

But that Jesus is the Son of God was not to be proven by His coming down from the cross. Rather, it was proven by His taking on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, obeying the Father's will to the end, dying on the Cross bearing those sins, and rising again in three days. The power of Jesus is not the power to avoid suffering, but the power to defeat sin and death and complete salvation through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders also mocked, saying, *"He saved others; Himself He cannot save."* Contrary to their intention, these words reveal the very heart of the Cross. For Jesus to save others, He could not come down from the cross.

Jesus did not remain on the cross because He lacked the power to save Himself. He did not come down because, if He saved Himself, He could not save us. He obeyed even unto death to pay the price of our sins completely.

If Jesus had come down from the cross as the mockers demanded, He could have displayed His own power. But the sins of mankind He had taken on with His baptism would have remained unjudged, and we could not have been saved from sin and death.

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered
with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

The baptism Jesus received from John and His obedience in not coming down from the cross are joined as one. Because Jesus had taken on all our sins with His baptism, He remained on the Cross until the punishment of those sins was finished. By shedding His blood, dying, and rising again, He completed salvation.

The religious leaders said, *"Let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him."* But true faith is not presenting to God conditions of one's own making and saying one will believe if they are met. It is accepting the salvation God has spoken and accomplished.

They had already seen Jesus heal the sick, raise the dead, and perform countless signs. Still they did not believe. The heart that refuses to believe presents yet another condition even after seeing a new miracle.

Jesus did not come down from the cross, but He rose from the dead in three days. The resurrection is a greater and more perfect power of God than coming down from a cross. Yet the hard-hearted refused to believe even before the evidence of the resurrection.

They mocked, saying, *"He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him."* Because Jesus was suffering before their eyes, they judged that God did not delight in Him. People easily think that when their circumstances are good they are loved by God, and that when they suffer they are forsaken.

But the suffering of Jesus was not evidence of failure, of being abandoned by the Father; it was the result of His obedience to the Father's plan of salvation. Jesus passed through the suffering of the Cross because He had to bear the judgment of our sins. Through that obedience countless sinners have come to receive salvation.

Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled

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Jesus. Though they themselves were facing death, they mocked the sinless Jesus. The religious leaders, the passersby, the soldiers, and even the criminals all rejected Jesus.

This shows that sin does not belong to one particular class only. The religious leader has sin; so do the political ruler, the soldier, the ordinary crowd, and the criminal. Because everyone is under sin, everyone needs the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

In another Gospel, one of the robbers later admits his sins and asks Jesus for grace. At first he reviled with the rest, but watching Jesus on the cross, he came to believe that He was the sinless King. Even at the last moment, whoever believes in Jesus as his Savior can receive grace.

But salvation is not received simply by thinking that Jesus is pitiful. We must believe with the heart the facts that Jesus took on all my sins with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose again.

When we look at the Cross, we must not think only of how much Jesus suffered. We must know why that suffering was necessary. We must believe that because my sins passed over to Jesus, He was nailed to the cross and judged in my place.

The Cross shows how dreadful sin is. God did not declare the remission of sin with words alone. He made His only begotten Son bear our sins and actually pay the price of those sins with death.

At the same time, the Cross also shows how great the love of God is. Jesus remained on the Cross to the end to save the sinners who insulted and cursed Him. To bring us, His enemies, to life, He gave up His own life.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit comes to lay down the desires and pride of his flesh as he looks at the Cross. If the Lord received all that shame and pain

for me, I can no longer live for sin and for the honor of this world.

Matthew 27:32–44 shows that what people mocked as the powerlessness of Jesus was actually the power of salvation. Jesus saved us by not saving Himself. Because He did not come down from the cross but obeyed unto death, we sinners could be released from condemnation.

Therefore we must abandon the attitude that says, "I will believe if you show me a miracle," and believe the Word of salvation God has already accomplished. Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

The person who believes this gospel no longer stands at Golgotha, the place of death, as one to be condemned. Because Jesus died in his place, he receives the remission of sins and eternal life. And he comes to live serving with gratitude Jesus the King, who saved us by not saving Himself.

The death of Jesus ended the judgment of sin and opened a new way to come to God

"Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This Man is calling for Elijah!' Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His

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spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons" (Matthew 27:45–56).

While Jesus hung on the cross, darkness came over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. In the time reckoning of that day, the sixth hour is around noon and the ninth hour is around three in the afternoon. For about three hours, darkness continued at the very time when the sunlight should have been brightest.

This darkness must not be seen merely as an event of changing weather. It is a solemn sign showing that the sinless Son of God was being judged, bearing the sins of all mankind. The Lord of life, who created the world, was meeting death in the sinner's place.

Sin makes man leave God, who is light, and remain in spiritual darkness. The result of sin is condemnation and death. Jesus bore in our place that very darkness and judgment of sin.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, about three years before He was crucified, Jesus had taken on all the sins of all mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Therefore the darkness of the Cross was not an event in which the sinless

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

Jesus suffered for no reason; it was the time when the sin of the world He had taken on with His baptism was being judged.

If Jesus had not taken on our sins with His baptism, the death of the Cross would have had no direct relation to our sins. Just because someone else suffers and dies, our sins cannot disappear. Because Jesus first received our sins passed on to Him through His baptism, He could be judged in our place on the Cross.

Around the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* This means, *"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?"* Following the word recorded in the Psalms, Jesus revealed the judgment of sin and the anguish of being forsaken.

Jesus is the Son of God, who is originally one with the Father. But at this moment He was receiving the righteous judgment of God in the sinner's place, having taken on the sins of all mankind. He was suffering in our place the severance from God and the anguish of condemnation that we deserved because of our sins.

God is love, but He is at the same time righteous. He cannot simply pass over sin without any judgment. Because Jesus, the only begotten Son, had taken on our sins, the Father had to judge those sins in the body of Jesus.

The cry of Jesus was neither unbelief toward the Father's will nor rebellion. In Gethsemane Jesus had already prayed, *"not as I will, but as You will."* On the Cross He carried that obedience through to death, fully experiencing the depth of the judgment a sinner must receive.

Because of our sins, we deserved to be forsaken by God and to receive eternal judgment. But because Jesus suffered the anguish of being forsaken in our place, whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be received as a child of God.

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Some of those standing there heard the words of Jesus and said, *"This Man is calling for Elijah!"* Even watching the suffering of Jesus, they did not know the spiritual meaning of His words. Even at the most crucial moment, when the sin of the world was being judged, people stood by like spectators.

One man filled a sponge with sour wine, put it on a reed, and offered it to Jesus to drink. But the others said, *"Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him."* To the very last they tested and mocked Jesus.

People wanted to see whether Jesus would be rescued from the cross in some miraculous way. But Jesus was not calling Elijah to save Himself from the cross. He was receiving the judgment, remaining on the Cross to the end, to save us sinners.

Jesus cried out again with a loud voice and yielded up His spirit. The death of Jesus was not a death that ended without plan because He could not endure the pain. It was a death in which He accomplished the saving work the Father had entrusted to Him and gave up His own life.

Jesus did not die because He had no power to escape death. He who has the authority to lay down His life and the authority to take it again gave up His life as the ransom for us. People killed Jesus, but Jesus gave Himself as the offering of salvation.

The baptism Jesus received from John and the death of the Cross are one complete work of salvation. With His baptism He took on all our sins, on the Cross He shed His blood and paid the punishment of those sins, and by rising again in three days He defeated sin and death.

If we speak only of the fact that blood was shed on the Cross and leave out how Jesus took on our sins, it does not become the whole gospel. The blood of Jesus is the blood that paid the price of the sin of the world passed on to Him through His baptism. The testimony of the water, the blood, and the

Spirit together reveals the perfect salvation of Jesus.

When the spirit of Jesus departed, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. This veil separated the holy place from the Most Holy, showing that a sinner could not come carelessly before the presence of God.

In the days of the Old Testament, only the high priest could enter the Most Holy at the appointed time, with the blood of the sacrifice. A person who had sin could not come as he was before the holy God.

Yet when Jesus died, the veil was torn *"from top to bottom."* It was not torn from below by the strength of man; God opened it from above. It shows that the atonement of Jesus was completed and the way to come to God was opened.

Now the sinner no longer needs to rely on the blood of animals and repeated sacrifices. For Jesus, the true High Priest, offered the eternal sacrifice of atonement with His own body. Whoever believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood can come boldly before God.

The tearing of the veil is the declaration that the problem of sin, which stood between God and man, has been solved. Because Jesus bore all our sins and was judged, no sin remains to block the way before God for the one who believes.

Therefore it is not that we must offer new sacrifices every day or establish by our own deeds some qualification to come to God in order to receive the remission of sins. We come to God by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished once and for all.

When the veil of the sanctuary was torn, the earth quaked and the rocks were split. The death of Jesus was not the ordinary death of one man. Because the Son of God, the Creator, died for the sins of mankind, the created world also revealed the gravity of the event.

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The graves were opened, and many bodies of the believers who had fallen asleep were raised. And after the resurrection of Jesus, they came out of the graves, went into the holy city, and appeared to many people. This is a sign showing that the death and resurrection of Jesus broke down the power of death.

The death of Jesus was not the end; it led to the resurrection. Jesus first rose from the dead, and those who belong to Him will also rise in the future. For the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the death of the body is not eternal destruction but the door that leads to resurrection and eternal life.

If Jesus had not risen, it could not have been confirmed that the death of the Cross completed salvation. Jesus took on the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and paid the wages of those sins on the Cross, and the resurrection reveals that Jesus paid in full the price of sin and death with His baptism and the Cross, and that He is the Son of God and the Lord of life.

The centurion and those who were guarding Jesus with him saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, and they feared greatly. And they confessed, *"Truly this was the Son of God!"* The Gentile soldiers who were executing Jesus came to testify to His true identity.

The religious leaders knew the Scriptures and yet rejected Jesus, but the Gentile centurion saw what happened at the cross and acknowledged that Jesus is the Son of God. This shows that the gospel would not be confined to one particular nation or class but would be preached to all people in the whole world.

But one does not receive the complete salvation merely by seeing marvelous phenomena and being afraid. Along with the fact that Jesus is the Son of God, we must believe how He took on our sins and removed them. We need the faith that accepts

together the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were looking on at the cross from afar. Even in the situation where the disciples had scattered in fear, these women watched the death of Jesus. Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joseph, and the mother of Zebedee's sons were there.

They had no power to stop the suffering of the Cross, but they did not leave Jesus; they kept their place. Later they become the first witnesses of His burial, of the empty tomb, and of the resurrection. God preciously uses not only those the world esteems highly but those who love the Lord and follow Him in faith.

To look at the Cross is not merely to think of the pain of Jesus and grieve. It is to know why Jesus had to die. It is because all my sins passed over to Jesus, and Jesus received the judgment of those sins in my place.

If a person looks only at the blood of the Cross without believing that his sins passed over to Jesus, he comes to think that sin still remains in his heart. Then he keeps asking daily for his sins to be washed away and cannot obtain the assurance of salvation.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies that Jesus took on the sins of our whole lifetime once and for all with His baptism and received the punishment of those sins completely on the Cross. The resurrection of Jesus confirms that this salvation is perfect and eternal.

This does not mean that a person who has received the remission of sins may sin as he pleases. Rather, when we know that Jesus suffered the darkness, the forsakenness, and the judgment of death because of our sins, we cannot take sin lightly. Thankful for the Lord's grace, we fight against sin and

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serve the gospel.

The Cross of Jesus is the place where the justice and the love of God appeared together. The righteous God judged our sins in the body of Jesus, and the God of love saved us by having His only begotten Son receive that judgment instead of us.

Matthew 27:45–56 shows that the death of Jesus was not failure but the completion of salvation. The darkness revealed the judgment of sin; the cry of Jesus shows that He suffered in our place the anguish of forsakenness we deserved; and the torn veil declares that a new way to come to God has been opened.

The opened graves and the believers who were raised show in advance the resurrection of Jesus and the future resurrection of believers. The confession of the centurion testifies that Jesus, who died on the Cross, is truly the Son of God.

Therefore we must not rely on our own works before the Cross. We must believe with the heart that Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins completely on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

For the person who believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit, no veil of sin remains to block the way between him and God. Clothed in the righteousness of Jesus, he can call God Father and come to Him boldly. And when the Lord comes again, he will rise in a glorious body and live with the Lord forever.

The new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea testifies to the actual death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus

"Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from

Arimathea, named Joseph, who himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb" (Matthew 27:57–61).

After the spirit of Jesus departed on the Cross, evening was drawing near. The disciples had scattered, and those who had followed Jesus were sunk in fear and sorrow. In people's eyes, the ministry of Jesus seemed to have ended in death.

At that very time Joseph of Arimathea appeared. Matthew records that he was a rich man and a disciple of Jesus. He was not a man who drew near to the Lord only while Jesus was alive and many people followed Him; even after Jesus died as a condemned man, he showed by his action that he was His disciple.

Claiming the body of Jesus after His execution on the cross could be more dangerous than professing to be His disciple while He was alive. It was an act that openly revealed he was on the side of Jesus, before the Roman power that had executed Him as a rebel and the religious leaders who had led the way in killing Him.

Joseph went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He did not merely respect Jesus in his heart; he actually did what he could do. True faith begins with the confession of the heart, but when the time requires, it appears through action.

Even when Jesus was abandoned by His disciples and mocked by the people, God was preparing Joseph. In the place so many had deserted, the faith and the wealth of one man were used for the burial of Jesus.

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The fact that Joseph was rich also carries an important meaning. Material things are not evil in themselves; what matters is for what purpose they are used. Judas sold Jesus to gain thirty pieces of silver, but Joseph offered his own tomb and possessions for the burial of Jesus.

The same material things can become tools of greed, or they can become tools that serve the gospel. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit must be able to use his possessions not to pile them up for himself alone but for the work of the Lord and for the saving of souls.

Pilate commanded the body of Jesus to be given to Joseph. That the body of Jesus was formally handed over shows that Jesus actually died on the Cross. Jesus did not merely faint and then come to His senses in the tomb.

The soldiers carried out the crucifixion and confirmed the death of Jesus, and Joseph, with Pilate's permission, received the body. The resurrection that followed was not the recovery of a man who had nearly died, but the event in which Jesus, who had actually died and been buried, rose again from the dead.

The actual death of Jesus is very important in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had taken on our sins, had to receive the punishment of death in reality. If He had not passed through death, the price of sin could not be said to have been paid in full.

Jesus did not die because of His own sins. Because He had taken on all the sins of all mankind onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He died on the Cross as the price of our sins. The death of Jesus was the actual judgment of the sins He had taken on with His baptism.

Joseph took the body of Jesus and wrapped it in a clean

linen cloth. The soldiers had stripped Jesus and mocked Him, but Joseph treated His body with devotion and honor. Faith appears as a heart that treasures the Jesus whom the world despises.

The body of Jesus had been torn on the cross by the scourge, the nails, and the crown of thorns. But that body was the body of the holy sacrificial offering, which had borne our sins and received the judgment. Joseph wrapped that body in clean linen and prepared the burial.

This scene also shows that we must not treat a person's body and funeral carelessly. The dead body is not the whole of the person, but since it is the body God gave and will raise in the future, it is fitting to handle it with respect.

Joseph laid the body of Jesus in his own new tomb, which he had hewn out of the rock. Jesus alone was laid in the new tomb, where no one else had yet been buried. Therefore, when the tomb later stood empty, there was no room to confuse His body with anyone else's.

That Jesus was buried in a rich man's new tomb calls to mind the word of the Old Testament that the Servant of God, killed without sin, would be with the rich in His death. People killed Jesus together with criminals, but God had Him buried in the prepared tomb of a rich man.

The word of God was fulfilled precisely, not only in the birth, the baptism, the suffering, and the death of Jesus, but even in His burial. People thought they had killed Jesus according to their own will, but in every step God was fulfilling the word of salvation He had promised.

That Jesus entered the tomb does not mean the work of salvation failed. It is the evidence that He fully received the judgment of death for our sins, which He had taken on with His baptism. The burial of Jesus confirmed that His death was real,

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and it became the preparation for the resurrection.

The baptism Jesus received from John, the death of the Cross, and the burial are joined in one. With His baptism He received all our sins passed on to Him, on the Cross He received the punishment of those sins, and His dead body was buried in the tomb. And on the third day He rose again from the dead.

The salvation of Jesus does not stop at the Cross. If there were only the Cross and no resurrection, death would seem to have won. But Jesus shattered the power of death and rose from the tomb, completing our salvation.

The tomb of Jesus was a tomb used only for a while. Its door was blocked with a large stone, but even that stone could not keep holding the Lord of life. Jesus rose again on the third day, just as He had said, and left the tomb empty.

For the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the tomb of Jesus is not a place of despair but the place where the death of sin and of the old self was confirmed. Our sins passed over to Jesus, and the judgment of those sins also ended with the death of Jesus.

Therefore the believer must not think that his sins are still alive and keep condemning him. If Jesus bore those sins and died and was buried, the punishment of those sins has already been carried out. To say that God judges us again for the same sins would mean that the atonement of Jesus was not complete.

But this does not mean that we may live regarding sin lightly. When we know that Jesus actually died and even entered the tomb because of our sins, we cannot treat sin carelessly. The person who has received the remission of sins gives thanks for the Lord's grace and seeks to deny the sins and desires of the flesh.

Joseph rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb and

departed. As far as human strength could see, everything seemed completely finished. The body of Jesus was inside the tomb, and the entrance was shut with a large stone.

But the large stone could not block the promise of God. God raised Jesus again, beyond every obstacle man had made and beyond the power of death. Though things look blocked to human eyes, the word of God is surely fulfilled.

The death and burial of Jesus are the historical foundation of our faith. The gospel is not a comfort or a symbol that people have invented in their minds. Jesus actually took on all the sins of the world onto His own body with the baptism He received from John, actually died on the Cross, was actually buried in a tomb at a real place, and actually rose again.

Mary Magdalene and the other Mary were sitting opposite the tomb. These women saw exactly where Jesus was buried. They were not people who would later go to the wrong tomb by mistake.

The same women confirmed the cross of Jesus, His burial, and His tomb, and on the first day after the Sabbath they would see the empty tomb. Their presence becomes the testimony that connects the Jesus who died on the Cross, the Jesus who was buried in the tomb, and the Jesus who rose again as the same One.

While the disciples were hiding in fear, these women stayed beside the tomb. They did not fully understand all the meaning of salvation, but because they loved Jesus, they watched over Him to the very last.

God does not use only those who have great power or fame in the world. He used the new tomb of the rich man Joseph, and He also used the testimony of the women who loved Jesus and stayed by the tomb. Each person’s position and circumstances differ, but everyone has something to offer the

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Lord by faith.

Joseph served the burial of Jesus with his possessions and social standing. The women stayed at that place and became witnesses of His death and burial. Faith appears as each person faithfully doing the work the Lord has entrusted, each in his own different circumstances.

To believe in the death and burial of Jesus is not to remain merely grieving over His suffering. We must know what sins of mine Jesus shouldered when He died. Jesus took on with His baptism not only my past sins but even my present and future sins, and then He died.

Before the tomb of Jesus, all of man's self-righteousness and merit must also come to an end. We cannot remove our sins by good deeds, prayers of repentance, or religious effort. All our sins passed over to Jesus through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and those sins were fully judged through the death of the Cross.

The person who believes in the burial of Jesus believes that the judgment of his own sins also ended with Jesus. And the person who believes in the resurrection of Jesus lives by the new life the Lord has given. Sin and death can no longer be his final master.

Matthew 27:57–61 looks like a dark and sorrowful scene, but contained in it is God's preparation toward the resurrection. Through Joseph of Arimathea, God had the body of Jesus buried in a new tomb, and through the women He had the location of the tomb and the burial testified.

Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, died on the Cross, and was actually buried in the tomb. And by rising again from that tomb, He completely defeated sin and death. This is the perfect salvation that the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies to.

The sinless Jesus, bearing the sin of the world He had shouldered with His baptism, completed all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross

Therefore, before Jesus who was buried in the tomb, we must believe that the judgment of our sins is finished, and we must look to the risen Jesus. And like Joseph and the women, even in times when the world turns away from the Lord, we must not be ashamed of the gospel but live serving the Lord's work with the possessions, the time, and the heart we have.

The stone, the seal, and the guard could not stop the resurrection of Jesus

"On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard" (Matthew 27:62–66).

The day after Jesus died on the Cross and was buried in the new tomb of Joseph of Arimathea arrived. A large stone had already been placed at the entrance of the tomb, but the hearts of the chief priests and the Pharisees were not at ease.

The people who had not believed the words of Jesus while He was alive remembered those words after He died. They knew precisely that Jesus had said, *"After three days I will rise."*

The disciples had scattered in fear and were failing to hold on to the word of the resurrection. Yet it was rather the religious leaders who had killed Jesus that remembered the

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word and devised measures to guard the tomb. Remembering the word and believing the word can be two different things.

The chief priests and the Pharisees heard the prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus, but before that word they did not look back on their own wrong. If Jesus was One who could rise again as He had said, they should have considered the possibility that He was the Son of God and repented.

But they did not choose faith; they chose the way of obstruction. The person who hears the truth and yet will not lay down his position, his doctrine, and his desires can oppose that truth to the end, even while fearing the possibility that it will come true.

They called Jesus *"that deceiver."* Jesus was not one who deceived people; He was the One who proclaimed the truth of God. It was rather the religious leaders who set up false witnesses and incited the crowd to have the innocent Jesus crucified.

Man can call the truth a lie and insist that a lie is the truth. Even with religious office and biblical knowledge, if the heart is full of its own greed, it can condemn even the Son of God as a deceiver.

They worried that the disciples of Jesus might steal His body and then say that He had risen. But the disciples of that time were not bold enough to protect Jesus. When Jesus was seized, they all fled, and Peter denied Him three times.

The possibility that the disciples, scattered in fear, would overpower armed guards, move the sealed large stone, and steal the body of Jesus was very low. The worry of the religious leaders rather shows how conscious they were of Jesus' word of the resurrection.

They said, *"the last deception will be worse than the first."* They feared that if the resurrection of Jesus became known,

more people would come to believe in Him as the Christ. They worried more about their religious authority collapsing than about the people believing in the Lord of life.

The true servant of God does not make it his goal that people gather to himself. He rejoices when souls come to Jesus, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and receive salvation. But a religious leader who loves his own position can regard people's believing the gospel as a threat to his own authority.

The chief priests and the Pharisees asked Pilate to command that the tomb be made secure until the third day. They tried to keep the promise of God from being fulfilled by human power. They thought that a large stone, the seal of Rome, and a guard could prevent the resurrection of Jesus.

Pilate said, *"You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how."* Pilate let them guard the tomb as they wished. Religious power and political power cooperated once again in the work of shutting Jesus inside the tomb.

They went to the tomb with the guard and sealed the stone. The seal was a measure to confirm whether anyone had moved the stone without permission and to show official control over the tomb. The tomb was blockaded as thoroughly as human power could manage.

They also set the guard to watch the tomb day and night. With the large stone, the seal, and armed guards in place, from man's point of view there seemed to be no way at all for the body of Jesus to come out of the tomb.

Yet the words that they made the tomb secure *"as you know how"* also expose the limit of human ability. However fully man uses his strength, he cannot shut the Lord of life inside death. For the power of God the Creator is greater than the stone, the seal, and the soldiers.

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All these measures could not stop the resurrection of Jesus. Rather, the fact that the tomb was strictly guarded made it difficult to claim that His body had been secretly removed by the disciples, and it became the result that made the evidence of the resurrection all the clearer.

The chief priests and the Pharisees guarded the tomb in order to deny the resurrection, but without knowing it, they ended up preparing important witnesses of the resurrection event. God can use even the actions of those who try to block the truth to reveal that truth.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the resurrection of Jesus is the completion of salvation that had to take place. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had taken on all the sins of all mankind onto His own body. And on the Cross He received the punishment of those sins and actually died.

That Jesus was in the tomb means that He actually passed through the judgment of death. Since the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had taken on our sins, had to die on the Cross and be buried. But after paying the whole price of sin, there was no reason for Him to remain held by death.

The sins Jesus took on with the baptism He received from John were completely judged on the Cross. Therefore Jesus broke the power of death and rose again on the third day. The resurrection is God's confirmation that the atonement of Jesus was accomplished perfectly.

The baptism of Jesus is the event in which our sins passed over to Him; the Cross is the event in which those sins were judged; and the resurrection is the event in which He defeated sin and death and gave us new life. These three are one whole gospel that cannot be separated from one another.

If Jesus had not risen after dying on the Cross, death would

still be holding Him. But Jesus rose again just as He had said, showing that the price of sin had been paid in full and that He is the Son of God.

The resurrection of Jesus is not simply a marvelous event in which He alone came back to life. It is the event that guarantees new life and the future resurrection to everyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because Jesus rose, those who belong to Him will also rise on the last day.

The religious leaders remembered the saying of Jesus that *"After three days"* He would rise. This shows that the resurrection of Jesus was not an accident, nor an explanation His disciples invented afterward. Jesus had spoken repeatedly of His death and resurrection before He died.

Jesus was not one who was seized and killed without knowing what would happen to Him. He knew it all: that He would bear our sins with His baptism, be judged for those sins on the Cross, and rise again on the third day. From beginning to end He obeyed the Father's plan of salvation.

The chief priests and the Pharisees were busy on the day of rest with the work of blocking the tomb of Jesus. Outwardly they honored the Law of God and the Sabbath, but their hearts were full of fear, unbelief, and the intent to kill.

Keeping dates and religious forms cannot give a person true rest. As long as sin remains in the heart, however zealously one practices religion, one cannot rest from condemnation and fear. True rest is obtained when we believe the gospel that Jesus has removed all our sins.

The large stone shows symbolically the impossibility man faces and the power of death. Man cannot move the stone of sin and death by his own strength. Neither good works nor religious effort can save him from death.

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But God raised Jesus from the dead. Even the stone that people thought no one could move was no obstacle before the power of God. Salvation is not achieved by man's effort; it is what God has accomplished in Jesus Christ.

The seal on the tomb shows the human authority that tries to block the truth. But no political command and no religious authority can bind the word of God, and what was spoken will surely be fulfilled: *"After three days I will rise."*

The guards could keep watch over a dead body, but they could not seize the Lord of life as He rose. The resurrection was not something people schemed in secret; it is the work of new creation that God performed.

Jesus, coming out of the tomb, did not simply take revenge on those who had killed Him. After His resurrection He came to His disciples, gave them peace, and commanded them to preach the gospel to the whole world. The resurrection reveals not only the power of judgment but the power of grace and life that brings sinners to life.

The salvation of the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit likewise cannot be blocked by anything outside, like the stone and the seal. Because Jesus bore all our sins, was judged, and rose again, no sin remains to condemn the person who is in Him.

But to believe in the resurrection must not stop at acknowledging the fact that a dead man came back to life. We must also believe that the One who rose is Jesus, who took on all my sins with His baptism and was judged on the Cross.

We must not, like the chief priests, hear the gospel and yet try to block the truth to protect our own thoughts and position. We must not fit the word of God to our own doctrines and experience, but lay down our own thoughts before the word.

Nor do we need to be discouraged when the truth meets

opposition. Though people set a large stone, sealed it, and posted a guard, they could not stop the will of God. The gospel of the water and the Spirit also spreads as God has ordained, beyond people's opposition and lies.

Matthew 27:62–66, seen from the outside, is a scene in which Jesus is completely shut in the tomb. But in reality it is a scene in which preparation was made to reveal all the more the certainty of the resurrection. The more firmly people secured the tomb, the more clearly the resurrection of Jesus proves to be not human manipulation but the power of God.

Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, paid the price of sin in full on the Cross, and was buried in the tomb. And beyond the stone, the seal, and the guard, He rose again just as He had said. This is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has defeated sin and death.

The person who believes this gospel does not see death as the final end. He believes that the risen Jesus has given us new life and will raise our bodies again on the last day. Therefore, in whatever hardship and opposition, he can live believing and preaching the gospel with the hope of the resurrection. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 27

[Question] 1. What meaning does the death of the Cross hold in the history of redemption?

The death of Jesus on the Cross is the event in which He received in our place the punishment of all the sins of mankind, which He had taken on with the baptism He received from John, and it is the climax and conclusion of the work of redemption God accomplished to save sinners. Its meaning in the history of redemption is as follows.

The prophecies and the sacrifices of the Old Testament were fulfilled.

The sin offering of the Old Testament received the sins of the sinner passed on through the laying on of hands, and then shed its blood and died. The Passover lamb, too, was a shadow showing beforehand Jesus Christ, who would bear the sins of mankind and be sacrificed. Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He completely fulfilled the atonement system and the prophecies of the Old Testament.

He received the punishment in the place of sinners.

The wages of sin is death. Jesus, who originally had no sin at all, took all the sins of sinners onto His own body with the baptism He received from John. And bearing those sins, He

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hung on the Cross and received the judgment and the curse of God in our place. Therefore the death of Jesus on the Cross is a substitutionary death in the place of sinners.

He paid the price of the remission of sins in full.

Jesus gave His own life as a ransom for many. The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was the event in which He took on the sins of mankind, and the blood He shed on the Cross is the evidence that He received the punishment of those sins in our place. Therefore the remission of sins is not obtained by human merit or repeated acts of repentance; it is received by believing in the redemption Jesus accomplished with the baptism He received from John and His death on the Cross.

He opened the way to come to God.

That the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died shows that the barrier between God and man, blocked by sin, was removed. Because Jesus took on sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and paid the price of those sins on the Cross, whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sins, is reconciled to God, and can come to Him.

He broke the power of sin and death.

The death of Jesus on the Cross was not defeat but the victory of salvation, which judged sin, death, and the power of the Devil. Jesus took on the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of that sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead on the third day, confirming that salvation had been completed.

Therefore the Cross is not simply the event of a righteous

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man dying unjustly. It is the central event of the history of redemption, in which Jesus took on the sins of all mankind with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and, bearing those sins, was judged on the Cross in our place, completing the remission of sins, reconciliation with God, and the way of eternal life. To believe together the baptism Jesus received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection from the dead is to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

[Question] 2. Matthew 27:1—what time does "*morning*" refer to?

Here, "*morning*" refers to the early morning when the day after Jesus was arrested and interrogated all night began to break, that is, around dawn. In modern time it may be placed at about five to six in the morning, but the passage does not give the exact hour. The original word also means 'early morning' or 'daybreak.'

At this time the chief priests and the elders of the people officially consulted to put Jesus to death, and then handed Him over to the Roman governor Pilate, who held the authority of execution.

[Question] 3. Matthew 27:2—why did the members of the council hand Jesus over to Pilate?

The Jewish council handed Jesus over to the governor Pilate because, though they had decided to put Him to death, under Roman rule they had no authority to carry out an

execution officially. In particular, the crucifixion they wanted was a Roman method of execution, so the verdict of the governor Pilate was necessary.

Moreover, the council had condemned Jesus for blasphemy, but with a religious charge alone it was hard to obtain a death sentence from the Roman governor. So they put forward a political charge, as though Jesus had claimed to be the King of the Jews and defied the authority of the Roman emperor. In the end they handed Jesus over to Pilate to carry out the death they had determined, using the power of Rome.

[Question] 4. Matthew 27:3–5—explain what distinguishes Judas Iscariot's remorse and returning of the silver from the repentance of a believer.

Judas, seeing that Jesus had been condemned, realized his wrong and returned the thirty pieces of silver. But his remorse stopped at guilt and regret over the outcome; it did not lead to the faith that returns to Jesus and asks for mercy and the remission of sins. In the end he despaired and took his own life.

The original word used for 'remorseful' in Matthew 27:3 means to regret and grieve over what has passed. The word alone, however, does not determine that his repentance was false; the actions Judas took afterward show the character of his remorse.

By contrast, the true repentance of a believer does not stop at admitting one's sins; it is turning from sin, coming to God, and believing in the redemption of Jesus Christ. Nor does it punish oneself for one's sins or fall into despair; it relies on the Lord's mercy and the remission of sins and bears the fruit of a

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changed life.

Therefore the difference is this: Judas's remorse was regret in which guilt headed toward despair, but true repentance is admitting sin and returning to God by faith.

[Question] 5. Matthew 27:6–7—how did the chief priests use the silver Judas threw into the sanctuary?

The chief priests gathered up the thirty pieces of silver Judas had thrown into the sanctuary, but they judged that it was not right to put it into the temple treasury because it was the price of blood. After consulting, they bought the potter's field with the money and used it as a burial place for strangers.

This shows their hypocrisy: outwardly they tried to keep the regulations of the Law, while they had taken part in killing the sinless Jesus. That field afterward came to be called the Field of Blood.

[Question] 6. Matthew 27:9–10—what is the content of the Old Testament word said to have been fulfilled?

Matthew 27:9–10 records this event as the fulfillment of what was spoken through the prophet Jeremiah. However, the thirty pieces of silver and the throwing of the money to the potter appear most directly in Zechariah 11:12–13.

• Zechariah 11:12–13: The price is set at thirty pieces of silver, and the money is thrown to the potter in the house of the LORD.

• Jeremiah 19:1–13: The potter, innocent blood, and the place of judgment and burial appear.

• Jeremiah 32:6–9: The event of buying a field with silver is recorded.

Therefore the event of Judas Iscariot's Field of Blood is chiefly the direct fulfillment of the word of Zechariah 11:12–13, and at the same time it can be seen as a composite fulfillment reflecting the potter, the field, the innocent blood, and the judgment that appear in Jeremiah. Matthew combined these prophecies and recorded the name of Jeremiah as representative.

[Question] 7. Matthew 27:11—what did Jesus answer to Pilate's question, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"*

Pilate asked Jesus, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* To this Jesus answered as follows.

"It is as you say" (Matthew 27:11).

Jesus did not deny that He is the King of the Jews. But His kingship does not mean a secular, political kingship opposing Rome; it means the spiritual kingship that rules the Kingdom of God.

[Question] 8. Matthew 27:16—what kind of prisoner was *"Barabbas"*?

Barabbas was a notorious prisoner widely known to the people of that time. He had taken part in an insurrection against Roman rule, and in the course of it had even committed murder

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and been put in prison. The Gospel of John also records him as a robber.

Barabbas, therefore, was not a simple thief but a grave offender involved in violent rebellion and murder. Yet the crowd demanded that Barabbas be released instead of the sinless Jesus. This event shows symbolically the picture of substitution: the sinner set free, and the innocent Jesus receiving the punishment of death in his place.

[Question] 9. Matthew 27:19—what exhortation did Pilate's wife send to her husband?

Pilate's wife sent word to her husband, exhorting him not to be involved in harming Jesus, because He is a just Man. The reason was that she had suffered greatly in a dream that day because of Jesus.

"Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him" (Matthew 27:19).

This exhortation is an event in which even Pilate's wife, a Gentile, testified that Jesus had no sin. But Pilate, though he heard this warning, yielded to the demand of the crowd and handed Jesus over to be crucified.

[Question] 10. Matthew 27:22—how does the question "*What then shall I do with Jesus*" become a question for us today?

Pilate's question, *"What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?"* demands the decision of faith given to

everyone today as well. Each person must decide whether to regard Jesus as a mere historical figure or a good teacher, or to believe and follow Him as the Son of God and the Lord who saves sinners.

Pilate knew that Jesus had no sin, yet conscious of the crowd's demand and his own position, he avoided a responsible decision. But washing his hands or shifting the responsibility to others did not remove his own responsibility for Jesus.

Therefore people today are challenged as follows, not to be swept along by public opinion, worldly values, or religious tradition.

• We must know rightly through the word who Jesus is.

• We must believe the redeeming work of Jesus and receive Him as Savior and Lord.

• We must not keep postponing faith or remain in a neutral attitude.

• We must not stop at the confession of the lips but live obeying the word of Jesus.

In the end this question does not ask how others treat Jesus; it asks whom I believe Jesus to be and how I will follow Him.

[Question] 11. Matthew 27:24—could Pilate escape the responsibility for the death of Jesus by washing his hands?

Pilate's washing of his hands was only a symbolic act meant to declare his own innocence; it did not actually remove his responsibility.

Pilate knew that Jesus had no sin, and he also had the authority to release Him. Nevertheless, worried about the

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uproar of the crowd and his own political position, he had Jesus scourged and handed Him over to be crucified. Therefore, as the governor who held the power of verdict, he cannot escape the legal and moral responsibility for the death of Jesus.

Of course, the religious leaders and the crowd who demanded that Jesus be killed also bear responsibility. But Pilate's responsibility does not disappear because he yielded to the demands of others. This event shows that one who takes part in sin cannot become innocent before God by trying to avoid responsibility with outward ceremony or words.

[Question] 12. Matthew 27:25—what significance does the crowd's cry "*His blood be on us and on our children*" hold historically?

"His blood be on us and on our children" is the crowd's declaration that if there is guilt in killing Jesus, they and their descendants will bear the responsibility and the punishment. At that time the expression that someone's blood 'returns' to a person was used to mean bearing the responsibility for that person's death.

This was a rash declaration of self-cursing, made while the crowd was convinced that their demand to kill Jesus was just. When Pilate tried to avoid the responsibility for the death of Jesus, they stepped forward, saying they would take that responsibility on themselves.

However, this word must not be interpreted as a permanent curse laid on the Jews of every age and their descendants. The declaration of the crowd standing there could not create a guilt inherited by the whole Jewish nation. Jesus and His disciples were also Jews, and many Jews afterward believed the gospel.

To use this verse as a ground for hatred or persecution of the Jews is to distort the meaning of the passage. In fact this verse has been gravely misused in history to justify anti-Semitism.

[Question] 13. Matthew 27:26—what kind of punishment was the scourging Jesus received?

The scourging Jesus suffered was not the ordinary flogging practiced in Jewish synagogues, but the cruel scourging Roman soldiers inflicted on a prisoner facing crucifixion.

In general, the Roman scourge was a form with several leather thongs attached to a short handle, with small pieces of metal or bone fastened to their ends or middles. However, since the form of the scourge in those days was not fixed as one type, the exact shape of the instrument used on Jesus cannot be determined.

This scourging was a punishment meant to inflict extreme pain and wounds, weakening the prisoner even before he hung on the cross, and to humiliate him publicly. The passage does not say that it had a fixed limit on the number of strokes, as Jewish flogging did. Therefore what Jesus suffered was not a simple beating but a Roman form of torture included in the process of crucifixion.

[Question] 14. Matthew 27:28–30—how did the Roman soldiers mock Jesus?

To ridicule Jesus as the King of the Jews, the Roman soldiers performed a mockery imitating a king’s enthronement.

• They stripped Jesus and put a scarlet robe on Him.

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• They twisted a crown of thorns and set it on His head.

• Imitating a king's scepter, they put a reed in His right hand.

• They knelt before Him and mocked Him as the King of the Jews.

• They spat on Jesus.

• They took the reed they had put in His hand and struck Him on the head.

The soldiers insulted Jesus by imitating a king's robe, crown, scepter, and homage. But what they acted out in mockery paradoxically reveals that Jesus is in fact the King of kings. Jesus bore this shame and pain in silence to save sinners.

[Question] 15. Matthew 27:32—who was Simon of Cyrene, who carried the cross of Jesus in His place?

Simon was a man from Cyrene. Cyrene was a city in North Africa, in the region of present-day Libya, where many Jews lived at that time. Simon, therefore, was probably a diaspora Jew living in Cyrene who had come to Jerusalem to keep the Passover. However, his exact ethnic background cannot be determined from the passage alone.

Simon came upon Jesus as He was being led outside the city, and compelled by the Roman soldiers, he carried the cross of Jesus to Golgotha. It appears that the soldiers made him carry the cross because Jesus had been severely weakened by the scourging and torture, but the passage does not directly explain the reason.

The Gospel of Mark introduces Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus. This suggests that his sons may have been known in the early Church, but the Scripture does not

explicitly record that Simon and his family later became Christians.

Simon carried the cross under compulsion at first, but as a result he became a man who directly shared in the suffering of Jesus. His figure shows symbolically the life of a disciple who takes up his own cross and follows Jesus.

[Question] 16. Matthew 27:34—why did Jesus taste the wine mingled with gall and refuse to drink it?

The wine mingled with gall in Matthew 27:34 means wine mixed with a bitter substance. The parallel passage, Mark 15:23, records it as wine mingled with myrrh. Such a drink is commonly interpreted as having been given to dull the senses of the person being crucified and to lessen the pain to some degree. However, scholars do not entirely agree on the exact ingredients and effect of the mixture.

Jesus tasted it and would not drink it. The passage does not directly explain the reason, but Jesus, without receiving any help that would cloud His mind and senses, bore in full the pain of the Cross and the punishment of sin with a clear consciousness.

This event is also the fulfillment of the word of Psalm 69:21, that the suffering righteous one is given gall and sour drink. Therefore Jesus' refusal shows Him voluntarily bearing the mission of redemption to the end without avoiding the pain.

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[Question] 17. Matthew 27:37—what was written on the accusation put up over the head of Jesus?

The content of the accusation put up over the head of Jesus was as follows.

"THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Matthew 27:37).

This accusation was put up to mean that Jesus was being executed for the crime of claiming to be the King of the Jews and rebelling against Rome. Paradoxically, however, it revealed that Jesus is indeed the King of the Jews and the true King of all the world.

[Question] 18. Matthew 27:38—what kind of criminals were the two men crucified on the right and left of Jesus?

The two men nailed to crosses on the right and left of Jesus were robbers sentenced to crucifixion in the Roman court. The original word for *"robbers"* in the passage means not a thief who steals secretly but a robber who plunders with violence, or an armed bandit. In some cases it can refer to insurrectionists, but the Scripture does not directly state that these men were companions of Barabbas.

The Roman soldiers treated Jesus as one among these grave offenders, nailing one robber on His right and the other on His left. This shows that the sinless Jesus was included among criminals and took the sinner's place.

According to the record of Luke, one of those who at first reviled Jesus later admitted his own sins and asked Jesus for salvation, while the other mocked Him to the end. The two

robbers show, before the Cross, the different figures of the one who believes in Jesus and the one who rejects Him.

[Question] 19. Matthew 27:39–44—who were the people that insulted Jesus on the Cross?

On the cross Jesus was insulted by the following people.

• Those who passed by wagged their heads and blasphemed Jesus.

• The chief priests, the scribes, and the elders mocked that He saved others but could not save Himself.

• The robbers who were crucified with Him also reviled Jesus.

They mocked Jesus, telling Him to come down from the cross and save Himself if He is the Son of God. But Jesus did not come down from the cross, not because He lacked the power to save Himself, but because He had to bear the substitutionary death to the end to save sinners. By not saving Himself, Jesus saved others.

[Question] 20. Matthew 27:42—what did the chief priests demand as the condition for believing in Jesus?

The chief priests demanded that Jesus, if He is the King of Israel, come down now from the cross, and said that they would then believe.

"Let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him" (Matthew 27:42).

They also mocked that since Jesus trusted God and said He

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is the Son of God, God should save Him now if He delights in Him. But what they demanded did not come from true faith; it was a condition meant to test and ridicule Jesus. Jesus did not prove Himself by coming down from the cross; He revealed that He is the Savior by dying on the Cross and rising again.

[Question] 21. Matthew 27:43—what does the mockery mean, that He said He is the Son of God, so God will deliver Him if He delights in Him?

These words were the mockery by the chief priests, the scribes, and the elders of Jesus' trust in God and of the fact that He is the Son of God. They thought that if Jesus were truly the Son of God, One in whom God delights, God should make Him come down from the cross at once.

But God had already testified clearly, when Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, that He is His beloved Son in whom He is well pleased.

"A voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:17).

Jesus did not come down from the cross, not because He was not the Son of God or had been abandoned by God. Because Jesus had taken all the sins of mankind onto His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He had to receive God's judgment of those sins on the Cross to the end. If He had come down from the cross, He could have escaped the death of the flesh, but the atonement and salvation for sinners could not have been completed.

Their mockery, *"He saved others; Himself He cannot save,"* therefore reveals the truth of salvation paradoxically. By not saving Himself from the cross, Jesus saved us from sin and

judgment. The Lord did not remain on the Cross for lack of power; He willingly bore all the shame, suffering, and death to save His people.

The salvation of God did not appear in the way of letting Jesus escape the death of the Cross. It appeared in the way of having Jesus pay in full on the Cross the price of all the sins of the world He had taken on with the baptism He received from John, and raising Him from the dead on the third day. The resurrection of Jesus from the dead confirms that He is truly the Son of God and has completed the work of salvation.

Moreover, their mockery unwittingly fulfilled the word of Psalm 22:8, where people ridicule the righteous one who trusts in God. To human eyes the Cross looked like abandonment and failure, but in reality the will of God to save mankind through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist and His death on the Cross was being accomplished.

[Question] 22. Matthew 27:46—what does the cry *"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?"* mean?

"Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?" is Aramaic, and its meaning is as follows.

"My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" (Matthew 27:46).

This word is a quotation of Psalm 22:1. On the cross, bearing the sins of mankind, Jesus expressed the judgment of God and the anguish of forsakenness that the sinner must receive.

But this does not mean that the relationship between the Father and the Son was completely severed, or that Jesus ceased to be the Son of God. To the end Jesus called God *"My*

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God," appealing to God in the actual suffering He was undergoing in the sinner's place. He also fulfilled the prophecy of Psalm 22 and showed that in the end God saves the suffering righteous One and gives Him the victory.

[Question] 23. Matthew 27:50—how did Jesus breathe His last on the cross?

On the cross Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and then His spirit departed and He died.

"Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit" (Matthew 27:50).

Jesus did not simply lose consciousness from the pain; He actually died. Nor was His life taken from Him by force; He accomplished the mission of redemption to the end and gave up His life of His own accord to save sinners. The death of Jesus was the substitutionary death that bore the price of the sins of mankind.

[Question] 24. Matthew 27:51–54—list the miraculous events that took place at the moment Jesus died.

When Jesus died, the following things took place.

• The veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom.

• The earth quaked and the rocks were split.

• The graves were opened.

• Many bodies of the believers who had fallen asleep were raised. After Jesus rose, they came out of the graves, went into the holy city, and appeared to many people.

• The centurion and the soldiers guarding Jesus saw the earthquake and the things that happened, and feared greatly.

• They confessed that Jesus was truly the Son of God.

The tearing of the temple veil from top to bottom shows that through the death of Jesus the way was opened for sinners to come to God. The earthquake and the splitting of the rocks show that the death of Jesus was a momentous event involving the whole created world. The opening of the graves and the raising of the believers testified in advance that through the death and resurrection of Jesus the power of death was broken and the way of life was opened.

[Question] 25. Matthew 27:51—what does the tearing of the veil from top to bottom mean spiritually?

The veil of the sanctuary was the curtain dividing the holy place from the Most Holy, showing that a sinner could not come carelessly to the holy God. Only the high priest could enter within it, once a year, with the blood of atonement.

That the veil was torn from top to bottom when Jesus died holds the following spiritual meanings.

• Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to Him with the baptism He received from John and ended the judgment of those sins on the Cross, so the barrier of sin standing between God and man was completely removed.

• The atonement that the sacrifices and the priesthood of the Old Testament pointed to was completed in Jesus.

• Now whoever believes in the redemption of Jesus Christ can come directly to God.

• Jesus became the only Mediator and the eternal High

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Priest.

• That the veil was torn from the top shows that it was God, not man, who opened the way of salvation.

This event, therefore, shows that Jesus washed away all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the blood He shed on the Cross, and opened a new and living way to come to God. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the complete remission of the sins of his heart and comes boldly to God and enters the Kingdom of Heaven.

[Question] 26. Matthew 27:52–53—what significance does the event of the saints coming back to life from the graves hold?

The third sign, the raising of the believers, shows that the death of Jesus broke the power of death and opened the age of life. That the graves were opened and dead believers came back to life is a sign showing in advance the resurrection of the body that will be fulfilled for all believers.

The meaning of this event is as follows.

• It reveals that the death of Jesus is victory over death.

Outwardly Jesus seemed to have been defeated by death, but in reality, through His death the graves were opened and the power of death began to collapse.

• The resurrection of Jesus guarantees the resurrection of believers.

That the believers are recorded as appearing in the holy city after the resurrection of Jesus emphasizes that Jesus is the firstfruits of the resurrection. This event shows in advance the resurrection of believers that will take place on the last day.

• It shows that the hope of resurrection in the Old Testament began to be fulfilled.

It means that the promise of the Old Testament, that God would open the graves and raise His people, began to become reality through the death and resurrection of Jesus.

• It became evidence for the resurrection of Jesus.

That the raised believers went into the holy city and appeared to many people testified that the death and resurrection of Jesus are God's actual saving events that defeat death.

This event is not a symbolic story but a sign of resurrection that actually happened. When Jesus died the graves were opened, and the believers who came back to life came out of the graves after His resurrection, went into the holy city, and were seen by many. This actual event testifies that Jesus is God, who defeated the power of sin and death and gives new life to the dead, and it shows in advance the resurrection that those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will receive.

[Question] 27. Matthew 27:55–56—what can we learn from the women who watched the death of Jesus from afar?

Many women had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, and when Jesus died on the cross they watched from afar. Even in the situation where the disciples had scattered in fear, they did not completely leave the side of the suffering Jesus.

This fact gives the following lessons.

• True faith appears as loyalty that follows the Lord not

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only in good times but also in suffering and fear.

• Serving the Lord lies not only in words or office but in the love that stays to the end in the place of need.

• By witnessing in succession the death, the burial, and the resurrection of Jesus, the women became important witnesses of the gospel.

• Even the women, who received relatively little attention in the society of that day, were preciously used in God's history of redemption.

• The person who loves the Lord does not turn away from the Lord's suffering, even when danger or sorrow follows.

The figure of these women, therefore, teaches that a believer must not abandon the Lord even in hard circumstances, but remain faithful to the end in the place entrusted to him, with love and service.

[Question] 28. Matthew 27:57—what kind of person was Joseph of Arimathea, the rich man who became a disciple of Jesus and buried His body?

Joseph of Arimathea was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, and he was the following kind of person.

• He was a rich man of great wealth.

• He was an honored member of the council, the highest deliberative body of the Jews.

• He was a good and just man, and he waited for the Kingdom of God.

• He had not consented to the council's decision and deed in putting Jesus to death.

• He was a disciple of Jesus, but for fear of the Jews he had not revealed the fact.

After Jesus died, however, he took courage, went to Pilate, and asked for the body of Jesus. He wrapped the body in linen and buried it in his own new tomb, which he had hewn in the rock for himself.

Joseph of Arimathea had hidden his faith out of fear before, but in the face of the death of Jesus he took the risk and carried out a disciple's duty openly. Moreover, as Jesus was buried in a rich man's tomb after His death, Joseph was used in the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaiah 53.

[Question] 29. Matthew 27:58—what can we learn from Joseph's asking Pilate for the body of Jesus?

The action of Joseph of Arimathea in asking Pilate for the body of Jesus gives the following lessons.

• Faith must appear as courageous action at the decisive moment.

Joseph had hidden his faith before for fear of the Jews, but after Jesus died he took the risk and revealed that he was a disciple of Jesus.

• We must overcome the fear of man.

For Joseph, a member of the council, to ask for the body of Jesus, who had been crucified, was something that could bring loss to his honor and position. But he chose serving the Lord over people's evaluation.

• Serving the Lord requires actual action and sacrifice.

Joseph did not honor Jesus with words only; he offered his time, his wealth, and his new tomb.

• Even in hard times we must not be ashamed of the Lord.

Joseph stepped forward openly not when Jesus was performing miracles and welcomed by the crowd, but when He

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had been put to death as a condemned man.

Joseph's action, therefore, teaches that a true disciple shows his faith in action even when following the Lord looks disadvantageous and dangerous, and uses the position, wealth, and opportunities he has for the work of the Lord.

[Question] 30. Matthew 27:60—what was the form of the tomb in which Jesus was buried?

The tomb in which Jesus was buried was a new rock-hewn tomb that Joseph of Arimathea had cut out of the rock for himself. It was a tomb in which no one had yet been buried, a form of tomb owned by the wealthy.

In those days the tombs of the wealthy in Jerusalem were generally family burial chambers cut into limestone. Inside, stone benches or long burial niches were made along the walls so that bodies could be laid there. Such rock-hewn tombs were costly to make, so they were used mainly by the wealthy.

Joseph wrapped the body of Jesus in linen, laid it in the tomb, and rolled a large stone against the entrance. However, the Scripture does not directly say that the stone was the disk shape commonly seen in pictures today. Tombs of the Second Temple period mostly used square blocking stones, and tombs with round stones were relatively rare.

The tomb of Jesus, therefore, was a new tomb hewn out of the rock, with space inside to lay the body and a structure whose entrance was blocked with a large stone. Because it was a new tomb no one had used, after the resurrection the fact that it was empty and the place where the body of Jesus had lain could be confirmed clearly.

[Question] 31. Matthew 27:63—what did the chief priests and the Pharisees say they remembered before Pilate?

The chief priests and the Pharisees said they remembered that, while Jesus was still alive, He had said He would rise again after three days.

"We remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise'" (Matthew 27:63).

They remembered the prophecy of the resurrection of Jesus, but they did not believe it. Rather, fearing that the disciples might steal the body of Jesus and claim that He had risen, they sought to guard the tomb. This gives the lesson that knowing and remembering the word of Jesus is not enough; the word must be received by faith.

[Question] 32. Matthew 27:64—explain what they demanded of the governor concerning the tomb of Jesus.

The Jewish religious leaders asked Pilate to command that the tomb of Jesus be guarded securely until the third day.

"Command that the tomb be made secure until the third day" (Matthew 27:64).

They worried that the disciples of Jesus might steal His body and tell the people that He had risen from the dead. They thought that if that happened, faith in the resurrection would spread and have a greater influence than before. So they asked that the tomb be sealed and guarded by soldiers.

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[Question] 33. Matthew 27:64—why did the Jewish leaders request a guard for the tomb?

The Jewish leaders asked that the tomb of Jesus be guarded because they remembered that, while He was alive, Jesus had said He would rise again after three days.

They did not believe that Jesus would actually rise, but they worried that His disciples might come by night, steal the body, and tell the people that Jesus had risen from the dead. They thought that then more people would believe in Jesus as the Christ and their own religious authority would be threatened all the more.

So they asked Pilate to command that the tomb be guarded securely until the third day. What they meant by *"the last deception will be worse than the first"* was that they feared that if news of the resurrection of Jesus spread, more people would believe in Him than while He was alive.

But Jesus was not a deceiver who misled people. The Jewish leaders called the truth a lie. Not content with killing Jesus, the Son of God, they even tried to block the evidence of His resurrection. This was Satan the Devil working through the religious leaders to hinder the saving work of Jesus Christ and the spread of the gospel of the resurrection.

They sealed the tomb and had it guarded by soldiers, but they could not prevent the resurrection of Jesus. Rather, the fact that the tomb was strictly guarded revealed all the more clearly that the claim that the disciples had secretly taken the body was false. Jesus rose from the dead in three days, just as He had said.

Jesus received all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John, and bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and by

rising from the dead He completed our salvation. No power of the world, no obstruction by religious leaders, and no scheme of Satan the Devil can stop the resurrection of Jesus Christ and the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The direct reason the Jewish leaders requested a guard for the tomb, therefore, was to prevent the disciples from stealing the body and proclaiming that He had risen. But at its root lay the unbelief that feared that the resurrection of Jesus and its gospel would spread widely and many people would believe in Him as the Savior.

[Question] 34. Matthew 27:65—what did Pilate answer to the request to guard the tomb?

Pilate answered the Jewish religious leaders to take a guard, go, and make the tomb as secure as they could.

"You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how" (Matthew 27:65).

So they went with the guards, sealed the stone of the tomb, and kept watch over it. But all human vigilance and defense could not prevent the resurrection of Jesus. Rather, the fact that the tomb was thoroughly guarded refuted the claim that the disciples had stolen the body, and showed all the more clearly that the resurrection of Jesus was accomplished by the power of God.

[Question] 35. Matthew 27:66—what kind of measure was *"sealing the stone"*?

"Sealing the stone" means that an official seal was placed

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on the large stone blocking the entrance of the tomb so that no one could secretly move the stone or open the tomb.

It is generally understood that in those days a cord was stretched between the stone and the wall of the tomb, its two ends fixed with clay or wax, and a seal of authority was stamped on it. If the seal was broken, it could be known at once that someone had opened the tomb, and breaking a seal without permission was regarded as a challenge to the ruling power. However, since the Scripture does not directly record the cord or the materials used, this is an explanation according to the custom of the time.

The religious leaders, therefore, took the following measures.

• They blocked the entrance of the tomb with a large stone.

• They placed an official seal on the stone so that any movement could be detected.

• They set a guard to watch the tomb.

These were measures to blockade the tomb as securely as possible so that the disciples could not take the body of Jesus. But even this sealing and guarding could not prevent the resurrection of Jesus, accomplished by the power of God.

[Question] 36. Matthew 27:66—explain what meaning the sealing and guarding add to the evidence of the resurrection.

From the fact that the enemies of Jesus guarded the tomb securely, we can draw the following lessons.

• No human power can stop the word and the plan of God.

The religious leaders blocked the tomb with the stone, sealed it, and even set a guard, but they could not prevent the

resurrection of Jesus.

• Remembering the word and believing it are different.

The enemies remembered the word of Jesus that He would rise after three days, but rather than believing and repenting, they tried to keep the word from being fulfilled.

• God uses even the actions of His enemies as evidence for the gospel.

That the tomb was sealed and watched by guards became an important circumstance refuting the claim that the disciples had stolen the body. The measures the enemies took to block the resurrection came instead to reveal the certainty of the resurrection event.

• Unbelief can refuse the truth no matter how much evidence it sees.

The enemies knew the words and the miracles of Jesus and still did not believe, and they tried to accomplish their own will by guarding the tomb.

Therefore the believer must not fear the power or the obstruction of the world, but believe that the word God has promised is surely fulfilled. Man can block a tomb, but he cannot block the resurrection performed by God, the Master of life. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The sinner was released, and the Lord, the King, was judged in his place

< Matthew 27:1-44 >

"When morning came, all the chief priests and elders of the people plotted against Jesus to put Him to death. And when they had bound Him, they led Him away and delivered Him to Pontius Pilate the governor. Then Judas, His betrayer, seeing that He had been condemned, was remorseful and brought back the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and elders, saying, 'I have sinned by betraying innocent blood.' And they said, 'What is that to us? You see to it!' Then he threw down the pieces of silver in the temple and departed, and went and hanged himself. But the chief priests took the silver pieces and said, 'It is not lawful to put them into the treasury, because they are the price of blood.' And they consulted together and bought with them the potter's field, to bury strangers in. Therefore that field has been called the Field of Blood to this day. Then was fulfilled what was spoken by Jeremiah the prophet, saying, 'And they took the thirty pieces of silver, the value of Him who was priced, whom they of the children of Israel priced, and gave them for the potter's field, as the LORD directed me.' Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say.' And while He was being accused by

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the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.' But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'Barabbas!' Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to him, 'Let Him be crucified!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head,

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and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'' Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing."

Sin that remorse alone cannot solve

Matthew chapter 27 begins with the wretched end of Judas, who had sold Jesus. Seeing Jesus condemned, Judas confessed that he had sold innocent blood. He returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders and tried to undo his wrong. But he had already betrayed the Lord in his heart, and he could not solve that sin by his own strength. Even after returning the money he could not escape the condemnation of his conscience, and in the end he took his own life.

Judas certainly regretted what he had done. But the true repentance the Scripture speaks of does not stop at feeling regret and anguish. It is admitting that one is a sinner and returning to the way of the remission of sins that God has accomplished. However many tears a person sheds and however hard he tries to make up for his wrong, he cannot erase the sins written on his heart. For the wages of sin is death, and the judgment of sin is not something light enough for the sinner himself to bear.

The chief priests and the elders heard Judas's confession and said, what was that to them—he should see to it himself. Though they had plotted together to kill Jesus, they could not solve Judas's sin. The office of a religious leader and knowledge of the Law are not the power that washes away a person's sins. Nor do a sinner's sins before God disappear because he confesses them to another person or receives religious counsel.

The silver Judas threw into the sanctuary was called the price of blood. The religious leaders judged that it was not right to put that money into the temple treasury, yet they did not recognize their own evil in seeking to kill the sinless Jesus. Man can be meticulous about religious rules while failing to see the greed, envy, and murder in his own heart. Polishing the outside does not solve the problem of sin. We must believe in the law of

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salvation God has established.

The righteous King who kept silent

Jesus stood bound before the governor Pilate. When Pilate asked whether He was the King of the Jews, the Lord answered that it was as he said. Jesus is not only the King of Israel in fact; He is the King of kings and the God who created the whole universe. Everyone must kneel before Him, yet the Lord stood in the low place, seized by sinners and put on trial.

The chief priests and the elders accused Jesus of many things, but the Lord made no excuse. Pilate marveled at Jesus, who did not defend Himself. Because the Lord had no sin, He had no need to answer false accusations. Moreover, He was going voluntarily to the place of judgment to accomplish the salvation God the Father had ordained. It was not that He was silent for lack of power or lack of words.

Jesus could have driven off the soldiers with a single word and could have called the angels of heaven. But had He done so, He could not have borne in our place the judgment sinners must receive. To deliver His people from sin, the curse, and destruction, the Lord accepted the suffering like a lamb silent before its shearers. In that silence were His love for sinners and His perfect obedience to the Father's will.

That the Lord is King also means that He took responsibility for His people. The kings of this world sometimes sacrifice their people to keep their thrones, but Jesus gave up His own life to bring His people to life. The Creator endured the insults of His creatures and received the sinner's punishment in their place. We are not looking at the tragedy of one weak man; we must see the love of the King, who gave up everything to save His people.

The exchange of places between Barabbas and Jesus

At the Passover feast there was a custom of releasing one prisoner whom the crowd wanted. At that time a notorious prisoner called Barabbas was in prison. Pilate asked the crowd whom they wanted released, Barabbas or Jesus who is called Christ. He knew that the religious leaders had handed Jesus over out of envy, and he found in Jesus no evil deserving death.

Even so, the chief priests and the elders incited the crowd to ask for Barabbas to be released and for Jesus to be crucified. When Pilate asked what evil Jesus had done, the crowd could give no reason. They only cried out the louder to crucify Him. As a result, the guilty Barabbas gained his freedom, and the sinless Jesus received the sentence of death.

This scene shows the substitution of the gospel vividly. Barabbas was a sinner who deserved punishment, but he was released because Jesus stood in his place. We too are sinners like Barabbas before God. We sin daily in thought, word, and deed, and according to the Law of God we deserve judgment and the punishment of hell. But the sinless Jesus stood in our place and received the punishment.

When Barabbas was set free, he did not offer his good deeds or pay part of his punishment. He was released as he was, because Another had taken his place. The remission of sins is the same. It is not that we pay off the price of sin little by little with many prayers of repentance and good deeds. Because Jesus bore all our sins and received the judgment in our place, whoever believes this fact receives the remission of sins freely.

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Pilate's act of washing his hands

Seeing that a riot was about to break out, Pilate took water and washed his hands before the crowd. He said that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus and that the crowd should bear the responsibility. But pouring water on one's hands does not remove the responsibility for a wrong verdict. Though he knew that Jesus was in the right, he handed the Lord over to the Cross to protect his own position and security.

People also use many methods to look away from their own sins. They blame others and their circumstances, excuse themselves by saying everyone lives that way, and try to gain peace of conscience by performing religious ceremonies. But sin does not disappear by washing hands with water or soothing the heart. Before God, either the price of sin must be paid in full, or we must believe in the Savior who paid that price in our place.

The water we must believe in is not the water with which Pilate washed his hands. It is the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Through the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, all the sins of mankind passed over to His body. Bearing those sins, the Lord hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, receiving the punishment of all sins. When we believe in this salvation of the water and the blood, our conscience is cleansed from dead works.

The scourging and the mockery the Lord received

Pilate released Barabbas, and after scourging Jesus, he handed Him over to be crucified. The soldiers stripped Jesus and put a scarlet robe on Him, and set a crown of thorns on His head. They put a reed in His right hand, knelt before Him, and mocked

Him as the King of the Jews. They spat on Him and struck His head with the reed, ridiculing the Lord's kingship.

Jesus was in fact the King of kings, yet He received the lowest and most shameful treatment. The crown of thorns calls to mind the pain of the curse that entered this world through sin. The Lord bore in our place the curse we deserved. His being scourged, shedding blood, being spat upon and mocked was not because of His own sins but to save His people from judgment and destruction.

When we think of the suffering of Jesus, we must not stop at mere emotional pity. Fasting for a set period or holding sorrowful feelings is not the whole of believing in the Cross. We must know why the Lord was scourged and shed His blood. Because He had taken on our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He received in His body the actual punishment of those sins.

People regarded Jesus as a weak man, but He is God the Creator. He who raised the dead, stilled the sea, and healed every disease was not beaten because He had no power to resist. He endured the humiliation to the end to complete our salvation. We must know this fact, give thanks to the Lord, and exalt in our hearts the salvation He has accomplished.

The Savior nailed to the Cross

Jesus was led away to Golgotha and crucified. Over His head was put the accusation that He was Jesus the King of the Jews. The world put it up as words of mockery, but in fact it became a writing that testified to the truth. The One hanging on the cross was the Son of God, the true King who saves His people from their sins.

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Two robbers were crucified on the right and the left of Jesus. The sinless Lord was treated like one among sinners. Because the Lord had already shouldered all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He received the punishment in the sinner's place. The Cross was not Jesus' failure but the place where the judgment of sin God had ordained was carried out.

The passersby and the religious leaders mocked Jesus, saying that if He is the Son of God, He should come down from the cross. They ridiculed Him, saying He saved others but could not save Himself. But if Jesus had saved Himself and come down from the cross, He could not have saved us. The Lord saved us by not saving Himself, and by remaining on the Cross to the end, He paid the price of all our sins.

By believing in the blood of the Cross alone, cut off by itself, we cannot know the whole of salvation. The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was the event in which our sins passed over to the Lord, and the blood of the Cross was the event in which those sins were judged. The resurrection of Jesus is the evidence that this salvation is complete and that sin and death have been defeated. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through this baptism, blood, and resurrection, receives salvation from all sins.

The freedom enjoyed by the one who has been released

When Barabbas came out of prison, he did not need to carry his own cross back to the place of execution. Jesus had been handed over in his place, and the execution of his sentence was canceled. If Barabbas had said he was still a prisoner and gone

back to prison, he would have been refusing the verdict of release given to him. In the same way, the person who believes that Jesus received the judgment of all our sins in our place must no longer hold sin in his heart and live with the status of a sinner.

For a saved person to say that he is righteous is not to boast that his own deeds are perfect. It is to acknowledge God's verdict that Jesus took on all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and ended the punishment on the Cross. Looking at ourselves, we have many shortcomings, but looking at the Lord's righteousness, we have no sin. Faith is exalting the word of God above our own judgment.

This assurance does not make a person proud; it makes him thankful and humble. I was not released because I was better than Barabbas, nor did I become a child of God because I was better than others. I was saved only because the Lord took my place. Therefore we cannot condemn or despise others, and we must preach the word so that souls who do not yet know the gospel may receive the same grace.

To be released from sin is not permission to live according to the desires of the flesh. It means we have been set free from the slavery of sin and have gained the liberty to serve the righteousness of God. Before, we lived bound to our own greed and the values of the world, but now we live for the gospel and for souls, led by the Holy Spirit. Since the Lord set us free at so costly a price, it is fitting that we offer our bodies and hearts to righteous work.

The Church is the place where people who have been released like this gather to share the grace of salvation and preach the gospel. We must embrace one another's weaknesses, build one another up with the word, and join our hearts so that even one more soul may hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Sharing gospel books, helping evangelists, and explaining

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salvation to those near us is the most precious use of the freedom we have received from the Lord.

What we must see before the Cross

When we look at the Cross, we must see the gravity of our sins and, at the same time, the perfect love of the Lord. The Lord received in our place the scourging, the curse, and the death we deserved. Therefore the believer must no longer try to bear the punishment of his own sins himself. Trying to wash away sins with daily prayers of repentance can fall into the error of treating the judgment the Lord has already completed as insufficient.

True faith sets its heart on the word that the Lord bore all our sins and finished all the punishment. Though our feelings waver and the weakness of our flesh is exposed, the ground of salvation does not change. The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross are sufficient to wash away all sins—past, present, and future. When we believe this gospel, we become not sinners but the righteous, clothed with the righteousness of God.

The person who has received the remission of sins does not use the Cross to justify the desires of the flesh. Rather, believing that his old self was judged together with the Lord, he desires to live no longer as a slave of sin and his own greed. Since the Lord gave Himself up for us, we too must use the rest of our lives for the gospel. The love of the Cross turns us from worldly desires and leads us to a life that serves souls.

We must put ourselves in the place of Barabbas. We, who deserved punishment, were released, and the sinless Jesus was condemned in our place. We gained freedom not because of our goodness but because of the Lord’s atonement. The person who

believes this grace does not boast of himself; he boasts only of Jesus Christ.

Now we must not try to solve our sins with our own regret and effort like Judas, nor merely wash our hands to escape responsibility like Pilate. We must believe that Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and was judged in our place on the Cross. We must receive into our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which the Lord, the King, accomplished in the sinner's place, and live preaching to the whole world the salvation we have received freely. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who bore all sufferings to give us true salvation

< Matthew 27:11-54 >

"Now Jesus stood before the governor. And the governor asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' Jesus said to him, 'It is as you say.' And while He was being accused by the chief priests and elders, He answered nothing. Then Pilate said to Him, 'Do You not hear how many things they testify against You?' But He answered him not one word, so that the governor marveled greatly. Now at the feast the governor was accustomed to releasing to the multitude one prisoner whom they wished. And at that time they had a notorious prisoner called Barabbas. Therefore, when they had gathered together, Pilate said to them, 'Whom do you want me to release to you? Barabbas, or Jesus who is called Christ?' For he knew that they had handed Him over because of envy. While he was sitting on the judgment seat, his wife sent to him, saying, 'Have nothing to do with that just Man, for I have suffered many things today in a dream because of Him.' But the chief priests and elders persuaded the multitudes that they should ask for Barabbas and destroy Jesus. The governor answered and said to them, 'Which of the two do you want me to release to you?' They said, 'Barabbas!' Pilate said to them, 'What then shall I do with Jesus who is called Christ?' They all said to

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him, 'Let Him be crucified!' Then the governor said, 'Why, what evil has He done?' But they cried out all the more, saying, 'Let Him be crucified!' When Pilate saw that he could not prevail at all, but rather that a tumult was rising, he took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, 'I am innocent of the blood of this just Person. You see to it.' And all the people answered and said, 'His blood be on us and on our children.' Then he released Barabbas to them; and when he had scourged Jesus, he delivered Him to be crucified. Then the soldiers of the governor took Jesus into the Praetorium and gathered the whole garrison around Him. And they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. When they had twisted a crown of thorns, they put it on His head, and a reed in His right hand. And they bowed the knee before Him and mocked Him, saying, 'Hail, King of the Jews!' Then they spat on Him, and took the reed and struck Him on the head. And when they had mocked Him, they took the robe off Him, put His own clothes on Him, and led Him away to be crucified. Now as they came out, they found a man of Cyrene, Simon by name. Him they compelled to bear His cross. And when they had come to a place called Golgotha, that is to say, Place of a Skull, they gave Him sour wine mingled with gall to drink. But when He had tasted it, He would not drink. Then they crucified Him, and divided His garments, casting lots, that it might be fulfilled which was spoken by the prophet: 'They divided My garments among them, And for My clothing they cast lots.' Sitting down, they kept watch over Him there. And they put up over His head the accusation written against Him: THIS IS JESUS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then two robbers were crucified with Him, one on the right and another on the left. And those who passed by blasphemed Him, wagging their

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heads and saying, 'You who destroy the temple and build it in three days, save Yourself! If You are the Son of God, come down from the cross.' Likewise the chief priests also, mocking with the scribes and elders, said, 'He saved others; Himself He cannot save. If He is the King of Israel, let Him now come down from the cross, and we will believe Him. He trusted in God; let Him deliver Him now if He will have Him; for He said, 'I am the Son of God.'' Even the robbers who were crucified with Him reviled Him with the same thing. Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This Man is calling for Elijah!' Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!'"

The relationship the risen Lord has made with us

Today is Resurrection Sunday. The word resurrection means that He came back to life from death. But someone may ask what the resurrection of Jesus has to do with us. This is a question we must surely ask ourselves. Does the resurrection of Jesus concern you and me, or not? I tell you plainly that it does.

Why does it concern us? Jesus rose from the dead in order to bring you and me back to life. Jesus came to this earth to save His people from their sins, to deliver them from death, judgment, and destruction. And He actually finished all that work of salvation. He rose again to complete that work. Therefore the resurrection of Jesus is deeply related to us who believe in Him.

Concerning Jesus, the Scripture says, *"She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. Jesus came to this earth to save His people. Then who is Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is God. He is God, who became the Savior for you and me. He is our Savior.

The King who came to save His own people

Then what does that God have to do with us? We are His people, and He is our King. Dear fellow believers, a people without a king is not a nation. For a nation to be established there must be a people, there must be a king, and there must be a law. Only when those three are in place does it become a nation. A king alone is not enough, and a people alone is not enough.

Jesus is our King. He is the King of mankind, the King of kings, and the Lord of lords. Every creature can only kneel before Him. Because He is King. Because He is the Creator, the

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Savior, and the Judge. If that King curses, no one can escape His judgment. Truly, Jesus is such a King.

Then what does this King have to do with Easter, and with us? What concerns us is that Jesus was crucified, died, and rose from the dead. People fastened a sign to the cross above Jesus' head. It was written in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek: 'The King of the Jews.

The charge for which Jesus was killed lies exactly here. They killed Him because this Man called Himself the King of the Jews, called Himself the Son of God, and called Himself the Judge. They spoke like this: this Man called Himself the Christ, the Savior God who came to save mankind from sin, and for that arrogance they would nail Him to the cross and kill Him.

Jesus is not only the King of the Jews but the King of the whole world. At that time Caesar was emperor in Rome. If Caesar was king and Jesus said, 'I am the Christ,' that meant He was God. It meant He was the King of kings. We may take it lightly because we do not know its meaning well. But in that land, to say 'I am the Christ' was to declare that one was God, come as the Savior.

So the chief priests and the elders, even in the religious trial, pronounced the sentence of death. Before Pilate's court also the death sentence was pronounced. It was because Jesus said He was King. When Pilate asked, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* Jesus answered, *"It is as you say."* It means that He is God, the Master of the whole universe, and that as that God He is the Savior. It means, I have come to save you. Pilate was greatly astonished at these words.

In Pilate's eyes Jesus had no sin. Even if Jesus said He was the Christ, He had not directly opposed the emperor Caesar, nor had He risen up in arms. So Pilate asked the crowd. There was then a vicious criminal named Barabbas. Pilate asked whether

he should release Barabbas or release Jesus. But the crowd shouted to release Barabbas and to crucify Jesus.

Pilate saw that he was accomplishing nothing and that instead a riot was starting. So he took water and washed his hands before the crowd, saying that he was innocent of this Man's blood. There was a pricking in his heart, but because an uproar was breaking out, in the end he handed Jesus over. After the verdict fell, the soldiers stripped Jesus and scourged Him. They struck Him thirty-nine lashes, forty minus one.

That scourge had something like hooks at its ends, so that with one stroke they lodged in the flesh. When it was pulled back, the flesh tore and blood poured out. After beating Him like that, they stripped Him and put a scarlet robe on Him. They twisted a crown of thorns and set it on His head, and placed a reed in His right hand. Then they knelt before Him and said, *"Hail, King of the Jews!" (Matthew 27:29),* spitting on Him and mocking Him. They took the reed again and struck Jesus on the head. After they had finished all that mockery, they crucified Jesus. And above Him they fastened the accusation, the King of the Jews.

The King of kings who bore humiliation for us

Jesus is the King of us believers. He is the King of the whole universe and the God of the whole universe. He is both the God of the whole universe and the Savior of the whole universe. That King of kings bore all those sufferings for His people, to save you and me today from sin, and to deliver us from judgment, destruction, and the curse.

The Scripture says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah*

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53:5). Jesus, as our God and as our King, came to this earth when His people were dying because of sin. He came clothed in human flesh.

By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, Jesus received all the sins of mankind passed on to Himself. He became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. Bearing the sin of the world like that, He was spat upon for His people, despised, beaten, and put to death hanging on the Cross. Jesus was not beaten because He had no strength. He did not suffer because He could not resist. As the King of kings, He carried out that work Himself, for us.

When we want to accomplish something, there are times we must carry it through without refusing even hard and lowly work. Jesus also did so to complete our salvation. Jesus could have refused on the spot. But *"as a sheep before its shearers is silent" (Isaiah 53:7)*, He bore all that humiliation. He allowed Himself to be sacrificed for His people. The King of kings received all those sufferings to bring true salvation to His people. We must know this fact, believe it, and give thanks.

Faith that believes not in religion but in the living God

If Jesus had suffered because He was powerless, that would be a wretched thing, but Jesus is King. He is God. He is the Creator. While Jesus was praying in the garden of Gethsemane, Judas came to seize Him, in league with the chief priests, the elders, and the Roman soldiers. When the soldiers rushed in at night with spears, the disciples fought back to protect their Teacher. Hot-tempered Peter drew his sword and struck, and one man's ear was cut off. Then Jesus stopped the fight, took hold of

the severed ear, and put it back in place. The ear was joined at once.

Jesus is the King of kings. He is the One who raises the dead. He raised even Lazarus, who had been dead four days and whose body had begun to smell. He healed the sick, the blind, and the paralyzed; He raised the widow's dead son; He walked on the sea. He is such a God. Dear fellow believers, we do not believe in a religion. We believe in the King of kings. We believe in the living God.

Ours is not the faith of those who minister for wages and speak falsehood. We believe in the God who came to save you and me from sin, the God who endured humiliation for you and me and suffered even death. That King of kings endured humiliation for us, endured death, and rose again. So even now He exists as our God, our Shepherd, our Savior, and our Judge. Until all who have not yet been saved are saved, He uses us as His workers. When the time comes, He will receive praise as our eternal King in His Kingdom and bestow eternal happiness and blessing on His people. Dear fellow believers, Jesus is such a King.

Because Jesus is the King of kings, whatever we do, we do it for the Lord. What we gain by working honestly is for the Lord; when we suffer humiliation, we suffer it for the Lord; when we labor, we labor for the Lord. When we receive glory, we receive it through the Lord. Therefore, whatever I do, I feel no wretchedness. How could serving my King be wretched? Rather, it is all the more glorious. Since I labor for my King, I am as bold as a lion.

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The command the risen Lord gave His disciples

Jesus was crucified and died on Friday, and He rose at dawn on the first day of the week. He came back to life from death in three days. After that He appeared before people many times, ascended into heaven before many watching eyes, and promised to come again. And in Galilee He spoke His last words to His disciples.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen" (Matthew 28:18–20). He said to make disciples of all the nations. He said to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. And He said to preach to the whole world the gospel He had commanded, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Then He promised to be with us always, even to the end of the age.

After His resurrection Jesus spent forty days with His disciples. Then, as He ascended into heaven, He said He would come again just as He had gone up. I believe the fact that the Lord is with me, and with you, to the end of the age.

What is a true life of faith?

Yet after receiving this salvation, people sometimes fall into a merely notional life of faith. This is especially true of those who speak of cheap salvation. They think that since their sins have all disappeared, it is all right to sin at will. At times we too

are tempted like that. But dear fellow believers, though our knowledge may think that way, true faith is not done with the head but with our life.

It is certain that our Lord has removed all our sins. Even so, as we live we commit wrongs. Each time, our conscience and the word of God speak to us. Then we must admit, 'I did wrong in this.' We must say we were wrong before people, and before God we must confess, 'I did this wrong. I admit it,' and deal with it squarely. And knowing that our Lord has removed even that sin, we must give thanks and strive to live uprightly. That is the true life of faith.

But those who speak of cheap salvation are not like this. They say that since sins are already gone, there is no need even to pray. Dear fellow believers, that is knowing only one thing and not the other; it is thinking held captive by the flesh.

Jesus rose again; He came to this earth, worked, and went through all that humiliation to give us salvation. If Jesus had not risen from the dead, what He did would have no meaning. It would be no different from commemorating one morally admirable man. But Jesus is not such a one. Because Jesus is God, He suffered humiliation for a time and even death to give us salvation. But because Jesus is the Master of life, He promised to rise again, and He actually rose again. He is One who can do so; He is God, who has that power.

Therefore, for us to believe in Jesus is faith and life, not mere theory. Yet some people say, 'Now that I have received the remission of sins, what need is there to live for the Lord? I can live for myself.' This is exactly the folly of knowing one thing and not the other. Dear fellow believers, if we have received the remission of sins and yet try to live only for ourselves, that person is a fleshly person. He is a person not united with God, a person who has not enthroned God as the King of his heart. He

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has accepted only the salvation and rejected the Lord. He is like Judas. Unless he turns back, he will surely end up acting like Judas.

Therefore we must enthrone Jesus as our King. Jesus is the King of the Jews, the King of believers, the King of you and me. No power holder of this world is our king. Believers have their own King. We live on this earth, but we are no longer a people belonging to this earth. We are God's people and workers of the Kingdom of God.

So I make faith my life. Jesus commanded us: baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teach them to observe all things He has commanded. Preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world, and keep that faith, living the life of faith. It is not enough to know the letters and say, 'I have read this word, so I know all it means.' We must apply that word in our lives. We must live confessing, 'You are my King, the Christ, the Son of the living God. You are truly God, my King, and my Savior.'

If He is my King and my God, then as one of His people I must follow His will and serve Him as I live. That is true living. If we do not live according to His will, what life of faith can we claim to be living? In the end we become adversaries. Even having received salvation, we can end up as adversaries.

Look at the false leaders who speak of cheap salvation. They do not work in the low place together with the saints. Instead they enjoy costly things and lord it over them, coveting and extorting the saints' possessions. They make people sell their houses and take on debt to offer money for building great chapels. Before them a saint can hardly lift his face and say a single word. Not only is the content of their gospel different; their very lives are different. But I hate such things. What belongs to the saints is the saints', and what belongs to the

church is the church's. I do not covet your possessions. If money is needed, we need only pray before God. God will supply it—why should I covet what belongs to others?

Dear fellow believers, do you know why Jesus lived together with His disciples for three years? It was so that they would watch what Jesus did and learn. Though Jesus is the King of kings, He did not trample the powerless. Rather, He looked after the weak, led them, and cared for them. He granted the remission of sins and healed diseases. The one who truly leads is the one who tends the flock and goes down to the low place to serve them. Ruling from above and driving others like servants is not the figure of a true leader.

The Lord who is with us to the end of the age

Therefore we must live the life of faith. We must follow His will. We must serve Him. Our Lord has surely risen. He is alive even now. And when the time comes, He will come to judge. Even now He dwells in our hearts through the Holy Spirit. Whether we eat or drink or whatever we do, we do it all for the Lord and for the glory of God. For faith is not knowledge but life.

The Lord promised to be with us to the end of the age. I believe that promise. The Lord is with me and with you. That Jesus rose again is the evidence that He has given us new life. Giving thanks before the Lord who has given us new life, we must live faithfully in the life of faith until the day we meet the Lord. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who tore the veil and opened the way of new life

< Matthew 27:45-66 >

"Now from the sixth hour until the ninth hour there was darkness over all the land. And about the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, 'Eli, Eli, lama sabachthani?' that is, 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?' Some of those who stood there, when they heard that, said, 'This Man is calling for Elijah!' Immediately one of them ran and took a sponge, filled it with sour wine and put it on a reed, and offered it to Him to drink. The rest said, 'Let Him alone; let us see if Elijah will come to save Him.' And Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and yielded up His spirit. Then, behold, the veil of the temple was torn in two from top to bottom; and the earth quaked, and the rocks were split, and the graves were opened; and many bodies of the saints who had fallen asleep were raised; and coming out of the graves after His resurrection, they went into the holy city and appeared to many. So when the centurion and those with him, who were guarding Jesus, saw the earthquake and the things that had happened, they feared greatly, saying, 'Truly this was the Son of God!' And many women who followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were there looking on from afar, among whom were Mary Magdalene, Mary the mother of James and Joses, and the mother of Zebedee's sons. Now when evening had come, there came a rich man from Arimathea, named Joseph, who

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himself had also become a disciple of Jesus. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then Pilate commanded the body to be given to him. When Joseph had taken the body, he wrapped it in a clean linen cloth, and laid it in his new tomb which he had hewn out of the rock; and he rolled a large stone against the door of the tomb, and departed. And Mary Magdalene was there, and the other Mary, sitting opposite the tomb. On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard."

The darkness of judgment that covered all the land

While Jesus hung on the cross, darkness came over all the land from the sixth hour until the ninth hour. The darkness that continued for three hours in the middle of the day was not a mere natural phenomenon; it shows that God's judgment on sin was being carried out on the Cross. The sinless Son of God was bearing all the sins of the world and receiving the curse in the sinner's place.

The Cross is not a place that reveals only the cruelty of men. It is the place that shows how solemnly the holy God judges sin.

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God is love, but at the same time He is righteous. He cannot pretend not to see sin or cover it over lightly. The price of sin must surely be paid, and sin that has not been judged cannot disappear before God.

Everyone is born in sin and commits countless sins all his life. From the heart come evil thoughts, greed, lust, hatred, and pride, and with words and deeds we also go against the will of God. In the world one may look a little better than others, but before the perfect Law of God no one can be called righteous. All of us were sinners who had to be judged under the darkness of the Cross.

But God did not leave us to destruction. He sent His only begotten Son, Jesus, to this earth in the flesh and passed all the sins of mankind on to Him. As the Savior who bore sin, Jesus received on the Cross the punishment we deserved. The darkness of the Cross was the judgment of sin and, at the same time, the darkness in which God's love that brings sinners to life appeared.

Why was the Lord forsaken?

About the ninth hour, Jesus cried out loudly, asking why God had forsaken Him. That Jesus, who is one with God the Father, experienced such abandonment was not because of His own sins. Jesus had no sin at all. But because He had taken all the sins of the world onto His own body, He suffered in the sinner's place the severance and the curse the sinner must receive.

Before He was crucified, Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist at the Jordan River. The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was the righteous act by which He received all the sins of mankind onto His own body. Just as the high priest of the Old Testament passed the sins of the people onto the

sacrificial offering, when John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, baptized Jesus, all the sins of the world passed over to the Lord.

Because Jesus had borne sins in that way, He had to be forsaken on the Cross and shed His blood and die. If we look only at the Cross without the Lord's baptism, we cannot fully know why the sinless One received the curse. The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was the event in which sins passed over, and the blood of the Cross was the event in which the sins passed on to Him were judged. The two events accomplish one complete atonement.

The Lord received in our place the eternal forsakenness we deserved. As a result, the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not forsaken by God. When the flesh is weak and life is hard, God may feel far away, but salvation is not decided by feelings. Because of the word that the Lord was forsaken in our place and paid the price of sin in full, the believer is God's child forever.

The death that finished the judgment of all sins

Jesus cried out again with a loud voice, and His spirit departed. The Lord's death was not a faint or a symbol but an actual death. He fully tasted death, the wages of sin, in our place. God the Creator, to save His creatures, clothed Himself in a human body and went down even into death.

That Jesus shed His blood means the price of our sins was paid completely. God does not judge the same sins twice. If all our sins passed over to Jesus and were judged on the Cross, He does not demand the price of sin again from the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Here is the

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ground on which the saved person is assured of the remission of sins.

People think that even after believing in Jesus, the sins they commit daily must be washed away by prayers of repentance. But the prayer of repentance is a prayer of admitting a wrong and turning back to the will of God; it is not a means of dealing again with the punishment of sin that was finished on the Cross. If a person had to wash his sins with his own prayers, the salvation the Lord accomplished with His baptism and the Cross would be incomplete.

With the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus bore not only the sins of the past but all the sins mankind will commit until the end of the world. On the Cross He received the punishment of all those sins once and for all. Therefore the person who believes this gospel becomes a righteous person without sin, not because his own deeds are perfect, but because the righteousness of Jesus is perfect. We must not condemn ourselves by looking at ourselves; we must look at the judgment the Lord has finished.

The veil of the sanctuary, torn from the top

When Jesus died, the veil of the sanctuary was torn in two from top to bottom. The veil of the temple stood between the sinner and the Most Holy, where the holy God dwells. No one could enter within the veil; only the high priest could enter, at the appointed time, with the blood of the sacrifice. This showed that a person who has sin cannot draw near to God.

But at the moment Jesus finished the judgment of all sins and died, the veil was torn. It was not torn by man from below upward; it was torn from top to bottom. This reveals that the One

who opened the way of salvation is not man but God. The way to God was not made by man's good deeds and religious efforts; Jesus opened that way with His body and His blood.

That the veil was torn means that the sin blocking the way between God and man was removed. Jesus bore our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and was judged for them all on the Cross. Now the person who believes this fact comes boldly before God with the status of a righteous person without sin. No special human mediator and no repeated sacrifices are needed any longer.

We do not enter the Most Holy with our own feelings or merits. On some days our faith may look strong and on other days weak, but the veil has already been torn, regardless of our condition. Believing in the righteousness Jesus accomplished is the only way to come to God. The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not stand outside the door as a sinner whenever he prays; he comes before the Father as a beloved child of God.

The quaking earth and the opened graves

When the veil of the sanctuary was torn, the earth quaked, the rocks were split, and the graves were opened. The death of Jesus did not end as the quiet death of one man. The whole created world testified to the death of the Creator and showed that the power of sin and death was being shaken. As the Lord paid the price of sin, a new way of life was opened in the order that death had ruled.

Many bodies of the believers who had fallen asleep were raised, and after the resurrection of Jesus they came out of the graves, went into the holy city, and were seen by people. This

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shows that the salvation of Jesus Christ does not stop at the remission of the sins of the soul but is the salvation that will also raise the believer's body in the future. The Lord's death and resurrection are the event that defeated both sin and death.

The person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit first receives new life in his heart. The soul that was dead in sin receives the remission of sins and comes alive by receiving the Holy Spirit. And on the last day the perishable body will also rise again and live with the Lord forever. Therefore, for the born-again person, death is not the end of everything. Believing that the Lord will raise him again, he lives in the hope of the resurrection even in the face of the threat of death.

The centurion and those keeping watch over Jesus with him saw the earthquake and the things that happened; they feared greatly and confessed that Jesus was truly the Son of God. The religious leaders knew much of the Scriptures and yet rejected the Lord, but the Gentile centurion saw the signs revealed at the cross and acknowledged who the Lord is. Salvation is not given to those who boast of knowledge and lineage but to those who believe the righteousness of God with the heart.

The faith of the women who watched from afar

Many women who had followed Jesus from Galilee, ministering to Him, were watching the cross from afar. Even in the fearful situation where the disciples had scattered, they watched the Lord's last moments. They had no power to bring the Lord down from the cross at once, but with loving hearts they did not leave that place. God recorded in the Scripture also the faith of those who followed and served the Lord without a name.

The life of faith does not consist only of doing great things

out front. Keeping one's place without leaving the gospel and the Church in hard times is also precious faith. There is the service of staying beside sick and struggling brothers and sisters, praying for the workers of the gospel, and helping with what is needed where no one sees. The Lord remembers even the labor that people do not recognize.

Those women kept watching even to the place of the tomb, at the moment when all hope seemed to have ended with the death of Jesus. Faith does not mean understanding every situation at once. To stay with the Lord even when we have not fully grasped the word and everything before our eyes is dark—that is faith. We must remain near the Church and the gospel, waiting for God to fulfill His promise.

Joseph, who offered his own new tomb

When evening came, Joseph, a rich man of Arimathea, went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. He also was a disciple of Jesus. In the situation where Jesus had been executed as a criminal, revealing oneself as His disciple was a dangerous thing. But Joseph did not turn away from the Lord's body; he wrapped it in clean linen and laid it in his own new tomb, hewn in the rock.

Joseph offered to the Lord the precious tomb prepared for himself. The person who has received salvation from the Lord uses what he has for the gospel. Material things, position, and time are not given only for the boasting of the flesh. They have eternal value when they are used to serve the Church, the body of the Lord, and the work of saving souls.

That Jesus was buried in the new tomb makes it plain that the Lord's death was real. The Lord did not lose consciousness for

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a moment on the cross and then wake up. With Pilate's permission the body was taken down, wrapped in linen, and laid in the tomb. A large stone blocked the door of the tomb, and the women confirmed the place. The gospel is not a symbol or an invented story but God's salvation actually accomplished in history.

The life that even the sealed tomb could not hold back

The chief priests and the Pharisees remembered that while Jesus was alive He had said He would rise again after three days. Worried that the disciples might steal the body and say He had risen, they asked that the tomb be securely guarded. Pilate gave them a guard, and they sealed the stone and made the tomb secure.

People thought they could prevent the resurrection of Jesus with a large stone, the seal of Rome, and armed guards. But human power and vigilance cannot shut the Lord of life in a tomb. Rather, the firmly sealed tomb later became sure evidence that the resurrection of Jesus was no trick of the disciples.

Matthew chapter 27 ends with the scene of the stone rolled in place and the tomb sealed. To human eyes it looks as though death and darkness have won. But the three days God had promised were drawing near. The Lord had already spoken of His resurrection, and no obstruction could stop that word. Faith is seeing the promise of God as greater than the stone of the tomb.

The resurrection of Jesus is not an event in which the Lord alone came back to life. By bearing our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, dying on the Cross, and rising again, He gave the believer the remission of sins, new life, and

the hope of resurrection. If the Lord's death was death for our sins, the Lord's resurrection is the evidence of the new life He gives us.

Those who live along the opened way

The veil of the sanctuary has been torn, and the way to come to God has already been opened. Yet if we think we must wash away our own sins ourselves, it is like building a barrier again before the torn veil. We must believe that Jesus removed all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and the blood of the Cross. The person who believes this gospel crosses over the wall of sin and enjoys peace with God.

The fellowship enjoyed inside the opened veil

That the way to God has been opened does not mean only the promise of entering Heaven after death. The person who has received the remission of sins calls God Father and has fellowship with Him even now on this earth. He prays when hardship comes, learns the will of God through the word, and lives led by the Holy Spirit. The one who stood far off because of sin has become God's family and entered His care.

This fellowship does not open and close according to our moods. The way does not grow wider because we prayed much today, nor is the torn veil sewn up again because we made a mistake. The ground on which the way was opened is the perfect atonement of Jesus. When we do wrong, we must admit it before the word and turn back, but we must not think we have become sinners again; within the unchanging gospel of the water and the

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Spirit we must ask for the Father's help.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins and testifies that this salvation is true. He also enables us to discern the thoughts of the flesh from the will of God, and leads us to serve the gospel in union with the Church. The person who has the Holy Spirit may still be weak, but he is not abandoned and alone. Within the word and the Church he receives rebuke and comfort and rises again by faith.

The person who enjoys peace with God must also deliver the gospel of peace to others. To the person still trembling before the wall of sin, we must tell the news that the veil has already been torn. To the person trying to draw near to God by religious labors, we must explain that Jesus has completed the way with His body and His blood. This is the mission of love to be carried out by those who have entered the opened way first.

All that the Church does for the gospel is the work of making this opened way known to the world. Translating and publishing the word, preparing evangelistic meetings and helping missions, and nurturing newly saved souls with the word are all works of serving so that sinners may come to God. The Lord has not only given us the privilege of salvation but also entrusted us with the precious office of leading others into that way.

The Holy Spirit dwells in the person who has received the remission of sins. The Spirit testifies that we are God's children and leads us to the life that pleases the Lord. We do not do good works to obtain salvation; we serve the gospel out of thanks for the salvation we have already received. Like the women, we keep our place beside the Lord in hard times, and like Joseph, we live offering what we have to the Church, the body of the Lord.

While serving the gospel we may meet obstacles like the

large stone. The opposition of the world, the lack of material things, the weakness of the flesh, and fear of the future may seem to block the way. But even the stone that sealed the tomb could not stop the risen Lord. The work of preaching the gospel that God has purposed does not end by man's obstruction. We must gain strength from the hope of the resurrection and continue the work entrusted to us.

The darkness of the Cross did not last forever. The Lord was judged for all our sins, opened the way to come to God, rose again from the dead, and gave us new life. Now, for the person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is not condemnation but righteousness; not a blocked veil but an opened way; not the tomb of death but the hope of resurrection and eternal life.

We must not make the Lord's forsakenness and death vain. We must not rely on our own deeds and repeated prayers of repentance but believe in the remission of sins the Lord has completed. And we must deliver this opened way of life to the souls who do not yet know it. Keeping in our hearts the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that Jesus bore all sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged on the Cross, and rose again to give new life—we must live preaching it boldly until the day the Lord comes again. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The risen Lord has given us new life

< Matthew 27:62-28:20 >

"On the next day, which followed the Day of Preparation, the chief priests and Pharisees gathered together to Pilate, saying, 'Sir, we remember, while He was still alive, how that deceiver said, 'After three days I will rise.' Therefore command that the tomb be made secure until the third day, lest His disciples come by night and steal Him away, and say to the people, 'He has risen from the dead.' So the last deception will be worse than the first.' Pilate said to them, 'You have a guard; go your way, make it as secure as you know how.' So they went and made the tomb secure, sealing the stone and setting the guard. Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.' So they went out quickly

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from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.' Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.' So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

Our church keeps two feasts a year. One is Resurrection Sunday, and the other is Christmas. There are truly many feast days, but we keep only these two. Today is the day Jesus rose again. The whole world keeps this Resurrection Sunday. When today's worship is over, eggs have been prepared for you.

Today we share the eggs with one another, but above all we

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think together on the grace of the Lord who has given us new life, and we share that grace. Resurrection Sunday is the day commemorating the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus came back to life from the tomb. He redeemed our sins, died for us, and rose again.

Whenever we think of our Lord's resurrection, we realize how truly great is the work He accomplished. The Lord came to this earth. The Lord bore our sins with the baptism He received from John. The Lord died on the Cross. And the Lord rose again from the dead. Do you believe that the Lord has risen?

Faith that believes the resurrection of One who had died

Jesus determined to save us sinners from sin and came to this earth. Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins. Jesus was nailed to the Cross, suffered, and died. And Jesus came back to life from the tomb in three days. Everyone who has received the remission of sins believes that the Lord rose again.

But the person who has not yet received the remission of sins cannot believe this fact. Such people ask: how can a dead man come back to life? To the mind of the flesh it simply cannot be understood. Think of it once. A man died. He does not breathe. His pulse does not beat. Three days have passed since he died. The body begins to decay completely. The blood and fluids gather to one side, and the blood does not circulate. Every element in the body separates, rots, and smells. How could such a man come back to life?

The person who has not been born again cannot believe this. But the born-again person believes it at any time. The Lord came to this earth to save us. The Lord bore our sins with the baptism

He received from John. The Lord died on the Cross. The Lord rose again from the dead. The person who has believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and obtained new life believes the Lord's resurrection at any time.

The risen Lord is our Creator and our Savior

God the Father sent His only Son, Jesus Christ, to this earth to save mankind from sin. God passed the sin of the world entirely on to that Son through the baptism He received from John. God had that Son nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and come to death. And God raised that Son again from death. The Lord who rose from that death is the Creator of you and me. He is also the God of salvation, who has saved you and me from sin.

That Jesus Christ, who rose from the tomb, is the Creator who made you and me. He is also the Savior who has saved you and me. He is not merely a man. He is the One who has given you and me new life. He is the God of creation and the God of salvation, who removed our sins and gave us new life. What an amazing thing this is! Before that God we kneel with the knees of our hearts and the knees of our bodies, worshiping and giving thanks.

Jesus Christ came to this earth and lived a life of thirty-three years. In the year He turned thirty, He received baptism from John, the representative of mankind, to bear the sins of mankind. With that baptism He took on all our sins, and for three years He testified to the gospel. After that He was nailed to the Cross, died, and rose from the dead. Now that Lord has risen from the dead and come out of the tomb, testified to His disciples for some forty days, and lives at the right hand of the throne of God the

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Father. That Lord is for you and me the God of creation, the God of salvation, and the Lord of life who has given us new life.

For a person to know this Jesus Christ rightly and believe in Him rightly can never happen without being born again by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only the person born again by the gospel of the water and the Spirit realizes and believes this truth.

The Lord rose again to give us new life

Today is Resurrection Sunday. The Lord rose from the dead to give you and me new life. Jesus shouldered the sentence of death on the Cross, was nailed to it, and died. And He said in advance that He would come back to life from death in three days.

When Jesus actually died, the religious leaders of Judaism remembered His word that He would come back to life three days after His death. They feared that His disciples might come, take the body away, and say that Jesus had risen. So they asked the Roman governor Pilate, stationed soldiers around the tomb, and had it strictly guarded. Pilate permitted it, and the soldiers guarded the tomb.

But at dawn on the third day after His death, an earthquake occurred. An angel came down from heaven, rolled away the stone door of the tomb, and sat on it. That angel wore shining, radiant white clothing. Then the Roman soldiers guarding the tomb trembled with fear and became like dead men. Some fled, and some fell down and fainted.

At that time Mary, who had received grace from the Lord, and several others came to the tomb with fragrant spices. They came to tend the body of Jesus. But when they arrived, the stone

door of the tomb was already open, and the stone had been moved away. Going inside, they found no body. Then the angel asked whom they were seeking. When they said they were seeking Jesus, he told them that Jesus had risen and come back to life, and to go and see. As the women came out of the tomb and ran, Jesus met them on the way. The Lord told them to tell His disciples: I have risen; go to Galilee, and you will see Me there at the appointed meeting place.

Why did Jesus Christ rise again?

The disciples met Jesus Christ in Galilee and worshiped Him. Yet the Scripture says that some among them doubted. Who among the disciples of Jesus would have doubted? It was Thomas. Thomas believed only after putting his hand into Jesus' side and his fingers into the marks of the wounds. But we believe plainly. We plainly believe that Jesus Christ has risen.

Why did Jesus Christ rise again? Why did He come back to life from death? It was to give us new life. He came to this earth at the Father's command to save us from sin and to give us new life. Therefore He came to this earth, received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from the dead. That is, He rose again to give us new life.

The meaning of Jesus' birth, the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection

That He was born on this earth in human flesh was to save us from sin. He came to save His people from their sins. That He

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received baptism from John was to bear our sins and wash them away for us. That He died on the Cross was to receive in our place the punishment and judgment of our sins and to put our old self to death. And that He rose again was to give us new life.

The Lord who rose from the dead is the Master of the life of you and me. He is the God who created us and the God who has given us new life. Though our knowledge about the Father of Jesus Christ may be lacking, when we know and believe in Jesus Christ we come to know the Father. We come to know how much the Father loves us through His Son. When we see that Jesus Christ, we come to know everything about the Father.

That Jesus Christ has given you and me eternal new life. He has given us life that can live forever. At first He was the Lord of creation who made us. Now He has become the Lord of life who has given us eternal life. Jesus Christ is the Creator of you and me, the Lord who has saved you and me from sin, and the God who has given you and me eternal life. On this Resurrection Sunday we must know, through the resurrection of Jesus Christ, that He has given us new life. We must know that He has given us the life of eternal life that never dies, and give thanks.

The faith that dies with Christ and rises with Him

I am a servant of God who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit until the day the Lord comes. There is nothing else. I do not wish to see some vision while praying, nor would God give such a thing. I only serve this gospel of the water and the Spirit and seek to follow the Lord. But as the old self, I can never follow the Lord. With my wisdom, my will, or my strength, I cannot follow the Lord. Therefore I must die with Christ. By faith we must be baptized, by faith have our sins washed away,

die with Jesus Christ on the Cross, and rise again with Jesus Christ to obtain new life.

To have died with Christ is a truly good thing. Dear fellow believers, could you follow the Lord with your old selves? You could not. It is utterly impossible. Then, after believing that we have died with Christ, is it no longer hard? It is still hard. That is why the Apostle Paul said, I die daily.

Jesus Christ received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, giving us eternal life. In the Lord who gave that eternal life is everything. After we believe this gospel and receive the remission of sins, we realize that unless we ourselves die, we cannot follow the Lord. So we die by faith. But even after that, it is not without difficulty. The flesh rises up daily. The desires of the flesh and the thoughts of the flesh rise up without ceasing. The mind of the flesh is death, and the mind of the Spirit is life and peace. The thoughts of the Spirit keep rising, but the thoughts of the flesh keep rising too.

Therefore we must believe these three things. We must believe that when Jesus received baptism from John, my sins passed over to Him. We must believe that when Jesus Christ died on the Cross and entered the tomb, I also died with Him. We must believe that just as Jesus Christ rose again on the third day after His death, I also came back to life with Him. These three are absolutely unchanging. The faith that believes them must surely be in us. Without this faith we cannot follow the Lord.

Look. If we do not believe the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, the sins of you and me cannot be passed on. Sins cannot be washed away. We cannot become people without sin. We must believe that the death Jesus Christ suffered, punished on the Cross, was because of the sins of you and me. We must believe that His death was His shouldering the sins of you and me and dying in our place. If we do not believe that, we cannot

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die ourselves. If we do not die, we cannot obtain new life. The word *"old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17)* cannot be fulfilled.

Though our sins have disappeared through the remission of sins, if we do not believe that fact, the old self remains as it is. If we believe that when Jesus died on the Cross I also died with Him, then, having died with Him, we have also risen with Him. He rose from the dead, and if we believe it, we too become those who have risen again with Christ. The faith that believes these three things must be kept forever. To follow the Lord we must die daily. We must die on the Cross. And after dying, we must surely rise again by faith. If we stay dead and remain still, it is nothing. We are dead to sin and alive to righteousness. We believe that God has brought us to life. Do you believe?

The faith that overcomes death with the hope of the resurrection

We believe that Christ has risen and that His resurrection is our resurrection. If we do not forget this, we are not shaken even when we pass through tribulation, come to the place of martyrdom, and lose our lives. But if we do not actually believe that Jesus' resurrection is our resurrection, we end up kneeling and cringing in the face of death. If we truly believe the resurrection of Jesus Christ, then even when we come to receive a punishment that leads to death, we can overcome every adversary because we have the hope of living again. Because we believe that we obtain the same resurrection with Christ, we can overcome with the hope of the resurrection every opposition of Satan the Devil, who threatens us with death.

Jesus Christ actually rose again. At that time the tomb was

guarded doubly and triply by Roman soldiers. Some say that the disciples of Jesus came secretly by night and stole the body. But that is impossible. The Roman soldiers were not loose men like volunteer neighborhood watchmen making their rounds. They were armed, elite troops. For the timid disciples to roll away that heavy stone and steal the body is impossible. Jesus actually rose again. He rose again and gave you and me new life. He gave us eternal life that never dies. Jesus Christ rose from the dead, testified to His disciples for forty days, and ascended into the Kingdom of Heaven.

We believe with the heart unto righteousness and enjoy eternal life. And we believe that on the last day this body will die and rise again. Because we believe that God will raise us again just as Christ rose, we believe in the Lord and do not fear death. It was because of this faith that the disciples and saints of the early Church did not fear death. When they became food for lions in the Roman arena, and when the emperor Nero set fire to the city of Rome, laid the blame on the Christians, and seized and killed them, the Christians sang praises. This is a fact every historian knows. What was the faith that enabled them to praise? It was that Christ died and rose again on the third day, coming back to life. Because they believed that though their bodies likewise die, the Lord would raise them again—because they believed they would live forever—they could sing praises.

We must surely believe these three things. This is the basis and the foundation. And we must come before the Lord daily, worshiping and fearing Him as we live. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, which the Lord came to this earth and accomplished by giving His whole life—this salvation that has saved us—you and I must believe with all our hearts and serve with all our hearts.

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Do not boast of your own righteousness; boast of Christ

Some people say things like this to put forward their own righteousness. The leader of a certain group boasts that he kept this gospel through hardship, drinking ditch water in mountain valleys to defend it. But dear fellow believers, it is not man who is worthy. It is Jesus Christ who is worthy. Jesus Christ is God to us: the God who gave us life, the God who created us, and the God who has saved us.

Jesus Christ is not some lesser one who merely removed our sins. It is not that only God the Father is great and the Son merely removed our sins. God the Father is our God, but the Son, Jesus Christ, is also our God. He was there when this universe was created, and He was directly involved when we were made. When we were born on this earth and fell into sin, deceived by Satan the Devil, He came to this earth to save His people from their sins. He came and received baptism from John to bear our sins, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, giving eternal life to those who believe in Him.

To exalt what Jesus Christ has done is the duty and the fitting way of those who are God's people. He came to this earth and was born, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose from the dead, and now testifies to the gospel and has ascended into heaven. If we have believed in Him and received the remission of sins, we must believe, worship, and honor the work He did with all His heart—the work of saving mankind from sin—and live for it.

I have nothing to boast of. I have only one thing to boast of: that Jesus became my Savior. That for me He received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose from the dead, giving me new life. And that He has made this lacking person a worker of

righteousness. Besides this I have nothing to boast of. Besides Jesus Christ I have nothing at all to boast of.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit the Lord accomplished by giving His life

If we have believed in Him, received the remission of sins, and obtained new life, what must we, who live for Him, regard as most important? What must we treasure most? It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The most precious work the Lord accomplished, giving His whole life after coming to this earth, is the work of this gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is, the work of saving you and me. To accomplish that work He forsook the glory of the throne of heaven.

The Apostle Paul confessed that Jesus Christ took him up to the third heaven and showed him the world of heaven. He forsook the glory of heaven and came to this earth. To save you and me, He received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, giving new life to you and me who believe in Jesus Christ. It was to give you and me new life that He rose again.

Though our bodies die someday, we believe that just as Jesus Christ rose from the dead in three days, God will come on the last day and raise us again. Do you believe? His death is our death; the baptism He received from John was to bear our sins; and His rising from the dead is to give you and me new life.

There is no one more beautiful than the person who serves the gospel. No one has realized anything more spiritual than the person who lives for the gospel. The life of receiving the remission of sins and living for the gospel is the most fitting life. This is my destiny, and there is nothing better than this. The

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person who, until his last breath, until the day the Lord comes, preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, serves this gospel, spreads this gospel, keeps this gospel in his heart and treasures it most, and within that gospel knows that Christ is his God and fears Him in his heart—that person is the most noble and spiritual person.

The risen Lord, who is God in His very nature

Today is Resurrection Sunday. Why did the Lord rise again? He came back to life from death to give you and me new life. He rose to bring you and me back to life. Because He is God, He had no reason to die at all. Only to save us from sin and deliver us from death did He come to this earth clothed in human flesh. He came and received baptism from John to bear all our sins, died on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Since He Himself is the God who lives forever, He has nothing to do with death. Only to save us did He put on flesh for a while, receive baptism, die on the Cross, and rise again.

Man fears death most of all. But our Lord is the Lord of the resurrection. He said, *"I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die" (John 11:25–26)*. Our hearts have already come alive again. Our bodies, too, He will raise again. He rose again to give us new life. Do you believe? Just as He rose, we also rise again. God brings us to life. He rose again to show us that. As the word says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*, and so He rose again to give us eternal life, that is, new life.

He is God in His very nature. He is different from the founders of the religions of this world. He is not a being who

practiced discipline under a bodhi tree and rotted away in death. He is the imperishable God of creation, the Creator. He made us, and He made all things in the universe. To bring back to life our souls, spirits, and bodies, which were dying, having fallen into sin through the deception of Satan the Devil, He came to this earth, received baptism from John to bear sin, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, giving the eternal new life of spirit and body to those who believe in Jesus Christ.

We believe it. We believe that just as Jesus Christ rose again, the bodies of you and me will also rise again and become beings that never die. We must believe that He has clothed us with such grace. I believe it. Do you believe? This is not a faith people pledge to each other to believe. We believe because He actually did so. It is not something I made up by believing on my own; we believe because He has accomplished it all.

When this truth is received by faith, it ends as briefly as this. But if we try to make people understand it by human logic, there is truly much to say, and it grows endlessly long. What ends in one word when we believe takes a hundred words when we try to force understanding. So we must receive it by faith.

In this spring, when the greens are budding with life, what must we do? We must preach the gospel and serve the gospel. When the weather is good we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and when the weather is hard we must serve this gospel still. We are all truly busy. But there is no work more precious than serving this gospel.

If you believe, it will be to you as you believe; if you do not believe, it will be as you do not believe. Our Lord is One truly worthy of trust. If you believe, I too will come to believe still more. We must all firmly believe in this Lord of the resurrection. Giving thanks today for the new life the Lord has given us, we must live holding fast to this gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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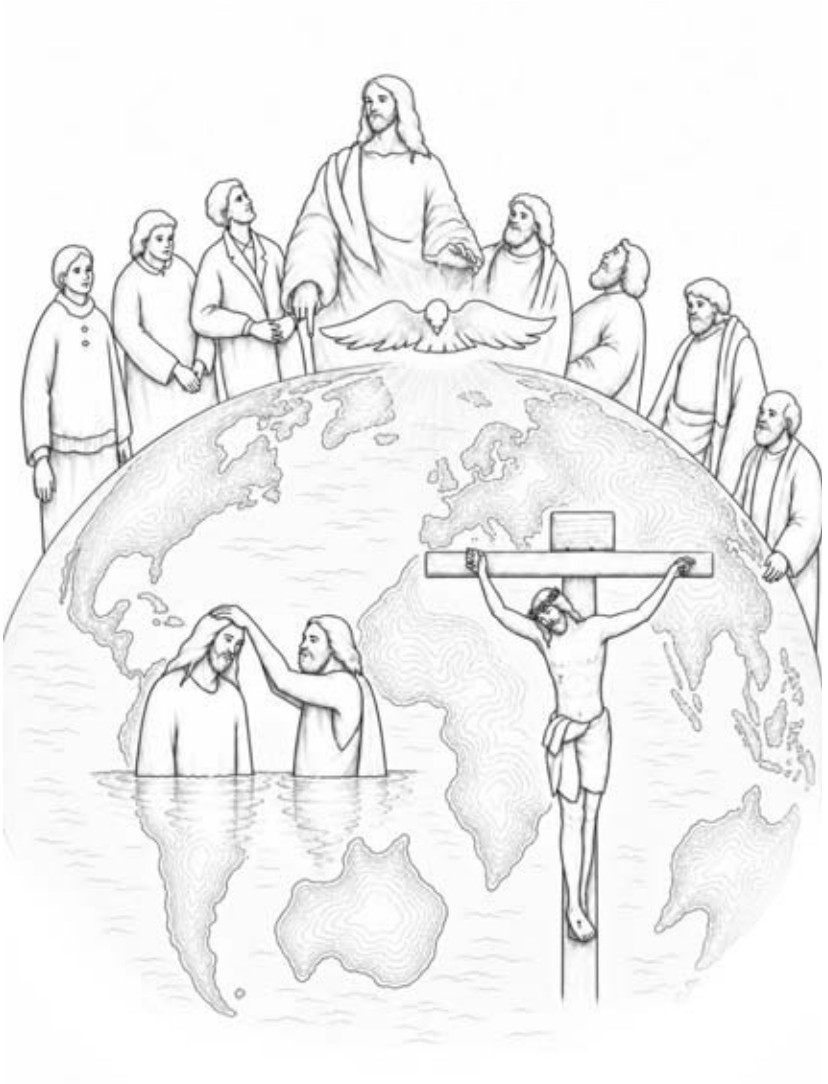

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Matthew Chapter 28

< Matthew 28:1-20 >

“Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, ‘Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.’ So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, ‘Rejoice!’ So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, ‘Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.’ Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, ‘Tell them, ‘His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.’ And if this comes to the governor’s ears, we will appease him and make you secure.’

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So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

1) Summary of the entire content

Matthew chapter 28 records the event in which Jesus, who had died on the Cross and been buried in a tomb, rose again, and the last command the risen Lord gave His disciples.

The stone that blocked the tomb and the guards could not stop the resurrection. The women witnessed the empty tomb and the risen Jesus, and the disciples met the Lord in Galilee. Jesus declared that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him and commanded them to make disciples of all the nations. The Gospel of Matthew ends with the promise that the risen Jesus is with His disciples to the end of the age.

1. The women go to the tomb of Jesus (verse 1)

After the Sabbath had passed, at dawn as the first day of the week was beginning, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb of Jesus.

These women had watched the death of Jesus on the Cross

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from a distance, and they had also seen in which tomb Joseph of Arimathea had buried the body of Jesus. It is therefore hard to suppose that they went to the wrong tomb.

Even in the situation where the disciples had scattered in fear, the women went to the tomb of Jesus. They did not go with assurance of the resurrection, but they headed for the tomb because of their love for Jesus. God established the women, whose testimony was counted of little weight in the society of that time, as the first witnesses of the news of the resurrection.

2. The angel rolls back the stone and the guards tremble (verses 2–4)

A great earthquake occurred, and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, rolled back the stone that blocked the tomb, and sat on it. The appearance of the angel was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.

The guards who were keeping the tomb shook for fear and became like dead men. The armed soldiers guarding the tomb could not move, while the women who were seeking Jesus came to hear the news of the resurrection.

When the angel rolled back the stone, it was revealed that the tomb of Jesus was empty, and the women heard the news that Jesus had risen just as He had said. The chief priests and the Pharisees had sealed the tomb and posted the guards, but neither the stone nor the seal nor the soldiers could stop the resurrection of Jesus. Jesus actually rose from the dead and came out of the tomb.

3. The angel proclaims the resurrection of Jesus (verses 5–7)

The angel told the women not to be afraid and spoke to them as follows.

"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay."

The words of the angel contain truths that are important for understanding the resurrection. Jesus, who had been nailed to the Cross, rose again. It was not that someone else came to life in His place; the very Jesus who had actually died and been buried was resurrected.

Moreover, the resurrection took place just as Jesus had said beforehand. Jesus had told His disciples several times that He would be killed and rise again on the third day. The disciples did not properly understand those words, but the words of Jesus were fulfilled exactly.

After having the women see the empty tomb for themselves, the angel had them go to the disciples and tell them that Jesus had risen from the dead and was going before them into Galilee. To those who hear the news of the resurrection is given the mission of passing that fact on to others.

4. The women run with fear and great joy (verse 8)

The women left the tomb and ran to bring the disciples the news of the resurrection. Matthew records that *"fear and great joy"* were together in their hearts.

They were afraid because they had witnessed a work of God that goes beyond human understanding. But because Jesus had not ended in death but had risen, there was great joy.

Faith in the resurrection turns sorrow and despair into joy and hope. To the women who had looked only at the Cross, the death of Jesus seemed to be the end of all hope, but the empty tomb showed that death was not the last word.

5. The risen Jesus meets the women (verses 9–10)

While the women were on their way to bring the news to

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the disciples, Jesus Himself appeared and said, *"Rejoice!"* The women came to Jesus, held Him by the feet, and worshiped Him.

The fact that the women held the feet of Jesus shows that the resurrection was not a mere vision or a spiritual symbol. Jesus rose with an actual body. The One who had been nailed to the Cross overcame death and lived again.

The women did not merely welcome Jesus as a man who had come back to life; they worshiped Him. And Jesus received that worship. This reveals that the risen Jesus is the Son of God, worthy to receive worship.

Jesus said, *"Do not be afraid,"* and called the disciples *"My brethren."* When Jesus was arrested, the disciples had all fled, and Peter had denied Him three times. Yet the risen Jesus, rather than condemning them as traitors, called them brethren and met them again. The resurrection was news of remission of sin and restoration even for the disciples who had failed.

6. Jesus calls His disciples to Galilee (verses 7, 10)

The angel and Jesus both told the disciples to go to Galilee. Galilee was the place where Jesus had first called the disciples and had ministered, preaching the gospel of the kingdom of God.

The disciples had failed in Jerusalem. They had abandoned Jesus and fled, exposing their own weakness. But Jesus did not cast them away; He met them again in Galilee, where He had first called them.

The Lord not only restores those who have failed but entrusts them with their mission again. The mission of the disciples was not given to them because they were perfect men who had never once fallen. They received it because the risen Jesus had remitted their sins and raised them up again.

7. The religious leaders try to cover up the resurrection (verses 11–15)

While the women were going to the disciples, some of the guards went into the city and reported to the chief priests everything that had happened. The chief priests and the elders neither examined the facts nor turned from their wrong; instead they gave the soldiers a large sum of money to spread a lie.

They had the soldiers say that the disciples came at night and stole the body of Jesus away while they were sleeping. But if the soldiers had really been asleep, they could not have known who took the body. Moreover, falling asleep on guard and losing the body was a matter for which the soldiers could be severely punished. The leaders promised that if any problem arose, they would persuade Pilate and protect the soldiers.

In Matthew chapter 26 Judas handed Jesus over for thirty pieces of silver, and in chapter 28 the soldiers take money and spread a lie that denies the resurrection. Money is being used as a tool that distorts the truth and moves the conscience of man.

The chief priests remembered that Jesus had foretold His resurrection, and through the report of the guards they also knew that something extraordinary had happened at the tomb. Yet rather than accept the truth, they fabricated a false story in order to protect their established position and power. They rejected the truth not because the evidence was insufficient but because they did not want to believe.

8. The eleven disciples meet the risen Jesus in Galilee (verses 16–17)

The eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee that Jesus had appointed. That they were eleven and not twelve shows the wound left by the betrayal and death of Judas Iscariot.

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The disciples saw the risen Jesus and worshiped Him. But among them there were still some who doubted or hesitated. Matthew did not hide the doubt of the disciples.

Seeing the risen Jesus before their eyes did not mean that everyone immediately understood the situation completely. The event that the One who had died on the Cross had risen again was astonishing enough to be hard even for the disciples to accept. But Jesus did not cast all the disciples away on the ground that some were doubting. He came near to them and spoke of His authority and of the mission they were to carry out.

Faith does not mean only a state without any question or hesitation. Even when it is hard to understand, faith is firmly established in the process of hearing the words of Jesus and following those words.

9. Jesus declares all authority in heaven and on earth (verse 18)

Jesus said to the disciples, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."*

On the Cross Jesus looked like a man defeated by the powers of the world. He was mocked by the soldiers, nailed to the Cross, and buried in a tomb. But the resurrection revealed that Jesus had not been defeated but had overcome sin and death.

The risen Jesus is not a religious leader whose influence reaches only the land of Judea. He is the King who holds all authority in heaven and on earth and the Lord of the whole world. The authority to give people the remission of sins and eternal life, and to judge those who reject the gospel to the end and send them to heaven or hell, also belongs to Jesus. This very authority is the ground of the command to preach the

gospel that follows and of the mission entrusted to the disciples.

The disciples do not go out into the world relying on their own ability and authority. They receive the command of Jesus, who holds all authority, and preach the gospel under His authority.

10. The command to make disciples of all the nations (verse 19)

Jesus said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations."*

The object of this command is not limited to any particular nation or region. The gospel of Jesus must be delivered not only to the Jews but to the people of every nation, people, and language. The prospect concerning the Gentile nations, which began in the Gospel of Matthew with the wise men from the East coming to worship the infant Jesus, expands at the end into the command toward all the nations.

Making disciples is not simply a matter of increasing the number of those who attend church. It is leading people to believe who Jesus is and what He accomplished, and helping them learn His word and follow Him with their lives.

A disciple is not a person who merely has knowledge about his teacher but a person who believes his teacher and follows his teaching. Therefore the preaching of the gospel and the raising of disciples cannot be separated from each other. Even after we preach the gospel and lead someone to believe, we must keep caring for him so that he learns the words of Jesus, practices them, and can preach the gospel to others.

11. The command to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit (verse 19)

Jesus commanded, *"Make disciples of all the nations,*

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baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."

The baptism Jesus commanded is a mark of faith by which a person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins openly shows that he has become one of God's people, belonging to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Contained in this command, along with the administering of water baptism, is the intent to teach and have people keep the gospel of the baptism by which Jesus took on the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist and accomplished salvation through the Cross and the resurrection. The rite itself does not wash away sin; it is by believing this gospel that one receives the remission of sins and lives as a disciple of the Lord.

Jesus spoke of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit together. This shows that Christian faith and salvation cannot be separated from the work of God the Father, God the Son Jesus Christ, and God the Holy Spirit. God the Father planned salvation, the Son accomplished salvation within history, and the Holy Spirit makes people realize and believe the truth of that salvation.

12. All the words of Jesus must be taught and observed (verse 20)

Jesus said, *"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."*

Raising disciples is not picking out and teaching only the words one finds agreeable. All the words that Jesus taught must be delivered rightly, and those who hear them must be helped to practice those words in their lives.

Jesus did not simply say to teach them to know; He said, *"teaching them to observe."* Piling up Bible knowledge is not

the goal of a disciple. Hearing the words of Jesus, we must follow love and forgiveness, honesty and humility, and the mission of the kingdom of God and the gospel in our actual lives.

This does not mean, however, that the act of keeping the words is a price paid to obtain salvation. The obedience of a disciple is not a merit that fulfills the condition of salvation but the fruit of faith that appears in a person who believes in Jesus and has received His grace.

13. The promise, *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age"* (verse 20).

Jesus did not give His disciples the mission and then simply leave them. He promised, *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

The disciples do not have to make disciples of all the nations by their own strength alone. The risen Lord, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth, is with them and accomplishes the work of the gospel.

This promise does not mean that no hardship will ever arise. The disciples would suffer persecution and affliction in the course of preaching the gospel. It means, rather, that in whatever circumstance the Lord does not abandon them but is with them, holding them up so that they carry out the mission of the gospel to the end.

The Gospel of Matthew began at the birth of Jesus with the words, *"They shall call His name Immanuel."* Immanuel means *"God with us."* And at the end, the risen Jesus promises, *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* The whole Gospel of Matthew testifies of Jesus, who is with us.

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14. The whole message that Matthew chapter 28 shows

Matthew chapter 28 shows that the event of the Cross, which seemed to have ended in death and despair, led to the victory of the resurrection. The tomb of Jesus was empty, and the angel proclaimed that He had risen just as He had said. The women held the feet of the risen Jesus and worshiped Him, and the disciples also met the Lord in Galilee.

The religious leaders gave money to cover up the resurrection, but they could not stop the truth. Neither the stone that blocked the tomb nor the seal nor the guards could hinder the resurrection of Jesus.

The risen Jesus called His failed disciples again and entrusted them with the mission of making disciples of all the nations. Included in making disciples is the whole process of going into the world to preach the gospel, baptizing in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching people to observe the words of Jesus.

The ground of this mission is not the ability of the disciples but Jesus, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth. The strength to carry out the mission also comes from the risen Lord, who is with us to the end of the age.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 28 is the word in which Jesus, who died on the Cross, rose bodily just as He had said, overcoming sin and death, and, as the Lord who holds all authority, gave His disciples the mission of making disciples of all the nations and the promise to be with them to the end of the age.

2) Matthew chapter 28 seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Matthew chapter 28 records the event in which Jesus overcame death and rose again, and the last mission the risen Lord entrusted to His disciples. Seen at the level of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, this chapter is the word that confirms that the salvation Jesus accomplished is complete.

Jesus, the Son of God, came to this earth in the flesh of man. And with the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, He had the sins of all the people of the world passed on to His own body. Bearing those sins, He hung on the Cross and received the judgment of sin in our place, and He rose from the dead and gave the remission of sins, new life, and eternal life to those who believe. The Holy Spirit testifies to this truth of salvation and dwells in the heart of the person who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins.

1. The empty tomb of Jesus shows that salvation did not fail (verses 1–6)

At dawn on the first day of the week after the Sabbath, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb of Jesus. A great earthquake occurred, and an angel came down from heaven and rolled back the stone that blocked the tomb. The soldiers guarding the tomb shook for fear and became like dead men, but the angel told the women not to be afraid.

The angel said that he knew they were seeking *"Jesus who was crucified"* and then proclaimed, *"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said."* The very Jesus who had been nailed to the Cross rose again. It was not that some other spiritual being appeared, nor that only the thought of Jesus survived. Jesus,

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who had actually died, rose bodily.

The empty tomb testifies that the price of the sins Jesus had taken on was paid in full. If Jesus had taken on our sins with the baptism He received from John but had not paid the full price of those sins on the Cross, He would have had to remain under the power of death. But because Jesus received the judgment of our sins completely, He overcame death and rose again.

The resurrection of Jesus is God's confirmation that the Cross was not a defeat but a complete victory. Because Jesus rose again, our sins have truly been resolved, and eternal new life has been given to those who believe.

2. The resurrection is the fulfillment of the words Jesus spoke beforehand (verse 6)

The angel said that Jesus had risen *"as He said."* Jesus had said several times that He would be handed over to the chief priests and the elders, be killed, and rise again on the third day.

The disciples did not properly understand those words, but the words of Jesus were fulfilled exactly. God's plan of salvation does not fail because man's understanding and faith are lacking.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not become the truth according to people's feelings or experiences. It is not that Jesus took on our sins because we believed strongly; we believe because Jesus actually did so. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, Jesus actually had all our sins passed on to His own body; bearing those sins, He actually shed His blood and died on the Cross; and He actually rose from the dead.

Faith is not a power by which man creates facts that do not exist. It is receiving into one's heart the salvation God has

already accomplished.

3. The risen Jesus has given new life to those who believe (verses 6–7)

Jesus did not rise again merely to boast that He is the Son of God. He rose again to give us new life and eternal life.

The baptism of Jesus was for taking on our sins, His death on the Cross was for receiving the judgment of those sins, and His resurrection was for giving us new life. These three are not separated from one another.

The baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist means that all our sins were passed on to Him. The Cross means that Jesus paid the price of those sins with His blood. The resurrection means that the power of sin and death came to an end and eternal life was given to those who believe.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit has the hope of rising again even though his body dies. Just as Jesus rose from the dead, the Lord will also raise the bodies of those who believe on the last day. The resurrection is the ground of a hope that does not collapse even in the face of death.

4. The women heard the news of the resurrection and ran to tell it (verses 7–8)

The angel told the women to go quickly and let the disciples know that Jesus had risen. The women, with fear and great joy, ran to bring the news to the disciples.

The gospel is not news to be kept only in one's own heart. A person who has come to know that Jesus has saved us from sin and death comes to want to deliver this news of life to others as well.

This does not mean, however, that preaching the gospel is a

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condition that completes our salvation. It is not because the women ran and told the news that Jesus rose again. Because Jesus had already risen, the women delivered that fact. In the same way, a believer serves the gospel not in order to be saved but because the grace of the salvation he has already received is so great.

To preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not to boast of one's own church or oneself. It is to let people know exactly how Jesus saved sinners through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

5. That the women held the feet of Jesus shows the resurrection of the body (verse 9)

The risen Jesus met the women in person and said, *"Rejoice!"* The women came to Him, held His feet, and worshiped Him.

That they held the feet of Jesus means that the resurrection was not a vision or a dream. Jesus came back to life with an actual body. The very body that was nailed to the Cross and shed blood overcame the power of death and rose again.

The body of Jesus is the body that carried out all the work of salvation. He came in the flesh of man and took on our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, He gave that body over to the Cross to die shedding His blood, and with that very body He rose again.

The women held the feet of Jesus and worshiped Him. Jesus is not merely an excellent man or a prophet but God, who must be worshiped. To believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not merely to acknowledge Jesus as a man who solved my problem of sin, but to believe in and worship Him as my God and my Savior.

6. The risen Jesus called His failed disciples *"My brethren"* (verse 10)

Jesus said to the women, *"Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee."* When Jesus was arrested, the disciples had all fled, and Peter had denied the Lord three times. Even so, Jesus did not call them traitors but called them *"My brethren."*

It was not because the disciples had been perfectly loyal that they became the brethren of Jesus. It was because Jesus had taken on their sins and received the judgment in their place that they were accepted by grace.

To say that a person has received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not mean that he never again makes mistakes or commits sins in the flesh. Believers, too, like the disciples, can stumble in fear, speak wrongly, or pursue their own advantage. But because Jesus took on all of that person's sins with the baptism He received from John and finished the judgment on the Cross, whoever believes this gospel actually receives the remission of all the sins of his heart and becomes a righteous person without sin before God.

This does not mean, however, that we may treat sin lightly. A person who has received the remission of sins admits his wrongs, returns to the word of the gospel, and seeks to live following the will of the Lord, led by the Holy Spirit. Instead of casting away those who are weak, the Lord restores them within the gospel and entrusts them with their mission again.

7. The report of the guards supports that the resurrection was an actual event (verse 11)

Some of the guards went into the city and told the chief priests everything they had seen. These men were not disciples of Jesus. On the contrary, they were the men posted to guard

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the tomb of Jesus.

They witnessed the great earthquake and the angel coming down and rolling back the stone. Even the soldiers guarding the tomb could not deny that something extraordinary had happened there.

The resurrection of Jesus is not a story the disciples made up out of desperate longing. After the death of Jesus the disciples were sunk in fear, and at first they could not easily accept the news that He had risen. But the tomb was empty, and Jesus actually appeared before His disciples.

The gospel is not the product of man's religious imagination; it rests on the event God accomplished within history.

8. They tried to cover the resurrection with money, but the truth did not disappear (verses 12–15)

The chief priests and the elders heard the report of the soldiers and yet did not repent. Instead they gave a large sum of money and had the soldiers lie, saying that the disciples came at night and stole the body of Jesus.

In Matthew chapter 26 Judas took money and sold Jesus, and in chapter 28 the soldiers took money and spread a lie denying the resurrection. The desires of the world can make a person turn away from even the truth before his very eyes.

The reason people do not believe the gospel is not always a lack of evidence. They can refuse the truth because they do not want to lay down their own thoughts, desires, and religious righteousness. For if they accept the baptism of Jesus, the Cross, and the resurrection, they can no longer boast of their own deeds or religious merits.

But even if people spread lies with money and power, the resurrection of Jesus does not disappear. Truth does not

become truth by man's consent, nor does it become false because man rejects it.

9. The disciples worshiped the risen Jesus, but some doubted (verses 16–17)

The eleven disciples went to the mountain in Galilee that Jesus had appointed. They saw Jesus and worshiped Him, but among them there were still some who doubted or hesitated.

Jesus did not drive out the disciples on the ground that some were doubting. Rather, He came near to them and spoke of His authority and their mission. The Lord holds up those who are lacking with His word and establishes them in faith.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit likewise is not something believed simply by emotional conviction. We must hear the word of God exactly and confirm one by one what Jesus did. We must realize through the word why Jesus was baptized by John the Baptist, why He shed His blood on the Cross, and why He rose again, and receive it into our hearts.

The center of faith does not lie in how strongly I am convinced. It lies in what Jesus actually accomplished.

10. All authority in heaven and on earth belongs to the risen Jesus (verse 18)

Jesus said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."* When He hung on the Cross, He seemed to have been defeated by the powers of the world, but by rising again He revealed that He had overcome the power of sin, death, and Satan.

Jesus did not die because He lacked power. To save His people from their sins, He shouldered the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and gave up His life of His own accord. And after paying the wages of sin in

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full with His own death, He rose again.

The risen Jesus is our God, our Savior, and our King. He is also the Judge who will judge the world in the days to come. To those who believe in Him He gives the remission of sins and eternal life, but those who reject His salvation to the end will receive the judgment of their own sins.

The ground on which the disciples could go to all the nations did not lie in their own ability or organization. They could go because the Lord who holds all authority in heaven and on earth commanded them and was with them.

11. Making disciples of all the nations is first preaching the true gospel (verse 19)

Jesus said, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations.*" The salvation Jesus accomplished is not for one particular nation only. It must be delivered to the people of every nation, people, and language in the world.

The work of making disciples does not end with registering people as church numbers. First, the salvation Jesus accomplished through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection must be preached exactly, so that the person receives the remission of sins.

A person receives the remission of sins when he knows his own sins, believes the fact that Jesus took on those sins with the baptism He received from John, and accepts into his heart that Jesus paid the price of all sins on the Cross and rose again. And the Holy Spirit dwells in that heart and leads him to live as a disciple of Jesus.

A disciple is not simply a person who has knowledge about the gospel. He is a person who holds the will of his Teacher, Jesus, in his heart, treasures what the Lord counted precious, and delivers this gospel to other souls.

12. The baptism given to disciples and the baptism Jesus received from John must be distinguished (verse 19)

Jesus commanded His disciples, *"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* Here, the baptism the disciples administer to people and the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River are related to each other, but their roles are different.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event of salvation in which He took the sins of mankind onto His own body and fulfilled the righteousness of God. On the other hand, the baptism a believer receives is an expression of faith that he believes the salvation Jesus accomplished for him, and a mark showing that he has become one of God's people, belonging to the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit.

The act of receiving water baptism at church does not itself automatically wash away the sins of the heart. No one can be born again merely by the rite of going into the water and coming out. One must first believe with the heart the gospel that Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again.

In the baptism a believer receives is contained a confession of union with Jesus. It is confessing by faith the fact that Jesus took on my sins, died in my place, and by rising again gave me new life.

13. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit accomplished salvation together (verse 19)

Jesus said to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a gospel that understands the Son Jesus in isolation. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit accomplished the salvation of mankind together.

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God the Father set the plan to save mankind from sin and sent His own Son. The Son Jesus came in the flesh of man, received baptism at the Jordan River to take on our sins, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. The Holy Spirit came upon Jesus at His baptism and testified to God's work of salvation, and now He dwells in the heart of the person who believes this gospel and has received the remission of sins.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit of truth. Therefore the work of the Holy Spirit is to lead people to the truth of the salvation Jesus accomplished. Experiencing some special feeling or phenomenon does not necessarily mean that one has received the Holy Spirit. What matters is believing with the heart the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood.

14. The words *"teaching them to observe"* speak of the life after receiving salvation (verse 20)

Jesus told His disciples to teach people to observe all things that He had commanded them. There is a clear order here. First the gospel must be preached so that a person becomes a disciple and is baptized, and then he must be taught to observe the words of Jesus.

It is not that a person receives the remission of sins by keeping the commandments of Jesus perfectly. There is no one who can be saved by keeping all the Law and the commandments. One must first believe the salvation Jesus accomplished through His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection and receive the remission of sins. After that, thankful for the grace received, one learns the words of the Lord and lives following them.

A person who has received the remission of sins does not

think he may live however he pleases. Because he loves Jesus, who gave up His life for him, he wants to know the Lord's will, serves the gospel, loves his neighbors, and seeks to turn back from wrong paths.

Obedience is not an act that pays the price of salvation but the fruit that comes from the faith of one who has been saved. The deeds of a believer may still be lacking, but the Holy Spirit leads him to keep learning the word and to grow according to the will of the Lord.

15. The Lord is always with those who have received the remission of sins, through the Holy Spirit (verse 20)

Jesus promised, *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* This promise was not given to the disciples only for a moment; it is a promise given to all who believe the gospel and carry on its mission.

The risen Jesus does not stay in one region in the flesh; He is with the hearts of those who believe, through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins, keeping him, leading him, making him understand the word, and giving him strength to serve the gospel.

We do not preach the gospel alone. We work together with the Lord, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth. Even when circumstances are hard and our own ability seems lacking, we can carry out the mission believing the promise that the Lord is with us to the end of the age.

That the Lord is with us does not mean that we experience no hardship in this world. We may meet affliction while preaching the gospel, our flesh may grow weary, and we may be rejected by people. But in whatever circumstance, the Lord does not abandon those who believe, and He holds them up so

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that the work of the gospel is accomplished.

16. At the beginning and at the end of the Gospel of Matthew stands the "God who is with us"

In Matthew chapter 1 the name of Jesus was called Immanuel. Immanuel means *"God with us."* And at the end of the Gospel of Matthew, Jesus said, *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age."*

For God to be with us, the problem of sin first had to be resolved. For the holy God cannot dwell together with sin. That is why Jesus came to this earth, took on our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, and received all the judgment of those sins on the Cross.

As a result, the heart of the person who believes this gospel has received the remission of sins and become a dwelling place where the Holy Spirit abides. God is with us not because our deeds are perfect but because Jesus has completely resolved all our sins.

The promise of Immanuel was actually fulfilled through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, and it continues in the life of the believer through the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

17. The whole meaning of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Matthew chapter 28 shows

Matthew chapter 28 declares that the saving work of Jesus did not end in death. Jesus took on all our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and was judged on the Cross, shedding His blood, and rose from the dead to give us new life and eternal life.

The empty tomb shows that the price of sin was paid in full. That the women held the feet of Jesus testifies that He rose

bodily. That Jesus called His failed disciples brethren shows that salvation does not depend on man's perfect loyalty but on the grace of the Lord.

The risen Jesus, holding all authority in heaven and on earth, commanded His disciples to go to all the nations. What they must deliver is not human wisdom or religious tradition but the gospel of the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood. Those who believe this gospel must be baptized, taught the words of Jesus, and raised up as disciples who can preach the gospel to yet others.

The Holy Spirit testifies to all this truth of salvation, dwells in those who have received the remission of sins, and helps them serve the gospel until the end of the age. Therefore the believer has no reason to boast of his own ability, nor any reason to be discouraged over his own lack. For the Lord who holds all authority is with him.

To sum it up in one sentence, Matthew chapter 28 is the word in which Jesus, who took on our sins with the baptism He received from John the Baptist and paid the price of those sins on the Cross, rose from the dead to give new life, is always with His disciples who have received the remission of sins, through the Holy Spirit, and commanded them to preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the nations. ✉

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Matthew Chapter 28

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete, and makes us preach this gospel to all the nations

Introductory Words

Matthew chapter 28 records the event in which Jesus, who had died on the Cross and been buried in a tomb, rose again, and the last command the risen Lord gave His disciples. When the women went to the tomb at dawn on the first day of the week after the Sabbath, a great earthquake occurred, an angel rolled back the stone, and the guards shook for fear and became like dead men.

The angel proclaimed to the women that He was not there but had risen as He had said, showed them the place where He had lain, and told them to deliver this news to His disciples. Neither the stone that had blocked the tomb nor the seal nor the guards could stop the resurrection of Jesus.

As the women ran with fear and great joy, the risen Jesus Himself met them, told them not to be afraid, and told them to tell His brethren to go to Galilee. The risen Lord revealed

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Himself first of all to the weak.

Meanwhile the religious leaders gave the guards a large sum of money and had them spread the lie that the disciples had come at night and stolen the body. But a lie made by man cannot change the fact of the resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is an event that actually took place in history.

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took on all the sins of the world, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and by rising again completely overcame the power of sin and death. Therefore whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sins and obtains eternal life.

The risen Jesus met the eleven disciples in Galilee, declared that He holds all authority in heaven and on earth, and commanded them to make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit and teaching them to observe all that He had commanded. And He promised to be with them always, to the end of the age. Let us now look at the passage in order and learn about the event of the resurrection and the gospel of the water and the Spirit that must be delivered to the whole world.

The resurrection of Jesus confirms the remission of sins He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross, and gives new life to those who believe

"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back

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the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.' So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.'" (Matthew 28:1–10).

At early dawn, when the Sabbath had passed and a new day was about to break, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to the tomb of Jesus. These women, who had been present at the Cross and at the burial, knew exactly where Jesus had been laid.

The women went to the tomb before daybreak because they loved Jesus. Even though Jesus had died, they did not cast away their love for Him. Even while the disciples were hiding in fear, these women went to the tomb of Jesus.

Yet the women went to the tomb not so much to meet the risen Jesus as to see the Jesus who had been buried there. Jesus had said several times that He would rise on the third day, but even they did not yet fully believe and expect that word.

A person can love the Lord and still not fully believe the word of God. For by one's own experience and common sense it is impossible for a dead man to live again. But the power and the promise of God go beyond human understanding and

possibility.

When the women came to the tomb, a great earthquake occurred. An angel of the Lord descended from heaven, rolled back the stone that blocked the tomb, and sat on it. The chief priests and the Pharisees had sealed the tomb and posted guards, but they could not stop the work of God.

When the angel rolled back the stone, the sealed tomb was opened, and the women saw for themselves that the body of Jesus was not there. Jesus had actually risen from the dead and come out of the tomb, just as He had said. The event in which the stone was rolled back and the empty tomb was revealed testifies that no human power can shut the Lord of life up in death.

However firmly people blocked the tomb, they could not stop the resurrection of Jesus. Neither the great stone, nor the Roman seal, nor the armed guards could hold the Lord of life in death. The word of God is fulfilled exactly as it is.

The appearance of the angel was like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow. The guards keeping the tomb saw the angel and shook for fear, becoming like dead men. The very men posted to prevent the resurrection of Jesus could do nothing before the power of God.

But the angel said to the women, *"Do not be afraid."* They saw the same event, yet to the guards it became terror, while to the women who sought Jesus it became good news. The risen Jesus is the Judge to those who do not believe, but to those who believe the gospel He is the Savior and the Lord of life.

The angel said, *"I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified."* The One who rose is the very Jesus who had been nailed to the Cross. The One who died on the Cross and the One who rose from the tomb are the same person.

The Cross and the resurrection of Jesus must not be

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separated from each other. A resurrection without the Cross cannot explain the judgment of sin, and a Cross without the resurrection cannot show how death was conquered. The baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus together accomplish complete salvation.

Seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Jesus had all the sins of the whole of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And as the Lamb of God shouldering the sin of the world, He shed His blood and died on the Cross.

The death of Jesus was the judgment of our sins. Since the wages of sin is death, Jesus, who had taken on our sins, had to die in reality. But once He had paid the price of those sins in full, death could no longer hold Him.

The angel declared, *"He is not here; for He is risen, as He said."* The tomb of Jesus is empty not because the disciples stole His body but because Jesus actually rose again.

The expression *"as He said"* is important. The resurrection of Jesus was not an accidental event that happened suddenly. It was the fulfillment of the promise Jesus had spoken repeatedly before He died.

People did not believe the words of Jesus, but Jesus died and rose exactly as He had said. God's promise does not fail because man's faith is weak. The salvation of Jesus rests not on human understanding or emotion but on the fact God has accomplished.

The angel said to the women, *"Come, see the place where the Lord lay."* The resurrection is not a mere feeling in the heart or a symbol. The actual place where the body of Jesus had been laid was empty.

The women knew where Jesus had been buried, and they had come to that very tomb. So they did not go to the wrong

tomb. They became witnesses who confirmed that the tomb of Jesus, who had died on the Cross and been buried, was empty.

The resurrection of Jesus does not mean merely that His soul continued to exist. Jesus died in the body, was buried in the body, and rose in the body. The reason the women could later hold the feet of Jesus is that He rose with an actual body.

The resurrection confirms the fact that our sins were completely dealt with through the baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross. If Jesus had still had the price of sin to pay, He could not have risen from the dead. The resurrection is the declaration that the judgment of sin is finished and the righteousness of God has been completed.

The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit obtains new life through the resurrection of Jesus. If the death of Jesus is death for our sins, the resurrection of Jesus is the beginning of the new life given to those who believe.

To be born again does not mean that the flesh instantly becomes perfect. It is to believe the complete salvation of Jesus, receive the remission of all the sins of the heart, and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. The life of the risen Lord causes a new life to begin within the believer.

The angel told the women not to linger at confirming the empty tomb but to go quickly to the disciples and deliver the news of the resurrection. The gospel must not remain news that one knows and rejoices in alone. It is the news of life that must be delivered to others.

The angel told them that Jesus was going before them into Galilee, and that there the disciples would see Him. This shows that Jesus was keeping, exactly as it was, the promise He had made before the Cross.

The disciples had abandoned Jesus and fled, and Peter had denied Him three times. Even so, Jesus did not cancel His

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promise with them. After rising, He went to Galilee first in order to meet His failed disciples again and restore them.

The women left the tomb with *"fear and great joy."* There was fear because of the astonishment of seeing the angel, the earthquake, and the empty tomb, but great joy arose because of the news that Jesus had risen.

In the faith that believes the resurrection there is this great joy. For sin and death are not the end, and our Savior lives. However hard the circumstances of the world may be, the fact of the resurrection does not change, and so the hope of the believer does not disappear either.

The women ran to tell the disciples. After hearing the words of the angel, they did not delay or attend to other things first. A person who has received the joyful news of the resurrection comes to have a heart that wants to deliver that news to other souls.

While the women were running, the risen Jesus met them in person. Jesus greeted them, saying, *"Rejoice!"* Jesus, who had died on the Cross, appeared before them in His living body.

The peace the Lord gives does not mean that no hardship arises in the world. It is the peace of having been set free from condemnation and the fear of death, because the enmity between sin and God has been resolved.

Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism and received the judgment of those sins on the Cross. And by rising again He gave those who believe the peace of reconciliation with God. If sin remained as it was, no one could enjoy true peace.

The women came to Jesus, held His feet, and worshiped Him. This shows that Jesus did not appear as a vision or a spiritual memory but actually rose with a body. He stood before them in the body of the resurrection, a body whose feet could be held.

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete, and makes us preach this gospel to all the nations

Moreover, the women did not merely welcome Jesus as a teacher come back to life; they worshiped Him. Jesus is the Son of God who is to be worshiped, the Lord of life who overcame the power of death and Satan.

Jesus again said, "*Do not be afraid.*" The resurrection of Jesus is not news that brings terror to those who believe but news that sets them free from fear. For the judgment of sin is finished and the power of death is broken.

Jesus called the disciples "*My brethren.*" He did not call those who had abandoned Him and fled traitors. The risen Jesus, knowing their failure, still received them as brethren.

This is the amazing grace the gospel of the water and the Spirit gives. Because Jesus took on all our sins and was judged in our place, whoever believes in Him becomes part of the family of God. We who were sinners by nature have come to be called the brethren of Jesus and the children of God.

This does not mean that the wrongs of the disciples were nothing. They really did abandon Jesus and flee. But Jesus had already taken on even that sin and been judged for it on the Cross, and so after His resurrection He did not condemn them but called them again.

Jesus told the women to tell His disciples that He would meet them in Galilee. He intended to meet His failed disciples again, establish their faith, and entrust them with the mission of preaching the gospel to the whole world.

The Lord does not save weak people and then cast them away. He teaches them with the word, refines them within the church, and uses them as workers who preach the gospel. The grace and power of the risen Lord are greater than our lack.

The resurrection of Jesus also guarantees that we will live again after death. Since Jesus overcame death and rose again, those who belong to Him will also rise on the last day. To the

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believer, the death of the body is not eternal destruction but like a sleep that awaits the resurrection.

Therefore the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not look at death as the final word of fear. We believe that the risen Jesus is our life and that He will raise our bodies again on the last day.

Faith in the resurrection is not a vague optimism that turns its eyes from reality. It rests on the historical fact that Jesus, who actually died on the Cross and was buried in the tomb, rose again according to His word. The empty tomb, the declaration of the angel, and the meeting with the women testify to that fact.

Like the women before the empty tomb, we must preach the gospel with great joy. We must let people know exactly the fact that Jesus took on the sins of the whole of mankind with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and rose again.

If we preach only the Cross and hide the baptism of Jesus, we cannot explain how sins were passed on to Him. If we speak only of the baptism and the Cross and do not preach the resurrection, we cannot fully deliver the new life and the hope to come. The gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies to the baptism, the death, and the resurrection of Jesus all together.

Matthew 28:1–10 shows the event in which the tomb of sorrow was turned into the starting point of joy and mission. Jesus is not in the tomb; He rose just as He had said. Death was defeated by life, the judgment of sin is finished, and the way to come to God has been opened to those who believe.

Therefore we must not make our own feelings or deeds the ground of salvation. We must believe the fact of the salvation Jesus accomplished with the water and the Spirit. Whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sins, new life, and true peace, and becomes a child of God.

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete, and makes us preach this gospel to all the nations

And like the women, we must deliver this joyful news to others. The risen Jesus is alive even now, and He saves from sin and death everyone who believes the gospel. To believe and keep this gospel of the water and the Spirit and to preach it to the whole world until the day the Lord comes again is the life of the person who has received the grace of the resurrection.

The lie bought with money could not change the fact of the resurrection

"Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, "'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept."' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.' So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:11–15).

The women who had met the risen Jesus ran to deliver this joyful news to the disciples. At that very time, some of the guards who had been keeping the tomb also went into the city. Two groups that had witnessed the same resurrection event set out for different destinations.

The women went to the disciples of Jesus to deliver the true news of the resurrection. The guards, on the other hand, went to report what had happened to the chief priests who had posted them at the tomb. On one side the gospel of life was being delivered, while on the other side a lie to block that gospel was beginning to be prepared.

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The guards told the chief priests *"all the things that had happened."* They must have reported the great earthquake, the angel coming down, the stone being rolled back, and the disappearance of the body of Jesus just as they had happened.

This shows that it was not out of ignorance that the chief priests refused to believe the resurrection of Jesus. Through the report of the soldiers who had guarded the tomb in person, they learned that an extraordinary event had taken place.

The chief priests also knew that Jesus, while He was alive, had said, *"After three days I will rise."* It was they themselves who, because of that word, had asked that the tomb be guarded securely. And on the third day they received the report that the tomb was empty.

If so, they should have looked back and asked whether they had wrongly condemned Jesus. They should have confirmed whether Jesus was truly the Son of God and the Christ, admitted their sin, and returned to faith.

But they did not try to confirm the truth. They gathered again with the elders and consulted how they could hide the news of the resurrection of Jesus. Because they had already decided in their hearts to reject Jesus, they would not believe whatever evidence they saw.

The reason a person fails to believe the truth is not always a lack of evidence. Because he does not want to lay down his own greed, pride, and position, he can reject the truth even in the face of sufficient evidence. When the heart hardens, it fabricates false explanations even after seeing a miracle.

The religious leaders gave the soldiers a large sum of money. The men who had given Judas thirty pieces of silver to have Jesus handed over now tried to hide the resurrection of Jesus with even more money. From beginning to end they used money to oppose the truth.

The money given to Judas was money to seize Jesus, and the money given to the soldiers was money to shut the risen Jesus back in the tomb with a lie. But though money can change the testimony of men, it cannot change the fact that God has accomplished.

Material things can become tools that serve the gospel, or tools that cover the truth. Joseph of Arimathea served the burial of Jesus with his own wealth and his new tomb, but the chief priests bought a lie with money to hide the resurrection.

Therefore what matters is not how much or how little material one has, but for what purpose one uses it. The person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit must not use his wealth for his own greed and for falsehood, but for preaching the gospel and saving souls.

The chief priests told the soldiers to say, *"His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept."* This was not an explanation of fact but a lie made up in advance.

This lie carries a contradiction that exposes itself. If the soldiers had all been asleep, they could not have seen who came and took the body. There is no way to explain how they knew it was the disciples who took Him.

Moreover, if the disciples had moved the great stone, broken the seal, and taken the body while the guards slept, there would have been considerable noise and movement. The claim that the disciples, scattered in fear, carried out such a deed beside armed soldiers is also hard to accept.

The soldiers were men under orders to guard the tomb. If they reported that they had fallen asleep on duty and lost the body, they could be punished by the governor. So the chief priests promised not only money but protection as the price of telling this lie.

They said, *"If this comes to the governor's ears, we will*

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appease him and make you secure." They meant that telling the truth could put the soldiers in danger, but that if they followed the lie the leaders had made, they would protect them with their power.

Two temptations, money and safety, were set before the soldiers. If they told the truth they could suffer loss, and if they lied they could gain money and protection. In the end the soldiers chose their own gain and safety over the truth.

The soldiers knew what they themselves had experienced. They were the men who had seen the angel and shaken with fear, becoming like dead men. Yet after taking the money they spread a story contrary to what they had seen.

Experiencing something marvelous in person does not automatically bring salvation. More important than seeing an amazing sign is believing that event according to the word of God. The soldiers experienced the sign of the resurrection but did not believe the risen Jesus as their Savior.

From the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the resurrection of Jesus is a core of salvation that can never be left out. Jesus had all the sins of the whole of mankind passed on to His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And He received the punishment of those sins on the Cross and actually died.

The fact that Jesus rose on the third day confirms that the price of our sins was paid in full on the Cross. If the judgment of sin had not been finished, Jesus could not have overcome the power of death and risen.

The baptism Jesus received from John is the event in which our sins were passed on to Him. The Cross is the event in which the sins He had taken on were judged, and the resurrection is the event in which He overcame sin and death and gave new life to those who believe.

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete, and makes us preach this gospel to all the nations

Therefore, if one denies the resurrection, one cannot fully believe the salvation of Jesus. If Jesus remained in death, He could not be the living Savior who overcame sin and death. Our Savior not only died on the Cross but also rose from the dead.

Conversely, it is not the complete gospel either to speak only of the resurrection without knowing why Jesus had to die on the Cross. Jesus was judged on the Cross because He had taken on our sins with His baptism, and He rose again because He had brought that judgment fully to an end.

The lie the chief priests made tried to erase the resurrection of Jesus. Today as well, Satan hides or distorts parts of the saving work of Jesus so that people cannot believe the complete gospel. He makes them speak only of the Cross while leaving out the baptism of Jesus, or makes the resurrection a mere symbol rather than a historical fact.

But the gospel of the water and the Spirit testifies that Jesus actually received baptism and took on the sin of the world, actually died on the Cross, and actually rose from the tomb. Salvation is not a religious story made up by man but a fact God accomplished within history.

The soldiers' taking money and lying did not fill the empty tomb again. Nor did it make the risen Jesus a dead man again. The words of men changed, but the fact that Jesus had risen did not change.

Once a lie is made, it can influence many people for a long time. The passage records that this saying was widely spread among the Jews at that time. A story heard repeatedly can be accepted as fact even without evidence.

For this reason we must not accept a claim as truth merely because many people believe it. We must confirm through the word of God whether it is true. Truth is not decided by the

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number of people, by fashion, or by religious authority.

Nor must this verse be used as a ground for condemning all Jews or their descendants as people who rejected the resurrection. Jesus and the disciples were also Jews, and many believers of the early Church were Jews as well. The passage exposes the concrete sin of those who made and spread the lie; it is not a word given so that a whole people should be hated.

Looking more broadly, in all of us there is the sin of trying to bend the truth to our own advantage. When a wrong is exposed, we may make excuses rather than admit it, or hide the facts to save face. The figures of the chief priests and the soldiers are a mirror reflecting the sinful nature of every human being.

The church and the workers of the gospel must not change their testimony because of money. If one omits or alters the content of the gospel to gain people's support, popularity, or position, one can become, like the soldiers, a person who takes money and says what he has been taught to say.

The person who preaches the gospel must speak the truth before God, not according to a price received from men. He must deliver the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection just as it is recorded in the Scriptures.

Those who believe the gospel of the resurrection must not hide the truth because of worldly loss or threats either. The soldiers chose the lie for fear of the governor's punishment, but the risen Jesus is the One who holds all authority in heaven and on earth. We must trust the authority of the Lord more than the powers of the world.

To the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the resurrection of Jesus is an eternal hope. Because Jesus rose, our hearts also obtain new life out of sin, and our

dead bodies will also live again in the days to come.

The risen Jesus is alive even now. Though the lies of men spread for a long time, the life and authority of the Lord do not disappear. The Holy Spirit dwells in the hearts of those who believe the truth and makes them testify to the gospel.

Matthew 28:11–15 shows that even those who saw the same event can give different testimonies. The women delivered the truth of the resurrection, while the soldiers took money and spread the lie of a stolen body.

The difference came not from the presence or absence of evidence but from which side the heart stood on. The women loved Jesus and obeyed His word, but the soldiers and the religious leaders chose money, position, and their own safety.

Therefore we must become witnesses of the gospel that gives life, not of the lie that hides the fact of the resurrection. We must boldly proclaim the fact that Jesus took on all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead on the third day.

The money and power of men can spread a lie for a while, but they cannot remove the truth. Jesus is alive even now, and He gives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit, and eternal life to everyone who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe this unchanging fact and live without altering the gospel before any gain or fear.

The risen Jesus sends His disciples with all authority and is with them to the end of the age

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came

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and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen" (Matthew 28:16–20).

The eleven disciples of Jesus went to Galilee as the Lord had told them. That they are recorded as eleven disciples, not twelve, shows the fact that Judas Iscariot betrayed Jesus and left. The wound of betrayal and failure remained in the community of the disciples, but the risen Jesus did not interrupt the plan of salvation and the work of preaching the gospel.

The disciples did not become workers of the gospel because of their own ability or perfection. They had abandoned Jesus and fled, and Peter had denied Jesus three times. Yet the risen Lord called them again to Galilee and entrusted the gospel to them. This shows that the mission of preaching the gospel begins not from man's righteousness but from the grace of the Lord.

The disciples came to "*the mountain which Jesus had appointed.*" They met the risen Jesus not because they went wherever they pleased according to their own thoughts, but because they obeyed the word the Lord had commanded. The person of faith follows the promise of the Lord rather than his own feelings. When we go to the place the Lord has spoken of, we meet the risen Lord and hear His will.

The disciples saw the risen Jesus and worshiped Him. Jesus is the Son of God who overcame death and rose again, the Lord of salvation who overcame the power of sin and death. So when the disciples worshiped Jesus, it was not simply a greeting to a respected teacher; it was an act of acknowledging Jesus as God and as their Savior.

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete, and makes us preach this gospel to all the nations

Yet among them there were also some who doubted. The Gospel of Matthew does not say who doubted. The doubt here may refer to a state of seeing the risen Lord before one's eyes and yet hesitating, unable to accept that astonishing fact at once. For the resurrection of Jesus is a work of God that is hard to grasp by human experience and reason alone.

What matters is that Jesus did not cast away the disciples who doubted and hesitated. Jesus *"came"* to them and spoke. He did not stand far off waiting until their faith became perfect; He came close to the weak and proclaimed His authority and their mission.

Our faith, too, is not made firm by human conviction or emotion alone. It becomes firm when we hear and believe the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished. The way to overcome doubt lies not in forcing one's heart to be strong but in knowing clearly through the word what Jesus actually accomplished.

Jesus said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth."* The risen Jesus is not one who rules only the affairs of heaven; He is the King of kings who rules the history of the earth, the nations, and the life of man. The authority to remit sins, to raise the dead, and to carry out the final judgment also belongs to Jesus.

This authority shows the fact that Jesus overcame sin and death through the Cross and the resurrection. Jesus is the sinless Son of God, but to take on all the sins of mankind He shouldered the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. And He received the punishment of those sins on the Cross, shedding His blood and dying, and completed salvation by rising again on the third day.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit is the gospel that believes the incarnation, the baptism, the death on the Cross,

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and the resurrection of Jesus as one completed salvation. If one believes only the Cross while leaving out the baptism of Jesus, one cannot fully understand why Jesus was judged in the place of sinners. Nor can one speak of the baptism apart from the Cross, nor say that salvation was completed apart from the resurrection.

Because Jesus had completed all salvation in this way and held all authority, He said, *"Go therefore."* The ground on which the disciples were to go out into the world was not their knowledge, courage, or wealth. The fact that Jesus, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth, was sending them was the ground of preaching the gospel.

Jesus commanded, *"Make disciples of all the nations."* The gospel is not for one nation or one class only. It must be delivered to all people without distinction, Jew and Gentile, rich and poor, learned and unlearned. For all people are sinners, and all people need the salvation of Jesus Christ.

To make disciples does not mean merely bringing people to church or making them religious. It is to have sinners hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit, believe that Jesus is the Savior who removed all their sins, and follow the word of the Lord by that faith.

When a person believes the fact that Jesus took on the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead, he receives the remission of sins. The person born again by this faith no longer tries to obtain salvation by his own deeds but comes to rely on the righteousness God has accomplished.

Jesus said, *"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit."* God the Father planned the salvation of mankind and sent His Son. The Son Jesus accomplished that salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete, and makes us preach this gospel to all the nations

the resurrection. The Holy Spirit testifies to this word of truth, dwells in the heart of the believer, and seals him as a child of God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit therefore reveals the saving work of the Triune God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit do not present different ways of salvation; with one will They save sinners. The person who has been saved comes to believe and confess this grace accomplished by the Triune God.

The baptism Jesus here commanded His disciples to administer is a mark of faith showing that the person has come to believe in the Triune God and the gospel of the water and the Spirit. At the same time, the church must teach and have people keep the gospel of the baptism by which Jesus took on the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John and completed salvation through the Cross and the resurrection. The rite performed with water does not itself wash away a person's sins; the power that actually removes sin lies in the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection that Jesus accomplished with His own body.

Therefore, when the church administers baptism, it must not perform a mere ceremony. It must teach clearly whether the person receiving baptism believes the gospel that he was a sinner by nature and that Jesus took on his sins, was judged, and rose again. A rite without the substance of faith cannot make anyone born again.

Jesus went on to say, *"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."* The preaching of the gospel does not end with leading people to receive the remission of sins. Those who have received the remission of sins must continue to be taught so that they learn the word of God, are united with the church, and live by faith.

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But the act of keeping the word does not become a condition of salvation. We receive the remission of sins not by keeping the commandments perfectly but by believing the salvation Jesus accomplished. A life of obedience to the word is not a price paid to obtain salvation but the fruit of faith that a saved person bears in gratitude to God.

Even a born-again person stumbles and errs at times because his flesh is weak. At such times he must not look at his own deeds and think he has become a sinner again. He must believe the righteousness Jesus completed and stand before the word again. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not an excuse that tolerates our lack; it is the foundation of faith that enables us to follow the Lord again even in the midst of failure.

In the *"all things"* Jesus told His disciples to teach are included not only the truth of the gospel but also the life of faith the born-again must live. They must be taught to love and forgive one another, to serve for the gospel, to seek first the kingdom of God rather than the desires of the world, and to trust the Lord and endure even in tribulation.

The purpose of the church does not lie in enlarging human honor or influence. It lies in preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that sinners receive the remission of sins, and in having the saved learn the word and be raised up as disciples who preach the gospel to yet other souls. If a church loses the gospel, however large its outward form grows, it cannot be a church that fulfills the mission the Lord commanded.

Not all believers preach the gospel in the same way. Some deliver the word directly, some pray, some support the work of the gospel with material things, and some care for newly saved souls. But all who are born again can take part in the Lord's command to make disciples, each with the gift and in the place he has received.

The resurrection of Jesus testifies that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross is complete, and makes us preach this gospel to all the nations

Finally, Jesus promised, *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* The Lord did not give His disciples the mission and then send them off alone. While the gospel is being preached to all the nations, the risen Lord is with His people and His church through the Holy Spirit.

This promise does not mean that those who preach the gospel will have no suffering at all. The disciples suffered persecution and tribulation, and many laid down their lives for the gospel. But no tribulation could cut them off from the love and the presence of the Lord. For the Lord who holds all authority was upholding their lives and the work of the gospel.

The Gospel of Matthew begins with the promise of Immanuel and ends with the promise that the Lord will always be with us. Jesus is God who came to this earth to save us from our sins, and God who, even after completing salvation, does not leave His people.

Therefore we must not give up preaching the gospel, looking only at our own weakness or our circumstances. We must believe that all authority in heaven and on earth belongs to the risen Jesus. And we must preach to all people the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus, and serve the saved souls so that they become disciples who live following the word.

Matthew 28:16–20 is the last command the Lord entrusted to the church. It is the command to believe in Jesus, who holds all authority, to preach the complete gospel to all the nations, and to raise up believers as disciples. While this mission is being carried out, the risen Lord, just as He promised, is always with His people to the end of the age. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Matthew Chapter 28

[Question] 1. Why is the resurrection of Jesus important in the faith of a Christian?

The event in which Jesus rose from the dead is the foundation and the core of the Christian faith. Without the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, faith in the remission of sins and eternal life cannot stand either.

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

First, the resurrection of Jesus from the dead proves that Jesus is the Son of God and the true Savior. Jesus spoke beforehand of His death and of His rising from the dead, and He actually came to life again just as He had said.

Second, it confirms that the remission of sins Jesus accomplished is complete. Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and died, and then rose from the dead. Therefore the event in which Jesus rose from the dead is the evidence that He bore the full price of sin and death and completed salvation.

"Who was delivered up because of our offenses, and was raised because of our justification" (Romans 4:25).

Third, it shows that Jesus overcame the power of death and of Satan. Even the tomb could not hold Jesus. Therefore the believer who has believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins can live without fearing sin,

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judgment, and death.

Fourth, it guarantees that believers will also rise again from the dead in the days to come.

"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Since Jesus rose from the dead and became the firstfruits, those who believe in Jesus and have received the remission of sins will also rise again from the dead on the last day and enjoy eternal life.

Fifth, it becomes the driving force of the preaching of the gospel and of the life of faith. After meeting Jesus risen from the dead, the disciples were freed from fear and became witnesses who preached the gospel. Believers today, too, can preach the gospel and live following the word of the Lord by the faith that the living Jesus is with them.

"And if Christ is not risen, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins!" (1 Corinthians 15:17).

Therefore the event in which Jesus rose from the dead is the center of the Christian faith: it proves that Jesus is the Savior, confirms the completion of the remission of sins, and guarantees to the believer the hope of rising again from the dead and eternal life.

[Question] 2. Matthew 28:1—what time does *"as the first day of the week began to dawn"* refer to?

"As the first day of the week began to dawn" refers to the early daybreak when Saturday, the Sabbath, had passed and the light was beginning to break on Sunday, the first day of the week.

"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began

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to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb" (Matthew 28:1).

Here, *"dawn"* means the time when the day is not yet fully bright but the darkness is lifting and the day is beginning to break. That is, the women went to the tomb in the early dawn of Sunday, the day Jesus rose from the dead.

[Question] 3. Matthew 28:1—what special meaning does *"the first day of the week"* hold?

"The first day of the week" refers to the day after Saturday, the Sabbath, that is, Sunday, the first day of the week. This day holds the special meaning of being the day Jesus rose from the dead.

Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead on the first day of the week. Therefore this day is the day Jesus overcame the power of sin and death and opened the way of new life.

Moreover, the believers of the early Church gathered on the first day of the week to commemorate the resurrection of Jesus from the dead, worshiping and breaking bread. Therefore *"the first day of the week"* means not simply the start of a new week but the day that represents the completion of salvation, new life, and eternal hope.

[Question] 4. Matthew 28:1—exactly what time is *"dawn"*?

"Dawn" means the time when the day is not yet fully bright,

that is, the early morning when the darkness is lifting and the day is beginning to break.

Therefore *"as the first day of the week began to dawn"* refers to daybreak, when the Sabbath had passed and the light was about to break on Sunday, the first day of the week. At this time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary went to the tomb of Jesus.

[Question] 5. Matthew 28:1—who does the passage identify as the women who came to see the tomb at early dawn?

The women who went to the tomb of Jesus at early dawn were Mary Magdalene and the other Mary.

"Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb" (Matthew 28:1).

Here, *"the other Mary"* refers, by the context, to Mary the mother of James and Joses. These women had watched the place where Jesus was buried, and at the early dawn of the first day of the week they came to the tomb again.

[Question] 6. Matthew 28:2—what does the great earthquake that occurred when the women came to the tomb mean?

"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it" (Matthew 28:2).

The *"great earthquake"* indicates that the event in which Jesus rose from the dead was a momentous event accomplished

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by the supernatural power of God. It was not a mere natural phenomenon but a sign showing that God intervened directly in the history of salvation.

When Jesus died on the Cross the earth also quaked, and when He rose from the dead a great earthquake occurred as well. This indicates that the power of sin and death was broken and that Jesus overcame death. Moreover, the earthquake that occurred together with the angel's descent from heaven shows that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was accomplished by the will and the power of God.

[Question] 7. Matthew 28:2—why did the angel of the Lord descend from heaven and roll back the stone from the entrance of the tomb?

"And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it" (Matthew 28:2).

The angel of the Lord rolled back the stone of the tomb in order to reveal that all the human seals and guards blocking the resurrection of Jesus had no effect before the power of God, and to show that Jesus had actually risen from the dead and come out of the tomb.

He also had the women and the disciples look inside the tomb and see for themselves that the body of Jesus was not there. The opened tomb became clear evidence that Jesus had actually risen just as He had said.

Moreover, the sight of the angel sitting on the stone indicates that the power of the tomb and of death could no longer hold Jesus, and that Jesus had completely overcome death.

[Question] 8. Matthew 28:3—what did the angel look like?

The countenance of the angel of the Lord shone like lightning, and his clothing was as white as snow.

"His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow" (Matthew 28:3).

The lightning-like countenance shows that the angel appeared revealing the glory and power of God, and the snow-white clothing represents the holiness and purity of heaven. For reference, Matthew chapter 28 records the angel who rolled back the stone of the tomb in the singular, as *"an angel of the Lord."*

[Question] 9. Matthew 28:4—how does the passage tell the reaction of the guards to the appearance of the angel?

Those who were keeping the tomb saw the appearance of the angel, trembled in great fear, and became like dead men, unable to move.

"And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:4).

This shows that before the glory and supernatural power of God, human strength and the guarding of the tomb could exert no effect at all. Even brave soldiers were overwhelmed with fear at the sight of the angel.

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[Question] 10. Matthew 28:5—what encouragement do the angel's words *"Do not be afraid"* give us?

"But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified'" (Matthew 28:5).

The words *"Do not be afraid"* give the encouragement that whoever believes in and seeks Jesus need not fear sin, judgment, and death. For Jesus overcame the power of sin and death and rose from the dead.

Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of sin on the Cross and died, and then rose from the dead. Therefore the person who believes this gospel and has received the remission of sins has the assurance of having been saved from the judgment of God and the hope of eternal life.

Those keeping the tomb trembled in fear at the sight of the angel, but the angel told the women who were seeking Jesus not to be afraid. This shows the fact that the news of Jesus rising from the dead can be a terror to those who do not believe, but to those who believe in Jesus it is great comfort and joy.

[Question] 11. Matthew 28:5—what did the angel say he knew about the women?

The angel said that he knew the women were seeking Jesus, who had been crucified.

"I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified" (Matthew 28:5).

This shows that the women had come to the tomb out of

love for Jesus, and that God knew their hearts and their purpose. They came to find the body of Jesus, but instead they heard the joyful news that Jesus had already risen from the dead.

[Question] 12. Matthew 28:6—how did the angel announce that Jesus had risen?

The angel testified that Jesus was not in the tomb and that He had risen from the dead just as He had said beforehand. He also told the women to look for themselves at the place where Jesus had lain, having them confirm the empty tomb.

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

Thus the angel testified that the resurrection of Jesus from the dead was not something that happened by chance but the fulfillment of the promise Jesus had spoken beforehand, and an actual event confirmed by the empty tomb.

[Question] 13. Matthew 28:6—what can we learn from the angel's words, *"Come, see the place where the Lord lay"*?

"Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:6).

The angel told the women to look at the place where Jesus had lain in order to have them confirm for themselves the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. By seeing the empty tomb with their own eyes, the women could know that the angel's words were true.

These words teach that the Christian faith is not based on groundless conjecture or vague feeling but is built on the

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historical fact and evidence that Jesus actually died and rose from the dead.

Moreover, after confirming the empty tomb, the women had to deliver the news to the disciples. So these words give the lesson that whoever has confirmed through the word and believed the fact that Jesus rose from the dead must deliver that joyful news to others.

[Question] 14. Matthew 28:7—what task did the angel entrust to the women?

The angel commanded the women to go quickly and deliver to the disciples the news that Jesus had risen from the dead, and to let them know that Jesus was going before them into Galilee and that they would meet Him there.

"And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you" (Matthew 28:7).

Thus the women received the mission of witnesses who first delivered the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. This gives the lesson that whoever has heard and confirmed the gospel must quickly deliver that joyful news to others.

[Question] 15. Matthew 28:7—why did Jesus intend to meet His disciples in Galilee?

The most direct reason Jesus set Galilee as the place to meet His disciples is that He had promised that after rising from the dead He would go before them into Galilee.

"But after I have been raised, I will go before you to

Galilee" (Matthew 26:32).

Galilee is the place where Jesus first called the disciples, preached the gospel together with them, and carried out much of His ministry. Jesus intended to meet again, in the region where He had first called them, the disciples who had abandoned Him and scattered, and to restore their faith.

Moreover, in Galilee Jesus gave the disciples the Great Commission to make disciples of all the nations. Therefore Galilee was not a mere meeting place but a new starting point, where the disciples met Jesus risen from the dead, received their mission again, and began to preach the gospel to the whole world.

[Question] 16. Matthew 28:8—what state of the women's hearts does *"fear and great joy"* describe?

"So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word" (Matthew 28:8).

The *"fear"* represents the astonishment and awe that arose from witnessing the supernatural events of the great earthquake, the appearance of the angel, and the empty tomb. The women felt fear because what they had experienced was so great and astonishing.

The *"great joy"* is the joy that arose from hearing the news that everything had not ended with the death of Jesus, but that He had risen from the dead just as He had said. The fact that the Jesus they loved had come to life again turned their sorrow into great joy.

Therefore this expression describes the complex state of heart in which the women felt fear and awe before the amazing power of God, and yet were seized with overflowing joy

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because of the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

[Question] 17. Matthew 28:7–8—find the reason for the women's hurried steps in leaving the tomb quickly.

The women left the tomb quickly in obedience to the angel's command, in order to deliver swiftly to the disciples the news that Jesus had risen from the dead.

"So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word" (Matthew 28:8).

They felt fear because of the great earthquake and the appearance of the angel, but they rejoiced greatly at the news that Jesus had risen from the dead. So they did not linger at the tomb but ran to let the disciples know. This gives the lesson that whoever has heard the gospel must not keep that joyful news only in his heart but must deliver it quickly to others.

[Question] 18. Matthew 28:9—what does the greeting "*Rejoice!*" of the risen Jesus mean?

"And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him" (Matthew 28:9).

"Rejoice!" was a greeting exchanged among the people of that time; it was not a mere asking after one's well-being but carried the meaning of 'peace be with you' and 'be glad.'

The women were in fear after seeing the great earthquake, the appearance of the angel, and the empty tomb. At that moment Jesus, risen from the dead, appeared in person and said,

"Rejoice!" removing their fear and giving them joy and peace.

This greeting indicates that since Jesus overcame the power of sin and death by rising from the dead, whoever believes in Jesus can enjoy true peace without fearing sin, judgment, and death any longer.

[Question] 19. Matthew 28:9—what heart does the women's act of holding the feet of Jesus and worshiping Him show?

"So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him" (Matthew 28:9).

The women's holding of the feet of Jesus was an act that expressed the overflowing joy and deep love of meeting again the Jesus who had risen from the dead. It also carried their earnest desire not to lose Jesus again.

Their worshiping of Jesus indicates that they did not regard Him as a mere teacher but believed and acknowledged Him as the Son of God, the Savior who overcame death, and the Lord.

Moreover, that they actually held the feet of Jesus shows that He did not appear as a spirit or a vision but actually rose from the dead with a body. Thus in this act appear together love and joy toward Jesus, and awe and faith.

[Question] 20. Matthew 28:9–10—what did Jesus say to the women who worshiped Him?

Jesus comforted the women who worshiped Him, telling them not to be afraid, and told them to tell His disciples to go to Galilee. He said that there the disciples would see Him, risen

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from the dead.

"Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.'" (Matthew 28:10).

Jesus gave peace and assurance to the fearful women and sent them as witnesses to deliver to the disciples the news that He had risen from the dead. Moreover, by calling the disciples *"My brethren,"* He did not condemn those who had abandoned Him and fled, but received them again in love and grace.

[Question] 21. Matthew 28:10—what can we know from Jesus calling His disciples "*My brethren*"?

Jesus calling the disciples *"My brethren"* shows that His love toward them had not changed and that He had remitted their sins.

When Jesus was arrested, the disciples all abandoned Him and fled, and Peter denied Him three times. But Jesus, risen from the dead, did not condemn them as traitors or cast them away; He called them intimately *"My brethren."*

This indicates that Jesus remitted the sins of the disciples and received them again, intending to restore their faith and entrust them with the mission of preaching the gospel. It also shows the grace that whoever believes in Jesus and receives the remission of sins becomes a child of God and enters a spiritual family relationship with Jesus.

Therefore these words show the fact that the love of Jesus is greater than man's failure, and that even if a person has fallen, the Lord remits the sins of the one who returns to Him and raises him up again.

[Question] 22. Matthew 28:11–15—along with this fabricated lie, list the representative false theories raised to deny the resurrection of Jesus.

Matthew 28:11–15 records the fact that the chief priests and the elders gave the soldiers a large sum of money and had them say that the disciples of Jesus came at night and stole the body while they were sleeping. This is the stolen-body theory, the representative fabricated lie spread from the beginning to deny the resurrection of Jesus. Afterward as well, various claims were raised to deny the resurrection of Jesus.

First, the stolen-body theory. This is the claim that the disciples of Jesus came to the tomb at night, stole the body, and then falsely proclaimed that Jesus had risen. But if the soldiers had been asleep, they could not have seen who took the body, and so they could not testify that the disciples stole it. Moreover, the tomb was blocked with a stone and sealed, and the soldiers were guarding it. This claim is a lie that carries a contradiction from the start.

Second, the swoon theory. This is the claim that Jesus did not actually die on the Cross but merely fainted for a while, and then came to His senses in the cold tomb and came out. But Jesus certainly died on the Cross, and Pilate also released the body of Jesus for burial. The claim that One who had suffered severe scourging and crucifixion moved the great stone blocking the tomb, slipped past the soldiers, and appeared before the disciples in the form of a healthy victor cannot stand.

Third, the wrong-tomb theory. This is the claim that the women and the disciples went to some other empty tomb, not the tomb where Jesus was buried. But the women had watched the burial of Jesus and knew the tomb. Moreover, if they had

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gone to the wrong tomb, the Jewish leaders could have stopped the evidence of the resurrection at once by showing the tomb where the body of Jesus lay.

Fourth, the vision or hallucination theory. This is the claim that the disciples, who longed intensely for Jesus, were deluded by psychological shock and expectation into thinking they had seen the risen Jesus. But the risen Jesus did not appear only in the mind of one person; He appeared several times to many people, including the women and the disciples. The women held His feet and worshiped Him, and the disciples saw Jesus in person in Galilee. The claim that a group experienced the same hallucination repeatedly cannot explain the empty tomb either.

Fifth, the moved-body theory. This is the claim that Joseph of Arimathea, the Jewish leaders, or the Roman authorities moved the body of Jesus to another place. But if the Jewish leaders or the Roman authorities had moved the body, they would have produced it publicly when the disciples began to proclaim the resurrection, and so blocked the preaching of the gospel. The fact that they could not do so shows that the body was not in their hands.

Sixth, the myth or legend theory. This is the claim that the resurrection of Jesus is not an actual event but a religious story that the disciples and the church created over a long period of time. But the news of the resurrection did not arise after long ages had passed; it was preached from the time when the people who knew the tomb of Jesus and the witnesses of that day were still alive. From the beginning the disciples testified to the death and resurrection of Jesus as the core of the gospel.

Seventh, the spiritual-resurrection theory. This is the claim that the body of Jesus did not actually come to life, but that His spirit or His teaching came to life again in the hearts of the

disciples. But the Gospel of Matthew records that the women held the feet of the risen Jesus and worshiped Him, and that the disciples saw Jesus in person and worshiped Him. The resurrection of Jesus is not a resurrection of thought or spirit but an actual resurrection in which the body that had died came to life again.

These false theories differ from one another in content, and if one claim is accepted, the others can hardly stand. The claim that Jesus did not die and the claim that someone stole or moved His dead body cannot both be true at the same time. The fact that so many different theories arose reveals that there is no consistent explanation for denying the resurrection.

The resurrection of Jesus is not a story the disciples made up but a saving event God actually accomplished. Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, bore those sins and died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again on the third day. By rising from the dead He overcame the power of sin and death and became the Savior who gives eternal life to those who believe in Him.

Therefore the representative false theories raised to deny the resurrection of Jesus are the stolen-body theory, the swoon theory, the wrong-tomb theory, the vision theory, the moved-body theory, the myth theory, and the spiritual-resurrection theory. But no claim can fully explain the empty tomb, the several appearances of the risen Jesus, and the evidence of the resurrection the disciples preached.

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[Question] 23. Matthew 28:11—through whom was the news of the resurrection of Jesus delivered to the chief priests?

The news that Jesus had risen from the dead was delivered when some of the guards who had been keeping the tomb went into the city and reported to the chief priests all that had happened at the tomb.

"Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened" (Matthew 28:11).

So the chief priests did not hear a rumor from the disciples; they came to know the fact through the report of the guards, who had kept the tomb in person and witnessed the great earthquake, the appearance of the angel, and the empty tomb. Yet even after hearing this report they neither believed nor repented, but tried to hide the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

[Question] 24. Matthew 28:11–12—how did the chief priests react when they received the report of the resurrection of Jesus?

Even after hearing the news that Jesus had risen from the dead, the chief priests neither believed nor repented. Instead they gathered with the elders, consulted how to hide the fact, and bribed the soldiers with a large sum of money.

"When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers" (Matthew 28:12).

They instructed the soldiers to lie, saying that the disciples

of Jesus came at night and stole the body. This shows that even though they had come to know the truth, they deliberately distorted and tried to hide the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead, in order to protect their position and their wrong belief.

[Question] 25. Matthew 28:12—what means did the chief priests and the elders use to create the false rumor about the resurrection?

The chief priests and the elders bribed the soldiers with a large sum of money and then instructed them to lie, saying that the disciples of Jesus came at night and stole the body.

"Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" (Matthew 28:13).

They also promised that if this lie reached the governor and the soldiers were in danger of punishment, they themselves would persuade the governor and protect them. Thus they tried to hide the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead and to spread a fabricated rumor, using money, false testimony, and power.

[Question] 26. Matthew 28:13—what flaws are there in the lie the chief priests and the elders had the soldiers tell?

"Tell them, 'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" (Matthew 28:13).

The lie the chief priests and the elders had the soldiers tell carries the following contradictions.

First, if the soldiers had been asleep, they could not have seen who took the body of Jesus, and so they could not testify

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that the disciples stole it.

Second, it is hard to accept that all the soldiers fell asleep at the same time and did not even hear the sound of the disciples rolling away the great stone and carrying off the body.

Third, for soldiers guarding a tomb to fall asleep was a grave dereliction of duty, deserving severe punishment. That they nevertheless said they had fallen asleep was because they had taken money and borne false witness.

Fourth, it is also unconvincing to suppose that the disciples, who had fled in fear when Jesus was arrested, slipped past armed soldiers, moved the stone of the tomb, and stole the body.

Therefore this story was a contradictory lie, made up to hide the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

[Question] 27. Matthew 28:14—what do the council members' words that they would keep the guards from being punished by the governor show?

"And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure" (Matthew 28:14).

For the guards to report that they had fallen asleep on duty was a grave fault that could bring severe punishment. The chief priests and the elders promised that if this fact reached the governor, they would persuade him and protect the soldiers from punishment.

These words show that they bribed the soldiers with money and even tried to use their political influence in order to hide the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead. Rather than accept the truth, they tried to manipulate the affair with lies, bribery, and power in order to protect their own position and authority.

Moreover, the fact that the religious leaders, who stood in the position of testifying to the truth of God, instead opposed the truth and protected a lie shows how grave the stubbornness and corruption of man can be.

[Question] 28. Matthew 28:15—how did the false rumor denying the resurrection of Jesus spread among the Jews?

The fabricated false rumor about the resurrection spread widely among the Jews as the soldiers took money from the chief priests and the elders and spoke just as they had been taught.

"So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day" (Matthew 28:15).

The soldiers lied, saying that the disciples of Jesus came at night and stole His body while they were sleeping. As the authority of the religious leaders was joined with the false testimony of the soldiers, this fabricated story spread as if it were fact.

This shows that a false rumor can be propagated widely through money, power, and false testimony. Yet even such a rumor could not remove the empty tomb of Jesus and the fact that He had risen from the dead.

[Question] 29. Matthew 28:16—where did Jesus give the Great Commission?

The place where Jesus Christ gave the Great Commission

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was the mountain in Galilee that He had appointed beforehand.

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them" (Matthew 28:16).

The Scriptures do not give the specific name of that mountain. Here Jesus, risen from the dead, told His disciples that He had received all authority in heaven and on earth, and gave them the Great Commission to make disciples of all the nations. So this mountain in Galilee is the place where the disciples received their mission anew and were sent out to preach the gospel to the whole world.

[Question] 30. Matthew 28:17—what does it mean that some doubted even while seeing and worshiping the risen Jesus?

"When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted" (Matthew 28:17).

These words mean that while the disciples saw Jesus risen from the dead in person and worshiped Him, some among them could not be convinced at once before so astonishing a sight, and hesitated or wavered for a moment.

Here, *"doubted"* is closer to a human hesitation that appeared in the process of accepting the overwhelming fact that Jesus, who had died, was alive again before their eyes, rather than an unbelief that stubbornly denied Jesus.

This record shows that the Scriptures do not hide the weakness of the disciples but record it as it was. Jesus did not cast away the doubting disciples; He declared His authority and entrusted them with the mission of making disciples of all the nations. This teaches the fact that faith does not arise from

human boldness but is made firm through the word and the evidence of Jesus risen from the dead.

[Question] 31. Matthew 28:18—what authority does the risen Jesus hold?

Jesus Christ is the One who possesses all authority in heaven and on earth.

"And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth'" (Matthew 28:18).

This means that Jesus holds the absolute authority to rule not only the angels of heaven and the spiritual world but also all the nations and peoples of the earth and every creature. Jesus took on all the sins of the world with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment of those sins on the Cross and died, and completed salvation by rising again. Therefore God the Father gave Jesus all authority in heaven and on earth: to save sinners, to rule over Satan the Devil, to raise the dead, and to judge the world.

Jesus, risen from the dead, is the Judge who will judge the world in the days to come, and with all that authority He commanded His disciples to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the nations. Therefore the preaching of the gospel is not a work done by human authority but a work done relying on the command and the power of Jesus, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth.

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[Question] 32. Matthew 28:19–20—explain the content of the Great Commission divided into four parts.

"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).

"Teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:20).

The four directives that appear in the Lord's Great Commission are as follows.

1. Go

This is the command not to remain with the gospel in any particular region or nation, but to go out to all the peoples of the world.

2. Make disciples of all the nations

This means not stopping at letting people hear the gospel once, but leading them to believe in Jesus as the Savior and to become disciples who follow His word.

3. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit

This does not speak of a rite performed with water only. It is the command to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the nations, so that they believe the salvation accomplished by God the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and rose again, completing salvation. Administering water baptism in the name of the

Triune God to the person who believes this gospel and has received the remission of sins is a mark that shows that faith and that salvation.

4. Teach them to observe all that He commanded

This means rightly preaching and teaching all the words Jesus taught and commanded, especially the gospel of the water and the Spirit, so that people receive the remission of sins, and continuing to nurture the saved so that they keep the word of the Lord within the church of God and live as disciples who serve the gospel.

Therefore the Lord's Great Commission can be summed up as going and preaching the gospel, making disciples of all the nations, baptizing them, and teaching them to observe the words of Jesus.

[Question] 33. Matthew 28:20—what promise did Jesus give at the end of the Great Commission?

While giving His disciples the Great Commission, Jesus assured them that He would always be with them, to the end of the age.

"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).

This is the promise that the disciples do not preach the gospel by their own strength and ability alone, but that Jesus, risen from the dead, is always with them through the Holy Spirit, leading, keeping, and helping them. The Lord dwells through the Holy Spirit in the heart of the person who believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has received the remission of sins, and He is with the church of God and with

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every work of preaching the gospel.

This assurance was given not only to the eleven disciples of that time but also to the believers and the church of God today, who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all the nations and nurture disciples. Therefore, even in hardship and persecution, the person who preaches the gospel carries out his mission by the faith that Jesus, who holds all authority in heaven and on earth, is with him to the end of the age. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Let us live by faith in the Lord who holds all authority

< Matthew 28:1-20 >

"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.' So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.' Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, "His disciples

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came at night and stole Him away while we slept." And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.' So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers"

Our Lord spoke to us like this: *"Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers" (2 Corinthians 6:14).* He tells us not to bear the same yoke with those who do not believe in the Lord, and not to work together with them. The Lord then said, *"Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you. I will be a Father to you, And you shall be My sons and daughters" (2 Corinthians 6:17–18).* The Lord said that He would dwell among those who follow Him and dwell apart. He said that He would walk among them in person, and that He would be our God and our Father. He means that He works in person within this church. We become the children of the Lord, and the Lord dwells among us and works. He promised that He Himself would be our God and

our Shepherd.

Everyone, we must truly be like those who believe. If we have received the remission of sins before the Lord, we ought to have the faith worthy of a believer. What happens when barley seed is sown in a field? Some seed begins to sprout a little and then is scorched by the sun and dies. Some seed dies because there is no moisture at its roots. Where the soil is not deep and there is no moisture, it withers and dies. We must not become like such seed. Nor must we become like the seed sown among thorns. It grows a little at first, but when the thorns cover it from above, casting their shade and pressing it down, its faith dies because of the cares of the world. Our faith must not become like that.

We must believe in the Lord. The Lord Himself becomes God to us. And He works within us. My problems and your problems, each and every one of them, the Lord attends to, governs, and works upon. The Lord is the One who works in person. Our Lord is not One who merely sits and receives worship and praise. To solve our problems He comes in person, dwells among us, and walks about among us. This problem and that problem the Lord Himself solves for us. The God we believe in is just such a God.

The Lord who rose on the first day of the week

Everyone, today we have read Matthew chapter 28. Matthew chapter 28 is a truly famous passage. In this chapter is recorded how our Lord rose again and met His disciples. It also contains the last words the Lord commanded and entrusted to His disciples before His ascension.

"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to

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dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men" (Matthew 28:1–4) The angel told the women this: *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay" (Matthew 28:5–6).*

What is the first day of the week? The Sabbath of the Old Testament runs from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday. So it was at dawn the day after the sun set on Saturday, that is, at dawn on the Lord's Day, that our Lord rose again. We must first think deeply about this point.

Everyone, there are truly many churches that insist the Sabbath must be kept. This age is an age in which angels of light strut about. The nearer the end comes, the more the angel of light appears, carrying on as if he were God, teaching and leading people. In this last age it often happens that people are dragged down to hell in this way. The one doing that work is precisely the angel of light. But our Lord rose on the first day of the week.

Those who insist on the Sabbath say this on the basis of the Old Testament: keep the Sabbath; if you keep the Sabbath you will be blessed, and everything will go well. So people suppose that things go well if they keep the Sabbath, and they fall into the delusion that they must keep the Sabbath to be saved. They fall into the delusion that they will receive blessings. Thus there arose on this earth what is called Sabbatarianism. How many people on this earth misunderstand the Scriptures, fail to grasp the true meaning of what the Lord says, are enticed by Satan the Devil into serving as his slaves, and finally perish and fall into hell?

The Lord who is the Lord of the Sabbath

Everyone, the understanding of the Sabbath is also greatly mistaken. When the Lord told us to keep the Sabbath, He meant that we should keep the rest He gave us when He removed our sins. In other words, He told us to keep this faith. Our Lord said, *"The Son of Man is Lord even of the Sabbath" (Matthew 12:8).* The Lord is the Lord of the Sabbath.

Yet the Sabbatarians say that only the people who keep the Sabbath go to heaven. They say that keeping the Sabbath is right if one follows the Scriptures. They hold up the Bible and teach and testify boldly. They say that in the beginning, after God created the heavens and the earth, He spoke of the Sabbath right afterward in Genesis chapter 2. In Genesis 2:3 it is written, *"God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it" (Genesis 2:3).* But our Lord said that He Himself is the Lord of the Sabbath. This Sabbath is the day of the Lord.

Everyone, the Lord Himself gave us rest. He is saying that the One who blessed us and made us holy is the Lord Himself. Who gave people true deliverance from sin? Our Lord gave it. Yet those who insist on the Sabbath say that one must keep the day to go to heaven. They say that this is believing well. It is a truly pitiable thing.

They say they do not eat pork, nor freshwater fish without scales. They say they do not eat squid either. They say they do not eat blood. But when pork is boiled, the blood is already in it. Everyone, would our God be so ignorant as to tell us to keep what we can never keep? Our God is by no means such a God.

Our God is Spirit. Therefore He speaks to us in the Spirit, and He tells us what is truly fitting and good for our souls. It is not by keeping the Sabbath that we are saved. He tells us to keep the grace by which the Lord removed our sins. The Sabbatarians

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ask in return: what does salvation or the remission of sins have to do with the Sabbath? But would we be saved by doing nothing and resting comfortably from sunset on Friday to sunset on Saturday? If one were saved that way, there would be no one on this earth who could not be saved. If you tell a lazy man to rest, how well he would rest!

If one believes in Jesus yet does not know the mystery of knowing Jesus Christ, does not know the fact that Jesus completely removed our sins, and says that one goes to heaven just by keeping the Sabbath, who could not do that? And yet they claim that they alone live according to the word, and that they are the true church. But how could a Sabbath church be the true church? The church of God, made up of those who have received the remission of sins, is the true church. Even so, countless people believe that way.

In this age angels of light appear and delude people. They delude them, saying that something comes of keeping the Sabbath well. But what would come of keeping the Sabbath well? They pride themselves on being the church that alone believes well, and they strive not to drink coffee, not to eat squid, not to eat fish without scales. But would our God be a God who sends someone to heaven for not eating squid and to hell for eating it? Would He send someone to heaven for resting quietly a day and a half, and to hell for failing to do so? Such a God would not be the God of grace. Nor would He be the God of mercy. Our God, knowing that we humans can do nothing, came to this earth in person and became our Savior.

The false teaching that one becomes holy by oneself and goes to heaven

I once went to a Sabbatarian church and listened to the sermon. I could find no fault with it at all. They say, let us live holy lives. They say to live one's life in holiness, and would that be a bad saying? Outwardly there is not a single bad word. But in fact it is all wrong. It simply does not hold together.

Everyone, how is sanctification accomplished? When the Lord completely removes our sins, we become people without sin. When the Lord takes us to heaven, we become people who go to heaven. When the Lord changes us, we receive the change. How could we change ourselves? However hard one tries, a person cannot change his own nature by himself. For a person to sanctify himself and go to the kingdom of heaven is an impossibility. That saying comes from the Devil.

The Devil lied from the beginning. He deceived, saying that if one ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, one would become like God. The claim is that if you live kindly, do no evil, and keep living kindly, you will at last be changed, become a person with no sin at all, and enter the kingdom of God. But what arrogant talk is that before God? That very saying is what the Devil says. The Devil came to Adam and Eve from the beginning and lied. He asked whether God had really said not to eat the fruit of every tree of the garden, craftily twisting the word of God.

Everyone, would a person really become sinless just by living sincerely, with conduct upright and unrelated to sin? While sinning ceaselessly in his heart, he merely appears not to sin where others can see. How many sins a person commits—is that not the true face of man? The saying that one is sanctified and goes to the kingdom of God is truly an empty saying. If

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anyone were to stand before the holy God by himself without the least sin, he could not stand before Him even a single day. When we examine ourselves, our faults never cease; how then could we become holy by ourselves and meet the Lord? By such a method one can never meet the Lord.

There are people who strive to go to heaven by keeping the Sabbath, saying that the command to keep the Sabbath appears countless times in the Scriptures. They strive to be faithful before God by not eating what has no scales. But God does not accept a faith that lives by works like that.

The risen Jesus Christ

Everyone, our Lord rose at dawn on the first day of the week, this Lord's Day. A Jewish tomb is a large cave. The body is placed inside the cave, and a great stone is rolled against the outside to block it. While Jesus was alive, He always spoke like this: kill Me; destroy this temple; in three days I will rise again. The people were afraid of those words, and fearing that He might really rise, they guarded the tomb. They also feared that the disciples might steal the body and say that He had risen. So soldiers guarded the tomb in several ranks with spears and swords. The words the Lord had spoken while He was alive were so fearful to them.

But there was a great earthquake, and an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, rolled back the stone, and sat on it. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. Those guarding the tomb trembled in terror and fell to the ground like dead men. When a person is too astonished, he cannot even speak. So gripped were they by fear that they lost their senses.

The angel rolled back the stone, sat on it, and spoke to Mary

Magdalene and the other Mary, who had come to the tomb. He told them: do not be afraid; the Lord you seek has risen; He is alive; go to Galilee. When the women looked inside the tomb, the Lord was indeed not there. And so our Lord appeared in Galilee, on the mountain He had promised His disciples. Everyone, Jesus Christ has risen. He is alive. Even now He lives at the right hand of the throne of God.

The Lord who holds all authority in heaven and on earth

The eleven disciples went to Galilee, came to the mountain Jesus had appointed, saw the Lord, and worshiped Him, but some doubted. Our Lord came to the disciples and said this: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:18–20).*

Everyone, we must live by faith before God. What, then, is living by faith? In everything we live by believing in the Lord. The Lord said that all authority in heaven and on earth had been given to Him. The authority of heaven belongs to Jesus Christ, and the authority of the earth also belongs to Jesus Christ. Therefore, whether we do business or hold a job, in all the life in which we follow the Lord, we must act believing in Him. When we rely on the Lord and act believing the fact that He helps us, our Lord brings those things to pass.

Everyone, we received salvation and the remission of sins by faith. Then now we actually live on this earth. In that actual

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living, too, we need faith that believes in our Lord. We need to act by faith. Before acting, first believe in the Lord, and then act, and the Lord helps us. For all authority belongs to our Lord. Do you have a practical problem of your own? Entrust it to the Lord, believe that the Lord will accomplish it, wait, and act. Then our Lord surely accomplishes it according to that faith. We must live our practical lives by faith.

In the things by which we live, what is there that is not of faith? Doing business is also of faith; whatever the work, not knowing whether it will succeed or not, we do it believing in the Lord. We believe in the Lord, ask for His help, and do the work by faith. When we ask for what we practically need, our Lord practically gives it. The authority of the earth, and every affair of this earth, hangs on the Lord. If we ask the Lord and believe in the Lord, the Lord gives. We must live our actual lives by faith.

God the Father gave all authority in heaven and on earth to Jesus. There is a reason the Lord spoke this word to His disciples. It is so that the disciples, by believing in Jesus, would testify to the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth, subdue all things on the earth, and live by faith. He was saying: be victorious by faith; be victorious by believing in Me.

Everyone, Satan the Devil can do nothing more to us. Even the things on earth, if we believe in our Lord, our Lord gives us. Yesterday there was the wedding of a brother. There is a reason I cannot go near that brother's house. Whenever I go, his mother suffers terribly and cannot bear it. When a believer keeps visiting, that mother is so distressed she does not know what to do. Yesterday too, as I passed by, she was fine before I went up, but the moment I went up, her eyes changed at once and she was in distress. So I prayed to the Lord to keep things quiet for just that one day, and to let it pass safely.

Everyone, demons cannot stir before a person who has received the remission of sins. They cannot even look him straight in the eye. When they come before a born-again man of God, the demon inside cannot endure it and shrivels up, just as ice melts before fire. Even without saying, “Satan, be gone,” it shrivels of itself. So the reason that brother cannot invite me to his house is that when I go, his mother suffers like that. Everyone, our Lord has given us the authority of heaven. Do you believe? Amen.

Our Lord gave us not only the authority of heaven but also the authority of the earth. If we believe in the Lord, we too come to enjoy that authority. Therefore the born-again must live by faith in all things. It is living by faith in union with the church. The Lord dwells throughout this church and works. Why do we say that He dwells throughout and works? Because every person has his own problems. When we believe in the Lord, the Lord works throughout to solve those problems Himself. Moreover, within the church, one’s own problem is not one’s alone but becomes the church’s problem. So we come to experience the Lord working throughout and solving those matters.

Everyone, God holds all the authority of heaven. He can judge the earth, He can send to heaven, and He can send to hell. He can do as He wills with this earth. But can we do away with this earth? Do we have such authority? We are weak beings who tremble even before petty authority. But our Lord holds everything. We live by believing in such a Lord.

Live by faith in union with the church

To live by faith is to live by faith in actual life. We cannot live by our own strength alone. Nor can we live by our old way

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of thinking. After receiving the remission of sins, everything has become new. Therefore we challenge everything by faith and act by faith. Then we can receive the help of our Lord.

Everyone, our remission of sins we received by faith; our becoming children of God came by faith; our becoming righteous came by faith; and our going to heaven is also by faith. Living on the earth is also by faith. When we believe, we can live. Romans chapter 1 also says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17).* The righteous must live by faith in all things. Not believing, not acting by faith, is itself sin. Therefore we must act by faith. We believe in the Lord, ask the Lord for help, and believe and act.

Acting believing in the Lord and acting without believing in the Lord, by human means and methods, are vastly different. To bring a work to pass by exercising within faith all the wisdom and ability God has given is to act by faith. But to do it only by human means and methods, without believing in the Lord, is not faith. The authority of the earth also belongs to our Lord. Everything on this earth, and all our livelihood and life, our Lord governs. When we believe in the Lord and act, the Lord grants according to that faith that believes in Him.

Faith is not believing in ourselves, nor is it believing in our own ability. It is believing only in the Lord. When we know the fact that authority belongs to the Lord, believe in Him, and ask for help, the Lord works within the one who believes. The Lord is our strength, and the Lord is power to us. When we believe in the Lord, He accomplishes, with all that authority, according to what we believe.

Everyone, to live by faith is to live believing in God, to live believing the church, and to live relying on the brothers and sisters, by the faith we have in one another. It is not that one is saved alone and sits by oneself, struggling to believe. Our God

knows well how lacking our faith is and how weak we are. Therefore He established the church, established those who came before, and established all the members in this church. Through the church He supplements that faith, and He has made us live by faith, believing in and relying on one another.

Therefore we must believe the church, and the brothers and sisters must help one another, exhort one another, teach one another, and lead one another. The Apostle Peter says this: *"Add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, to godliness brotherly kindness, and to brotherly kindness love" (2 Peter 1:5–7).* Second Peter chapter 1 says that those who have become partakers of the divine nature must live with these eight qualities. A person who truly has faith seeks the benefit of the other. That benefit is not merely the benefit of the flesh; it is helping the other person's soul receive the remission of sins. And for that purpose, one endures all persecution and affliction by believing in the Lord.

Everyone, when we receive the remission of sins, everything changes. One who was called clever in the world may look foolish instead, and one who seemed lacking may become a truly wise person. Why is that? The person who knows his own lack becomes wise by believing wholly in the Lord, while the person who thought himself clever in the world does not believe in the Lord but trusts his own wisdom, and so becomes a fool instead. Compared with the Lord, we are all foolish. How could God and we be compared? Since we cannot be compared, we are all foolish.

There are those who do not enjoy all that is the Father's, while the person who truly knows and believes enjoys all that is the Father's as his own. That is precisely the difference between a person who has faith and a person who has none. Our faith

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does not spring up in a single morning. Therefore, unite in the church, beginning with small things. Help one another, exhort one another, lead one another. Though you are lacking, believe in the Lord. In the hard things we cannot bear, in all of life, live by believing in our Lord. Believe and ask. If we live by faith, our Lord helps us.

Testify by faith to the gospel of the baptism Jesus received from John

What did our Lord entrust to His disciples last of all? It was to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. The mark that the Lord has saved us is precisely baptism. Therefore we must testify by faith to this gospel of the baptism, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Everyone, Jesus received baptism from John. With that baptism received from John the Baptist, He had the sins of the whole world passed on to Himself. He became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. And bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross, shedding His blood and dying. In three days He rose from the dead and accomplished our salvation completely. Jesus is the One who came by water and blood. He took on all our sins once and for all and washed them away once and for all. This is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

People ask, is that all? Yes. This is all. We must believe the fact that the Lord holds all authority in heaven and on earth, and testify to this gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith to all the nations. We live our daily lives by faith, and we preach the gospel by faith. Hard problems, things we truly need, and the help we seek—all these we ask for by faith. We ask, saying: Lord, I believe; I believe that You will give this to me. We do

business by faith and hold our jobs by faith, and even when circumstances are hard and conditions are difficult, we act believing that the Lord will give this to us.

Do not look at your circumstances, but believe in the Lord who holds authority

Everyone, what eats away at faith is precisely circumstances and conditions. But we must not gaze at our conditions. The Epistle of James says that he who asks without believing is like a wave of the sea driven and tossed by the wind. You are sailing along a calm sea in a boat, when suddenly a storm arises. When the storm arises, where does our faith go? While it was calm, we had faith that the Lord was keeping us, but when the storm arises, we cry out that we are perishing. At such a time, too, we need faith that believes in the Lord. To believe that the Lord will keep me even in the storm, that is faith.

Then our Lord, for the sake of the one who believes in Him, stills the storm with that power of His who holds all authority in heaven and on earth. And so we are protected by the power of the Lord. This is precisely faith. True faith is believing not in our circumstances but in the Lord as the One who holds authority.

After receiving the remission of sins, we must live a new life. We must change the old life. We must live challenging things anew by faith. We must believe in the Lord, ask for the sake of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and act believing the fact that the Lord helps us. Yet we must not test God. To rush in recklessly without even believing, claiming to believe that He will protect us, is not true faith. The Scriptures tell us not to test God.

Look at Peter. On the storm-tossed sea Peter said, *"Lord, if*

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it is You, command me to come to You on the water" (Matthew 14:28). When the Lord said to come, Peter got out of the boat and walked on the water toward the Lord. The waves beat fiercely beside him, and all he could see was waves. But Peter walked on the water by faith. On this earth, the only human being who has ever walked on water is Peter alone. Peter was truly a man of faith. If we too believe in the Lord even for those problems on the earth, if we believe that the Lord holds authority, it will be done according to that faith.

Our Lord says this in Matthew chapter 28: all authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me; live on this earth by believing in Me; live by faith and act by faith. We praise our Lord. Our Lord holds all authority in heaven and on earth. We must believe and live. Amen. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Live carrying out the will of the Lord

< Matthew 28:1-20 >

"Now after the Sabbath, as the first day of the week began to dawn, Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb. And behold, there was a great earthquake; for an angel of the Lord descended from heaven, and came and rolled back the stone from the door, and sat on it. His countenance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. And the guards shook for fear of him, and became like dead men. But the angel answered and said to the women, 'Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him. Behold, I have told you.' So they went out quickly from the tomb with fear and great joy, and ran to bring His disciples word. And as they went to tell His disciples, behold, Jesus met them, saying, 'Rejoice!' So they came and held Him by the feet and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said to them, 'Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me.' Now while they were going, behold, some of the guard came into the city and reported to the chief priests all the things that had happened. When they had assembled with the elders and consulted together, they gave a large sum of money to the soldiers, saying, 'Tell them, 'His disciples

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came at night and stole Him away while we slept.' And if this comes to the governor's ears, we will appease him and make you secure.' So they took the money and did as they were instructed; and this saying is commonly reported among the Jews until this day. Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

Make disciples of all the nations

Before ascending into heaven, our Lord said this to His disciples: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19).* This was the last request the Lord left on this earth. When the Lord gives us salvation and we believe in that Lord, the outward expression of that faith is precisely baptism. The Lord Himself told His disciples to make disciples of all the nations. And He told them to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.

Making disciples is the will of the Lord

The word to make disciples of all the nations was the Lord's

last charge. We are now seeking to raise up workers overseas. Upholding the Lord's word to make disciples of all the nations, we seek to make disciples of Jesus Christ among those peoples overseas. We intend to baptize them in the name of Jesus Christ and make them disciples. So we administer baptism to the brothers and sisters overseas, and we appoint the brothers and sisters there as workers. And we teach and nurture them to follow our Lord, and lead them with prayer.

It is the same within this country. We must deliver this blessed news to those who do not yet know the love of the Lord and have not received salvation. And the work of making those who have received the remission of sins into disciples of Jesus Christ is ours to do. Whether at home or abroad, wherever in the world it may be, we must establish churches and make disciples of Jesus Christ. Especially the people of God who are overseas, that is, all the nations, we must make into disciples. Delivering to them the gospel of the water and the Spirit and making them disciples of Jesus Christ is the task we, the church of God, must carry out.

Whether it is overseas mission or domestic mission, this work is carrying out the command of our Lord. Our Lord came to this earth and took on all our sins at the Jordan River. By receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He shouldered the sin of the world Himself. And on the Cross He paid the price of those sins in our place and died. He rose again on the third day after His death, and for some forty days He testified that He was alive. Then, before going up to the kingdom of heaven, He gathered His disciples and left this last will.

"*Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end*

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of the age" (Matthew 28:19–20). So He promised. Therefore, going abroad to minister, making disciples, and nurturing those disciples to raise up workers is thoroughly scriptural. It is also upholding the will of the Lord.

Delivering the gospel to many people is also precious. But making disciples is the more proper way. It was the Lord's will to make the people of a nation into disciples, so that that people would preach the gospel to their own kin. Our Lord wanted the gospel to be preached to the whole nation through the twelve disciples in the land of Israel. In the same way, the Lord wanted the gospel preached to the many peoples overseas. He wanted that gospel to be preached fully through those who were first made disciples among each people.

When I think of this work, my heart is sometimes heavy. Within the country, people are near, and we can call them to come or go and speak with them. But going overseas, even one trip requires many procedures, and there are many difficulties. Even so, we pray to the Lord, make disciples, entrust them, and seek to carry out that work. We must believe that all we do in this way is upholding the will of the Lord.

Our Lord died on the Cross and rose again on the third day. At that time Mary Magdalene and the other Mary came to see the tomb of Jesus. It was early dawn, the darkest hour before daybreak. In Israel the name Mary was very common. So several Marys appear in the Scriptures. These two Marys, with hearts that longed for Jesus, went to the tomb at dawn on the third day after He was buried.

But on the way to the tomb, the ground shook and there was a great earthquake. An angel of the Lord came down from heaven, rolled back the stone of the tomb that shut Jesus in, and sat on that stone. His appearance was like lightning, and his clothing as white as snow. The guards keeping the tomb saw this

scene, trembled with fear, and became like dead men.

Then the angel spoke to the women: *"Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here; for He is risen, as He said. Come, see the place where the Lord lay. And go quickly and tell His disciples that He is risen from the dead, and indeed He is going before you into Galilee; there you will see Him" (Matthew 28:5–7).*

Jesus who rose again from the dead

When these two women who went to the tomb came upon that scene, how afraid they must have been! Before He died on the Cross, Jesus had said this: *"Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up" (John 2:19).* Because the Lord had spoken this word several times, the chief priests, the scribes, and the Pharisees of Israel feared those words.

While Jesus lived on this earth, He raised even the dead, and the sick were all healed if they only met Jesus. That is why the very words Jesus had spoken were fearful to them. So when Jesus died on the Cross, the chief priests petitioned the governor Pilate. They begged him to have the tomb of Jesus guarded thoroughly.

Since He had said He would rise in three days, they feared the disciples might take the body away. If the body disappeared from the tomb, they worried that a greater uproar would arise than when Jesus was alive, and that still more people would rise up. So they begged that the tomb be surrounded in layers, so that the disciples of Jesus could not steal the body.

At that time Israel was a vassal state of Rome. The Roman soldiers wanted Israel to remain a subject state that obeyed them well and paid its taxes well. Therefore guarding the tomb of

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Jesus was a service to the Roman emperor. So historians relate that they surrounded that tomb in three rings: the soldiers formed one ring around the tomb, another ring around that area, and yet another ring outside it.

They guarded it so that no one could come in. It was because they feared the Lord's word that He would rise again within three days. The religious leaders of the Jewish nation were so afraid that His word might come true that they did all this. But while the guards were keeping fierce watch with swords and spears, an angel came down from heaven and an earthquake shook the ground. The angel rolled back the great stone that blocked the entrance of the tomb of Jesus, and sat upon that stone.

Everyone, in the dark of night an earthquake struck, and an angel appeared clothed in garments white as snow. What a fearful sight that must have been! So the guards keeping the tomb became like dead men. But to the two Marys the angel showed grace. He told them: do not be afraid; have you come seeking the body of Jesus? He is not here; He has risen and has already gone to Galilee; He has gone before you to Galilee, so go to the mountain He promised.

So as the two Marys were hurrying on their way, they met Jesus on the road. Jesus greeted them, saying, *"Rejoice!" (Matthew 28:9)* and the women came, held His feet, and worshiped Him. Then Jesus said this: *"Do not be afraid. Go and tell My brethren to go to Galilee, and there they will see Me" (Matthew 28:10).*

While the women were on their way, some of the guards told the chief priests all that they had seen with their own eyes. Jesus really rose, they reported; we saw it with our own eyes; angels actually came and opened the door of the tomb, and Jesus rose and went out of the tomb. Hearing that news, the chief priests gave the guards a large sum of money and said this: *"Tell them,*

'His disciples came at night and stole Him away while we slept.'" (Matthew 28:13).

They bribed them with money, and promised that if this word reached the governor, they would speak well for them and keep them from trouble. The soldiers took the money and did as they were taught, and the Scriptures record that this saying has spread among the Jews to this day. But Jesus truly rose. He rose again from the dead.

The Lord who rose again told His disciples to go to Galilee, to the mountain He had appointed. The disciples saw Jesus on that mountain and worshiped Him, but there were also some who doubted. Everyone, we must know clearly the fact that Jesus has risen. And we must have the faith that believes it.

Some of the guards took money and said that the disciples of Jesus stole the body while they were sleeping. But this is nonsense. If a report went up that the Roman soldiers had lost the body while sleeping, they would lose their lives. They would in fact all be put to death. Could they so easily say something that would cost them their lives? So that they could take the money and bear no responsibility for what they said, the chief priests and the Roman soldiers stood in a very close relationship. The politicians and the religious leaders were holding hands with each other. That is how they could fabricate the lie so completely and keep spreading it. And many people heard that story and believed it.

Jesus who received all authority in heaven and on earth

But the truth is that Jesus rose again. He appeared in Galilee, and when the disciples came to Him, He met them all. He

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gathered them in one place and said, *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth" (Matthew 28:18).* The Father gave all authority to the Son. Now Jesus has become the Judge. All authority has returned to our Lord.

Our Lord came to this earth and Himself took on all the sins of this earth. With the baptism He received from John the Baptist He shouldered the sin of the world, and in place of that sin He was judged on the Cross. Because Jesus was judged in our place, Satan the Devil can no longer rule over people. The Devil can no longer rule over any soul in the world. Now it is our Lord who rules over people.

It is because Jesus Himself bore death, the wages of sin, and paid that price in full. The Lord paid the price of His own life and purchased the souls of me and you, of all people. Because He bought us and saved us, Satan the Devil can no longer rule over us. Rather, our Lord rules over us. So He said to His disciples: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18–20).*

Our Lord holds all authority in heaven and on earth. And He told us to make disciples of all the nations, and to teach them to observe all that He taught His disciples to observe while He was on this earth. Everyone, whether overseas mission or domestic mission, all this work of planting churches is the last Great Commission our Lord left on this earth. It is also the last will of our Lord. Knowing that this is the Lord's will, we must uphold that command well.

Our Lord will come again to this earth as the Judge. He comes as the Judge and judges the people. All authority of heaven and earth belongs to Jesus. Therefore there is authority

in the name of Jesus. However Satan the Devil rages, if with true faith we command Satan to depart in the name of Jesus Christ, Satan departs. The Devil can do nothing. For all authority belongs to Jesus. Before the name of Jesus Christ, Satan is bound to retreat.

The Lord who is alive and with us even now

Therefore we must carry out the work of overseas mission holding this faith. Domestic mission is the same. We must hold fast by faith that all this work is carrying out the command the Lord has given us. We must also live our life of faith believing the fact that our Lord rose again and is alive even now at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. Our Lord is not One who came to this earth, bore our sins, died, and ended there.

He not only removed all our sins with the baptism He received from John and the Cross, but He also rose again from the dead. After His resurrection the Lord appeared to many people. The Scriptures record that He was seen by over five hundred brethren at once (1 Corinthians 15:6). Therefore the resurrection of our Lord is utterly different from the claim of the leader of some heretical sect that he went up a mountain alone and received something no one knows about. What our Lord did actually happened in history and was clearly attested to many people. Our Lord truly rose. He came to life again.

And He is alive even now, governing all authority in heaven and on earth. Our Lord said, *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).* According to this word, our Lord is alive even now and walks with the servants of God and the saints. We must believe that He is the God who keeps us and works among us. Everyone, do you believe that our Lord is with

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us to the end of the age?

When we carry out the command of God, the Lord accomplishes His will. He also makes us make disciples of the nations, and through those disciples He has the gospel preached. We believe in our Lord, who accomplishes His will in this way.

Our doing overseas mission and domestic mission is not to build up some denomination. We must know this fact clearly. It is not for the growth of our denomination or the expansion of our influence. It is solely upholding the will of our Lord. Making disciples of all the nations, baptizing them, and delivering to them all the commands the Lord taught us to observe so that they keep them: all this work of God is what we are doing. Everyone, do you understand this fact?

Do you believe that our Lord rose again? Do you believe that the Lord is alive even now? Do you believe that our Lord is with us and keeps us until the end of the age? Our Lord is the Lord who hears our prayers. He is the living Lord. Our Lord is always with us, helps us, and bestows His grace on us. He holds us up, and He accomplishes the will of God through us. He is the living God, who through us accomplishes the salvation of God and the work of making disciples.

Therefore we must believe in the Lord and go forward with faith in the work of preaching the gospel. We intend to establish a church in every region. When a family moves to another region, we plant a church there, and we intend to establish churches in Busan and in many other regions. We must know that the establishing of a church in each region is the very work of saving the souls of our families. Therefore we must pray by faith and serve the Lord by faith. We must become saints who take part together, with material things, with prayer, with faith, with our bodies, with our time, in many ways, carrying out the Lord's command.

Even if we move to another region in the course of our life of faith, if our church is there we attend that church, and if there is no church, we will establish churches in every large city. Not only in this country, but wherever it is needed, we intend to establish churches overseas as well. If you ask why we establish churches there, it is because there also are many souls who must be saved. There are truly many souls to whom the gospel must be preached in many countries. Many peoples are waiting for the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach. We must make disciples of all the nations.

Therefore we must engrave this word clearly on our hearts. We must know the fact that this is not our work but God's work. We must truly challenge such work by faith, pray, and serve in this work of God. Whatever we do, we must do it all by faith. We must not do it in vain show; even when we offer one small material thing, we must offer it truly for God. Even in doing one small task, we must keep firmly in mind the fact that I am working for this gospel and for the Lord.

Not for ourselves but for the preaching of the gospel

Everyone, working in the church is not working for some person. All the work this church does is done for God. Whether we eat or drink, we do it all for the glory of God. The work of preaching the gospel, the work of establishing churches, the work of caring for the brothers and sisters, praying, and delivering the gospel to souls: for whom is all this work done? It is for our Lord.

Our Lord said, *"And whoever gives one of these little ones only a cup of cold water in the name of a disciple, assuredly, I*

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say to you, he shall by no means lose his reward." (Matthew 10:42). In the same way, though it seems that what we do is done to the brothers and sisters and to souls, in fact what we do to them is done to our Lord. We must know this and believe it so. In my ministry, too, what I do is done not to you but to the Lord. And in your ministry, what you do is done not to me but to the Lord. We are all doing it for the Lord. Our bodies are for the Lord, and everything we have is for the Lord.

We must know well in which direction the church is moving, gather our hearts there, and pray together. Do not decide anything alone and arbitrarily; know well in which direction the church is going. Pray for that work, give your heart to that work, offer material things for that work, and gather wisdom and time for it. We must do so not in words only but in reality. It must not be that we do everything of our own first and then try to serve with what is left over.

If our church decks itself out with everything it wants, we can never do mission. God enabled us to obtain this building, but in fact, apart from the piano and the pulpit and a few things, there is little here. We must not exert ourselves for our own church only. We do care for the church, but everything must be done for the preaching of the gospel. Everything must be done for the work of delivering the gospel to souls.

I always say this to the workers: if we finish decking out our own church first, we can never do mission. The thought of doing everything for ourselves first and then doing mission with what remains is not right. Rather, it is by offering material things to the Lord and gathering them that we can do this work and that work and carry out the Lord's command. The thought of decking out all that is ours and then doing mission with the leftovers is no different from the thinking of a robber.

For us not to serve the Lord is in fact to kill people. Everyone,

if we do not preach the gospel, that person is put to death and goes to hell. That is truly a great evil and a wrong. Even when we build a chapel, it is different from building a private house. We must not spend excessively for ourselves, for our own church. We must not put too much effort into decking out the church. We must do mission. We must establish churches in every region. Only then will your families, relatives, and friends, and all other souls, receive the remission of sins. If instead we move only in the direction of growing our own church, mission and evangelism end right there. Once one's own greed is fully served, that is the end.

We must seek the benefit of the kingdom of God

If we set out to deck out only our own church, there is no end. Everyone has the desire to bring in good air conditioners and heaters for our church. Because it is a matter for ourselves, such things are decided in an instant. Even without money, we somehow find a way and get it done quickly. Because it is for ourselves, the hearts of the saints also run to it at once. But if we consume everything for ourselves like that, nothing at all is left to flow outward.

Our churches across the country may seem small in scale, but the money spent for souls is greater than the money spent for ourselves. When we calculate the money spent for ourselves, it is not so much. But the money that goes out for souls is truly much. That is a desirable thing, a right plan, and a right ministry. Our Lord said, *"It is more blessed to give than to receive" (Acts 20:35).*

If we can, we must have something to share with souls. We must have something to give, whatever it may be. Rather than

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trying to receive something from them, we must have something to give. Our saints and the servants of God, too, must have hearts that would give rather than receive. Only then do our hearts grow larger, and our lives actually become rich. The Scriptures say this: *"There is one who scatters, yet increases more; And there is one who withholds more than is right, But it leads to poverty" (Proverbs 11:24).* The person who truly knows how to serve for the gospel actually becomes rich.

We must listen carefully to this command our Lord has given us. It does not stop at being a doctrine. It is the command our Lord spoke in person to His disciples before going up to the kingdom of heaven. He said: make disciples of all the nations, and baptize them. We must become servants of God and saints who uphold this command. We must cherish a great purpose. Rather than making our own name known, we must always be thinking of how the gospel of the water and the Spirit may be preached, and how the church and the kingdom of God may profit, and live with our focus set there.

To seek the benefit of the kingdom of God is to look not only at ourselves but at how this gospel is being made profitable through us. If a work is for the gospel, we must offer it boldly to the Lord and carry out the Lord's command. Everyone, you must not live a life only for your private affairs or for yourself alone. You must live for the Lord. Only then does the Lord help you and bless you. Our church, too, must be a church for the Lord. Only then does the Lord make this church blessed and bless it. Knowing this fact, we must realize how we ought to live before God, and live carrying out His will. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

We must make disciples

< Matthew 28:16-20 >

"Then the eleven disciples went away into Galilee, to the mountain which Jesus had appointed for them. When they saw Him, they worshiped Him; but some doubted. And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, 'All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.' Amen."

Jesus rose again on the third day after dying on the Cross. And for some forty days He revealed Himself to His disciples. After that, just as He had said, He called His disciples to a mountain in the region of Galilee. The disciples all gathered at the place Jesus had told them to come, and the risen Lord appeared among them. And He commanded His disciples this: *"All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:18–20).*

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The risen Lord who holds all authority

The Lord died and rose again, and He became our true God and our Savior. God the Father gave all authority in heaven and on earth to His Son. Before Jesus came to this earth, the Devil swept over this world. But because of what Jesus accomplished by coming to this earth, the Devil lost all his power. Therefore, when we command Satan to depart in the name of Jesus Christ, the Devil cannot stir. The Father gave all that authority to the Son. The Lord who holds that authority speaks to us. He says: now make disciples of all the nations.

What, then, is a disciple? A disciple is one who follows exactly in the footsteps his teacher walked. A disciple is one who carries within himself the very goal his teacher cherished and the very life his teacher lived. The Lord told us to make such disciples from among all the nations. And He told us to baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and to teach them to observe all that He commanded. He meant for us to teach all the truth the Scriptures speak, so that they observe it.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in baptism

The Lord said to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This baptism is truly important. Everyone, what is contained in this baptism? In it is contained the fact that Jesus took on our sins. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus shouldered all the sins of the world on His own body. When John the Baptist laid his hands on the head of Jesus and baptized Him, all the sins of mankind were passed over to Jesus.

This is precisely His coming by water. The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world is Jesus.

Next, Jesus hung on the Cross bearing those sins. He received in our place the judgment of sin we should have received, and He shed His blood and died. This is precisely His coming by blood. Jesus died in the place of our death. And in three days He rose again from the dead. By rising He made us born again and gave us new life. Thus Jesus accomplished our salvation once and for all with the water and the blood. In baptism are contained His washing away of our sins, His taking our death in our place, and His raising us to new life. That is why the Lord said to baptize in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. This is precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Lord who is with us to the end of the age

The Lord went on to say, *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20).* Our Lord is always with us. How is He with us? He is with us by the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts that have received the remission of sins, and He goes with us until the end of the age. Therefore we are not alone. We are with the Lord. The Lord keeps us and leads us, gives us new strength, and protects us. He also makes us pray, and when we pray He hears and answers. The Lord is with His disciples to the end of the age. Until the day we go before the Lord, He is with us always. We must live by the faith that knows and believes this fact.

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Cast your anxieties upon the Lord

I believe that the Lord is with us in truly many things. When a person grows old, the body is not what it used to be. The sunlight dazzles, the eyes smart, and one tires more easily than before. But because the Lord is with me, I can still work for the gospel no less than a young person. As we live on, many anxieties arise. There are times when worry floods the heart over what lies ahead. But everyone, do not be anxious. The Lord said that He would be with you always, even to the end of the age.

If there is a worry in your heart too heavy to bear, cast it away to the Lord. Entrust it to the Lord. If you ask Him to resolve it in a good way, the Lord takes up that burden. Whether it is a matter of the future or a matter of marriage, even what we cannot solve by our own strength is solved when we believe in the Lord. If we do not believe in the Lord, it remains unsolved instead. We must first follow the will of the Lord. Then the Lord solves all the remaining problems.

I do not hurry in anything. I prepare what I have planned step by step and go forward. I never plunge into something once and then quit because it does not go as I wished. If we prepare steadily, God accomplishes it. That is how I believe. God is also opening up the work we do just as expected. However hard the world may be, God opens our way. A person reaps what he sows. If we sow for what is right we reap what is right, and if we sow evil we reap evil. The Lord is One who does not lie.

When we sow for the preaching of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and sow asking in prayer for what is needed, the Lord surely answers. Whenever I needed something, I prayed. I told God that a house was needed, and God provided that house almost as a free gift. But prayer is not something offered once and done. It must be offered long and steadily to reach heaven.

We are not to pray once and then pester like a child, asking why He does not give. As we keep praying, what we first asked for out of some lack becomes truly earnest to us. After praying that earnestly, we cast that burden before God. When we entrust it, believing He will give, God accomplishes it. Everything fulfilled in my life has been so. When we serve the Lord, He supplies material things as well. When material things are supplied, we serve the gospel more, and the workers who serve the gospel together also increase.

Gospel ministry that serves the Lord purely

I truly want to do overseas mission. If only there is an interpreter, I can go anywhere and hold meetings. But sadly, many people seek material gain under the pretext of Jesus. We seek to serve the Lord purely, while they put the gospel forward to secure their own profit. We must not do so. Material things follow of themselves when we serve the Lord. When we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit purely, God supplies all that is needed and adds fellow workers as well. If God permits, we will go anywhere and preach this gospel.

A brother from Japan came to us to receive mission training. This brother had never once attended a worldly church. Wanting to know about the last days, he searched the Internet and came upon our books, and by reading those books he came to know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since then he had preached the gospel alone in loneliness. Even when people did not readily receive it, he was not discouraged; he visited brothers and sisters far away, had fellowship with them, and held fast to this gospel.

This brother is truly pure in heart. He does not adorn his

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outside; he came simply, just as he was, worn from his work. Though he graduated from university, he is not in the least arrogant, and he is always ready to learn. A sister interpreted at his side, so we communicated well, and the training proceeded smoothly. Training does not succeed because we train someone well. The person himself must have the heart to learn well. This brother had precisely that heart.

This posture of learning is precisely the posture of a disciple. People who are older usually do not try to learn. There is a saying that an old dog does not try to learn even when it meets a new master. However much the new master cherishes and teaches it, it clings only to its old habits. People are the same. As they age, they shrink from learning and following, and try to go only by what they knew of old. But to follow Jesus is to learn from Him, to hear His word, and to walk after Him.

I too, going about many countries for mission, mingled freely with their cultures. Even with unfamiliar gestures or words, I was not ashamed but learned on the spot. Not being willing to learn is the shameful thing; learning, however clumsily, is not shameful. Therefore the person whose heart is pure, who lays down his own thoughts before the word of God, becomes a disciple of the Lord. The true disciple is the person who, when the word of God says so, accepts that the word is right, whatever his own thoughts may be.

On the other hand, there was a man who said he had received the remission of sins by reading our books, yet when he actually met me he would not learn. Because he had already ministered for a long time, he was reluctant to learn under a younger man. Instead he tried to teach others, and his heart was set entirely on material things. I exhorted him like this: if you have met the Lord, you must take the posture of a learner. Whatever your past was, however many years you ministered, before the Lord you are

now like a little child. You must learn anew, from how you live, to how you speak, to how you think.

But that man remained uninterested to the end. A person who says that even though the word of God says so, he himself does not think so, is no different from Judas Iscariot, who sold Jesus. We must not stand in such a place. By all means, we must pray, and believe that the Lord hears our prayers, answers, and works in person.

The word of the Lord to make disciples of all the nations means precisely this. It is enough for that brother to become like us. It is enough for him to believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit as we do, serve the Lord as we do, and preach this gospel as we do. That is precisely a disciple. A disciple of Jesus. To follow in the footsteps of the teacher and become like the teacher, that is making disciples.

Therefore we must have faith in our hearts. It is the faith that the Lord is always with us. If the Lord were not with us, how could we live? Because the Lord is with us, we look only to the Lord. If there is a burden too heavy to bear, entrust it to the Lord, and follow the will of the Lord first. Then the Lord solves all the remaining problems. I have lived that way all along. You too must live that way. ✉

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◇ Next in the Series: “Mark Volume 1”

Following this book, the first volume of the Mark Biblical Exposition & Sermon series, which examines Mark chapters 1 through 4 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, will be published soon.

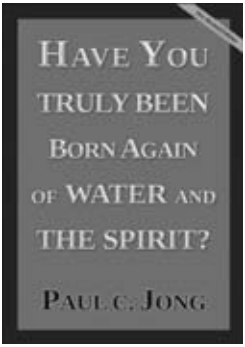
> ***Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)***

We sincerely hope that the books of Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will strengthen your faith and become spiritual food for your soul.

All of Pastor Paul C. Jong’s books are available free of charge at www.bjnewlife.org in eBook (PDF, EPUB) and audiobook (M4A, MP3) formats as soon as each new title is published, and they can also be read directly on the website at any time.

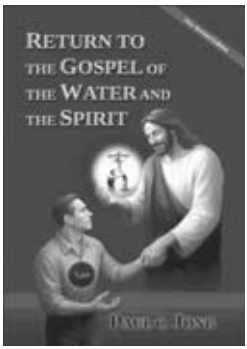
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

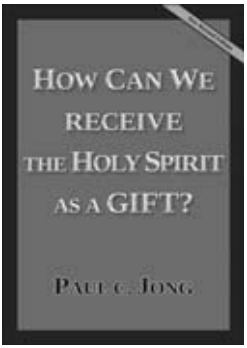
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

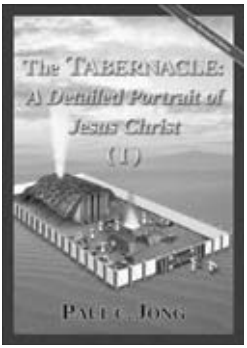
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



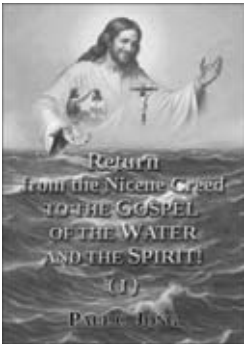
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



-Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit? –

The gospel that the early church preached was precisely the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That gospel was the gospel that Jesus actually shouldered and washed away the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John was to fulfill the law of the sacrificial system found in Leviticus. That is, just as sin was transferred to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands, the substance of that sacrificial law was fulfilled through Jesus's baptism.

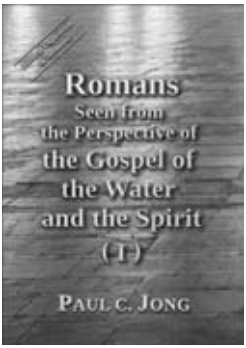
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching the present day.

Today, many people are struggling to receive the removal of their sins without knowing when their sins were transferred to Jesus. Because of this, even while saying they believe in the gospel of the cross, they fail to reach true assurance of salvation and live amidst repetitive repentance and the pangs of conscience.

The reason we must return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit is clear. This is because only this gospel allows us to meet the Jesus who became the sacrificial offering as the sin of the world was transferred to His body, and thereby have assurance of salvation.

Paul C. Jong's Biblical Exposition & Sermons

Romans seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)



When Looking at Romans from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit,

A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of those sins on the cross, and resurrected, it finally begins to be seen why Paul introduced himself as a "debtor to the gospel" and so boldly declared, "I am not ashamed of the gospel."

The Apostle Paul, after revealing the sins of the Gentiles and the hypocrisy of religious people in turn, proclaims the righteousness of God manifested apart from the law. That righteousness is not a righteousness built up by human moral effort, but the righteousness completed by the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the cross, and the resurrection. The righteousness Abraham received when he was uncircumcised is the evidence of it, and the "blessing of not imputing sin" that David sang of is the result of it.

A person who believes this gospel knows that he is one who has already been justified. Only upon that conviction does peace with God reside, and the path opens where even tribulation leads to perseverance, character, and hope. This mystery—that a life which was placed under the reign of death over sin through one man, Adam, has received the removal of sins through one person, Jesus Christ, and has been transferred under the reign of righteousness—takes its place within us.

Salvation has already been completed at once. Now, what remains is the matter of receiving that gospel with the heart and living as a righteous person.

Matthew seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Tracing Jesus' birth and the wise men's worship, the ministry of John the Baptist as the last high priest, the saving work Jesus began with His baptism in the Jordan, the temptation in the wilderness, and the proclamation of the gospel of the kingdom of heaven, this book testifies that through His baptism by John the Baptist, Jesus took the sins of mankind upon Himself, was judged and died on the cross, and rose from the dead, overcoming sin and death.

If you know the blood of the cross but not when and where your sins were passed on to Jesus, look to the unchanging word of salvation rather than your feelings. In the Bible-based gospel of the water and the Spirit, see what the 'all righteousness' God fulfilled truly is.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Psalm seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I)

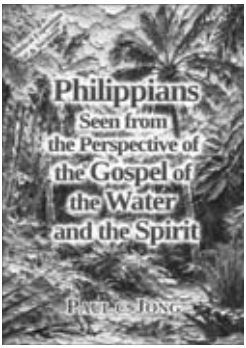


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who is to come.

This book is a biblical exposition that unfolds the Psalms from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. David's songs are not an outpouring of emotion but the confession of a righteous man who has received the remission of sins, a prophetic praise that looked up to the Christ who is to come. The blessing, righteousness, and peace of the Psalms do not come from human goodness but from the salvation God accomplished in Christ.

Beneath it all flows a single gospel. It is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus took our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins on the cross, and rose from the dead to make us righteous. When you open the Psalms with this gospel, the old songs come alive as your own confession, and this book leads you to the blessed place of those clothed in the righteousness of God.

Philippians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit



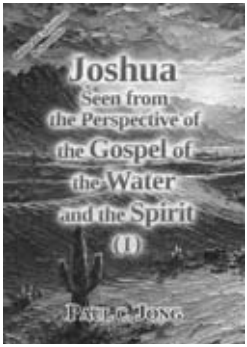
This book offers a fresh understanding of the Epistle to the Philippians from the perspective of the 'gospel of the water and the Spirit.' When we hold fast to the truth that Jesus took the sins of the whole world upon Himself by being baptized by John, suffered judgment on the Cross, and was resurrected, the true source of Paul's joy becomes absolutely clear.

Paul discarded everything he once boasted of as rubbish, proclaiming instead the righteousness received from God through faith alone. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have already been delivered from sin and granted citizenship in heaven. Even though our flesh is weak, we are never again placed under condemnation; this is the root of true joy that remains unshaken in any circumstance.

Salvation has been accomplished completely, once and for all. Now, we must believe in this gospel with all our hearts and live boldly, sharing it in our new life. This book serves as a clear guide along that path.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)

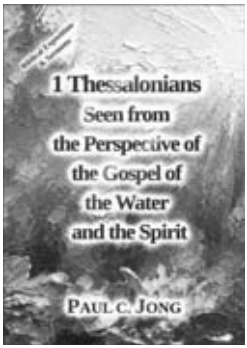


The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy the remission of sins and true rest.

This book explains Joshua chapters 1 through 12 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. From the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan to the fall of Jericho and the defeat of the kings of Canaan, Joshua points to Jesus Christ the Savior. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from death to complete salvation.

Discover the true victory that is obtained not by human strength but by believing the Word of God. Lay down your own righteousness, rise again from failure, be united with the Church of God, and walk boldly in the rest and the spiritual inheritance God has already given.

1 Thessalonians seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit



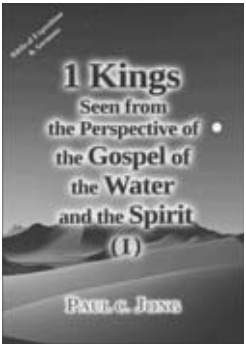
The young church in Thessalonica, established not long before, might well have collapsed under the persecution that pressed in from every side; yet with firm faith, love, and hope it carried the gospel throughout the whole region. What kept these weak people from falling? It was not a religion delivered in word only, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which came in power, in the Holy Spirit, and in much assurance.

This book opens the five chapters of First Thessalonians anew with that very gospel. It is the gospel by which Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of the world, was judged in our place for that sin on the cross, and rose again from death, delivering us from sin and death. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the power of God that turns a sinner into a righteous one, and turns the fear of death into living hope.

If you desire a faith unshaken in the last days, open this book. Here is the sure word by which you receive the remission of sins—life and true comfort for you.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

1 Kings seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

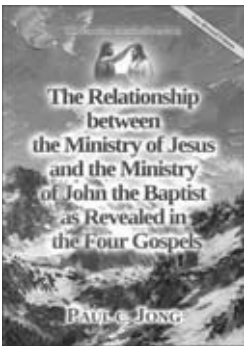


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures forever.

This book reveals the gospel of the water and the Spirit contained in the Temple and its furnishings. Jesus took the sins of the world upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete salvation.

Do not rely on your own wisdom and your own kingdom. Use the wisdom, wealth, and time you have received for the gospel and for souls, and serve Jesus Christ as the King of your heart, building the house of God.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

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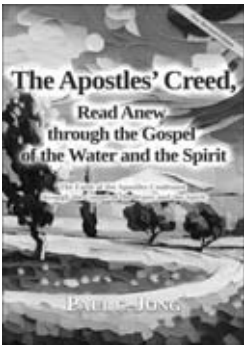
Paul C. Jong's Special Features

The Apostles' Creed, Read Anew through the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit [New Revised Edition]

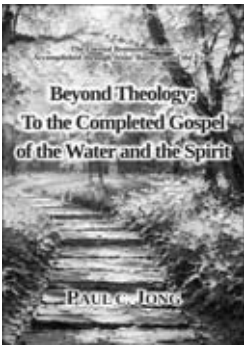


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission of sins and been born again.

This book examines this confession of faith, shaped and refined by people, article by article in the light of the "gospel of the water and the Spirit" to which Scripture testifies. In the light of this gospel—the gospel in which Jesus took upon Himself all the sins of the world by being baptized by John, bore the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead on the third day—this book points out what the Apostles' Creed leaves out.

The aim of this book is not to help the reader recite the Creed more skillfully. "Have I truly been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit?" When we come to answer this question through the Word, we will at last offer a living confession as those who have received the remission of sins and been born again.

Beyond Theology: To the Completed Gospel of the Water and the Spirit



Even as we confess that we have been saved, why does the weight of sin still remain in one corner of our hearts?

Countless saints live carrying this question. Each denomination has a different answer, but the Bible testifies to one story from beginning to end.

This book does not belong to any denomination. It sets out what each tradition—Calvinism, Lutheranism, Methodism, Catholicism, and others—teaches, acknowledges their contributions, and then brings them all before the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the gospel by which Jesus bore the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and completed our eternal salvation through His resurrection from death.

This book does not condemn any church. It only invites you to lay down your familiar theology for a moment and to discover anew, before the gospel of the water and the Spirit, where unshakable assurance begins.

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►www.bjnewlife.org

Please help us spread the true gospel of Jesus Christ through our books so that more people can be born again of the water and the Spirit. We would also be grateful if you could introduce our website and books to many people and invite them to visit.

THE NEW LIFE MISSION
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Sincerely,
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Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 90-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

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

Matthew, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Through Matthew chapters 24–28, this book testifies to the salvation that the Lord completed and accomplished for us, presenting a faith that discerns the end times.

The text clearly illustrates contrasting choices and their outcomes. It features, in turn: the one who is taken and the one left behind in the same field; the virgins who prepared oil and those who failed to do so; the servant who multiplied his talents and the one who hid his; the woman who poured out expensive perfume and Judas who sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver; Barabbas who was released and Jesus who bore the cross in our place. Finally, it contrasts the women who spread the news of the Resurrection with those who tried to cover up the fact with money.

All these passages show us what we must believe and how we must live by faith. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, was judged and died on the cross for those sins, and rose again to grant us salvation from sin and eternal life.

What, then, is the task the Lord has entrusted to those who have received salvation? The risen Lord commanded us to make disciples of all nations. Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live according to the mission entrusted to you by the Lord.

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