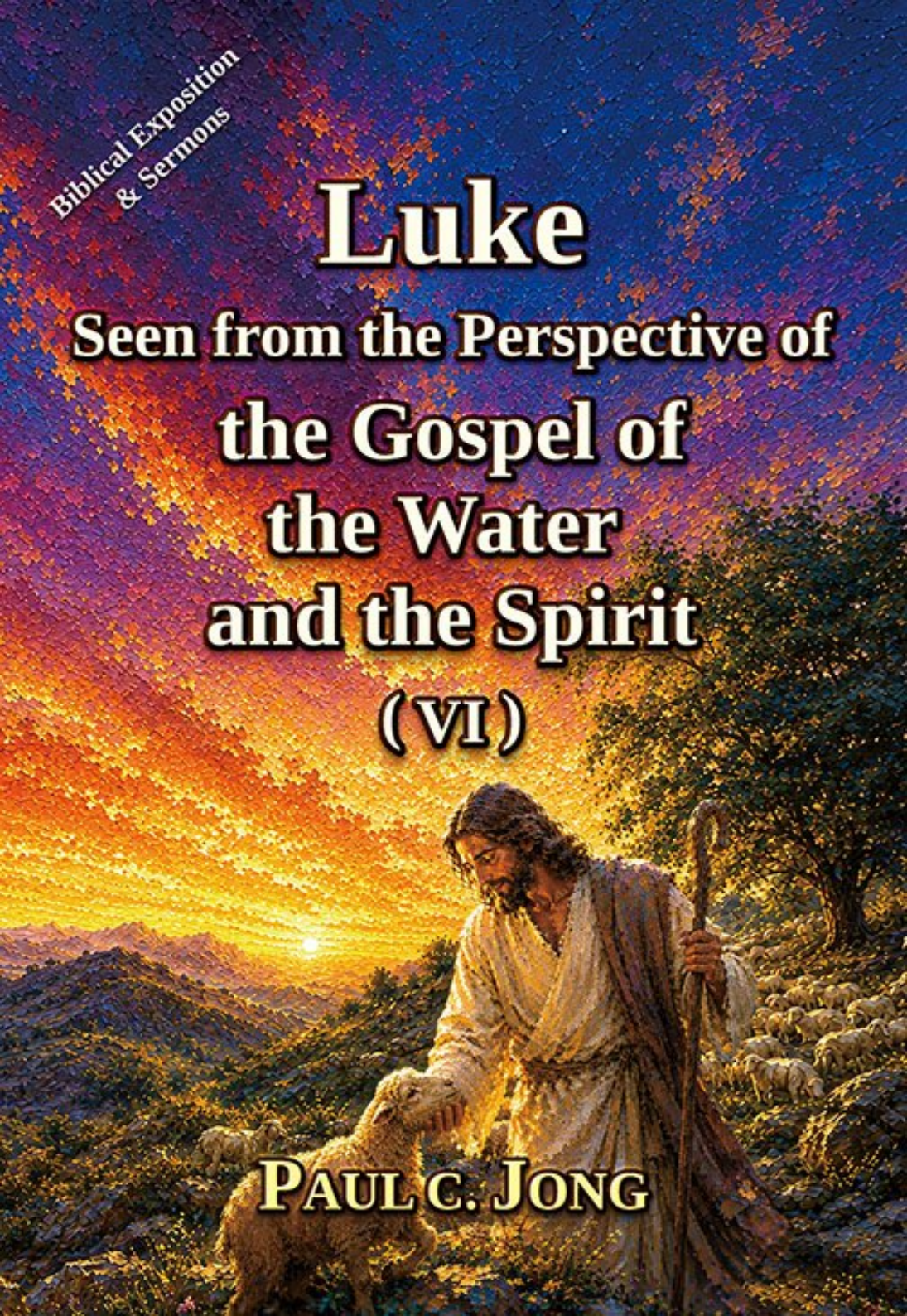
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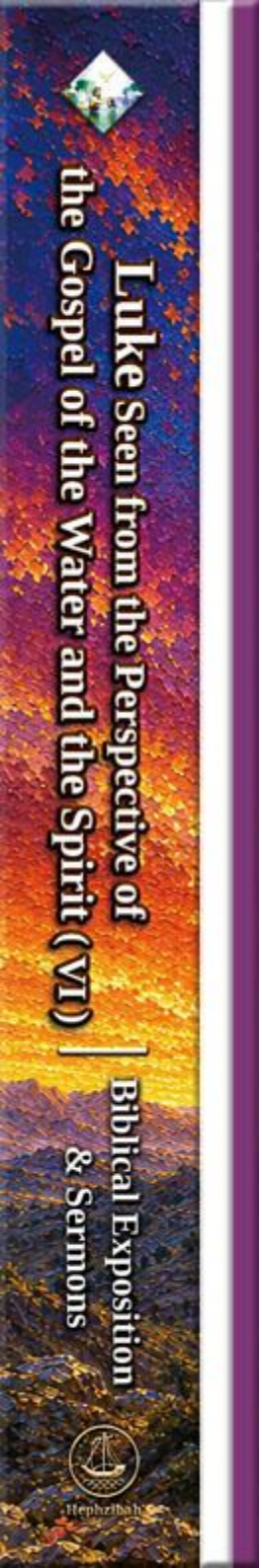
Luke

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

(VI)



PAUL C. JONG



“The veil of the temple was torn in two” (Luke 23:45)

Jesus’ shedding of His blood on the Cross was not a failure or a tragedy. Jesus removed all the sins of the world—the sins that had been transferred to His own body through the baptism He received from John—by being judged for them in our place, and by rising again from the dead He overcame the power of sin and death and completed our salvation.

When Jesus breathed His last, the veil of the Holy Place was torn from top to bottom. Through this work of salvation that Jesus accomplished, God has enabled anyone who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit to receive the remission of all his sins and to come boldly before God.

This book invites you into that salvation, completed by His baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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

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

PAUL C. JONG

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

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

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

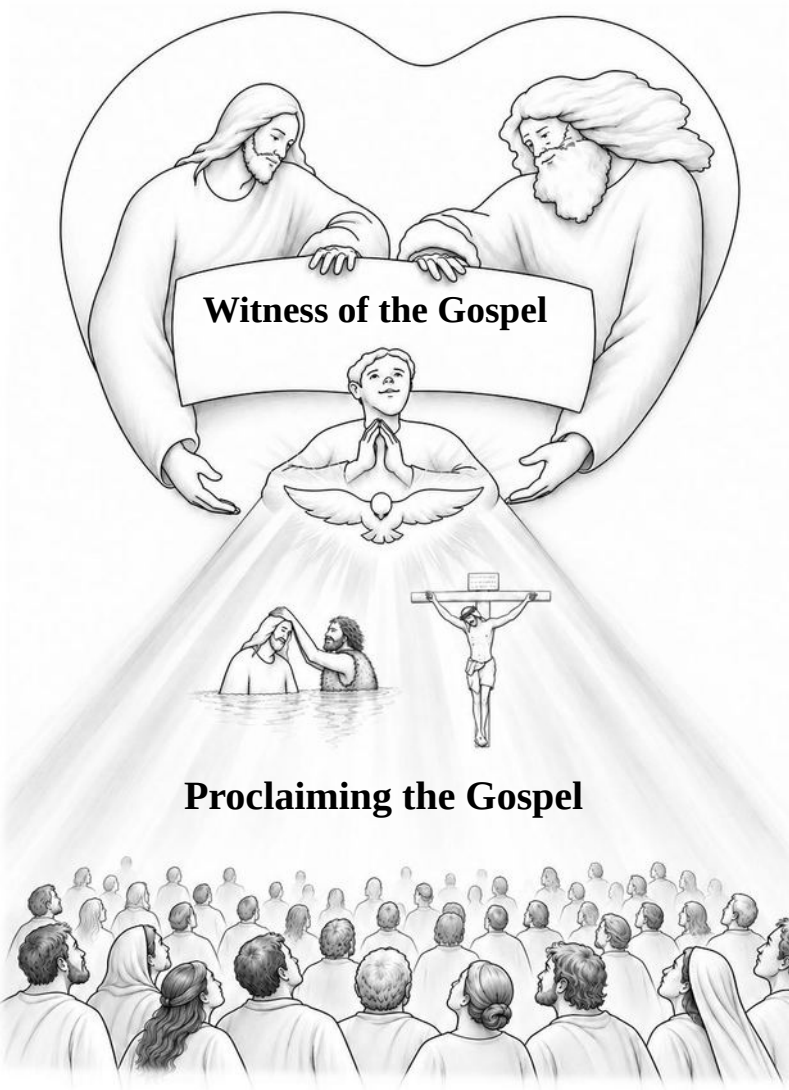
I would also like to thank God's servants and brothers and sisters for their invaluable service in publishing this book. We all worked hard to write this book.

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

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

PAUL C. JONG

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Preface

To read Luke chapters 23 and 24 is not merely to know the Cross and the resurrection of Jesus as events that took place long ago. It is to know the meaning of the suffering and death that Jesus Christ, the Son of God, underwent in order to save sinners, and to believe in the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. It is also to learn what the person who has received the remission of sin must preach as he lives, holding the hope of the resurrection.

This sixth volume of the Luke series covers Luke chapters 23 and 24. We examine the process in which Jesus, who had no sin, was interrogated and mocked, died hanging on the cross, and was buried in the tomb. Next, through the empty tomb, the two disciples on their way to Emmaus, and the disciples who met the risen Lord, we confirm that the promise of salvation written in the Scriptures was fulfilled. All these words show the fact that Jesus completed salvation, and that the person who has believed in that gospel must hold the hope of the resurrection and preach the word of the remission of sin to all nations.

Jesus who completed salvation with His baptism and the Cross

In Luke chapter 23, Jesus, though He had no sin at all, was interrogated and mocked and then hung on the cross. But we must not see the Cross of Jesus merely as an unjust death or a heartbreaking tragedy. When Jesus received baptism from John

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the Baptist, He took charge of all the sins of mankind, and He hung on the cross in order to receive the judgment of those sins in place of mankind. Therefore, what is needed in the face of the Cross is not to pity Jesus with human feelings, but to know and believe that He is God and that He did all these things in order to save sinners.

One of the criminals crucified with Jesus blasphemed Him, but the other criminal admitted that he was a sinner who deserved punishment, and believed in Jesus' sinlessness and in His kingdom. He had no good deeds to show for himself, but he entered Paradise by relying on Jesus. This shows the fact that salvation is given not by a person's merit but by faith in what Jesus completed. The tearing of the veil of the temple when Jesus died shows that the way to come to God, which had been blocked by sin, was opened. The fact that Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus in his own new tomb testifies to the Lord's actual death, and makes us think that the old self of the believer, too, died and was buried with Christ.

The Lord who rose from the dead and gave us eternal hope

In Luke chapter 24, the women went to the tomb of Jesus but did not find His body. Jesus had risen again just as He had said. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus were discouraged, looking only at the death on the Cross, but when the risen Lord opened the Scriptures to them, they realized that the suffering and resurrection of the Christ were things accomplished according to the will of God. Faith is not based on the circumstances before our eyes or on our feelings; it begins with knowing and accepting the written Word of God.

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The risen Jesus showed the disciples His hands and feet and ate food before them. This shows that His resurrection was not a vision or a spiritual symbol but a real bodily resurrection. The resurrection of Jesus is the guarantee that the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit will also rise again in the future in a body that will not decay and live in the eternal kingdom of God. The person who has this hope does not regard death as the end, and even in hardship he can believe in the Lord who will raise him again and can carry out the work of the gospel entrusted to him.

Witnesses of the resurrection who preach the gospel of the remission of sin

The risen Jesus opened the hearts of the disciples so that they understood the Scriptures, and said that the word that leads to the remission of sin must be preached to all nations. He also promised the Holy Spirit, blessed the disciples, and went up into heaven. As witnesses who had seen the death and resurrection of Jesus, the disciples received the mission of preaching to the world the salvation the Lord had completed.

Today, the person who has received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is also a witness of this salvation. A witness is not one who conveys his own thoughts or religious experiences, but one who preaches the word that Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and then completed salvation by rising again. The Lord, who rose again and ascended into heaven, is working together with the Church even now through the Holy Spirit. Therefore the saved person must look forward to the Lord who will come again and to the eternal kingdom of

God, and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls who have not yet received the remission of sin.

Before reading this book

This book is arranged so that the word of Luke chapters 23 and 24 may be examined through 'Biblical Exposition,' 'Questions and Answers,' and the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong. Part 1 of the Biblical Exposition first examines the events and the flow of the text from the general perspective, and then explains the meaning of that salvation from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Part 2 consists of passage-by-passage sermons that divide the text according to its content and unfold the central events and teachings. The Questions and Answers concisely confirm the main verses and themes and help the reader organize what he has examined in the Biblical Exposition once again.

The sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong lead us not to look at the Cross merely as an object of human pity, but to believe in it as the event of salvation in which Jesus received in our place the judgment of the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism. They also do not let the resurrection remain a mere doctrine, but lead us to accept it as the actual hope given to the saved. Following the sermons, the reader can learn how the baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection of Jesus form one complete salvation, and can reflect on what he must live for as a witness who preaches that gospel.

I hope that all who read this book will believe that Jesus took charge of all their sins and their judgment with His baptism and the Cross. I hope that each one will hold in his heart the new life and the eternal hope the risen Lord has given, and, with the help of the

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Holy Spirit, preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the souls who do not yet know salvation. I hope that the Holy Spirit will make us understand the word and lead us to live as witnesses of salvation, waiting for the Lord who will come again. ✉

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CHAPTER

23

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Luke Chapter 23

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

Luke chapter 23 records the course of events in which the sinless Jesus is interrogated by Pilate and Herod, condemned in place of Barabbas and crucified to death, and buried in the tomb of Joseph of Arimathea. We will examine each text in turn through the general interpretation of its context and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. Interrogated by Pilate and Herod (23:1–12)

"Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.' Then Pilate asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' He answered him and said, 'It is as you say.' So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no fault in this Man.' But they were the more fierce, saying, 'He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.' When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time. Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by

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Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other."

General interpretation of the text

The religious leaders lead Jesus to Pilate, the Roman governor, and accuse Him of inciting the people, forbidding the payment of taxes, and claiming to be a king. Because it was hard to obtain a death sentence from Rome with religious accusations alone, they changed the charge to one of political rebellion.

Pilate asks Jesus whether He is the King of the Jews, but he finds no crime deserving death. When he hears that Jesus is from Galilee, he sends Him to Herod Antipas, the ruler of Galilee, who was staying in Jerusalem at that time.

Herod had heard rumors about Jesus and expected to see a miracle, but Jesus does not answer his questions. Herod's interest was not in knowing the truth and repenting but in satisfying his curiosity.

Herod and his soldiers mock Jesus, dress Him in a gorgeous robe, and send Him back to Pilate. Herod and Pilate, who had previously been enemies of each other, become friends on this day. They were united with each other in rejecting and mocking the sinless Jesus.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The sinless Jesus was interrogated in our place

The religious leaders led Jesus to Pilate and accused Him of misleading the people, forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and claiming to be a king. But after interrogating Jesus, Pilate said, *"I find no fault in this Man."*

Jesus is indeed a King, but His kingdom was not a political kingdom of this world. Jesus did not come to overthrow Rome and gain fleshly power; He came to save those bound by sin and death and make them the people of the kingdom of God.

Herod had long wanted to see Jesus, but it was not because he wanted to hear the word of salvation. He wanted to watch the marvelous miracles Jesus performed. Jesus gave no answer at all to such questions from Herod. Seeking Jesus as an object of curiosity and miracles is entirely different from knowing and believing in Him as one's own Savior.

The chief priests and the scribes kept on accusing Jesus, and Herod and his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him. Jesus was God, who could fully have proven His innocence and escaped from that place. But He kept silent like the lamb recorded in Isaiah chapter 53. This was because He had to be judged on the Cross for our sins, which He had taken charge of with His baptism.

2. Barabbas is released in place of Jesus (23:13–25)

"Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, 'You have brought this

Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him' (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). And they all cried out at once, saying, 'Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas'— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Then he said to them the third time, 'Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.' But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will."

General interpretation of the text

Pilate calls together the religious leaders and the people and declares that he has found no crime in Jesus that would warrant a death sentence. Since Herod also judged that Jesus had no fault, Pilate intends to chastise Jesus and then release Him.

But the crowd demands that Jesus be crucified and that Barabbas be released. Barabbas was a man who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder.

Pilate declares Jesus' innocence three times, but in the end

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he yields to the demand of the crowd. Though he knows what is just, he hands the innocent Jesus over to crucifixion for the sake of his own political safety and public opinion.

This event must not be blamed on the whole Jewish nation. The text shows the responsibility both of some of the leaders and the crowd who accused Jesus and of the Roman governor who held the authority to pass sentence. Luke shows the paradox that the guilty Barabbas is released while the sinless Jesus is handed over to death in his place.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Barabbas was released and Jesus was condemned in his place

Pilate said repeatedly that he had found in Jesus no crime deserving death. Herod also found no fault in Jesus. But the crowd demanded that Jesus be crucified and that Barabbas be released.

Barabbas was a real sinner who had been thrown into prison for rebellion and murder. Jesus, on the contrary, was the righteous One without any sin at all. Yet the sinner Barabbas was set free, and the sinless Jesus received the death sentence. This scene clearly shows the principle of substitution, in which Jesus receives in the sinner's place the judgment the sinner should receive.

Before God we, too, are people like Barabbas. Even if, before a human court, we have not committed murder or raised a rebellion, we have rebelled against God in our hearts and lived committing countless sins, following greed, hatred, and pride. Therefore we must not put forward our own goodness and religious deeds.

The sinless Jesus took charge of all our sins on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. And He was handed over to the judgment of the Cross in place of Barabbas and of us. The event of Barabbas' release shows that salvation is not a reward for good deeds but the grace by which Jesus received in our place the punishment that sinners should receive.

3. Simon who carried the cross and the daughters of Jerusalem (23:26–31)

"Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin "to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?'"

General interpretation of the text

As the soldiers lead Jesus away, they lay the cross on Simon, a man from Cyrene, and make him follow behind Jesus. Simon carried the cross under compulsion, but his figure calls to mind the way of the disciple, who is to take up his own cross and follow Jesus.

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Many people and women follow Jesus and grieve. Jesus tells them not to weep for Him but to weep for themselves and for their children.

This does not mean that He rejected their sorrow for Him. It is a warning that, because the coming judgment on Jerusalem is very grave, they should not remain in emotional sorrow but reflect on their own situation and repent.

The word that asks what will happen in the dry wood if such things happen in the green wood means that if even the sinless Jesus suffers, the judgment that an unrepentant generation will meet will be even greater.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Rather than pitying Jesus, we must see our own sins

When Jesus was going on His way bearing the cross, the soldiers laid the cross on Simon, a Cyrenian, and made him follow Jesus. Many women, seeing Jesus' agonized figure, beat their breasts and wept bitterly.

But Jesus told them not to weep for Him but to weep for themselves and for their children. Jesus was not a pitiful religious leader who was arrested and died because He had no power. He is the almighty God who created the whole universe, and the Savior who voluntarily walked the way of the Cross in order to remove our sins.

Therefore, when we look at the Cross, we must not sentimentally pity Jesus, thinking only of how much pain He must have suffered. We must first realize whose sins caused Him to walk that way. The sins the Lord took charge of with the baptism He received from John are none other than our sins, and

the punishment the Lord received was the judgment we should have received.

The word *"if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"* warns of the severity of the judgment that sinners without life will meet. If the sinless Jesus received such punishment because He had taken charge of our sins, then the person who rejects that salvation and keeps his own sins as they are cannot escape the final judgment.

The Cross is not merely an event to be grieved over. It is an event we must know, give thanks for, and believe: that Jesus saved us by taking charge of our sins and paying the just price of sins.

4. Jesus is crucified (23:32–38)

"There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

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General interpretation of the text

Jesus is crucified together with two criminals at the place called the Skull. People divide Jesus' garments by casting lots, and the religious leaders and soldiers mock Him, saying that since He saved others, He should save Himself.

Jesus prays for those who crucify Him, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* This does not mean that they bore no responsibility; it shows the mercy of Jesus, who opens the way of the remission of sin even to those who kill Him.

Above the cross is fastened the inscription of the charge, *"THE KING OF THE JEWS."* Rome fastened it in mockery, but from the perspective of the Gospel of Luke it paradoxically declares the fact that Jesus is the true King.

It is not that Jesus did not come down from the cross because He lacked the power. Instead of saving Himself, He accepted suffering in order to save others. Jesus' kingship is shown not through violence and self-preservation but through sacrifice and the remission of sin.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The mocked Jesus is the true King

Jesus was crucified together with two criminals. That the sinless Jesus was treated like one of the criminals was the fulfillment of the word recorded in Isaiah chapter 53.

Jesus asked God to remit the sins of those who had crucified Him. The people did not know that they were crucifying Jesus, the Son of God and the Savior. But Jesus had taken charge of even the sins of such sinners with His baptism and was receiving the judgment for them on the Cross.

The rulers and the soldiers mocked Jesus, saying that if He was the Christ and the King, He should save Himself. Had Jesus come down from the cross, He could have shown His power, but He could not have completed the work of saving sinners. By not saving Himself, Jesus saved us.

The inscription fastened above the cross, *"THE KING OF THE JEWS,"* was meant for mockery, but in reality it testified to the truth. Jesus is not only the King of the Jews but the King of kings, who saves all mankind from sin and death and rules over them.

5. The promise given to the repentant criminal (23:39–43)

"Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"

General interpretation of the text

One of the criminals crucified with Him mocks Jesus, telling Him to save Himself and them. But the other criminal says that they are receiving the punishment their deeds deserve, whereas Jesus has done nothing wrong.

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Even though Jesus is facing death, he believes that Jesus will come again as King, and he asks Jesus to remember him when He comes into His kingdom.

Jesus promises him, *"Today you will be with Me in Paradise."* He acknowledged his sin and trusted in Jesus, and Jesus accepts this man, who turned back at the last moment.

Salvation is not obtained through past merits or social qualifications; it is given through believing in and relying on the grace of Jesus. Moreover, the center of salvation is not simply going to a good place but being with Jesus.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The two criminals show the way of faith and the way of rejection

One criminal blasphemed Jesus and demanded that, if He was the Christ, He save Himself and them from the cross. He did not acknowledge his own sin and just punishment; he only wanted to escape the suffering right before him.

The other criminal feared God. He acknowledged that they were receiving the punishment their deeds deserved, and he confessed that Jesus had done nothing wrong. He also believed that Jesus, who was hanging on the cross, had a kingdom and would come again as King, and he pleaded with Him to remember him.

Jesus said to him, *"Today you will be with Me in Paradise."* This criminal could not come down from the cross to accumulate good deeds or establish religious merit. What saved him was not his deeds but the faith that knew who Jesus was and relied on Him.

Yet the ground of his salvation was not the human act of faith

itself. Salvation was possible because Jesus, right beside him, had already taken charge of the sin of the world, including his sins, with His baptism and was receiving the judgment for that sin on the Cross.

The Cross divides people into two groups. For those who regard what Jesus accomplished as incomplete and blaspheme and reject it, there is judgment; but for those who acknowledge their own sin and helplessness and believe with the heart in the salvation Jesus accomplished, there is the remission of sin and the promise of Paradise.

6. The death of Jesus (23:44–49)

"Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, "into Your hands I commit My spirit."' Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous Man!' And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things."

General interpretation of the text

From noon until about three in the afternoon darkness comes over all the earth, and the veil of the temple is torn in the middle. The darkness shows the solemnity of judgment that Jesus' death

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carries, and the event of the veil being torn can be understood as symbolizing that a new way to approach God has been opened.

Jesus cries out, *"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'"* Then He breathes His last. Even in the face of death, Jesus trusts God as His Father and entrusts His life to Him.

Seeing this, the Roman centurion glorifies God and confesses that Jesus was a righteous Man. The people who had been watching Jesus' death also beat their breasts and return. This is a response of grief upon realizing the gravity of the event they have witnessed.

Those who had followed Jesus and the women who had come with Him from Galilee watch all these things from a distance. They later become important witnesses who confirm Jesus' burial and the empty tomb.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Through Jesus' death the way to approach God was opened

While Jesus was hanging on the Cross, darkness came over all the earth. This darkness shows that the judgment of sin was coming upon Jesus, who had taken charge of the sin of the world. Jesus received in His own body all the punishment for our sins.

When Jesus breathed His last, the veil of the temple was torn. The parallel passages in Matthew and Mark record that the veil was torn from top to bottom. This means that it was not man who opened the way to approach God, but God Himself who opened that way.

In the Old Testament, the high priest entered the Most Holy Place on the appointed day with the blood of the sacrifice. But because Jesus took charge of our sins with His baptism and

offered His own body as the eternal sacrifice, there is no longer any need to repeat the same sacrifice for sin. Those who have received the remission of sin by believing in Jesus' baptism and blood can boldly approach the presence of God.

Jesus committed His spirit into the Father's hands and breathed His last. He did not die for His own sins. The holy God came clothed in a human body, took charge of our sins on that body, and paid the price of sins by giving up His own life.

The centurion saw all these things and confessed that Jesus was a righteous Man. The crowd beat their breasts and returned. But we must not stop at watching the Cross and feeling sorrow over it. We must know why Jesus died, and believe with the heart that His death was none other than the judgment for our sins.

7. Joseph of Arimathea buries Jesus (23:50–56)

"Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment."

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General interpretation of the text

Joseph of Arimathea was a council member, but he was a good and just man, and he did not consent to the leaders' decision and deed. He was waiting for the kingdom of God.

Joseph goes to Pilate and asks for the body of Jesus. He wraps the body in linen and lays it in a rock tomb in which no one had yet been buried. This clearly shows that Jesus really died and was buried.

The women who had followed from Galilee observe the location of the tomb and how Jesus' body was laid. They prepare spices and fragrant oils, but on the Sabbath they rest according to the commandment.

This scene becomes the basis for the later event of the empty tomb. Because the women saw the exact place where Jesus was buried, it is hard to suppose that they mistakenly went to a different tomb. Everything seems to have ended with death and burial, but God is preparing the resurrection.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must live by faith in union with the Lord

Joseph of Arimathea was a member of the council, but he did not consent to the council's decision and deed to kill Jesus. He was a man waiting for the kingdom of God, and he went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus.

In the situation where Jesus had died on the Cross, asking for His body was an act that openly revealed that he was a disciple of Jesus. Rather than fearing what people would think or fearing for his own position, Joseph held Jesus precious.

He wrapped Jesus' body in linen and laid it in a rock tomb in which no one had ever been buried. According to the parallel passages, it was a new tomb that Joseph had prepared. With this, the prophecy of Isaiah chapter 53 that the grave of Christ would be with the rich was also fulfilled. Jesus' burial shows the fact that He really died and the certainty of the resurrection that would follow.

Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not look at Jesus' death merely as a historical event unrelated to themselves. They believe that when Jesus received baptism our sins passed on to Him, and that when Jesus died on the Cross the judgment for our sins was also finished. Therefore we must acknowledge by faith that our old man also died and was buried with Christ.

This does not mean that we should abuse the body or abandon all responsibilities in the world. It means that we should not serve our own greed, righteousness, and stubbornness as the king of our lives, but serve Jesus, who saved us, as our Master. Those who have received the remission of sin must not merely boast of their own salvation while chasing after the world; they must live for the Lord and the gospel.

The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee also observed the tomb and the place where Jesus' body was laid, and prepared spices and fragrant oils. They became witnesses who watched the scene of the Cross and the burial, and in the next chapter they become the first to confirm the empty tomb of the resurrection.

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Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 23 conveys

Luke chapter 23 is the chapter in which the sinless Jesus was judged in place of sinners. Pilate and Herod found in Jesus no crime deserving death. Even so, Barabbas the murderer was released, and the righteous Jesus was handed over to the Cross.

Jesus' death on the Cross was not a defeat suffered for lack of power. Because Jesus had taken charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He was voluntarily crucified in order to receive the judgment for those sins. He shed His blood to pay the price of sins, really died, and was buried in the tomb. And in Luke chapter 24, by rising from the dead, He became our perfect Savior.

Therefore we must not look at Jesus' Cross with mere pity or only as a religious symbol. We must clearly know and believe with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took charge of all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, was buried, and rose from the dead.

For those who believe this gospel there is the remission of sin and the promise of Paradise, and a new and living way to approach God is open. After receiving the remission of sin, we must, like Joseph of Arimathea, hold the Lord more precious than our own position and profit, and live serving the Lord and the gospel by the faith that our old man died and was buried with Christ. ✉

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

Jesus who was judged in place of sinners

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 we examined each passage of Luke chapter 23 side by side through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at why the sinless Jesus was judged in place of sinners and at the salvation He accomplished through His death on the Cross and His burial.

The interrogation by Pilate and Herod, the release of Barabbas, Jesus' Cross and the promise of Paradise given to one criminal, the event of the veil of the temple being torn, and Joseph of Arimathea's burial of Jesus are connected with one another in a single flow. These words show that Jesus, who had no sin at all, carried our sins, which He had taken charge of with His baptism, and was judged on the Cross, and that those who believe in the salvation He accomplished obtain the remission of sin and eternal life.

The expository sermons that follow trace the flow of the text and examine how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by which Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

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The way of the Cross of the sinless King

"Then the whole multitude of them arose and led Him to Pilate. And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.' Then Pilate asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' He answered him and said, 'It is as you say.' So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no fault in this Man.' But they were the more fierce, saying, 'He stirs up the people, teaching throughout all Judea, beginning from Galilee to this place.' When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time." (Luke 23:1–7).

The true King who was falsely accused

The Jewish council, having made Jesus' words revealing that He is the Christ and the Son of God the ground of their condemnation, all arose and led Him to Pilate, the Roman governor. This was because, under Roman rule, the governor's sentence was needed to put Jesus to death. The same people who had made an issue of Jesus' identity in the council accused Him before Pilate as a political rebel threatening Roman rule.

They accused Jesus of perverting the nation, forbidding the payment of taxes to Caesar, and calling Himself Christ, a King. But Jesus had never misled the people; He had taught the truth of life. Moreover, He had clearly said, *"Render therefore to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's,"* so the accusation that He had forbidden the payment

of taxes was also false. The fact that Jesus is the Christ, the King, is true, but the accusers distorted that kingship into political rebellion against Caesar.

When Pilate asked, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"* Jesus answered, *"It is as you say."* Jesus clearly acknowledged His kingship. He is not a king who would overthrow Rome with armies and worldly power, but the eternal King who saves His people from sin and leads them into the kingdom of God. Jesus came as the King of the Jews, and at the same time He is the King of kings, who rules over all mankind and all things.

"I find no fault in this Man"

After interrogating Jesus, Pilate declared to the chief priests and the crowd, *"I find no fault in this Man."* This verdict means, first, that Jesus was guilty of no crime of political rebellion punishable under Roman law. At the same time, Jesus was the holy Son of God, who had actually committed no sin at all. That the sinless One was accused as a sinner and put on trial was not because of His own sin but in order to be judged in our place for our sins, which He had taken charge of with His baptism.

The crowd did not accept Pilate's verdict of innocence and insisted even more strongly that Jesus had stirred up the people from Galilee all the way through Judea. When Pilate heard that Jesus was a Galilean, he sent the case to Herod, who had jurisdiction over Galilee. As it happened, Herod was in Jerusalem, so Jesus came to stand before him as well. Even after receiving the first verdict that He was innocent, Jesus was handed over to another interrogation by the persistent demand of His accusers.

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To the Cross, carrying the sins He took charge of with His baptism

It was not for lack of power that Jesus suffered these things. At the time of this text, He had already taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Since it was the Father's will for saving sinners that He be judged on the Cross carrying the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism, Jesus endured the false accusations and the unjust trial and voluntarily went forward on the way of the Cross.

Jesus would afterward be crucified and die shedding His blood, thereby receiving in our place the judgment for all the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism, and He would rise again on the third day and overcome sin and death. For us today, Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection are all the completed work of salvation. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes a child of God.

Even if many people accuse with one voice, a lie does not become the truth. The saints must discern right from wrong not by the number or the power of people but by the word of God. The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe that the sinless Lord took charge of none other than our sins with His baptism and was judged in our place on the Cross. Therefore they do not try to become righteous by their own deeds but rely on the righteousness of God that Jesus completed.

Luke chapter 23 verses 1–7 show that the sinless Jesus, even while being falsely accused and handed over to Pilate and Herod, went forward toward the Cross. Jesus is not a political rebel but

the eternal King who saves sinners. We must receive the remission of sin by believing not the false judgments of men but the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and we must serve Him as our Savior and King.

The true King who was mocked by Herod

"Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other." (Luke 23:8–12).

Herod, who wanted to watch a miracle

When Pilate heard that Jesus was a Galilean, he sent Him to Herod, the tetrarch who had jurisdiction over Galilee. When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad. But that gladness was not the joy of faith at meeting the Savior. The text makes clear that he had long wanted to meet Jesus after hearing rumors about Him, and that he wanted to watch Him perform a miracle before his eyes.

This Herod was Herod Antipas, who had been rebuked for his sins by John the Baptist. Though rebuked for taking Herodias,

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his brother's wife, and for the many evils he had done, he did not turn back; he put John in prison and then had him beheaded. He rejected the word and the rebuke of God, yet he wanted only to watch Jesus' power. True faith is not curiosity about miracles; it is realizing one's sin and accepting with the heart the Savior whom God sent and His word.

"He answered him nothing"

Herod questioned Jesus with many words, but Jesus gave him no answer at all. Jesus did not keep silent because He lacked the wisdom to answer or the power to perform a miracle. Though He was God, who knows all the hearts of men and all that is to come, He did not prove Himself in response to the unbelief that rejected His word while demanding a miracle as a spectacle. Obeying the way of substitution appointed by the Father, Jesus went forward toward the Cross in silence.

The chief priests and the scribes vehemently accused Jesus there as well. Even though Pilate had ruled that Jesus had no fault, they did not stop their accusations. A heart that has decided to reject the truth keeps inventing pretexts for condemnation even when no fault is found. Rather than believing in Jesus, the Son of God, they were absorbed in accomplishing their own will to kill Him.

When Herod neither saw the miracle he wanted nor heard any answer, he and his soldiers treated Jesus with contempt and mocked Him. The gorgeous robe they put on Him was an instrument of mockery, ridiculing Jesus' kingship. But Jesus, whom they dressed up and mocked as a sham king, was truly the King of the Jews and the King of kings, who rules over the whole world. Even the contempt and mockery of men could not remove

His deity and His kingship.

Herod and Pilate had previously been enemies of each other, but that day they became friends. Their reconciliation did not come from accepting the truth; it was formed in the process of rejecting and mocking the sinless Jesus. Even powers that had been opposed to each other were of one mind in rejecting the Son of God.

To the Cross, carrying the sins He took charge of with His baptism

It was not for lack of power that Jesus received Herod's mockery and the soldiers' ridicule. At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Now He was about to carry the sins He had taken charge of, receive all the judgment of sin by dying on the Cross shedding His blood, and rise again on the third day to overcome sin and death. To accomplish the Father's will to save sinners, Jesus endured the mockery and voluntarily went forward to the Cross.

Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. Jesus took charge of all our sins with His baptism, received all the punishment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. Whoever believes in this gospel with the heart receives the remission of all his sins, receives the Holy Spirit, and becomes a child of God.

The saints do not, like Herod, seek only marvelous experiences and visible power. They do not test Jesus by demanding that He fulfill their own will; they acknowledge their

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sins before the written word and believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished. Even if the world treats Jesus with contempt, they serve Him as the eternal Savior and King and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Luke chapter 23 verses 8–12 contrast Herod, who wanted to watch a miracle, with Jesus, who obeyed the way of substitution in silence. Herod mocked Jesus when his curiosity was not satisfied, but even amid that mockery Jesus followed to the end the Father's will to save sinners. True faith does not treat Jesus as a source of miracles to meet the needs before one's eyes; it believes in Him and serves Him as the Son of God, who completed salvation with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection.

Jesus who was handed over to the Cross in place of sinners

"Then Pilate, when he had called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people, said to them, 'You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him. I will therefore chastise Him and release Him' (for it was necessary for him to release one to them at the feast). And they all cried out at once, saying, 'Away with this Man, and release to us Barabbas'— who had been thrown into prison for a certain rebellion made in the city, and for murder. Pilate, therefore, wishing to release Jesus, again called out to them. But they shouted, saying, 'Crucify Him, crucify Him!' Then he said to them the third time, 'Why, what

evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.' But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will." (Luke 23:13–25).

"I have found no fault in this Man"

Pilate, having received Jesus back from Herod, called together the chief priests, the rulers, and the people. He made clear that he had interrogated Jesus himself but had found none of the fault of which they accused Him. Herod, too, had sent Jesus back without pronouncing Him guilty or sentencing Him to death. On this basis Pilate declared that Jesus had done nothing deserving death.

Yet even after confirming Jesus' innocence, Pilate said, *"I will therefore chastise Him and release Him."* To chastise an innocent man and then release him was not a just verdict but an unjust compromise chosen between the demand of the crowd and the truth. He should have released Jesus at once, but to avoid the people's backlash Pilate tried to inflict punishment on the sinless One. When one compromises under pressure even while knowing the truth, one ends up going on to greater injustice.

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"The voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed"

The crowd all cried out at once, demanding that Jesus be done away with and that Barabbas be released. Barabbas was a real sinner who had been thrown into prison for a rebellion made in the city and for murder. Jesus, who had no sin at all, faced the demand that He be killed, while Barabbas, who had committed crimes and deserved punishment, came to be released.

Pilate spoke to them again, wishing to release Jesus, but the crowd shouted, *"Crucify Him, crucify Him!"* For the third time he made clear that he had found in Jesus no crime deserving death, but the crowd demanded crucifixion with even louder voices. The word *"the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed"* reveals that the pressure of the majority crushed justice and forced through an unjust verdict. However loudly many people may insist, the righteousness of the sinless Jesus and the truth of God do not change.

At last Pilate gave sentence as the crowd requested. He released Barabbas, who had been thrown into prison for rebellion and murder, and delivered the sinless Jesus to their will. Though he knew Jesus was innocent, he did not use the authority he held as governor justly. However great the pressure of the crowd was, Pilate's responsibility for unjustly handing Jesus over does not disappear.

The chief priests and the elders persuaded the crowd to ask for Barabbas and to destroy Jesus. Pilate handed Jesus over in order to gratify the crowd, and the Jews pressed him, saying that if he released Jesus he was not Caesar's friend. The envy of the religious leaders, the shouting of the crowd, and Pilate's fear of losing his power together produced a verdict that went against the truth.

Jesus who was handed over in place of Barabbas

This event, in which the sinner Barabbas was set free and the sinless Jesus was handed over in his place, clearly shows the substitution by which Jesus took charge of the sinner's judgment. Barabbas was not released because of his own righteousness or good deeds; he was set free because Jesus was handed over in his place. In the same way, we too are released from sin and condemnation because the sinless Jesus was judged in our place.

At the time of this text, Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of Barabbas and of all mankind on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Jesus stood in the sinner's place in order to accomplish the will of salvation, receiving in our place the judgment for the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism. Having taken charge of our sins with His baptism, Jesus was now voluntarily going on the way by which He would carry those sins, be crucified and die shedding His blood to receive all the punishment of sin in our place, and rise again on the third day to complete salvation.

Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has already completed with His baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. Whoever believes this gospel is, like Barabbas, released from sin and judgment, receives the remission of all his sins once and for all, and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. Salvation is not a matter of the sinner paying off his own punishment little by little or earning qualification by good deeds; it is the grace received by believing in the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished by taking the sinner's place.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit clearly see the grace of their own salvation in the release

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of Barabbas. Because they believe that they, too, were sinners deserving judgment but that Jesus took their place, they do not boast of their own merits. They follow the word of God rather than the voice of the majority and the pressure of the world, and they boldly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which released them from sin and judgment.

In Luke chapter 23 verses 13–25, the loud voices of the crowd forced through an unjust verdict, but they could not overthrow God's plan of salvation. The sinless Jesus, carrying our sins, which He had taken charge of with His baptism, was handed over to the Cross in place of sinners like Barabbas. Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is released from all sin and condemnation not by his own righteousness and deeds but by the judgment Jesus took charge of in his place.

The almighty Savior, who is not One to be pitied

"Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin "to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?' There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the

place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS." (Luke 23:26–38).

"Do not weep for Me"

After Pilate handed Jesus over to the Cross, they led Him away to the place called the Skull. They laid hold of Simon, a Cyrenian who was coming from the country, laid on him the wooden cross on which Jesus would be hung, and made him follow behind. Simon carried the wooden frame of the cross, but the Savior who took charge of the sin of the world and received the judgment for that sin is Jesus alone. Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of mankind on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and now He went forward to the Cross to pay the price of those sins.

The people and the women who followed Jesus beat their breasts and wept bitterly. But Jesus said, "*Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."* Jesus was not a pitiful victim who had been seized for lack of power. The almighty Son of God voluntarily received baptism in order to save sinners, and He gave His own body over to the Cross in order to be judged for the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism.

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One cannot receive the remission of sin by remaining in fleshly, emotional pity for Jesus hanging on the Cross. One must know and believe why Jesus received baptism and why He was crucified. Even if one sheds tears thinking of Jesus' suffering, those tears cannot wash away sin. The sinner must first realize the judgment that will come upon himself and his children, who have not received the remission of sin, and believe with the heart in the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished with the water and the blood.

"If they do these things in the green wood"

The word that the days are coming when the barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed will be called blessed shows how fearful the coming judgment is. To escape that judgment, people will cry out to the mountains and the hills to cover them. The green wood refers to those who have met the Lord, received the remission of sin, and obtained spiritual life, while the dry wood refers to those who have not received the remission of sin and have no spiritual life. If even the green wood suffers tribulation, the judgment that the lifeless dry wood will receive is even more severe. Therefore we and our children must obtain life by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus was led away with two criminals and was crucified between them. The criminals were punished for the sins they had committed, but Jesus had committed no sin at all. He stood in the sinner's place in order to be judged in our stead for all our sins, which had passed on to Him through His baptism. The sinless Jesus was numbered with sinners and took charge of the curse and death in our place.

Jesus prayed for those who had nailed Him to the cross, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* Even as they killed the Son of God, they did not know the spiritual meaning of what they were doing. Their ignorance reveals the wretched state of mankind darkened by sin. Jesus loved even such sinners and interceded for them, and by being judged on the Cross for the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism, He accomplished the salvation that remits all sins. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all his sins.

"THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS"

The rulers sneered, *"He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God."* The soldiers also mocked Him, *"If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself."* It is not that Jesus stayed on the cross because He lacked the power to come down. Had He saved Himself and come down, He could not have taken charge of the judgment for the sins of mankind to the end. By not saving Himself but taking charge even of death, Jesus showed that He is the true Christ, who saves sinners.

Above Jesus' cross was fastened the inscription *"THE KING OF THE JEWS."* People fastened it as a charge and a mockery, but the words written on that inscription revealed Jesus' true identity. Jesus is not only the King of the Jews but the King of kings, who rules over all mankind and every creature. The kings of the world protect themselves by force and make people submit, but Jesus revealed the kingship of love and righteousness by giving up His own life to save sinners.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of the world with His baptism and was receiving the

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judgment for those sins on the Cross. Soon He would die shedding His blood and rise again on the third day to overcome sin and death. Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. Whoever believes this gospel believes that Jesus' death was the death that paid the price of his sins in his place and that His resurrection is the completion of salvation that gave eternal life, and so receives the remission of all his sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Therefore the saints do not regard Jesus hanging on the Cross as a helpless object of pity. They believe in Him as God, who completely saved them with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection, and they give Him thanks and praise. They also preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that they, their children, and their neighbors may not come to judgment. Jesus, who saved sinners by not saving Himself on the Cross, is our eternal Savior and true King.

The Paradise entered by faith

"Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:39–43).

"Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"

While Jesus was hanging on the cross between the two criminals, one criminal blasphemed Him, saying, *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us."* He spoke the name Christ with his mouth, but he did not believe in Jesus as the Savior. What he wanted was not the salvation that delivers one from sin and the judgment of God, but to come down from the cross and escape physical death. Without acknowledging his own sin and punishment, he tested and mocked Jesus' power.

The other criminal rebuked him, saying, *"Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation?"* Facing death, he feared God, and he knew that he and his companion were sinners under the judgment of God. One who fears God does not hide his sin or shift the responsibility to others; he accepts the fact that God's judgment is right.

He confessed, *"We indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds."* He acknowledged that he had done evil and that the punishment he was now receiving was just. Without putting forward his own merits or good deeds, he acknowledged himself before God as a sinner in need of mercy and salvation. He stood in the place where he had to rely not on his own deeds but only on the salvation Jesus performed.

"This Man has done nothing wrong"

Then, referring to Jesus, he confessed, *"This Man has done nothing wrong."* Jesus had committed no sin at all, and He had done no evil deserving the punishment of the cross. This confession holds the faith not only that Jesus' life was good but

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that everything He did to save sinners was right. Jesus' coming in a human body, His taking charge of all the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and His being judged on the Cross in our place carrying those sins were all the righteous work of God to save sinners.

Both criminals had sinned, and neither had any good deeds or merits by which to escape death. But one blasphemed Jesus and sought only the life of the flesh, while the other acknowledged his own sin and judgment and believed that the salvation performed by the sinless Jesus was right. Salvation is not received through merits a person has accumulated; it is received by believing with the heart in the righteousness of God that Jesus accomplished with His baptism and the Cross.

"Today you will be with Me in Paradise"

The criminal who believed pleaded, *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom."* Before his eyes was Jesus, hanging on the cross and dying, yet he believed in Jesus not as a prisoner whose end would be death but as the King who has His own kingdom. He believed that Jesus would come into that kingdom beyond death and that Jesus had the authority to save him, and he entrusted his soul to Him.

Jesus answered, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise."* He had neither time to accumulate new good deeds nor any merit already to put forward. But because he believed with the heart in the salvation Jesus was accomplishing, he received the remission of all his sins. The word *"Assuredly"* shows the certainty of the promise; the word *"today"* shows that salvation is not postponed but accomplished that very day; and the word *"with Me"* shows that the blessing of Paradise is life

together with Jesus.

At the time of this event, Jesus had already received baptism from John the Baptist and taken charge of all the sins of the world, including this criminal's sins, and He was receiving the judgment for those sins on the Cross. Soon He would die shedding His blood and rise again on the third day to overcome sin and death. Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection. Through Jesus' baptism our sins passed on to Him, through the blood and death of the Cross the punishment of sin was fully paid, and through the resurrection the way of eternal life was opened.

No matter how many sins a person has committed, if he believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, he receives the remission of all his sins. Conversely, even if a person is near Jesus and speaks the name Christ with his mouth, he cannot escape from sin unless he believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished with His baptism and the Cross. Like the criminal who was saved, the person who acknowledges his own sin and the judgment he deserves, believes that all the saving work Jesus performed is right, and entrusts his soul to Jesus the King obtains the remission of sin and eternal life.

The way of salvation opened on the Cross

"Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, "into Your hands I commit My spirit."' Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he

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glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous Man!' And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things." (Luke 23:44–49).

"There was darkness over all the earth"

While Jesus was hanging on the Cross, from about the sixth hour until the ninth hour the sun lost its light and darkness continued over all the earth. The darkness that came at midday showed that the judgment for sin was coming upon Jesus, who had taken charge of all the sins of the world. Because the Son of God, who had no sin whatsoever, bore the sins of mankind on His own body, He received in our place the curse and the punishment we should have received.

Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Carrying those sins, He was crucified and died shedding His blood, and so He fully paid the price of sins. Jesus' death was not a punishment received for His own sins but the substitutionary death in which He was judged for our sins, which He had taken charge of with His baptism.

"The veil of the temple was torn in two"

At that time the veil of the temple was torn in the middle. The veil showed that because of sin man could not approach the holy God. But because Jesus took charge of all sins with His

baptism and received all the judgment for those sins on the Cross, the sin that had blocked the way between God and man was removed. A new way to approach God was opened—not by human deeds or repeated sacrifices, but by faith in the salvation Jesus accomplished. Those who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit now boldly approach the presence of God relying on Jesus Christ.

With a loud voice Jesus said, *"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'"* He did not have His life helplessly taken from Him; trusting the Father to the end, He voluntarily gave up His own life to save sinners. He entrusted even His death on the Cross wholly to the Father's will, and after fulfilling the mission of salvation He breathed His last.

At the moment Jesus breathed His last, the punishment for the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism was fully paid on the Cross. On the third day He rose from the dead, overcame sin and death, and showed that He is the eternal Savior. Today we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by Jesus' baptism, the blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection.

"Certainly this was a righteous Man!"

The centurion who had watched all these things glorified God and confessed, *"Certainly this was a righteous Man!"* People crucified Jesus together with the criminals, but Jesus was not a criminal who died for His own sins; He was the righteous One, who had no sin whatsoever. Because the sinless One took charge of our sins in our place, His death became the saving death that justifies those who believe.

The crowd that had gathered to watch also saw what had

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happened, beat their breasts, and returned. Seeing the darkness at midday and the death of Jesus, they felt great shock, fear, and sorrow. But it must not end with grieving at the sight of Jesus' death. Only when one believes with the heart that Jesus took charge of the sin of the world with His baptism and received its judgment in his place on the Cross does one receive the remission of all his sins.

Those who knew Jesus and the women who had followed Him from Galilee also stood at a distance and saw all these things. They became eyewitnesses of the event in which Jesus really died on the Cross. Jesus' death is not a symbol or a story but an event of salvation that really took place in history, and the resurrection that followed is also the work of God in which Jesus, who had really died, overcame death and rose again.

The saints do not remain before the Cross pitying Jesus and grieving. They believe that Jesus had compassion on us, took charge of all our sins with His baptism, ended the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and gave eternal life through His resurrection, and so they give thanks and praise. Just as the veil of the temple was torn, the way to approach God has already been opened. Whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift. And we must serve God with unshakable faith and preach this gospel of salvation.

The faith that dies and is buried with Christ

"*Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man*

went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment." (Luke 23:50–56).

"Waiting for the kingdom of God"

After Jesus breathed His last on the Cross, Joseph of Arimathea came forward. He was a good and just council member, and he had not consented to the council's decision and deed to kill Jesus. He was a man waiting for the kingdom of God, and that faith was shown in the courageous act of going to Pilate and asking for the body of Jesus. The faith that waits for the kingdom of God is not swept along by the unjust decisions of the world but acts according to the will of God.

Joseph took Jesus' body down from the cross, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a rock tomb in which no one had ever been buried. Jesus really died on the Cross and was buried in the flesh. His death and burial are events that took place in history, and His resurrection on the third day is the work of God in which He overcame real death and rose again.

It was not because of His own sins that Jesus died and was buried. He had already taken charge of the sins of all the people of the world on His own body by receiving baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and by dying on the Cross shedding His blood He received all the punishment for those sins. Jesus' burial confirms that He really

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bore, to the very end, death—the wages of the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism.

The faith that has died and been buried with Christ

A person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that they have died and been buried with Christ and have been raised with Him to new life. When Jesus received baptism our sins passed on to Him; when He died on the Cross our old man, who was under sin, also died with Him; and when He was buried we, too, were buried with Him by faith. Through Jesus' resurrection we, too, have escaped from sin and death and obtained new life.

The saints who have the faith of having died and been buried with Christ do not serve the desires of the world and their own will as their master. They live together with Jesus, who saved them, look toward the kingdom of God, and serve the Church and the gospel. Just as Joseph of Arimathea used his position and possessions to serve the Lord, the saints also use the body, time, and material things God has entrusted to them to accomplish the Lord's will.

The women who followed the Lord to the end

The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee followed after Joseph and saw the tomb and how Jesus' body was laid. They became eyewitnesses of the fact that Jesus really died and was buried. The testimony of those who saw with their own eyes the location of the tomb and how Jesus' body was laid leads on to the testimony of the empty tomb and the resurrection that they

would find on the first day of the week.

The women followed the Lord to the end because they knew that Jesus loved them and was the Savior who had taken charge of the problem of their sin and death. Jesus did not charge their sins to them; He took them upon Himself with His baptism and was judged in their place on the Cross. Having first received the Lord's perfect love and salvation, they did not abandon Jesus even after His death but served Him by preparing spices and fragrant oils. The love and devotion of the saints are not a price paid to obtain salvation but the fruit borne from the salvation and love they have first received.

After preparing the spices and fragrant oils, they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment. They had both the heart to attend to Jesus' burial with devotion and the faith that obeys the word of God. They did not yet fully understand Jesus' resurrection and so prepared spices to anoint a dead body, but God established them as witnesses who would confirm the empty tomb and deliver the news of the resurrection.

Jesus died and was buried, but on the third day He rose from the dead and overcame sin and death. Through Jesus' baptism all our sins passed on to Him, through the blood and death of the Cross the judgment of sin was ended, and through His burial and resurrection the eternal life that overcame real death was revealed.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit wait for the kingdom of God and stand on the side of the truth like Joseph of Arimathea, and like the women of Galilee they follow and serve to the end Jesus, who first loved and saved them. By faith that they have died, been buried, and risen with Jesus, they do not chase the desires of the old man; with the new life the Lord has given, they serve the Church, the gospel, and souls, looking toward the eternal kingdom of God. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 23

[Question] 1. Compared with the other Gospels, what does Luke chapter 23 especially emphasize?

Luke chapter 23, while recording Jesus' interrogation, crucifixion, and burial, especially emphasizes the innocent Jesus standing in the sinner's place and showing mercy and salvation to sinners until the very last moment.

Luke records together the fact that Pilate repeatedly declared that he had found no fault in Jesus and the fact that Herod, too, found no crime deserving death. The criminal hanging on the cross and the centurion also testify to Jesus' innocence and righteousness.

"Said to them, 'You have brought this Man to me, as one who misleads the people. And indeed, having examined Him in your presence, I have found no fault in this Man concerning those things of which you accuse Him; no, neither did Herod, for I sent you back to him; and indeed nothing deserving of death has been done by Him" (Luke 23:14–15).

Luke also conveys the prayer in which Jesus asked that the sins of those who nailed Him to the cross be remitted, the word He spoke to the women weeping for Him, telling them to weep for themselves and for their children, and the event in which He promised Paradise to the repentant criminal. These show that Jesus is the Savior who has compassion on sinners even in the midst of His suffering.

"But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not

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even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:40–43).

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of all the sins of the world, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Therefore Luke chapter 23 testifies to the fact that the sinless Son of God died in place of sinners, and that whoever believes in His salvation obtains the remission of sin and eternal life.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 23 verses 6–7, why were both Pilate and Herod staying in Jerusalem around the time of the Passover?

The common background for Pilate and Herod both staying in Jerusalem at the same time was the Passover. Pilate, the Roman governor, was in Jerusalem to oversee public order, administration, and trials so that no disturbance would arise during the feast, when many people gathered; and Herod Antipas, who ruled Galilee and Perea, had also come to Jerusalem to spend the Passover season.

The Passover was a great feast commemorating Israel's deliverance from slavery in Egypt. Since people from all parts of Judea and from many nations gathered in Jerusalem, maintaining order was important to the Roman ruler.

When Pilate learned that Jesus was a Galilean, he judged that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction. As it happened, Herod was

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also in Jerusalem, so Pilate sent Jesus to him.

"When Pilate heard of Galilee, he asked if the Man were a Galilean. And as soon as he knew that He belonged to Herod's jurisdiction, he sent Him to Herod, who was also in Jerusalem at that time" (Luke 23:6–7).

Pilate's usual administrative base was Caesarea, but during the great feasts he came up to Jerusalem to maintain Roman rule and manage the crowds. The Jewish leaders led Jesus to Pilate precisely because they intended to have Him crucified by the sentence of the Roman governor.

Herod had heard rumors about Jesus and had long wanted to see Him, but he asked many questions with a mind set on seeing a miracle rather than believing the word. When Jesus did not answer, Herod and his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, and then sent Him back to Pilate.

Herod and Pilate, who had previously been enemies, became friends with each other that day. The two men interrogated Jesus with different authority and different purposes, but they became one in rejecting the sinless Jesus.

"For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done" (Acts 4:27–28).

In this way Jesus' interrogation passed from Pilate to Herod and back to Pilate again. Both rulers found in Jesus no crime deserving death, and this process revealed that Jesus was the righteous One, who suffered not for His own sins but in place of sinners.

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, and after several interrogations He received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and rose from the dead. These

events that took place at the Passover led on to Jesus' saving sinners as the true Passover Lamb.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 23 verse 2, on what charges did the Sanhedrin accuse Jesus before Pilate?

The Sanhedrin accused Jesus on three charges: first, that He had misled the Jewish people; second, that He had forbidden the payment of taxes to Caesar; and third, that He had challenged Roman rule by calling Himself Christ, a King.

"And they began to accuse Him, saying, 'We found this fellow perverting the nation, and forbidding to pay taxes to Caesar, saying that He Himself is Christ, a King.'" (Luke 23:2).

What the religious leaders had made an issue of in the council was that Jesus had revealed Himself to be the Christ and the Son of God. But when they sought a death sentence from the Roman governor, they changed the content of the accusation to make Him look like a political rebel.

Jesus did not incite the people to riot, and He taught that the things that are Caesar's should be rendered to Caesar. Therefore the first two charges were false accusations that distorted His words and deeds.

The first accusation was the claim that Jesus had stirred up the people from Galilee all the way to Jerusalem. But Jesus only preached the kingdom of God, healed the sick, and saved sinners; He did not gather a crowd to fight against Rome.

The second accusation also ran directly contrary to Jesus' teaching. Though the religious leaders had heard with their own ears Jesus' word that taxes should be paid to Caesar, before Pilate they accused Him as if He were a man who had forbidden

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the payment of taxes.

It is true that Jesus is the Christ and the King, but that kingship is not the power to seize Caesar's seat and set up a worldly political kingdom. Jesus is the King who saves His people from sin and death and rules over them forever.

"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.'" (John 18:36).

After hearing the content of the accusation, Pilate interrogated Jesus but declared from the start that he had found no fault in Him. After Herod's interrogation, too, he made clear that Jesus had done nothing deserving death, and for the third time he said that there was no crime deserving the death penalty.

Pilate and Herod found in Jesus no crime deserving death. Jesus had no sin, but because He had taken charge of the sin of the world, He stood in the sinner's place, received false accusations and interrogations, and took charge of the judgment for that sin on the Cross.

We must believe in the innocence and the kingship of Jesus to which the Scriptures testify, rather than in the accusations of men. Jesus is the true Christ, who received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, and who saved sinners through the Cross and His resurrection from the dead.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 23 verses 3–4, what did Pilate mean when he asked Jesus, *"Are You the King of the Jews?"*

Pilate's question was an interrogation meant to confirm whether Jesus had claimed to be a political king opposing the

rule of Caesar, the Roman emperor. Because the Sanhedrin had accused Jesus of being *"Christ, a King,"* Pilate asked whether the charge of rebellion was true.

"Then Pilate asked Him, saying, 'Are You the King of the Jews?' He answered him and said, 'It is as you say.' So Pilate said to the chief priests and the crowd, 'I find no fault in this Man.'" (Luke 23:3–4).

Jesus' answer, *"It is as you say,"* was a word acknowledging that He is a King. But Jesus' kingship is not the kind of kingship that overthrows Rome by military force and seizes a worldly throne.

Jesus is the promised Christ and the Son of God, who sits on the throne of David and rules forever. His kingdom is the eternal kingdom that saves people from the power of sin and death and makes them the people of God.

"Jesus answered, 'My kingdom is not of this world. If My kingdom were of this world, My servants would fight, so that I should not be delivered to the Jews; but now My kingdom is not from here.' Pilate therefore said to Him, 'Are You a king then?' Jesus answered, 'You say rightly that I am a king. For this cause I was born, and for this cause I have come into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth. Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice.'" (John 18:36–37).

After hearing Jesus' answer, Pilate declared that he had found no fault in Him. This shows that Jesus did not die for the crime of political rebellion but, as the sinless One, received the judgment of sinners in their place.

The inscription above the cross recorded that Jesus was the King of the Jews. People mocked Him with these words, but the writing instead revealed before everyone that Jesus is the true King.

People mocked Jesus on the cross as the King of the Jews,

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but Jesus is the true King, who received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, and who accomplished salvation through the Cross and His resurrection from the dead. We must believe His word and obey His rule.

The kings of the world dominate people by force, but Jesus gave up His own life to give life to His people, and He rules with truth and salvation. Therefore those who believe in Jesus' kingship receive His salvation and live according to His word.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 23 verses 8–12, what attitude did Herod show toward Jesus, and how did he treat Him?

When Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad, expected to see a miracle, and questioned Him with many words. When Jesus gave no answer at all, Herod and his soldiers treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, put a gorgeous robe on Him, and sent Him back to Pilate.

"Now when Herod saw Jesus, he was exceedingly glad; for he had desired for a long time to see Him, because he had heard many things about Him, and he hoped to see some miracle done by Him. Then he questioned Him with many words, but He answered him nothing. And the chief priests and scribes stood and vehemently accused Him. Then Herod, with his men of war, treated Him with contempt and mocked Him, arrayed Him in a gorgeous robe, and sent Him back to Pilate. That very day Pilate and Herod became friends with each other, for previously they had been at enmity with each other" (Luke 23:8–12).

Herod had long heard rumors about Jesus and had wanted to see Him. But his interest never reached the point of believing Jesus' word and seeking salvation; it remained at the level of

curiosity, hoping that some marvelous miracle would happen before his eyes.

"Now Herod the tetrarch heard of all that was done by Him; and he was perplexed, because it was said by some that John had risen from the dead, and by some that Elijah had appeared, and by others that one of the old prophets had risen again. Herod said, 'John I have beheaded, but who is this of whom I hear such things?' So he sought to see Him" (Luke 9:7–9).

Jesus did not show a miracle at Herod's demand but kept silent. That silence showed Him walking the way of suffering in obedience to the Father's will in order to save sinners.

"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).

Herod and his soldiers putting a gorgeous robe on Jesus was an act of dressing Him up like a king in mockery. But the mocked Jesus is truly the King of kings and the Christ who saves sinners.

Herod's sending Jesus back to Pilate became evidence that He had no crime deserving the death penalty. Jesus had no sin, yet He received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead.

Herod and Pilate, who had previously been enemies, became friends with each other that day. The two rulers grew close in rejecting Jesus, but even through their deeds God accomplished His will to save sinners.

We must not stop, like Herod, at seeking marvelous things; through the written word we must know and believe who Jesus is and what salvation He accomplished.

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[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 23 verses 22–25, what final sentence did Pilate pass concerning Jesus and Barabbas?

Pilate declared for the third time that he had found in Jesus no crime deserving death, and said that he would chastise Him and release Him. But when the crowd kept demanding crucifixion, he gave sentence according to their will: he released Barabbas, who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, and delivered the sinless Jesus to the Cross.

"Then he said to them the third time, 'Why, what evil has He done? I have found no reason for death in Him. I will therefore chastise Him and let Him go.' But they were insistent, demanding with loud voices that He be crucified. And the voices of these men and of the chief priests prevailed. So Pilate gave sentence that it should be as they requested. And he released to them the one they requested, who for rebellion and murder had been thrown into prison; but he delivered Jesus to their will" (Luke 23:22–25).

Though Pilate knew Jesus was innocent, he put the pressure of the crowd and his own political position ahead of truth and justice. His three declarations of innocence show even more clearly that Jesus was One who had no crime deserving death.

This sentence forms a vivid contrast: the guilty Barabbas is released, and the sinless Jesus is condemned. What Barabbas received was release from prison and punishment that day, but this scene shows the salvation of Jesus, who stood in the place of judgment in the sinner's stead.

"The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus, whom you delivered up and denied in the presence of Pilate, when he was determined to let Him go. But you denied the Holy One and the Just, and asked

for a murderer to be granted to you, and killed the Prince of life, whom God raised from the dead, of which we are witnesses" (Acts 3:13–15).

The apostle Peter testified that the people had denied the holy and righteous Jesus and asked for a murderer to be released. The people delivered to death the Prince of life, whom Pilate had been determined to release, but God raised Him from the dead.

"But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed. All we like sheep have gone astray; We have turned, every one, to his own way; And the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all" (Isaiah 53:5–6).

We, too, were originally bound to receive the judgment of God because of sin. Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead.

The sinner does not escape condemnation by his own deeds; he obtains the remission of sin by believing in the judgment Jesus received in his place. Also, we must not yield to the voices of men as Pilate did, but judge right and wrong according to the word of God.

The figure of Pilate warns that one who knows the truth can still abandon justice when pressed by the voices of people. The saints must judge by the standard of the written word of God rather than by the demands of the majority, and give thanks for the salvation Jesus accomplished.

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[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 23 verse 26, who was the man who carried Jesus' cross and followed behind Him?

The man who carried Jesus' cross and followed behind Him was Simon, a Cyrenian. He was coming from the country when he was laid hold of by those who were leading Jesus away, and they laid the cross on Simon and made him follow Jesus.

"Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus" (Luke 23:26).

The Gospel of Mark introduces Simon as the father of Alexander and Rufus. Since the Gospel of John records that Jesus at first went out bearing His own cross, we can know that Simon was seized on the way and came to carry that cross.

"Then they compelled a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, the father of Alexander and Rufus, as he was coming out of the country and passing by, to bear His cross" (Mark 15:21).

What Simon carried was the wooden cross that had to be transported to Golgotha. The One who took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for sin, and accomplished salvation is Jesus alone.

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Simon transported the wooden cross, but the Cross of salvation Jesus accomplished alone.

"Then He said to them all, 'If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross daily, and follow Me" (Luke 9:23).

For a disciple to take up his own cross does not mean paying

the price of salvation; it means not putting his own will first, but obeying Jesus' word and following the way entrusted to him.

Simon carried the cross and followed behind Jesus at a moment he had not expected. We, too, must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished and serve the Lord according to His word amid the labors and hardships entrusted to us.

Unexpected responsibilities and sacrifices can also come to those who believe the gospel and follow the Lord. At such times the saints do not try to pay the price of salvation; giving thanks for the grace they have already received, they lay down their own will and obey in the work entrusted to them.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 23 verses 27–31, what does the word Jesus spoke to the people and the women who followed Him weeping mean?

Jesus' word means that they should not stop at pitying Him as He went bearing the cross, but should look to their own souls and those of their children, which were under sin and judgment. Jesus warned them of the great tribulation that would come upon them and of God's judgment on sin.

"And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin "to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?'" (Luke 23:27–31).

Jesus was voluntarily going on the way of the Cross in order

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to save sinners. He was not One who suffered for lack of power; He is the almighty God, who received baptism from John, took charge of the sin of the world, and accomplished salvation by receiving the judgment for that sin. Therefore the faith that looks to the Cross does not lie in pitying Jesus but in believing in and giving thanks for the salvation He accomplished.

The word telling them to weep for themselves and for their children is a warning to examine one's own soul first and to pass on the word of salvation to the next generation as well. A person must realize his own condition of needing the remission of sin and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

The word that the tribulation will be so great that the barren, the wombs that never bore, and the breasts that never nursed will be called blessed shows the horror of the coming judgment. The scene of people crying out to the mountains and the hills to cover them also shows the desperation of wanting to hide in the face of judgment.

Jesus also spoke beforehand of the day when Jerusalem would be surrounded by armies and the people would fall by the edge of the sword or be led away captive. This warning, together with the fall of Jerusalem in history, makes us look to the solemnity of the final judgment, when all people will stand before God.

The green wood and the dry wood have been interpreted in different ways, but in this context the saying may be understood to mean that if such suffering comes upon the innocent Jesus, how much more severe will the judgment be upon those who remain under sin and judgment? It means that if even the righteous go through the suffering of the last tribulation, how much more severe will the judgment be that comes upon those who have not received the remission of sin.

This word holds the justice of God, who judges sin, together with the compassion of Jesus, who desires people to hear and believe the word of salvation before judgment comes. The person who examines his own soul comes to pass on this salvation to his family and neighbors as well.

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. We must preach the word so that we and our children may believe this salvation, and come to the Lord by faith before judgment comes.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 23 verse 34, whose sins did Jesus pray to the Father to remit?

Jesus prayed to the Father to remit the sins of those who crucified Him, mocked Him, and brought Him to death. Directly, this refers to the Roman soldiers who carried out the crucifixion and divided His garments among themselves; and in the whole context of the Passion, those who accused Jesus, demanded His crucifixion, and mocked Him are also connected with it.

"Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots" (Luke 23:34).

The word that they did not know what they were doing does not mean that they were unaware of the very fact that they were carrying out a crucifixion. They crucified Jesus without realizing that He is the Son of God and the promised Christ.

Peter, too, after saying that the people had done it in ignorance, made clear that the sufferings of Christ foretold by the prophets had been fulfilled, and preached that they should

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repent and receive the remission of sin.

"Yet now, brethren, I know that you did it in ignorance, as did also your rulers. But those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled. Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:17–19).

Jesus' prayer was a prayer of intercession in which He had compassion on sinners and opened the way of the remission of sin. Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead.

This prayer also fulfilled the prophecy of Isaiah that the Christ would bear the sin of many and make intercession for the transgressors.

"Therefore I will divide Him a portion with the great, And He shall divide the spoil with the strong, Because He poured out His soul unto death, And He was numbered with the transgressors, And He bore the sin of many, And made intercession for the transgressors" (Isaiah 53:12).

This salvation becomes the remission of sin and life for those who hear the gospel and believe in what Jesus accomplished. The saints who have received the remission of sin must also remember Jesus' compassion and pray that the gospel may be preached to those who harm them and that they may be saved.

Stephen, too, prayed that the sin of those who were stoning him would not be charged to them. We, too, remembering the remission of sin and the compassion we have received, must not repay our enemy with hatred but pray for his soul.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 23 verse 35, who is *"the chosen of God,"* and what does it mean?

"The chosen of God" refers to Jesus. It is a title that reveals that Jesus is the Christ and the Son of God, whom God appointed and sent to save sinners.

"And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.'" (Luke 23:35).

When the rulers saw that Jesus did not come down from the cross, they mocked Him, saying that He was not the Christ chosen by God. They thought that if He were the chosen One, He should escape suffering and save Himself first.

But the purpose for which God sent Jesus lay not in delivering Himself from suffering but in saving those under sin and death. By not coming down from the cross, Jesus fulfilled to the end the mission of saving others.

"And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, This is my Son, my chosen: hear ye him –ASV" (Luke 9:35).

The title Christ holds the meaning that Jesus is the King of kings and the Creator, and the Savior who fulfills the offices of High Priest and Prophet. Even amid the mockery of the Cross, Jesus was the true Christ whom God had appointed.

Jesus the King overcame the power of sin and death and rules over His people. As High Priest He gave Himself up as the perfect sacrifice, and as Prophet He proclaimed the truth of the salvation God accomplishes.

The rulers sneered at Jesus, telling Him to save Himself, but He saved sinners by not coming down from the cross. Bearing the Cross to the very end was how He fulfilled His mission as the chosen of God.

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin

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of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The resurrection reveals that Jesus, who hung on the Cross, is truly the Son of God and the chosen Christ.

Therefore we must not judge Jesus by our own thoughts as the mocking rulers did, but believe with the heart in Jesus, the Savior whom God sent, and in the salvation He accomplished.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 23 verse 38, what was the inscription fastened above Jesus' cross meant to announce?

The inscription fastened above Jesus' cross was a placard stating the charge, meant to announce to the people the identity of the condemned man and the crime for which he was being executed. The content recorded in the Gospel of Luke was *"THE KING OF THE JEWS."*

"And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS" (Luke 23:38).

The Jewish religious leaders had accused Jesus as though He had rebelled against Caesar by calling Himself a king, and Pilate wrote that political charge on the inscription and made it public. The Gospel of John reports that the writing was recorded in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek and that many people read it.

"Now Pilate wrote a title and put it on the cross. And the writing was: JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then many of the Jews read this title, for the place where Jesus was crucified was near the city; and it was written in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin. Therefore the chief priests of the Jews said to Pilate, 'Do not write, "The King of the Jews," but,

"He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'"' Pilate answered, 'What I have written, I have written.'" (John 19:19–22).

The chief priests demanded that he not write *"The King of the Jews"* but instead change it to *"He said, 'I am the King of the Jews.'"* Pilate, however, left what he had written as it was.

The charge people laid on Jesus paradoxically testified to who He truly is. Jesus is not a king who sets up a worldly political kingdom but the eternal King who saves His people from sin and leads them into the kingdom of God.

Beneath that inscription of the charge, the soldiers mocked Him, saying that if He was the King of the Jews He should save Himself. By not coming down from the cross, Jesus fulfilled His mission as King. His kingship is not the power to protect Himself by sacrificing His people, but the saving power that gives life to His people by giving up His own life.

Pilate, too, found in Jesus no crime deserving death, and the criminal crucified with Him also confessed that He had done nothing wrong. Jesus was crucified not for His own sins but because He had taken charge of the sin of the world.

Because the sinless Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, He was judged on the Cross, and He rose from the dead and overcame sin and death. The inscription on the cross was a placard announcing the charge of execution, but at the same time it became evidence revealing that Jesus is the true King who accomplishes salvation.

Looking at the inscription above the cross, we must believe that the mocked Jesus is our eternal King. Receiving His salvation and living under the rule of His word is the attitude that accepts the title King of the Jews by faith.

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[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 23 verse 43, what did Jesus answer the criminal who believed in His kingdom and pleaded with Him to remember him?

Jesus promised the criminal who pleaded with Him to remember him that he would be with Jesus in Paradise that very day.

"And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:43).

This criminal acknowledged that they were receiving the punishment their deeds deserved, and confessed that Jesus had done nothing wrong. He acknowledged his own sin and punishment and believed in Jesus' righteousness and kingship.

He believed that Jesus, who was crucified together with him before his eyes, had a kingdom and would come as the King of that kingdom even after death, and he pleaded with Him to remember him.

The word *"today"* shows that the promise of salvation was not put off to some distant future day, and the word *"with Me"* shows that the greatest blessing of Paradise is being with Jesus.

The word Jesus began with *"Assuredly"* makes clear that the promise is a true word that will surely be fulfilled. The criminal's salvation depended not on the judgment of those around him or on past merits, but on the word and the authority of Jesus, who saves sinners.

Though the death of the body was near, for the criminal who believed in Jesus, death became not the end in destruction but the door into life together with the Lord. Jesus promised not merely to remember him but to have him with Himself.

The criminal had no time to come down from the cross and accumulate good deeds, but Jesus accepted his faith and promised him Paradise. This shows that salvation is not human

merit but the grace of God, received by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished.

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, including the criminal's sins, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead.

The two criminals saw the same Jesus, but one blasphemed Him and the other believed in Him as Savior and King. We, too, must acknowledge our sins and believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished, and so receive the promise of eternal life.

At the Cross, what matters is not what sin a person committed in the past but who he knows and believes Jesus to be—the One who took charge of the sin of the world and was judged. To the one who comes to Jesus by faith, the Lord gives the remission of sin and the hope of the kingdom of God.

[Question] 13. In Luke chapter 23 verses 44–45, just before Jesus breathed His last, what phenomena occurred over all the earth and in the temple?

Just before Jesus breathed His last, the sun lost its light and darkness came over all the earth, continuing from the sixth hour until the ninth hour, and the veil of the temple was torn in the middle.

"Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two" (Luke 23:44–45).

The sixth hour is about noon in today's reckoning, and the ninth hour is about three in the afternoon. The darkness that

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continued for about three hours in the daytime, when the sun should have been shining brightly, showed that Jesus' death was not the death of an ordinary condemned man.

Because Jesus had received baptism from John and taken charge of the sins of the whole world, He received on the Cross, in the sinners' place, the judgment that they should have received. The darkness over all the earth shows the severity of the judgment on sin.

The veil of the temple was the curtain that divided the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place. That the veil was torn means that Jesus solved the problem of sin, which had blocked sinners from God, and opened the way to approach God.

Matthew and Mark record that this veil was torn in two from top to bottom. This shows that it was not man who tore it from below to make a way, but God who opened the way of salvation.

Formerly the high priest entered the Most Holy Place at the appointed time with the blood of the sacrifice, but Jesus Himself became the perfect sacrifice and completed the way of the remission of sin.

The darkness shows that Jesus took charge of the judgment of the sin of the world, and the torn veil shows that through that judgment the remission of sin and the way to approach God were opened.

After breathing His last on the Cross, Jesus rose from the dead and overcame sin and death. Since He completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, whoever believes this salvation receives the remission of sin and can boldly approach the presence of God.

Looking at the darkness over all the earth, we must know how severe the judgment of sin is; and looking at the torn veil, we must believe in the way of salvation Jesus opened. We must

approach God not by relying on our own righteousness but through the salvation the Lord completed.

[Question] 14. In Luke chapter 23 verses 52–53, in what kind of tomb did Joseph of Arimathea bury the body of Jesus?

Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus down from the cross, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb hewn out of the rock, in which no one had ever been buried. The Gospel of Matthew makes clear that it was Joseph's own new tomb, which he had hewn out of the rock.

"This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before" (Luke 23:52–53).

Joseph of Arimathea was a council member, but he did not consent to the council's decision and deed to kill Jesus. As a good and just man he was waiting for the kingdom of God, and he asked Pilate for the body of Jesus.

Joseph wrapped Jesus' body in linen and laid it with devotion in the new tomb he had prepared. The women who had come from Galilee also saw with their own eyes the tomb and how the body was laid.

Since only Jesus' body was laid in a tomb no one had yet used, when the tomb was found empty three days later there could be no confusion with anyone else's body. This burial clearly links together the facts of Jesus' real death, the empty tomb, and the resurrection.

"And they made His grave with the wicked— But with the rich at His death, Because He had done no violence, Nor was

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any deceit in His mouth" (Isaiah 53:9).

Jesus was crucified and died together with criminals, but by being buried in the new tomb of Joseph, a rich man, He fulfilled this prophecy. Joseph did not fear what people would think, and he served Jesus with his position and his wealth.

Jesus' burial shows that He really went through the death of the body. He did not merely appear to be dead; after He breathed His last on the Cross, His body was wrapped in linen and laid in the tomb.

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and, after being buried in the tomb, completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Those who believe accept that death, burial, and resurrection as the work accomplished for their own salvation.

With the faith that waits for the kingdom of God, Joseph of Arimathea took the body of Jesus and gave up his own tomb. We, too, must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished and show that faith in our lives without fearing what people think.

[Question] 15. In Luke chapter 23 verses 54–56, what day was it when Jesus was buried, and what did the women who watched it do afterward?

The day Jesus was buried was the Preparation Day, the day of preparing for the Sabbath, and it was almost the beginning of the Sabbath. The women who had come with Jesus from Galilee observed the tomb and how the body was laid, and then returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils, and rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment.

"That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near.

And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment" (Luke 23:54–56).

Since the Sabbath began at sunset on Friday, the Preparation Day, Joseph of Arimathea had to hurry with the burial. He wrapped Jesus' body in linen and laid it in a rock tomb that no one had yet used.

The women followed after Joseph and looked closely at the location of the tomb and how the body was laid. After returning home, they prepared spices and fragrant oils to anoint Jesus' body when they went back after the Sabbath had passed.

They loved Jesus, but they did not treat God's commandment lightly on the grounds of that love. They rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment, and then at dawn on the first day of the week they went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared.

At that time the women did not fully understand the resurrection Jesus had spoken of, so they intended to anoint the body of the dead Jesus with spices. But because they knew the love of the Lord, who had taken charge of their sins and their problems, they did not leave Jesus but followed Him to the end, even at the time when the disciples were hiding in fear.

They had received the love of Jesus, who embraced their faults and their pains, took charge of the problem of sin by receiving baptism from John, and gave up His life on the Cross. Because they knew that love, they served the Lord even while enduring danger and toil.

At the same tomb they found that Jesus' body was gone, and they heard from the angels the news that He had risen. As the women who watched the burial also confirmed the empty tomb,

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Jesus' real death, burial, and resurrection are clearly linked together.

The spices and fragrant oils prepared in sorrow led them on the way to meeting the joyful news of the resurrection. God established these women as witnesses who confirmed the empty tomb and delivered the news of Jesus' resurrection to the disciples.

Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and, after being buried in the tomb, completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. We, too, must believe in that saving love, follow the Lord with thanksgiving, and preach the gospel of the resurrection. ✉

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus on the Cross is not One to be pitied but the almighty God

< Luke 23:26-31 >

"Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin "to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?'"

The passage we read today is the scene in which Jesus, having received the death sentence from Pilate, goes to Calvary. Jesus had been scourged with forty stripes minus one, and His whole body was exhausted. When He collapsed from exhaustion while going up to Calvary bearing the cross, the people laid hold of a Cyrenian named Simon, laid the cross on him, and made him follow Jesus. Many women followed Jesus, beating their breasts and weeping. At this time Jesus spoke. He said,

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“Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children” (Luke 23:28).

Jesus received the death sentence in Pilate’s court and was led away to the place of execution. As He went bearing the cross, a great multitude of women followed, beating their breasts and weeping bitterly. It was a crowd that followed beating their breasts, saying, ‘To think that He must be nailed to a cross and die!’ Since the passage speaks of a multitude, we cannot know whether there were a hundred or a thousand. The passage specifically records the many women who followed Jesus, mourning and weeping for Him.

In fact, when you look into it, women have very deep faith. Recently in Zambia, a father and his son who belonged to a certain church read our books and received the remission of sin. The father, who had been running that church, quit the church. He had believed that way until then, but when he read our books he found that the church he had been serving was completely wrong. Not only that church but all the churches in the whole world are without the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What is more, even when you look at those who are called leaders, there is hardly anyone who has received the remission of sin.

The father of one brother from that church gathered together with our church family and held a worship service. One of our co-workers went there and led the service, and after the service the sisters stood up, gave testimonies, danced too, and were overflowing with joy. Then the father, the pastor who had attended that church, was greatly shocked. How could sisters give testimonies, sing praises, and dance inside a church, he wondered. It was because the church he had attended taught that sisters must keep completely silent in the church. The Apostle Paul once said such a thing to the Corinthian church, which was so disorderly.

But the Apostle Paul did not say it with that meaning. The Head of the Church is Jesus Christ; under Him are the brothers, and under them are the sisters. He only said that the sisters should not do the work of teaching anyone in the church but should keep order. Brothers and sisters are equal in Christ. Yet in that church the sisters were not allowed even to open their mouths. Because of this, the father, the pastor, was greatly shocked.

He had witnessed something he thought could never happen. His son, one of our brothers, sent word to one of our co-workers. How was it, he asked, that sisters could not even open their mouths in the church? When you look into it, far more women loved and served Jesus. When Jesus rose again, too, it was Mary who went first, believed, and met Him. The first person Jesus met after His resurrection was Mary.

When you search the Scriptures, the sisters have far deeper faith. Jesus, too, does not disregard the sisters. The problem is only when things are done too disorderly; the faith of the sisters itself is not something to be blocked. After I received that news, I gave this instruction: never stop the sisters from hearing the word, giving testimonies, singing praises, and dancing. In God's sight, a person who hears the word, receives the remission of sin, and out of thankfulness shouts hallelujah, praises, and dances is far better than a person who does not even say amen readily and just sits there staring blankly. In fact, it is rather we who must repent. We must not block it.

From now on, if there are people in the African region who have been saved and are so glad that they praise, give testimonies, and dance, do not stop them. Rather, we must repent, and that church must repent too. It is the same in a certain denomination that insists there should be only one church in each region. When the preacher is moved and shouts out a phrase, the whole congregation responds, but they say that the brothers

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must do it first and the sisters afterward.

When I saw that, I said it was truly pitiful. When you look into it, the sisters are far better, so who set up such a law? In the Presbyterian Church, too, women are kept from stepping forward in the church. But could their faith not be better?

"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children"

So it was that as Jesus went up the hill of Golgotha bearing the cross, there was a multitude of many women following behind Him, beating their breasts and wailing. So the word Jesus spoke is in verse 28: *"But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children.'"*

If we consider this word with our intellect, emotion, and will, it is truly a grave word. Being a whole person here refers to a person who has intellect, emotion, and will. A person who knows rightly, feels rightly, and acts rightly is called a whole person. Many women were following, beating their breasts and weeping, and Jesus turned to them and said, *"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."* How significant it is that He spoke this word at the very moment He was being led away to the place of execution to be nailed to the cross and die! Is this merely a word of ethical and moral humility?

Jesus had now taken charge of all the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and He was tried in Pilate's court after being framed by the people. Pilate tried to release Jesus, but Jesus did not say a single word and simply received the death sentence. Even so, Pilate could not bring himself to pronounce the death sentence. Whether he looked at

Jesus' eyes or at His conduct, He was not a man who had committed a crime. But many people of Jerusalem demonstrated outside that court and held a protest, demanding that Jesus be crucified.

Pilate tried to release Him because, however hard he searched, he could find no fault in Him. But the people shouted, 'If you let this man go, you are not Caesar's friend but a traitor.' Pilate was the governor sent by Caesar, and they all shouted together in protest that if he let Jesus go he was not loyal to Caesar.

So Pilate, having no other way, released Barabbas, the most vicious criminal in the prison, and handed Jesus over to be crucified. Having no choice, he pronounced the death sentence, saying, 'Do as you will.'

As He was being led away like this to the place of execution, He said to the many women who were weeping in sorrow and grief at seeing Him led away, *"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."* This word means the following: "I have taken charge of the sins of mankind. It has been nearly three years since I took the sin of the world upon Myself by receiving baptism from John." He received baptism from John at the age of thirty, and He died at the age of thirty-three. Since I have taken charge of the sins of mankind, I am now going to be nailed to the cross in order to receive the punishment for those sins and save you completely.

"Since I have taken charge of your sins with the baptism I received from John, I am going there to pay the price of your sins. Do not weep for Me, and do not hinder the work I am doing. But weep for yourselves and for your descendants. Do you know why I am being led away to the cross?" Therefore He said, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your descendants.

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The Savior who came to take charge of our sins

The thoughts of the women were completely different from the truth. Because those many women had heard and seen much of what Jesus had said in ordinary times, beginning with the Sermon on the Mount, they could not understand how so wonderful a person could hang on a cross and die. But we must not treat Jesus' death on the Cross with a heart of pity and sympathy. That is a great delusion.

What we ought to do is to give thanks by faith and praise by faith before Him, who came to remove our sins and is taking charge of that work in order to solve our sins perfectly. We must be thankful to and praise that Jesus, who bore my sins in my place and gave His body over to the cross to be nailed there. It is not something to weep over together, nor something to pity; it is something to give thanks for and praise by faith. Yet today many people on this earth think of Jesus hanging on the cross and pity Him, wondering how much it must have hurt. That is greatly mistaken.

He tells us not to weep for Him. Why do you weep for Me, when I have come to save you? The Lord made this universe and everything in it, and He made man too. Then a fallen angel challenged God, and his plan came to nothing. Since he was to be cast out, and since he knew the fact that God loves man, he enticed Adam and Eve and caused them to fall into sin. He made them unable to believe the word of God, and he tried to drag man down with him and destroy him.

Why did he do that? Because doing so would grieve God's heart. Satan knew that God especially loves man because He made man in His own image. But just as by one man's sin all men became sinners, so by one Man's obedience all men become righteous. The Lord came to this earth to save us, who bear the

image of God.

The Lord took charge of the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and in order to make known that He Himself is the Savior of mankind, He performed countless signs and miracles—the miracle of the five loaves and two fish, casting out demons, raising the dead, and walking on the stormy sea. That Jesus is the very Savior of mankind and God. Jesus took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross and died shedding His blood, and rose again on the third day. If we believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the remission of sin and are saved. And we praise, give thanks, and give glory before God, and we live on this earth hoping to go and live in that kingdom in the future. How wrong we are, then, when we instead pity this Jesus, who saves us like this!

We must not pity Jesus

Jesus loves you and me, and He came to save us and is about to be nailed to the cross and meet death. Since He took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, He is about to pay the price of our sins with His blood. Just as we pay money when we buy something, He is now going to the cross to shed His blood and pay the price of our sins with His own life as the price. Then should we not give thanks by faith?

We must think as whole persons. How holy and almighty a God He is! He is the One who rises again even after dying. That He came to this earth and suffered humiliation from people during His thirty-three years of life was in order to save you and me completely from sin; it was not that He was nailed to the cross because He had no power. He is the God who created the

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universe. Jesus made this universe and all things in it with His word. He said, Let there be, and it was all created simply by His word.

When He judges the Devil, too, having come into this world, whereas we would have beaten him with a club, Jesus does it with His word. Throw Satan the Devil and his followers into the bottomless pit—with that one word they go in without being able to move a muscle. That is how much authority Jesus has.

Since He is such a One, it makes no sense for you and me to pity Jesus. We human beings are deluded. So Jesus said, "Do not pity Me, but weep over the fact that you and your descendants are going to hell." Jesus says to us, 'Come out of your delusion. Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your descendants.'

Those who say they believe in Jesus wonder how much it must have hurt when He was scourged, and how painful it must have been when He was led away. But Jesus was rather proud. How proud He must have been, to have said *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)* at the moment His breath stopped as He hung nailed to the cross! It is a word that says, I have accomplished it all—I have finished all the work I came to this earth to do in order to save you.

Is this a religion made by man? Is Jesus an illusion? No. He is the God who is the real truth, the Creator, and our Savior. Because He had taken charge of our sins, He suffered humiliation and pain for a little while, came to death, and then rose again and saved us; He is not One who was killed weakly for lack of power. He is truly the mightiest One in the universe. No general in this world, no army, not even all the angels of heaven attacking together could overcome Jesus.

We must believe in Jesus and be saved

We must receive this word in the following way. Jesus is going to the cross to die shedding His blood and so save us, and we must not pity that Jesus but believe in Him and be saved. What happens if we do not? Verse 29 says, *"For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'"*

After telling them not to weep for Him but to weep for themselves and for their descendants, Jesus said that the one who cannot conceive a child is blessed, the womb that cannot carry a child to term and give birth is blessed, and the breasts that never nursed are blessed. Simply put, it is a word that says the person who cannot get pregnant, cannot give birth even at full term, and cannot nurse a baby for lack of milk is blessed.

To put it even more simply, it is a word that says the person who was never born as a human being is rather blessed. Now what does the phrase *"For indeed the days are coming" (Luke 23:29)* mean here? If, when the Lord comes to this earth, you have children, are pregnant, are giving birth, and are nursing a baby, it is rather a curse. Is that not, in itself, an immensely blessed thing? But what matters is the day. What day? The day of judgment.

The Lord came to this earth, took charge of your sins and mine with the baptism of John the Baptist, and is now going to the cross carrying the sin of the world. And He is nailed there and dies and rises again, and so saves us. When Jesus is nailed to the cross and dies now, He saves all mankind from sin. He has washed away all sins. But if a person does not believe and reaches that day without being saved, it would rather be a blessing for him never to have been born on this earth.

If a person is born on this earth and lives without knowing or

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believing the work by which Jesus saved you and me from sin, and so remains unsaved, he ends up becoming the most accursed of human beings. It is written, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life" (John 3:16)*.

After God made man, when man went wrong, He came to this earth to save us. He came through the body of a woman, took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John, died and rose again, and completed the work of saving us. But people do not accept it and do not believe. Instead they pity Jesus and believe in Him religiously. They pray every day, saying, 'How much it must have hurt You!'

If a person does not accept the baptism Jesus received from John—the baptism by which He was passed that person's own sins—and does not accept His death on the Cross as his own death, but believes in Him only as a pitiful Jesus, it would have been better for such a person never to have been born. God brings down judgment. The work I do is to remove your sins, and what you must do is to believe that I took charge of your sins, received the judgment for those sins, and saved you.

This is not something to weep over but something to believe. Why do you pity Me? Dear fellow believers, do you know what hurts a person's pride the most? It is receiving pity from someone lesser than oneself. If the one who calls me pitiful is someone better than I am, it may be a little comfort, but if someone a thousand or ten thousand times inferior to me pities me, it rather wounds my pride.

Do not pity Me, but believe

A little while ago I wrote that Jesus received the death

sentence and was led away to Calvary, but if Jesus heard it, it would displease Him. Why did I write that He was led away by the unjust Pilate? Because Pilate did not render his judgment justly. Nevertheless, because Jesus had to take charge of the sin of this world and die on the cross, He said nothing and became the sacrifice at the hands of the crowd.

It is written in the Scriptures, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5)*. Jesus accomplished that work of salvation with power, with majesty, and without servility. He did not say that it hurt, or beg to be spared, or ask them to drive the nails in gently.

I ask the nurse to go easy even when I merely get an injection. I am so afraid of injections that I am frightened at the mere sight of someone in a white coat. But Jesus is not like me.

Jesus rather said this to those many women who pitied Him: "Weep for yourselves and for your descendants. I am not a pitiful man but One who has come to remove your sins. When you believe in Me, believe as whole persons, with intellect, emotion, and will together. Since I have taken charge of your sins, this is a work I am now doing of My own accord in order to receive the judgment for your sins. So do not weep out of pity or out of sympathy. After I do this work, I will come again to judge those who do not believe in what I have done. I will come to this earth as the fearful Judge who throws into the punishment of hell, to suffer torment forever, Satan the Devil, who incited people to nail Me to the cross, and those who do not believe in Me and still have sin in their hearts. Come to your senses. This is not a time to weep. You must weep for yourselves." This is what He is saying.

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Jesus will come again to this earth as the Judge

Verse 30 says, *"Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'"* Jesus accomplished all the purposes He came to this earth to accomplish. And He rose again, testified to people for forty days, and went up into heaven before people's eyes. And He said that He would come again just as they had seen Him go. When He comes again, He comes as the Judge, the One who presides over the court. He comes to judge all those who pitied Him and felt sorry for Him—those who, while saying they loved Him, did not receive into their hearts His love and the salvation He accomplished.

Jesus will come again to this earth in majesty as the Judge. People wait for the Rapture, but the Rapture takes place when Jesus comes as the returning Lord. Because He comes again, it is called the second coming. When He comes again, Jesus is so powerful and great, and because people have sin in their hearts and have been under the Devil's control until then, they are terrified of Him. So they cry out, Mountains, hide me! Rocks, hide me!

Such is the Lord. So believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sin. Love is stronger than death. The Lord loved us and gave up even His own life to accomplish all our salvation, and He is coming to judge those who do not believe it but believe only religiously.

We must believe in Jesus as whole persons. We must believe in Him as the Jesus who had compassion on me, came to this earth, received baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again. We must not think of Him as a Jesus who came to save me but was helpless with pain and was barely able to be sacrificed for lack of power. Jesus volunteered of His own accord. Because He had

taken charge of our sins, He had to be nailed to the cross and judged. For if Jesus were not judged, we would have to be judged.

So, for the sake of that work, He never once opened His mouth, but when many women followed Him weeping and wailing, He said, *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."* When that day comes, the one who cannot conceive a child, the one who cannot give birth, and the one who cannot nurse will be blessed. The person who was never born is rather blessed. Once born as a human being, the person who does not accept the work by which I saved him with the water and the blood will receive such fearful punishment in hell.

So He told them not to weep for Him but to weep for themselves, and to believe in Him quickly.

We must know exactly what the Lord did and believe it

Verse 31 says, *"For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?"*

When the time comes for Jesus to come again to this world, the Antichrist will appear. When the Antichrist appears, living as a human being on this earth will itself be a curse. The plagues of the seven trumpets and the seven bowls will come. Hail will fall from the sky, fires will break out, earthquakes will occur, diseases will spread, wars will break out, famines will come, all the seawater will turn the color of blood so that the fish rot and stink, all the springs of water will become blood swarming with germs, and it will be an age in which people cannot live.

When that happens, even the righteous, while they are alive,

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will suffer from the plagues the Lord has permitted. It will be so even before the Antichrist kills us.

Now, if they do these things in the green wood, how much more will be done in the dry? Those who have no life because they have not received the remission of sin, those who still have their own sins in their hearts, those who are slaves of the Devil—what will become of these people? That is what this word says.

This is how we must understand Jesus' hanging on the cross and dying. Because Jesus had received baptism from John the Baptist, and because our sin had been passed to Him, He rightly had to hang on the cross and die. Jesus volunteered of His own accord. Jesus absolutely had to die, because unless He died once He could not deliver us from death and could not pay the price of death. So we must know the Lord as whole persons. He is not One who hung there and died miserably for lack of power; He is the One to whom we are grateful, who loved us and endured pain for a little while. To think that He suffered it because He had no power is to mock and despise Jesus.

God and man alike become angry when their self-respect is wounded. What would happen if, standing before the judgment seat on the day of judgment, someone said, "Thank You, Lord, for suffering for me; I wept and wailed for You and loved You and pitied You so devotedly—do You pretend not to know me?" He would say, The fallen angel mocked Me, and now these do the same, and He would order that all such people be seized and thrown into the bottomless pit. We must come to our senses.

Even while we give thanks that we have received the remission of sin by believing in Jesus on the Cross, there is no need for us to weep and wail every day at early morning prayer, or to hold early morning prayer or all-night prayer begging Him to forgive that sin yet again each time we commit a sin, saying that Jesus suffered for me and yet I sinned again.

The Lord came to this earth and paid the price of our sins and saved us fairly and squarely, justly, most righteously, and most perfectly. In order for our sin to be passed to Him, He first received baptism from John; He paid that price and saved us righteously from sin, and He made us the people of God, the righteous, His workers, and the people of the kingdom of heaven.

We must know exactly what the Lord did and believe it. We must never pity Him. Every time you pity Him, the Lord is displeased. Do not wound God's pride; give thanks that He saved us righteously. That He saved us righteously means that He saved us fairly and squarely because He had the power. It is not that He was crucified for lack of power; He was crucified voluntarily because He had the power. Those today who believe only in the Cross as a religion are servants of Satan the Devil and belong to the Devil.

Is Jesus the founder of a religion of the cross? Is Jesus a man, a creature? Why do you wound Jesus' pride and believe in Him as the founder of a man-made religion? Jesus is the Creator and the Almighty. The One who made the universe and all things in it is Jesus. God the Father and the Holy Spirit were there together, but it was Jesus who spoke and made the galaxies of heaven, the sea, the earth, and all the other worlds. We must not make Jesus the founder of a religion, nor must we believe in Jesus on the Cross while pitying Him.

Jesus is not such a childish One. We humans ask for injections to be given gently, and though we talk big, we tremble when some small thing happens; but Jesus is the omniscient and almighty God, who does not bat an eye even if all the angels, all mankind, and all the devils attack Him together. He merely came to this earth as the Savior. That is why He is called Jesus. He is the true King of kings, who as the Christ also fulfilled the office of High Priest, the office of Prophet, and the office of our

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Shepherd. In order to let only those who have no sin enter the kingdom of heaven, He came to this earth and removed our sins. If we only believe through the word in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord accomplished, our sins disappear and the Devil flees too. We must not pity Jesus; we must believe in Him. We must praise God by faith, and by faith we must also dance and give thanks.

There are people who, like the pastor I mentioned earlier, tell the sisters not to do such things when they dance and praise, asking how sisters could behave that way inside a church. If I had been there, I would have said this: Brother, what kind of pastor are you? Brother, you came to faith far later than the sisters. Brother, you cannot dance and cannot give thanks yourself, so why do you stop the sisters when they dance and praise God? He has only been saved; he still keeps his old habits just as they were.

That brother has not yet had the old grime washed off. He does so because he does not know, so we need only teach him patiently over a long time. Jesus was nailed to the cross not for lack of power but voluntarily, of His own accord. Even when He was being nailed, He did not utter a single word of protest. They say there are two kinds of condemned criminals. One kind goes to his execution quietly, saying, I die because of my own crimes; the other kind curses violently, screaming, Have you not sinned as I have? How can you kill me?—so that there are cases where the execution has to be carried out by force.

But Jesus, while being nailed to the cross and pouring out all the blood in His heart, said just two things. Of the two thieves nailed on either side of Him, one thief said, *"Remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42)*, and confessed that he believed Jesus was his Savior, who had no sin. Then Jesus said, *"Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)*.

And He spoke only the word *"It is finished!"* To those who nailed Him to the cross and beat Him with whips He said not a word; He prayed to God the Father that they did so because they did not know what they were doing, and He did not utter a single word of resentment.

And on the third day after His death He rose again, just as He had said. And for some forty days He appeared to people and showed Himself as evidence. Jesus is a real person. Having died and risen again, He told us to receive the Holy Spirit, and He said that since He had risen, when we finish all our work on this earth and come to Him, He would raise us again when He comes again as the returning Lord. He told us that this corruptible body would put on the incorruptible and go to the Lord's kingdom to live with the Lord forever.

We must know, believe, and give thanks in this way. On this earth today there are people who believe in the religion of the cross and pity Jesus every day. They must repent. It is written, *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)*. Why must we rejoice? Because the Lord came to this earth to save us and saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Therefore we must rejoice by faith, pray always, and acknowledge the Lord in everything.

God made His love known through such things. Though we were born on this earth as sinners, God let us hear this word of truth in order to give us the remission of sin. We must rejoice in, give thanks for, and delight in the righteous word, the word of truth. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Do not weep for others, but weep for yourself

< Luke 23:26-31 >

"Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin "to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?'"

Today we have read Luke chapter 23. The text records the word Jesus spoke when, having been passed the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, He went up to Golgotha bearing the cross in order to receive the punishment for that sin. Here the word Jesus spoke to sinners continues from verse 27.

It says, *"A great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him."* When Jesus was going up toward the hill of Golgotha bearing the cross, there was a great multitude of the people and of women who mourned and lamented for Him, beating their breasts. Many sinners who

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ordinarily followed Jesus and knew and cherished Him followed Him, beating their breasts and weeping bitterly.

The Lord spoke to those who were following Him. It says, *"But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children'" (Luke 23:28).*

Sinners must know what this word means, which the Lord spoke to those who have sin. And the born-again righteous, who already know and believe the meaning of this word, must preach the gospel by faith. *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children"*—Jesus spoke this word to sinners who have sin.

This word was spoken to the many people who loved and followed Jesus. The Lord had been sentenced as the most wicked and vicious sinner among sinners, and He was going up toward Golgotha bearing the cross. But there was a true reason why Jesus bore the cross. In order to save sinners from all their sins, He was passed the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, and He bore the cross.

The Lord speaks to those many sinners who were weeping bitterly out of concern, pity, love, and tender care for Jesus. He says, If you are going to weep, weep for yourselves and for your children. He says, You must not weep for Me but for yourselves. He says, Why do you weep for Me? Do not weep for Me. He says, As the Savior of sinners, I am in the midst of bearing the cross and being judged in order to remove every one of the sins of sinners. But you, He said, weep for your sins and for the sins of your descendants. This very word is the word of the Lord.

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The one who truly must weep is the one who has sin—oneself

Even now countless sinners are weeping for Jesus and following Him. They weep, saying that Jesus hanging on the cross is pitiful, and they weep, wondering how much it must have hurt when He was nailed to the cross.

But Jesus is being nailed to the cross in order to remove the sins of sinners. Because He had received baptism, He was passed the sin of the world; and because He bore the sin of the world, He made so costly a sacrifice on the Cross. That sacrifice is the precious grace of God that enables us to receive the remission of sin.

Therefore it truly makes no sense to weep for the Lord and follow Him because we love Jesus, because He seems so pitiable, while we still have sin in our own hearts. The Lord says that it is certainly a wrong thing.

The reason a sinner must weep is that he must know there is judgment for his sins and beg and plead for his sins to be remitted. How can one weep for Jesus? The ones who really need to be wept for are sinners themselves. Sinners go to the hell where the Devil will go. Therefore a sinner must not weep over Jesus' being nailed to the cross, but must weep for himself before God, before the word of truth.

What if one has not received the remission of sin and, though believing in Jesus Christ, is a sinner who has not been born again? He is going to hell to suffer a tribulation worse than that, so does he have the leisure to think of Jesus, not knowing his own situation?

What if a person weeps, wondering how much it must hurt Jesus? Unable to weep for his own soul, which will suffer forever in hell, he weeps because Jesus, nailed to the cross on

the hill of Golgotha, seems pitiful. This is truly inconsistent.

A sinner must think of the torment of hell he will suffer and weep to Jesus beforehand, asking Him to save him from sin. How can sinners weep for Jesus? You have no idea how many sinners in this world weep for Jesus even now. As if it did not matter that they themselves go to hell, they do not weep for themselves but weep thinking of Jesus being nailed to the cross. There are many who pretend to be better than Jesus and more righteous than Jesus.

Instead of doing that, sinners must think about themselves. They must think about their own future, and consider whether they will go to heaven or to hell in the future, what suffering they will undergo, and what blessedness they will enjoy. Rather than weeping for Jesus, sinners must think about themselves before God.

The Lord speaks. He says, It is not I who am pitiful; it is you sinners who are pitiful. He says, Having taken the sin of the world upon Myself by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, I am now being nailed to the cross to remove all the sins of sinners and die. And He says that on the third day after His death He will rise again and go up in glory to the right hand of the Father's throne. But you sinners, He says, are going to face the judgment of hell, and yet, without even receiving the remission of sin, do you weep for Me out of fleshly affection because I am being nailed to the cross?

He says, It is not I who am pitiful; weep for yourselves, who are truly pitiful because you have not received the remission of sin. He says, Believe in the baptism and the blood of the Cross by which I removed all your sins, so that you will not go to hell. And so, He says, you too must be saved from sin; then you too can come to the Paradise where I am. He says, Think of your remission of sin; think that a sinner will go to hell. He says, Think of your future and weep; think of My judgment upon your sins.

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The true reason Jesus bore the cross

After receiving baptism, Jesus grew exhausted as He went up the hill of Golgotha bearing the cross. He was utterly exhausted, having been scourged and left hungry. Moreover, because a crown of thorns had been placed on His head, blood was running down from His forehead, and His whole body was covered with blood. But there was meaning in all these things.

Jesus fell while carrying the wooden frame of the cross and could not get up well. So the soldiers laid hold of a Cyrenian who was coming up from the country and made him carry the wooden frame of the cross up the hill. And Jesus went up following behind him.

It seems that before God it is such country people who are used. Dear fellow believers, not one of these words recorded in the Scriptures is without meaning. God could have laid hold of a city man and laid the cross on him, but there is God's will in His laying hold of a country man and laying it on him.

What would have happened if He had called a city man and laid the wooden frame on him? He would have talked back, saying, Why are you doing this? Don't you know I am a Roman? Look at my citizenship. He would have protested, asking whether there was no law. But the country man carried the cross without a word, just as he was told.

So it is in later ages as well. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, removed all the sins of sinners on the Cross, rose again on the third day after His death, went up into heaven, and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. After that event of the Cross, the righteous who served God were for the most part such simple and unaffected people. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? Before the Lord, pure-hearted sinners were saved, and pure-hearted righteous people served the Lord.

Why must a sinner weep for himself? Because a sinner is one who will suffer endless tribulation in hell in the future, he ought to weep for himself. If he merely pities Jesus, wondering how much it must have hurt when He was nailed to the cross, while he himself has not received the remission of sin, he will have to go into the hot fire of hell in the future and suffer there.

The word in which Jesus said, You sinners, do not weep for Me but weep for yourselves, means this. He says, Think of the punishment of hell you yourselves will suffer in the future, and weep. He says, Seek My help as quickly as possible, even a day sooner. He says, Know that not only you but your children too will go into the fire of hell and suffer. He is saying, Truly weep and plead earnestly for yourselves to be saved; have pity on yourselves. He is saying, Do not pity Me, but pity yourself and pity your children.

At that time the Jews of Israel drove Jesus Christ to the cross. And they said that they themselves would take all the curse resulting from that deed. And so, after Jesus died on the Cross, what things happened one after another?

About forty years after Jesus Christ rose again on the third day after His death and went up into heaven—that is, around A.D. 70—General Titus of Rome completely devastated Israel. You have no idea how extreme Israel's tribulation was at that time. The Roman general seized the people of Israel and killed them. He sold them off as captives, and scattered them throughout the whole world so that they could not live gathered in one place.

And so the people of Israel, who had been scattered throughout the whole world, came to be gathered again later; but after that, Hitler gathered the scattered Jews and committed a massacre. The Lord actually showed that a sinner who does not weep for himself as a sinner, who does not know that he is pitiful,

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and who rejects the remission of sin of Jesus Christ suffers such hardship.

When Jesus was being tried in Pilate's court before He died on the Cross, the sinners of Judea shouted, Crucify Him, crucify Him. From the chief priests on down to the Pharisees, the scribes, and the people, they said, Crucify Him. Of course not everyone did so. There were also many who wondered why He should have to be nailed to a cross. But at that time those who claimed to believe in God incited the sinners.

When Pilate asked, then, whom he should release instead of Jesus, they asked him to release Barabbas, a vicious criminal. Pilate thought it strange, because however much he interrogated Jesus, He had no fault. He thought, What grudge do those people have against this man, that they tell me to crucify Him?

So Pilate said, 'Even looking at it objectively, as a Roman, Barabbas seems to be the criminal and Jesus does not. Then you take responsibility for crucifying Jesus.' Then they said, 'Yes, we will take responsibility. Let that sin be on our children.' Pilate said, Then I am innocent, and he released Barabbas instead of Jesus.

This very event is a picture of the remission of sin. Barabbas, a vicious criminal, was released from his sin because of Jesus. It is the same with sinners. Jesus received baptism with water and shed His blood for what sinners should have been judged for, and so He delivered sinners from sin.

Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of the righteous. He is the Jesus of all mankind, my Jesus, and your Jesus. The Lord is my Lord and the Lord of the righteous. Yet sinners rejected Him. They rejected Him, saying, Is Jesus the Son of God? Crucify Him and kill Him.

Jesus speaks to sinners. He says, Weep for yourself, who are a sinner; weep for yourselves and for your children; daughters

of Jerusalem, you sinners who live a religious life, weep for yourselves. If sinners do not believe that I am the Savior of sinners, the Master of sinners, the Redeemer of sinners, they go into the fire of hell. So believe in Me, He says. And He said, Think that your descendants will go to hell, and weep.

Jesus, who came to save sinners—the sin of rejecting such a Savior is the sin of the people of Israel. Because of the sin of rejecting Him, their descendants were scattered throughout the whole world, suffered fearful hardship, and died. They did not die ordinary deaths but suffered gruesome deaths.

A sinner dies and goes into the fire of hell. God says through the Gospel of Mark and the Book of Revelation that a sinner falls into the fire where the worm does not die and the fire is not quenched. The Lord said that this very punishment is the second death of sinners.

So for whom must sinners weep? A sinner who has not received the remission of sin must weep for himself. Should a sinner who has sin weep for Jesus? Or should he weep for himself and for his descendants?

A sinner must weep for himself, the sinner—how can he weep for Jesus? Is Jesus pitiful? Jesus came to this earth and did a precious work in order to send sinners to heaven, so what is pitiful about that? The Lord's suffering was a matter that ended once He had hung on the cross for a few hours and suffered pain for a short while. Compared with living forever in the fire of hell in torment that feels like dying, without being able to die, it is nothing.

Jesus was glad even as He died on the Cross. He was in great anguish because of being turned away from by God the Father for a short while, but He said, It is finished, and died gladly. He did not die a wretched death. Having accomplished all the work of salvation, Jesus, who said *"It is finished!"* was fully satisfied.

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It is wrong for one who has sin to pity Jesus

How can those who have sin pity God instead? This is the very thing God finds most displeasing. Countless sinners in this world pity Jesus, but do you know how displeasing God finds that heart? The Lord truly hates it when people gather in the chapel every day and weep, saying, 'Lord, how much it must have hurt when You hung on the cross!'

The Lord speaks. He says, Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourself. He says, My being nailed to the cross is to save you who have sin, and it is being nailed for only a short while. He says, You sinners, think of the heat you will have to suffer every day when you go to hell.

He says, Compare My hanging nailed to the cross for a few hours now with your living forever in that heat, together with the worms, as a sinner. He says, Think about it yourself. He says, Should you weep for yourself, a sinner who will be judged, or should you weep for Me? He says, I suffer pain only for a short while.

Yet a sinner comes to church and says, Lord, how much it must have hurt. What is so pitiful about Jesus that they weep? Sinners weep thinking of the cross; they weep thinking of how Jesus was scourged and wondering how much it must have hurt; and whenever they have nothing better to do, they weep wondering how much it must have hurt when He was nailed.

The Lord is sick and tired of that weeping and finds it revolting. It is a sound of ignorance about the Lord and a foolish sound of weeping. The Lord regards it as something that makes His flesh crawl. How can a sinner weep at dawn, by night, and by day, thinking of Jesus?

You have no idea how proud those who are going to hell are. They are in the position of going into hell to suffer, yet they do

not know their own condition, and the Lord hates the fleshly affection that merely wonders how much it must have hurt Jesus. Such a heart is not for Jesus; it is acting foolishly out of an abundance of self-love.

For a sinner to weep for Jesus is to oppose God. That weeping is a great sin. It is a sin that leads to hell. Even in this present age the Lord speaks to the sinners who follow Him. He says, Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourself, for your child, for your children. Jesus tells sinners, Please think of yourselves and your descendants, and believe the word that removes sin.

The plagues that will come in the last days

What will it be like when disaster comes in these last days? The Lord said, *"For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"' For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:29–31).*

He is telling us how fearful it will be when God brings disaster upon this earth at the time of the final disaster. As the word says that in the end the one who could not conceive and could not nurse will still be called blessed, it will be better, even in death, if one dies alone.

There are people who do not believe the fact that God has become their Savior. They are the people who reject the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that He has removed all the sins of the world. For them God is preparing seven terrible plagues, held in bowls.

When He pours out those plagues, it will be a time so painful

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that the sinners being judged will look at the mountains and say, Mountain, cover me. How fearful it will be when huge chunks of hail fall from the sky! Scientists say that in the last days nuclear weapons are the most fearful disaster, but more fearful than nuclear weapons are the disasters of nature. At that time diseases, earthquakes, famines, and tribulations will occur without a moment's pause. The last days are a time of disaster.

The suffering sinners will undergo in the last days is exceedingly great. The Lord speaks. He says that the sinners who refuse to the end to accept that I have become the Savior of sinners will suffer terrible torment in this world through the plagues of the seven bowls. And He says that when the plagues are over, He will call back those who have died and send them into the fire that is not quenched, which is the second death, to suffer torment forever.

I believe this word. What will become of everyone living in this age if they do not receive Jesus Christ? Jesus Christ is the Savior who took charge of all the lifelong sins of every sinner in this world—original sin, personal sins, and even future sins. If they know that fact and yet do not believe but reject it, they suffer torment in this present life and go into the unquenchable hell in the life to come.

Therefore a sinner must believe in the baptism and the blood of Jesus. Only by receiving into the heart the salvation of Jesus' baptism and blood can one escape all those plagues, that torment, and hell.

Let us look at Revelation chapter 6 from verse 12. *"I looked when He opened the sixth seal, and behold, there was a great earthquake; and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became like blood. And the stars of heaven fell to the earth, as a fig tree drops its late figs when it is shaken by a mighty wind. Then the sky receded as a scroll when it is rolled*

up, and every mountain and island was moved out of its place. And the kings of the earth, the great men, the rich men, the commanders, the mighty men, every slave and every free man, hid themselves in the caves and in the rocks of the mountains, and said to the mountains and rocks, 'Fall on us and hide us from the face of Him who sits on the throne and from the wrath of the Lamb! For the great day of His wrath has come, and who is able to stand?'"

The stars of heaven fall as a fig tree drops its late figs, and the sky is rolled up like a scroll. In the last days God will cast down the stars of heaven and do away with them. At the time our Lord comes, such things will take place.

The word that every mountain and island is moved out of its place means that there will be a great earthquake on this earth and a great upheaval of the earth's crust. It is a word that says in the last days there will be nothing left intact in heaven or on earth. In the Book of Revelation there is also the word *"Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city" (Revelation 14:8)*. It is a word that says in the last days everything built up in this world by human power will collapse.

God pours out the plagues, the wine of His wrath, upon this earth, burns up all the trees on the ground, and causes earthquakes. He does away with this universe as though rolling up a scroll. When we look at the sky there are no stars; though the sun is there, it gives no light; the moon, too, is dyed red; and even at midday this earth becomes pitch dark. The earth's axis shakes so that the whole crust splits and twists, disasters occur in which lava erupts here and there, this earth burns up entirely, and not one mountain remains.

When God moves the earth like this, sinners tremble with fear, saying, Mountain, hide me; rock, hide me; hide me from the fearful wrath of the Lord.

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When hail as big as boulders falls from the sky, some people will think they can dig a tunnel in the ground and hide. And when disaster or famine comes, they will think, Why worry, when water comes out if you dig a well deep into the ground? But, utterly different from what people think, God will shake this whole world to its foundations. He will permit on this earth a disaster that cannot be escaped by any means.

Because God's disaster is so fearful, sinners will come to wish earnestly that the mountain over there would just cover them. Though a person would be crushed to death if a mountain covered him, the terror is so extreme that they will be at the point of pleading that a mountain would just cover them. That is how fearful that plague is to sinners. Such a plague will come down on this earth.

God is preparing such plagues for sinners. What was the word He spoke as He went bearing the cross before He died on it? It was the word, Do not weep for Me. He says that whoever does not believe in Me takes the side of the Devil and opposes Me. It is the word that says, "I will put the one who does not fully believe in Me on trial and judge him, just as I put the Devil on trial." Dear fellow believers, do you believe this fact?

Jerusalem is a city of religion. Among the people of Jerusalem, many—women and men, children and adults alike—followed Jesus. They were people who ordinarily loved Jesus.

Jesus speaks to those people who follow Him. He says, Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and weep for your children. He says, What will happen if you do not believe in Me as your complete Savior? He says, I am the Savior who removed all your sins—original sin, personal sins, and even future sins. He says, If you do not believe that I am your Savior, who removed all the sins of this world, all the sins of your soul, and all the sins of your flesh, I will send you into the fire of hell. He

says, I will also make you suffer great tribulation while you are alive. So, He says, weep for yourselves and weep for your children.

This present age is urgent. A sinner who does not believe in Jesus Christ as his own Savior will not only see the tower he has built with such effort on this earth collapse entirely, but will also meet endless plagues.

Those who have not received the remission of sin through the water and the Spirit will meet those endless plagues that God sends and become truly pitiful people. God's plagues are not plagues of the degree that people imagine. It is fortunate if your children have received the remission of sin, but if they have not received the remission of sin and even a little sin remains in their hearts, they go into the fire that is not quenched. Is that not truly pitiful?

What if a person believes in Jesus and yet even a little sin remains in his heart? There are those who do not believe that Jesus is the complete Savior but believe in Jesus as a religion, like the people of Jerusalem. They say, Jesus is a good person; He is the One who died for us; He is our Savior. But they say that because we commit sins every day, we cannot become righteous. Therefore, they say, we receive the remission of sin by confessing our sins every day. Sinners who have sin and who disregard God's merit and His being the Savior in this way are sent to hell. Not only does the sinner himself go to hell; his children go to hell too.

So for whom must sinners truly weep? They must by all means weep for themselves. They must weep for themselves, who have not received the complete remission of sin—for their own souls, which are going to hell.

It is said that if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His, and that there is no condemnation to those who are in

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Christ Jesus. God does not judge a person who has no sin. God does not judge the righteous, who have no sin, as though they had sin. That He does not condemn means that He does not say they have sin.

Our God does not say, 'You have sin,' to the righteous who have received the remission of sin by believing in the Lord, who has made them completely righteous. It is said that there is now no condemnation to those who are in Christ. The righteous who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sin—the righteous who have believed in Jesus Christ completely—God, too, acknowledges as having no sin.

Even if people believe in Jesus, if they have not received the remission of sin completely, they go to hell. And such people, as sinners, suffer endless hardship on this earth. Especially the sinners who have to live in this age must think deeply.

What must the righteous do?

The born-again righteous must also think. Though the righteous have been born again, they must think about whether their family, their children, and their parents have been born again or not. And if one truly knows the fact that sinners will suffer such disaster and go to hell, what must one do? One must not weep for Jesus. One must weep for oneself, and for the remission of sin of one's family, and for the remission of sin of one's children.

Jesus is the Savior of the righteous. He is the Lord of the righteous and the Lord of all mankind. And He has become the Savior of those who believe in Him. But to those who do not believe, He is the Lord of judgment.

Sinners who believe in Jesus and yet completely reject Jesus' salvation of the water and the Spirit go to hell. Even if one rejects only a third of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is hell; even if one rejects only half of it, it is hell; even if one rejects only a very little of it, it is hell. The place where the person will go who thinks that Jesus did not take away all his sins with His baptism and the Cross, and who says that he has sin, is hell.

Then what must the righteous do? What the Lord said is clear. Even among the family of the righteous, God sends to hell the sinner who has not received the remission of sin. The word is that He sends to hell whoever has not received the remission of sin.

Then what must the righteous truly do? They must deliver to sinners the gospel of Jesus' water baptism and the blood of the Cross.

The Lord is the Lord of the righteous, the Savior of the righteous, and the Savior of those who believe. God is the God of the righteous and the God of those who believe. The righteous must believe the fact that God saves those souls—my family, or those religious people—and must preach the gospel of Jesus' water baptism and the blood of the Cross and save them from sin. God saves those souls through the righteous who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been born again.

Jerusalem refers to a city of religion. How do we save the brothers and sisters of the righteous, the families of the born-again, or the other sinners of the world? There is only one answer. It is for us to deliver the gospel of Jesus' water baptism and the blood of the Cross. And the sinners who hear that gospel must believe that gospel in order not to go into hell.

The born-again righteous can save the sinners who have fallen into all kinds of religion, through faith in the Lord. We the

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righteous do the work of the Lord, believing that God will save religious people and the sinners of the world.

When the righteous believe in God and pray for their children and families, asking Him to save them, we believe that God Himself will save them by the power of His gospel. We believe that because God is the God of the righteous, He causes those souls to receive the remission of sin. When the righteous preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to sinners with the faith that believes in such a God, God works and saves those souls.

God is the God of the righteous. He is the God who solves the problems of the righteous. In these last days, if we have no faith, we cannot save sinners. The righteous who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit save souls because they deliver by faith the gospel of Jesus' water baptism and the blood of the Cross, which they themselves believe.

How must the righteous live in the last days? They must live by faith alone. God has not forgotten those souls who have fallen into religion. Countless sinners have fallen into religion and even now suffer because sin remains in their hearts, but we believe that God will save those souls with the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit.

What hope is there in this age if one has not received the remission of sin? What use is a building one has built up? In this age the righteous are all right. But the families of the righteous who do not yet believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not all right. Nor are the many sinners who, though they say they believe in Jesus, do not yet know the truth and have not been born again. Therefore we the righteous must deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit for them.

For the sinners who are heading toward destruction because they have not received the remission of sin, for the many sinners who are living religious lives in this world, we the righteous

must deliver the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must deliver it unceasingly, with the faith that it saves those souls. Then God will work through the faith of the righteous, and many souls throughout the whole world will be saved.

If sinners are not saved, in the end they go into God's fearful plagues. Their bodies, too, are cursed amid endless plagues. And their souls, after death, go into the lake that burns with unquenchable fire and brimstone and take part in the second death. The righteous come to salvation by faith.

Then what must the righteous do? What if sinners will not listen no matter how much we deliver the gospel of the baptism and the blood? We the righteous must also believe firmly in God. Believe that God is the God of the righteous. Believe that the Lord is the Lord of the righteous.

Therefore we the righteous go forward believing in the God of the righteous, saying, 'Lord, help us. We believe You will do it. Help them and save them.' This very attitude is faith.

We the righteous believe firmly in our hearts and exhort in this way. We exhort, saying, Come to the church and receive the remission of sin; if you do not receive the remission of sin, something terrible will happen. We tell them, Jesus loves you, and so He has saved you with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We say, Don't you want to go to heaven too? Then come to the born-again church and listen to the true word of God.

However inadequately the righteous may speak, when the righteous talk, God works in the heart of the listener. He causes fear to arise in that person's heart, and He causes a desire to arise to go and see once, and so He leads him. Therefore sinners who have not received the remission of sin follow the righteous and receive the remission of sin.

The righteous must consider whether sinners truly think about the fact that they are going to hell. We must think about

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whether sinners believe that souls really go to hell and receive fearful plagues. We must consider whether they truly believe that they will go into the lake that burns with hot fire and brimstone and suffer torment forever.

The Lord tells sinners, Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. He says, Daughters of Jerusalem, weep for yourselves and for your children. He says, Weep for your family, and weep for the countless sinners who have fallen into religion. He says this because there is suffering for sinners. We must truly know and believe that suffering. For the soul of a sinner who has not received the remission of sin, the tribulation and torment of hell are waiting. I am not telling you this word to frighten you.

God said that there will be fearful plagues. It is a plague so great that sinners will say to the mountains, Fall on us, and to the hills, Cover us. That plague comes upon the sinners who have not accepted Jesus' word of the remission of sin through the water and the Spirit. There are sinners who do not accept the fact that our Lord Jesus Christ has become their Savior. They are those who do not accept the fact that He has completely become their own Savior. The Lord said that He would throw them into the fire that is never quenched.

What we believe is not a religion made by man

The righteous must examine themselves once more. We the righteous must once more examine the hearts of sinners and our own thoughts. We must examine whether Christianity is a religion, whether the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe is a religion.

Our faith is different from the religions of the world. Some

say, I like this religion, so I believe this religion; I like that religion, so I believe that religion. They regard it as no more than choosing an accessory that suits them well. But the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe is not a religion invented by sinners.

In other words, Christianity is something God established, and it is the truth by which Jesus saved sinners. Therefore it is not a matter of whether people believe it or not. If people hear the word of the water and the Spirit and yet do not accept that salvation, they receive the judgment of God. The one who does not accept the merit of the salvation of the baptism and the Cross that God has provided receives the wrath of God.

Salvation is not something man did but something God Himself did. Therefore sinners must know the fact that every sinner who does not accept God's salvation of the water and the Spirit will go into the fire that is not quenched. Knowing that fact, we must accept by faith all that Jesus Christ did to save us from sin. The gospel of the water and the Spirit, in which Jesus received baptism for us and died on the Cross for us, is not something man did.

We the righteous know and believe the fact that if sinners are not born again, they go into the unquenchable fire of hell. We also know that the many sinners who have not been born again and are living in these last days lie under fearful plagues and God's disasters.

Our Lord is now gradually bringing disasters upon this earth. It is not that there are no disasters for the born-again righteous either. But the born-again righteous can endure those disasters because they have hope. And while we are enduring by faith, God will take us and go to the kingdom of heaven. We who have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and kept that faith in our hearts will go to Paradise.

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Our Lord will come to this earth in the future, make all things new, and reign for a thousand years together with the born-again righteous. He will raise again the righteous who are alive until the time He comes and the righteous who have been martyred, and He will establish on this earth the kingdom in which He will be with His people for a thousand years, that is, the kingdom of Christ. And He will distribute to the righteous authority over ten cities and authority over one city. If anyone has suffered harm on this earth because of the Lord, He gives us the Millennial Kingdom, which repays that labor many times over, and lets us reign and enjoy it for a thousand years.

The word that God gives us rewards does not mean that there are rewards only when we get to the kingdom of heaven. It means that before we go to the kingdom of heaven, God will establish a new kingdom on this earth, and there He will give rewards according to how much we served the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Why, as recorded in the Book of Revelation, does God make all things new and let us live on this earth? It is to fulfill that word in which He promised to give rewards to the righteous.

And after the Millennial Kingdom has passed, God carries out the Great White Throne Judgment. Those who have not been born again go to eternal hell, and those who have been born again live forever in the new heaven and the new earth, the eternal kingdom of heaven.

Dear fellow believers, do not think of the kingdom of God as a theory. Do not think of it as a religion either. Do not think of it as merely a shallow doctrine that came out of someone's head, or a doctrine some denomination invented. The Millennial Kingdom and the new heaven and the new earth that come through the gospel of the water and the Spirit are God's predestination, His plan, and His providence.

What kind of place is hell?

We know and believe that hell is the place where sinners go who have not received the remission of sin. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Sinners who have not been born again of water and the Spirit go to hell, but what kind of place is that hell? The Book of Revelation says that hell is the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and a place where even the worm does not die. And it says that this punishment is the second death.

It is said that it is appointed for men to be born once and to die once, and after this the judgment. If a person is born once and once receives the remission of sin, he goes to the eternal kingdom and does not suffer the second death. But if a person is born once and rejects the love and salvation of Jesus Christ, he suffers the second death, and that death is eternal death.

We think of the concept of death wrongly and suppose that when we die there is nothing. But the death of which God speaks is not that kind of death. It is a curse in which all happiness is lost. The concept of death of which God speaks is a curse.

Sinners living on this earth, though they have sin, mingle with one another within religion, live religious lives saying that Jesus could not remove all their sins, and get along nicely and peacefully among themselves as sinners. How does God repay such sinners? Because there must be pain, He raises the bodies of sinners again as bodies that do not die and gives them eternal torment. He makes them bodies that suffer and feel exactly the same pain they felt in the world, yet never die.

And God has made the lake that burns with fire and brimstone, and He puts into it sinners with bodies that never die and makes them live there forever. Our Lord says in the Gospel of Mark that in hell even the worm does not die. They feel all that torment with that body, in which every sense is alive, no

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different from when they were living on this earth.

You have no idea how hot that place is. A certain rich man who used to wear purple cried out that he was in torment in the fire. He asked that the beggar Lazarus, who was in heaven, dip the tip of his finger in water for him. Hell is a place like that, where the hot torment continues every day without even a drop of water, and yet one does not die. It is so today, tomorrow, and forever.

And there is no night or day there. It is always a hot day. Where is there night when the fire is burning? Where is there night when it burns every day? Hell is a place where that heat is felt forever.

The Lord speaks. He says, Did I not remove all your sins? He says, This is the price of the sin of rejecting My love and disregarding the salvation of the water and the Spirit that I gave you. He says, Because the sin of not believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit is a great sin that leads to hell, this punishment is fitting for you.

For those who have received and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord gives, and for those who have lived for that gospel, the Millennial Kingdom and the kingdom of heaven are waiting. But sinners who did not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but followed religion and followed the world and disregarded the righteousness of God, writhe in torment forever in a hell so hot that they cannot even set foot on it.

The righteous can truly laugh, but sinners cannot laugh. How hot must it be for them to writhe and shudder? We can know how great the wrath of God is, in proportion to how great the love of God is.

God the Creator makes man, His creature, His child through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and gives him the grace of

enjoying eternal happiness and living forever. So it is fitting that He gives an eternal curse to the sinner who rejects that grace. Why did He make hell? He made it for the sinner who rejects the love of God. That disposition is entirely fitting. As great as the love of God is, so great are the wrath and the curse of God.

God has saved you and me with the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus. This salvation we have received is not a small thing. When we go to the kingdom of heaven, just as Jesus Christ is seated at the right hand of the throne, we too will sit together with the Lord and live in glory forever. God says in Ephesians that He has made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus.

We the born-again righteous are children of God and kings. Since He has exalted His creatures so highly, where is there any glory higher than this? Since He has given us all of God's happiness and His glory, to be with God forever, how great a glory it is! This glory cannot be fully expressed in human words.

The tribulation we suffer at present is not worthy to be compared with the glory we will enjoy a little while later. Here is one of the reasons we must accept the salvation of being born again of the water and the Spirit of God. It is because when we accept this salvation we become children of God. Do you understand?

The righteous who have been born again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gave devote their whole heart and body to serving the gospel of God. That service is a work only the children of God can do. That is why we the righteous have a power of God that sinners who have not been born again do not know. We the righteous, though we have flesh, are different from ordinary sinners: we are those who have the power, by preaching the gospel, to remit anyone's sins or to leave them as they are.

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Sinners do not know the fact that God gives such a great blessing when one believes in Jesus Christ. They think that believing in Jesus merely brings peace on this earth. So the born-again righteous and sinners are on entirely different levels.

If we truly believe in Jesus, who came by the water, the blood, and the Spirit, it is not only that we have peace on this earth. There is eternal peace in the life to come as well, and in this present life too our hearts are peaceful and at ease because there is not a single sin in our hearts. The righteous receive the grace of God and live in peace on this earth as well.

Although there are many tribulations on this earth, we who have been born again live in peace, with God's help and care and the peace He gives. And in the life to come we live in eternal joy. In eternal delight and laughter, enjoying eternal blessing and grace, we the born-again righteous live forever in the kingdom of heaven.

There is no middle ground between heaven and hell

But if one rejects the love of God, that is, the truth concerning the water baptism of Jesus Christ and the judgment of the Cross, one suffers the eternal torment of hell.

These days sinners invent many claims about an intermediate state. Some denominations also speak of a middle ground between heaven and hell. But the kingdoms of the life to come that God has made are only heaven and hell. There are only heaven and hell; there is absolutely no middle ground.

And the gap between heaven and hell is so deep and so far that no one can cross over. God did not build a brick wall at the boundary between hell and heaven. With His infinite power He

made an indescribable gulf. He made it so that no one could climb up and sit in the middle. Lest we should try to sit in the middle, God made that boundary by His power so that no one could sit there.

In this world sinners live religious lives. When the Lord says, *"Daughters of Jerusalem,"* it is a word that says, You who live religious lives in Jerusalem.

He says, All you sinners who live religious lives, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. He says, You too live a religious life, say that you love Me, and weep for Me, but there is nothing to weep for on My account. He says, My going to the cross is because I took charge of your sins at the Jordan River in order to save you. He says, I am now going to the cross for you, carrying the sin of the world. He says, My dying now is receiving the judgment for you, in your place.

He says, What is there to weep for? Rejoice. And He says, If a sorrowful heart arises, think carefully about whether you have perhaps not accepted all of My love and My salvation. He says, If perhaps you believe and yet have sin in your heart, know that you yourself are going to hell, and weep for your soul. He says, Your children will go to hell, and you yourself will go to hell. So weep for yourselves, He says; do not weep for Me. It is a firm word of exhortation spoken by the God of the righteous.

This word is one that Jesus spoke also to the countless sinners of later ages. For in later ages, too, there are many sinners who would weep for Jesus Himself. It is a word He spoke in advance to the sinners who would look at the cross and weep, wondering how much it must have hurt Jesus hanging on this cross. Knowing that the Devil would deceive them in that way, the Lord of the righteous spoke in advance.

This was before Jesus Christ, having received baptism, died on the Cross. There were many sinners who, without even

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having received the remission of sin, followed Him, pitied Him, and loved Him. The Lord told those sinners who believed in Him to weep for themselves.

Dear fellow believers, I hope that sinners will not weep uselessly for Jesus but will weep thinking of the judgment they, as sinners, will receive. And I hope that the righteous will not just sit weeping in pity at the thought that sinners who have sin may go to hell, but will preach the gospel by faith.

It is said that it is appointed for men to be born once and to die once, and after this the judgment; and it is said that there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved. Jesus Christ alone is our Savior. Jesus alone took charge of all the sins of sinners by receiving the water baptism and the judgment in His own body at the Jordan River and on the Cross in the place of sinners. If you do not believe this fact, it is hell.

Among those who attend big churches there are people who are swept along by the crowds and follow the current of the world. But we must know that going by the broad way leads to hell. And those who go by the broad way must pity their own souls and weep. They must weep thinking that their souls will suffer forever. Our Lord spoke to all the sinners of this earth.

True faith is looking up to and believing that God has removed the sins of sinners. Religion is making a god for oneself, and believing in Jesus while remaining a sinner even though one believes in Him is religion. Making something for oneself and believing in it oneself is religion. Faith and religion are that different.

Faith is believing what God has done. It is looking up to and believing with the heart that Jesus has saved us sinners from all sins through His baptism and the Cross. That very belief is faith.

We must become righteous by believing that Jesus Christ

removed the sins of me, a sinner, and your sins at the Jordan River and on the Cross. Jesus was born in a manger, and when He turned thirty He took charge of the sins of sinners by receiving baptism at the Jordan River. And He died for us on the Cross, rose again on the third day after His death, went up to the right hand of the throne of God, and became the Savior of sinners. Believing in that Lord is faith.

Religion is merely believing that God exists—asking what kind of God He is, saying He is the almighty God, saying that God exists. But God abandoned the throne of glory and came to this earth to remove my sins. And He was passed the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River.

And after that, Jesus wore the crown of thorns to remove my sins. He wore the crown of thorns to take charge of all the wrong thoughts I have had in my head and the sins I have committed with my body—to take charge of the sin of the world. He was stripped of His clothes and spat upon in order to suffer in my place the contempt I was to suffer. Believing like this is faith.

But in the religions that people have made, they believe like this. They say that Jesus died on the Cross to remove my original sin, and that on the third day after His death He rose again and went up. So now, they say, the sins I commit every day are always forgiven, whenever I repent, by God seated at the right hand of the throne. They say He forgives them, saying, So you know you did wrong; I will forgive you. It is the person who has sin who has made Jesus like that.

That very thing is religion. It is a Jesus one has made for oneself, a god one has made for oneself, a method of salvation one has made for oneself. Religion is one's own method, which has nothing to do with Jesus.

Countless sinners of this age believe in Jesus as a religion.

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They make Jesus their savior on their own, they make the method of salvation on their own, they make heaven on their own, they invent a middle heaven on their own, and they make the hell to which they will go on their own. That very thing is the man-made religion of the Devil.

But God created us, and from the time He made us He made us in order to make us His children. He knew fully that the fallen angel Satan the Devil would act in this way, and He permitted it all. And God Himself came to this earth clothed in flesh, took charge of all the sins of mankind at the Jordan River, and suffered all that judgment on the Cross for us. Now Jesus has risen and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and to whoever believes in Him He has given the seal of becoming a son of God through the Holy Spirit. That very work is God's plan and God's salvation.

Whoever submits to the word of God receives blessing

He says, You who live religious lives, weep for yourselves. He says, Know that you are going to hell, and know that you will suffer eternal torment in hell. And He says, Ask God to save your soul from the judgment of hell.

He says, Sinners, receive the remission of sin. He says, Believe that Jesus saved you with the water baptism and the blood of the Cross, and be delivered from sin. And He says, Deliver the gospel of Jesus' water baptism and blood to everyone who is going to hell. Otherwise your children too will go to hell; not only you but your family too will go to hell; and all the sinners you know will also go to hell if they do not believe in Me.

So, He says, weep for sinners. He says, There is nothing at all to weep for on My account, for I am the Savior of sinners. He says, To become the Savior of sinners I came to this earth, took charge of all the sins of sinners with the water baptism, and died on the Cross. And so, He says, I have saved you. He says, Since I have removed all your sins at the Jordan River and on the Cross, now only believe in that salvation. He says, I am the Savior of sinners.

Dear beloved saints, for whom must a sinner weep? The righteous have received the remission of sin. Then for whom must they weep? They must weep for the pitiful souls who have not received the remission of sin. They must not weep for God. The Lord said, 'You who are a sinner, weep for yourself.'

Jesus came to this earth to save sinners, received baptism, and bore the cross. He took charge of the sins of sinners with His baptism, and He received the judgment of sin on the Cross in the place of sinners. And yet sinners, not knowing that remission of sin which God accomplished in order to remove all the sins of sinners, wept because Jesus seemed pitiable. How contradictory and how wrong that is!

What is even more lamentable is the fact that even now such sinners make up the greater part of this earth. I want to say this fact to you and to myself. Throughout the whole world there are so many such pitiful sinners.

It is not God on one side and the righteous on the other. God is the God of the righteous. He is the God of the righteous who have been born again of water and the Spirit. God and the righteous are one. The righteous belong to Him, and God belongs to the righteous. The righteous are those who have been born again of water and the Spirit. Those who have been born again are those who have no sin and who have the Spirit of God.

By faith we pray, My God, that soul is pitiful; just as You

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saved me, save them too. We say, God, I believe You will save them; I believe that as I believe in God, the Lord will help. And when we go forward by faith and deliver the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit, God works in sinners and saves them from sin. Therefore we the righteous, who have been born again of water and the Spirit, must deliver the gospel of Jesus' baptism and blood to pitiful souls and save those souls. We must live by such faith.

In these last days, will you set your heart on the wealth of this world? Do not set your heart on wealth. I am not saying to squander what you have. Manage it well. But keep in mind that when disaster comes upon this world, everything in the world will collapse. Nothing at all will be left on the earth.

The plagues of the last days cannot be compared with the earthquake that destroyed a great city. As if to show clearly that such an earthquake is nothing, God will move islands out of their places and make mountains disappear. God will also shake mountains and make them cave in, and split the earth open and make it sink. He will shake every axis of the earth and turn it into an earth completely different from the one we have now. A disaster so fearful that people will say, Mountain, please hide me, is coming to this earth before long.

The disasters up to now have been natural disasters. But when God's disaster comes upon this earth, our Lord Himself will pour it out, adding to it even disasters caused by man. Then nothing will be left on the earth.

In this age one must be saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ has given. One must believe what Jesus Christ did. One must confirm through the word and believe with the heart Jesus Christ's coming to this earth and the event in which He took charge of all our sins with His baptism at the Jordan River. And one must accept by faith

that Jesus died on the Cross for all one's sins and received the judgment in one's place, and so be saved.

The righteous have nothing to worry about. I am not saying not to worry because such plagues do not come upon the righteous. The Lord gives us the strength to endure the tribulation, and when the plagues of the seven bowls begin in earnest, He will rapture us. Until then we the righteous must live for the preaching of the gospel, and there is nothing else to do.

Dear fellow believers, will you deposit money here and there to prepare for that time of tribulation? Go ahead. But however much money you have, the price of grain will be so high that you will not even be able to buy food. Throughout the whole world grain will be scarce, and in the future prices will rise sky-high, so that even if one offered ever so much money or a lump of gold, there would be nothing to eat, and many people would starve to death. Do not prepare money; whoever you are, prepare by believing the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your heart.

Submit to the word of God. Whoever submits to God receives the blessing of God. Every sinner who does not submit to God but proudly stiffens his neck receives a curse. It is only right that he receives a curse.

A sinner must weep for himself. And he must not merely sit weeping but must prepare his own faith. I am not saying this word merely to share my feelings. The born-again righteous must believe that God is their God and run the remaining race by faith, and sinners who have not received the remission of sin must receive the remission of sin.

Among the blessings one receives on this earth, the greatest blessing is the blessing of the remission of sin. This blessing is indeed the greatest blessing. Therefore sinners who have not been born again must quickly receive the remission of sin. Without delay, they must receive the remission of sin now, in this age.

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If one does not accept the remission of sin in this age, the body suffers tremendous tribulation. Of course the soul suffers tribulation too. These two things now overlap for us. If a person does not receive the remission of sin in this present age, there is no hope. For that person there is nothing but a curse. However much he toils and however much he learns, it is in vain. However much he stores up, it is in vain. Wait and see whether what I say is right. I am not speaking my own words. I believe the word of God. I am one who preaches the word of God.

Sinners may have lived by religion until now, but since it is now the last days, they must no longer remain in confusion. Now sinners must abandon religious thinking. Now is the time to abandon human thinking. Now the crucial question is whether one obtains salvation by faith or not, whether one escapes this disaster by faith or not.

When disaster comes upon this world, the righteous need only take refuge in the Lord. They need only rely on the Lord. The Lord keeps the righteous. He gives the righteous faith so that they do not lose this faith, gives them what to say at each moment, and keeps them from ever submitting to the Devil. God grants us a faith strong enough even to be martyred, and the God of the righteous also grants the righteous the Rapture, in which they meet God alive, without tasting death.

The Lord has saved us. Therefore sinners must not weep because of Jesus or His death, but must weep for themselves, thinking of the eternal punishment they will receive. And they must weep for their descendants, who will meet the same end as they do because they have not received the remission of sin. And the most important thing is to receive Jesus' baptism and the blood of the Cross into the heart. Those who have sin now, I hope you will believe in the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit of Jesus. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children

< Luke 23:26-38 >

"Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin "to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?' There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are

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the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."

What is the most fearful and greatest enemy in the life of faith? It is none other than the thoughts of the flesh of you and me. The thoughts of our flesh keep rising up, and they continue until this body is transformed and clothed with a new body. If we follow the thoughts of the flesh and are led by them, we cannot think spiritual thoughts and so cannot live by faith. Then, even while knowing and believing in Jesus, we become those who oppose Him, and our faith dies. We turn our backs on Jesus. We end up like Judas Iscariot, who was one of Jesus' twelve disciples and yet betrayed Jesus.

The thoughts of the flesh still exist, but our true thoughts are the thoughts of the Spirit. What is right for you and me is truly spiritual thinking and spiritual faith. Our thoughts and faith become right when we think of the things of the Spirit and the things of God, and I believe that we succeed in faith only when we follow God.

Next week we will greet Easter Sunday. People regard this week as Passion Week and fast. And they gather the rice saved by fasting to help the poor, or they perform ascetic practices, thinking of Jesus' suffering and taking part in it. Then, when Easter Sunday morning comes, they share an egg each and go on living with a new heart. Doing so is the ritual of keeping a religious season. So people think of Jesus' suffering in a fleshly way and regard Passion Week as gloomy.

Those who attend the Catholic Church in particular pray the Stations of the Cross. They hang the pictures of the fourteen stations on the wall and pray, going through them one by one,

beginning with Jesus receiving the death sentence from Pilate and continuing to the scenes of His being led away and falling. In that way they think of Jesus' suffering together and take part in it.

There are also cases where Christians, especially during Passion Week, do not eat lavish food, do not indulge too much in fleshly pleasures, and spend the week in restraint. Usually they spend Passion Week regarding it as right to take part in that way.

"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children"

In this word we have read today, what does Jesus say? When Jesus was going up the hill of Golgotha bearing the cross, a certain man who lived in the region of Cyrene happened to be passing by. Then the people laid Jesus' cross on him and made him follow behind. And many people followed behind Jesus, beating their breasts and weeping bitterly. Jesus was not One who should receive the death penalty, yet He was being led away to the place of execution, so the people wept in great grief.

But our Lord says, Pitying Me is fine, but do not weep for Me; weep for yourselves and for your descendants. He said, *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28)*. The daughters of Jerusalem followed Jesus and strove to stop the execution. These many people pitied Jesus and felt sorry for Him; grieving over that righteous death, in which He bore sin and died for many people, they beat their breasts and wept with the sorrow of losing someone they loved.

Of course, such a heart is good too. But when we look at the

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word our Lord spoke, we come to think again about whether merely grieving over Jesus because it is Passion Week is really the right attitude of heart.

The Lord's word is this. Think about it. How many sins have you committed? Because of your fleshly thoughts and the sins you commit throughout your lives, will you not go into that pit of hellfire, that place of unspeakable agony, and suffer there? Will it not be so with you and your descendants? Should you not rather think that you yourselves are going to hell, and weep for your descendants and for yourselves? Yet why do you weep for Me? Because I am being led away to the place of execution, do I look pitiful to you? Do not pity Me and feel sorry for Me; weep for yourselves and for your descendants. I am not pitiful. I came into this world in obedience to the will of God the Father; I took charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist; and carrying those sins I will be executed on the cross, die shedding My blood, rise from the dead, and save you. Yet why do you feel sorry for Me? Do not do that; instead pity yourselves and your descendants. Is it not clear that you will live and then go to hell? Should you not beat your breasts and weep so that you yourselves may receive the remission of sin? The ones who deserve pity are not I but you yourselves. This is what the Lord is now saying.

Rather than pitying Jesus, we must confess our thanks and our faith

This week and next week are Passion Week, and once a year we keep as a season the events of Jesus being crucified and led away. But we must think about how many fleshly thoughts and actions Christians and religious people throughout the world—

and you and I, who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—have, and how much we live against the will of God. Because of those sins, you and I are people who more than deserve to go to hell. Since Jesus took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John and completed our salvation by dying on the Cross, rather than weeping in pity for Jesus we must become those who believe this fact and give thanks to Jesus.

We must become thankful people and people firm in faith. We have made the confession of faith until now, but on such an occasion we must make an even clearer confession: "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." The Lord received baptism from John, died on the Cross shedding His blood, and then rose from the dead and saved us. You are our King, the High Priest who removes our sins, and the Prophet who teaches us all the truth. Such a One as You has saved us. We must make more of this confession of faith that relies on the Lord. That is profitable for us.

Rather than weeping as we think of the Lord, rather than praying with fasting, abstaining from meat, and performing ascetic practices, we must become those who give thanks all the more by faith, thinking that the Lord saved you and me, who are truly worthless, from sin and became our perfect Savior.

That is what the Lord wants. Rather than grieving because it is Passion Week, we must look to the Lord by faith and instead give more thanks and strengthen our faith all the more. When we do so, the Lord looks at us and is all the more pleased.

We must hold fast to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus Christ saved us from sin

It is raining, the atmosphere is gloomy, it is Passion Week,

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and even though we live doing the work of the gospel, not everything turns out as we hope. If at such a time we sink into the thoughts of the flesh, we become depressed. In fact, I myself have a great many thoughts at times. Though my body is in one place, my mind wanders here and there; I have a full conversation with someone I have not met as though I had met him, and I also call to mind co-workers who are far away. In my thoughts I do many things like that.

We always have thoughts. But we must hold fast to the fact that Jesus Christ has saved us from sin. How worthless and lacking are you and I? And yet our Lord has saved us so perfectly. Until we go to the Lord's kingdom, we must not only confess, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God," but must go on making, day after day, this confession of faith: "The Lord has perfectly removed our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit." And so we do the work of God by faith and go to the kingdom of God.

When I write books, I deal with the Bible from many angles, but there has never been a time when I did not speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In my sermons I may have done it a little less, but when I write books I deliberately keep putting it in, in this book and in that book. When people read Romans, they read it from the viewpoint of Romans, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit is contained there too. So the readers, too, reflect on the gospel again and again, and their thoughts become deeply soaked in that gospel. When that happens, our thoughts and our faith become whole, and as we look at our weakness we give more thanks and our faith becomes firmer.

The thoughts of you and me are always wandering about. I know this well because I myself am like that. Just as a person who likes fishing thinks of fishing and a person who likes games

thinks of games, a person's thoughts drift here and there after what he likes. Then what about you? Do you not truly wander about following the thoughts of the flesh? As a spider spins its web, a person makes plans to do evil and, without even knowing it, devises such things.

We must think the thoughts of the Spirit and keep confessing our faith

Are your thoughts the thoughts of the Spirit, or the thoughts of the flesh? Is it enough merely to grieve, beat your breast, and pity Him like the daughters of Jerusalem? Is that truly for Jesus' sake? No. Without even knowing it, you think in the direction that benefits your own flesh. In your thoughts you lie, in your thoughts you oppose, in your thoughts you care only for yourself, and in your thoughts you trap others. You must quickly return to the thoughts of the Spirit. Looking at ourselves—you and me, weak and ugly, committing so many sins—we must keep believing and confessing that the Lord has saved you and me with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Only then does the heart get settled, the center get settled, the body get settled, the thoughts get settled, and the direction get settled.

It is not enough simply to have been saved, or simply to be doing the Lord's work. We must take hold of our thoughts, think the thoughts of the Spirit, and keep confessing our faith. Only then do we live the life of faith that pleases the Lord. What did the Lord say? He said, *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28)*. Is that right, or is it not? Who must receive pity? Is it Jesus, or is it we? It is we ourselves. Though one is saved if one believes, a person sinks into fleshly thoughts and tries to trap

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others, as a spider spins out its web and builds its house. The thoughts of the flesh dig traps to bring down the church.

We must know, believe, and give thanks that the Lord took charge of the sins of you and me, who are so unrighteous, with the baptism He received from John, and shed His blood on the Cross. We must give thanks by faith. A person can go wrong at any time, and if the outcome goes wrong, all the rest goes wrong too. If I, while saying I believe in the Lord, oppose the gospel, oppose the servants of God, oppose the people of God, and oppose God, it makes no difference whether I believed in the past or not. We must weep as we look at such a self, and we must keep on confessing our faith and lead the life of faith well.

God surely judges those who have sin

The Lord said, *"For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!' Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'" (Luke 23:29–30)*. When the last day comes, it will be like this. Destruction is coming to this world, and the person who does not do all those things of being pregnant and nursing and living with lingering attachment to this world is blessed. There is actually such a meaning, and it is also a word He spoke as an example.

God surely judges those who have sin and those who oppose God. So what must we do? We must live looking to the Lord. The Lord told us to reflect on ourselves and weep for ourselves, and to believe in the Lord and stand firm by faith.

The Lord goes on to say, *"For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31)*. The Lord will surely come again to this world and judge. A person

who puts his hope in such a world is truly foolish. Because this world is so bleak, when I preach such a sermon I myself become gloomy and you become gloomy too. So I try to preach many positive sermons. I have already delivered the word about the judgment many times, so now I do not need to deliver it so often.

Among those who beat their breasts and weep, there are also many who will be judged. That is why He said to weep for yourselves and for your descendants. Suppose a certain sister loved Jesus and wept bitterly. Mary Magdalene had been a woman of ill repute, but she met Jesus, received the remission of all her sins, believed that Jesus is the Savior, and lived the life of faith. Then one day Jesus was seized and was about to die. They did not long for Jesus in a fleshly way but longed for Him spiritually, and so they beat their breasts and wept. But that sister's friend also beat her breast and wept along with her. When asked why she was weeping, she said that she wept because she had heard that Jesus was not One who should be executed, but that the chief priests, the elders, and the religious people of the Jews had wrongly accused Him and brought Him to this.

But that person, too, will die and be judged, and how fearful is that judgment! The Lord is now going to the cross because He took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. Yet among those now weeping at the sight of Jesus, those who have sin in their hearts will receive a terrible judgment of fire and suffer forever, and yet, not knowing the judgment they themselves will receive, they are weeping for Jesus. That a person is born once and dies is what God has appointed, and after that there is surely judgment. For those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, confess their faith, and follow the Lord, there is surely a reward.

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Jesus is the true King who saved us from sin

This is the word of verses 32 to 38. Jesus received the death sentence together with two criminals, went up the hill of Golgotha, and was crucified together with them. Jesus said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do" (Luke 23:34)*. The people stood looking on, and the rulers divided Jesus' garments by casting lots and sneered. They said that He saved others, so if He was the Christ, the chosen of God, let Him save Himself. The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and said that if He was the King of the Jews, He should save Himself. And above Jesus they fastened an inscription written, the King of the Jews. They spat on Him, mocked Him, and sneered, saying, Serves You right—You who once even washed away the sin of the woman caught in the very act of adultery and sent her away.

People put a scarlet robe on Jesus in order to kill Him under the pretext that He was the King of the Jews. They sneered, saying, "If You are Christ the King, just try to save Yourself; You said You were the King of kings, so just try to save Yourself." It was mockery, saying that if He was a king, should He not save Himself?

Then was Jesus the true King? Yes. Jesus was the King of the nation of Judea, the King of those throughout the whole world who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the King of all creation. He was the true King and the true Savior, and the High Priest who removes sin. People said, If You are the Christ, just try to save Yourself, but Jesus was truly the King. So when they crucified Jesus, they wrote *"THE KING OF THE JEWS"* on the inscription of the charge and fastened it there.

In people's eyes, since Jesus was being nailed to the cross, they regarded Him as neither the King of the Jews, nor the Savior

who removes our sins, nor the Prophet who teaches the truth, but as One being nailed to the cross because He was false and had sin. But it is not so. As King, as the Savior who removes sin, and as Prophet, Jesus voluntarily gave Himself up to the cross of His own accord in order to give true salvation to you and me and to all mankind. He gave up His own life of His own accord. It was not for lack of power, but because He is truly the King.

Since Jesus would rise from the dead, there was nothing to worry about. In order to save you and me today and everyone throughout the world who would believe in Jesus, He offered His body before God the Father, received baptism from John, and was crucified. And so He became the true Savior of you and me.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Jesus is the true Christ. The word Christ means King, High Priest, and Prophet. Who is the One who, as the King of kings, will judge all people and the whole universe between good and evil and judge the Devil? It is none other than Jesus Christ.

I hope that the Christians and the many religious people who only pity Jesus will weep for themselves. There are people who have not received the remission of sin because they do not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord gave, and people who do not believe in Jesus and do not abandon the thoughts of the flesh. Unless, until the day the Lord comes, they return to the thoughts of the Spirit, believe in the Lord, confess their faith, and follow the Lord, they go into the fire that is never quenched. They must beat their breasts and weep for themselves and for their descendants.

Jesus was the true Prophet. He taught us everything: that we were born as descendants of Adam, how we became sinners, and how those sins are washed away. The Lord said that He is the way, the truth, and the life; that whoever believes in Him does

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not perish but has eternal life; and that no one comes to the Father without believing in Him. The Lord taught us everything through His word. We must believe with the heart, confess our faith, and follow the Lord with thanksgiving and faith.

If you say, 'Now I have come a certain way, and I have surely received salvation,' and follow the thoughts of the flesh, you die. Since you, too, are people who could become like that, you must come to your senses again and live by faith. Will you follow the Lord, confessing your faith forever?

When we follow the Lord by faith, the Lord works through us

It is the same for me and for you. I hope you will be those who finish their lives while living the life of faith. I hope you will not become those who die by their own doing by following the thoughts of the flesh, or those who oppose the Lord. How many people are there who have lived the life of faith until now and then ended up that way? In fact, when you look into it, they are lacking people just like us. But at that point they hardened their own thoughts.

The Lord is the eternal Lord. Do not believe in the Lord for a while and then abandon the Lord, saying, Let us meet later, at the time of the Rapture. If a person follows the Lord thinking he can just meet Him when that time comes, and then turns and kicks against Him and follows the thoughts of his own flesh and does not unite with the church of God and its workers, he becomes an adversary. Then it is death. Such a person, like Judas, would have been better off never having been born into this world.

Satan the Devil is doing all kinds of things in your hearts. So

you must quickly realize how wickedly you yourselves act and how much you are people who plan evil, and repent; give thanks to the Lord, who saved such people; and become those who, though lacking, keep following by faith. To fail to do so and say, 'I have done enough of the life of faith. I know all I need to know without your nagging. I can do as well as you'—that is precisely pride. That is the way of destruction that leads to death.

You and I must live confessing our faith, keep following the Lord, and meet the Lord. And we must become the foundation for the work of saving others. Have you ever seen an old tree that has rotted? Though the inside of the old tree is rotten, its bark is alive. And from there new shoots come out, and its fruit falls and new sprouts come up. When you look around a pine tree on a mountain, seeds have fallen and dozens of young pines have grown. I brought a small ginkgo tree and planted it, and within three or four years it bore ginkgo nuts, and you have no idea how many ginkgo trees come up from its roots. If you raise one tree properly and tend the ground around it well, you have no idea how many new trees come up. From one tree you harvest even twenty.

Will we save only a hundred people? Only hundreds of thousands? We will save tens of billions. When one person follows by faith to the end, that many people are saved. Do not say, 'With me in this state, who could possibly be saved, and how?' If you follow the Lord by faith, the Lord works through you and causes others to be saved as well. That is the work of the Lord, not something you and I can do. The Lord does it. We give thanks to our God. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

< Luke 23:26-49 >

"Now as they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus. And a great multitude of the people followed Him, and women who also mourned and lamented Him. But Jesus, turning to them, said, 'Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, "Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!" Then they will begin "to say to the mountains, 'Fall on us!' and to the hills, 'Cover us!'" For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?' There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew:

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THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.' Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, "into Your hands I commit My spirit."' Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous Man!' And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things."

What is spiritual revival?

The title of this meeting of ours is 'Spiritual Revival.' Spiritual revival means that a revival takes place in the heart. There are two kinds of revival. One is a fleshly revival, like an economic revival, and the other is the spiritual revival that takes place in a person's heart. Today I want to speak to you about this very spiritual revival. In this present age, fleshly revival is taking place on a large scale, but spiritual revival is all but disappearing.

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We have opened this meeting under this title in order to bring about a true spiritual revival.

Then how can spiritual revival take place? People today have achieved a great deal of material revival. Our country, too, pushed forward the Five-Year Economic Development Plans as a nation under the slogan 'Let's live well,' and the people themselves carried out the Saemaul Movement and achieved industrialization in a short time. So we escaped the poverty in which, after the war, it was hard even to make a living, and achieved a great material revival. But when material revival took place, spiritual revival disappeared instead. This is not something that happened only in our country; it is a worldwide trend. The people of the whole world have material prosperity, but spiritual prosperity is now not even in their sight.

But the flames of spiritual revival must rise up. There must be spiritual revival in our hearts, and our spiritual hearts must come alive. So, on the basis of the passage we read today, I want to share the word with you on the theme of spiritual revival.

Who are the people who have spiritual revival in this age?

In verse 26 of the passage it is written like this: *"As they led Him away, they laid hold of a certain man, Simon a Cyrenian, who was coming from the country, and on him they laid the cross that he might bear it after Jesus."*

Who mainly believes in Jesus? Here there was a man named Simon who was coming up from the country. He was a Cyrenian. This Simon the Cyrenian bore Jesus' cross in His place. Jesus had received the death sentence in Pilate's court, so that the punishment of the cross was finally confirmed, and having been

struck with the whip that is given to those condemned to death, He was going up, carrying the cross, to the execution ground of Golgotha, called the Skull. When Jesus was so exhausted that He could not go up and collapsed, the soldiers made a certain man among the many onlookers carry the cross in His place. That man was Simon, a very sturdy man from the country who had come to Jerusalem and was passing by there. The soldiers laid hold of that man and made him carry that cross. Simon carried Jesus' cross in His place all the way to the hill of Golgotha, and Jesus followed behind him.

The Bible says that when Jesus was going to die on the cross, a man named Simon carried in His place the cross that Jesus had been carrying. Looking at the latter part of the Bible, we find that later this man's family believed in Jesus and received many blessings.

Who are the people who have spiritual revival in this age? They are precisely people like Simon the Cyrenian. Their hearts are pure, so they express things as they are, speak without hiding anything, and accept things without pretense. Simon was used before God like this because he purely followed what God said. People whose hearts are pure are used before God, and such people also believe in Jesus well. On the contrary, those who care only about outward appearance, have no purity or honesty in their hearts, and just move according to their circumstances are not used well before Jesus, and there is no spiritual revival in their hearts either. God gives the gospel to such people too, but they do not believe in Jesus well.

Thus Simon, who came from the country, carried Jesus' cross in His place and followed Jesus.

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"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children"

As Jesus went up the hill of Golgotha carrying the cross, many people mourned and lamented, beating their breasts. A great multitude of such women followed Jesus. Jesus turned to them and said, *"Daughters of Jerusalem, do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children" (Luke 23:28)*.

In particular, women followed behind Jesus in a crowd, wailing. The meaning of the words Jesus spoke to them as He turned to them is this: "Since I have taken charge of all your sins with My baptism, I am carrying the cross like this in order to remove those sins and receive their judgment in your place; so do not pity Me. Do not beat your breasts and wail out of sympathy for Me. Weep for yourselves and for your children. I have taken charge of all your sins with the baptism I received from John at the Jordan River, and now I am going to receive the judgment for your sins on the Cross in your place. I am going to save you; I am going to do a righteous work. So do not weep for Me in sympathy."

Even today there are many people who cannot believe in Jesus spiritually and believe in Him in a fleshly way. Like these daughters of Jerusalem, there are many crowds who cannot follow Jesus spiritually and follow the Lord gripped by the emotions of the flesh. They choke up and shed tears at the mere thought that the Lord died on the Cross for them. Today many people, as they take the Lord's Supper, weep together, thinking how much it must have hurt Jesus when He carried the cross and when He was nailed to it. But Jesus says to such people, "Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children. Weep for your descendants."

Jesus' work of salvation is not something to be pitied but something to be believed

We must not believe in Jesus with a fleshly revival or a revival of emotions. However much we weep for Jesus, what help is it to Jesus? Our sympathy toward Jesus is only fleshly sympathy, and Jesus is not pleased with it in the least. Jesus is now carrying out this work with a clear purpose. This is not something to be pitied but something to be believed, and we must know why the Lord had to do this.

For a long time, from the Middle Ages until now, people have not experienced the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For long ages they were preoccupied with fleshly revival, having forgotten the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and they always wept, thinking of Jesus and wondering how much it must have hurt, how painful it must have been, and how shameful it must have been for Him. Even today there are many people who believe in Jesus like this. From the moment they step in the church door, they cry out toward the cross as if wailing, 'O Lord!' Thinking of the Lord who was nailed to the cross and shed His blood, they make themselves solemn and stir up the emotions within them, saying, "Thank You, Lord, for suffering for me."

Intoxicated with their own emotions, they do not know why Jesus had to die, or that it is not something to weep over but something to give thanks for and to fear. Merely at hearing the words Jesus and the cross, they take out a handkerchief and wipe their tears. When the speaker says 'Jesus,' tears trickle down; when he says 'on the cross,' they wipe the flood of tears with their handkerchiefs; when he says 'was nailed,' they blow their noses once; when he says 'shed His blood,' sounds like wailing are heard here and there, and their shoulders shake without ceasing. Finally, when he says 'He died,' everyone weeps like

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people who have come to a funeral, and the hall becomes a sea of tears.

A revival speaker who is good at making a sea of tears like this and at stirring up the emotions of the saints to the full gets the reputation of being a powerful speaker. The proof that the audience received grace depends on how much they wept that day and how zealously they offered prayers of repentance until they were hoarse. But is sobbing at the thought of Jesus' death and crying out to the Lord with prayers of repentance really spiritual revival?

On the contrary, Jesus is not pleased when we weep for Him. I hope you will know this fact clearly. Jesus rather told them to weep for themselves and their families. On the basis of this word, we must know what pleases Jesus. He wants us to know exactly what Jesus did for us, what grace He bestowed on us, and how He made it possible for us to enter the kingdom of heaven. The Lord wants us to truly know and exactly believe the merits He accomplished, and, knowing and believing them, to always give thanks to the Lord, to pray without ceasing, and to give thanks in everything. Then Jesus is pleased. That is precisely spiritual revival.

But today countless Christians do not seek such spiritual revival; not only at revival meetings but even in ordinary worship services, they want fleshly revivals such as a revival of emotions or a revival of the gift of healing. But after all the weeping and wailing, receiving fire, speaking in tongues, and making a commotion, what happens when they go outside the church? The moment they step out of the sanctuary, everything cools down coldly along with the cold wind. Their emotions cool, their zeal cools, and everything vanishes like the wind.

If you and I truly believe in Jesus Christ, we must know and believe in our hearts what Jesus did. We must truly know and

believe, so that faith arises in our hearts and thanksgiving arises in our hearts. That is true spiritual revival and true faith, so real faith must come into being in us.

Spiritual people who know the signs of the last days

In verse 29 He said, *"For indeed the days are coming in which they will say, 'Blessed are the barren, wombs that never bore, and breasts which never nursed!'"* This word means that when the destruction of this world is near, those who have not given birth to a baby, those who have not conceived a child, and those who are not nursing are blessed. What kind of word is this?

In the last days, that is, the age of the end, the world becomes a fearful and hard place where even able-bodied, sturdy adults find it hard to live. That age is now drawing near, and what would it be like to meet the age of the end while giving birth to and raising a newborn baby who can do nothing? The newborn baby knows nothing and just cries because it is hungry, and the mother can neither feed nor clothe it, so how hard would it be for both of them?

There is an old saying that everyone is born with his own share of food, but that is a story for when there is some measure of economic leeway. In the time of the end, not only will there be a great economic depression, but all over the world there will be earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, and the destruction of crops by abnormal weather; hail will fall; a comet will fall into the sea and tidal waves and storms will rush onto the land—things that human beings cannot imagine will happen, and it will be an age so dangerous and pressing that it will be hard to keep one's senses. Because of severe famine, it will be an everyday

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occurrence for not only adults but even children to starve to death for lack of food. In such an age, would a person who has borne many children be blessed?

This does not mean, however, that we should not have children. It means that in this age, when the time of the Lord's coming is at hand, we should bring about not a fleshly revival but a spiritual revival. It means that since our own children are also lives, we must discern this age well, and since not only our own children but other people's children are the same lives, we must preach the gospel to those lives and prepare to greet the Lord. It means that such a person is a blessed person.

Those who have spiritual revival sense intuitively that this is the last age. This does not mean, however, that we should lie, naming a date and saying the Lord will come on that day, like a certain group that fixed a date and prophesied the end. The Lord said that we can know the last days by the signs. Since the Lord showed us through His word the signs that will take place in the last days, spiritual people who believe the word know the last age, because they see and experience directly that the world is going toward its end just as the word says.

Great earthquakes are taking place all over the world, the natural environment is being destroyed and abnormal weather is forming, people's hearts are growing hard and they try to start wars, and human kindness and love are drying up—many of the things of the last days that the Bible speaks of are appearing now. Spiritual people prepare for these things. They reckon that it is an age in which it is hard for their children to grow up fully and live happily.

Whether one believes in Jesus or not, one must think about one's own end and the destruction of this world. In this age in particular there is the grave problem of the destruction of the earth, and even scientists are discussing it openly. Ordinary

people who cannot read the movements of the world well do not know it, but the intellectuals who study what will become of the world in the future are openly discussing the end of the world on the premise that destruction is coming upon the world.

As a measure to delay the end of the world, they carry out environmental policies. Our country also carries out environmental policies. As industry develops, all kinds of harmful substances pollute the atmosphere and destroy the ozone layer, and as ultraviolet rays pour down unhindered, all kinds of diseases, including skin cancer, increase among people. Also, in Japan volcanoes are showing signs of erupting again and scholars are preparing for it, and geologists fear a large-scale earthquake. There are also forecasts that with global warming the icebergs of the Arctic will melt and great cities will be submerged in water. The scientists of the world know all these facts, but they let them out little by little so as not to give a great shock, lest people learn of them and be startled and fall into fear and confusion. The whole world is afraid of the end of the world.

If destruction comes upon this world, are you ready to greet the Lord? Our Lord said, *"Then they will begin 'to say to the mountains, "Fall on us!" and to the hills, "Cover us!"'" (Luke 23:30)*. This means that because God's plagues are so fearful and God's judgment so dreadful, people want to hide anywhere there is a place to hide, even in a small grove.

God also said, *"For if they do these things in the green wood, what will be done in the dry?" (Luke 23:31)*. Here the green wood refers to those who have met the Lord, and the dry wood refers to those who have not yet met the Lord and have lost their vitality.

Spiritual people sense this age intuitively and live accordingly. They live preparing for the future. Since it is an appointed principle that we are born once on this earth, die, and

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go before God, we must prepare on this earth the faith with which to stand before God, live that way, and then go. Those who know and pursue spiritual revival live like that.

The two criminals on the crosses and Jesus, our King

While dying on the Cross, our Lord suffered truly much mockery, and He was even scorned by one of the thieves. One thief mocked Jesus, saying, You saved others, so come down and save Yourself and us. But the other thief rebuked the thief who was mocking Jesus and said that this Man had done nothing wrong; that we are being nailed to the cross because of our sins, but this Man is being nailed not because He committed sin but for the righteous work of saving us. Then Jesus said to him, *"Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)*.

What is our Lord to us? Is He our King, or is He our friend? The Lord is our King. Is Jesus the Master of all things in the universe, or is He one of the creatures? Jesus is the Master of all things in the universe and the Creator.

If we look at the words from verse 39 to verse 43, they are as follows: *"Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"*

The two thieves were nailed to the cross alike, but one thief

blasphemed Jesus and the other thief believed in Jesus as his Savior. The blaspheming thief told Jesus, If You are the Christ, try saving Yourself and us, while the other thief rebuked him, saying that it was right for us to be under the same condemnation, but why do you not fear God? He said that we receive the due reward of our deeds, so it is only right, but this Man has done nothing wrong. Then because of whom is the Lord now being nailed to the cross? He is being nailed to the cross because of the sins of all the people of the world.

Those who believe in our Lord acknowledge exactly who Jesus Christ is. Those who fear God believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and our Savior.

The reason the veil of the temple was torn

Jesus said, *"Today you will be with Me in Paradise,"* and died on the Cross. When Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn in the middle. Why was the veil of the temple torn in the middle when Jesus died on the Cross?

When Jesus died nailed to the cross on the hill of Golgotha, there was Herod's temple. That temple, which Herod built, was enormous. Even now the wall of that temple remains, and if you go to Israel, people hold on to that wall and weep, calling it the 'Wailing Wall.' Before that Wailing Wall, people confess the sins they have committed, or write their wishes on paper and tuck them into the cracks of the wall, and that wall is still enormous in scale even now.

Inside that magnificent temple of God there was the sanctuary, and inside that sanctuary there was the veil. When Jesus said *"It is finished!"* on the cross on the hill of Golgotha and died, inside the temple that veil, woven as thick as a carpet,

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was torn right through from top to bottom.

The Lord came to this earth and took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. And by dying nailed to the cross, He received all the judgment for our sins. To those who believe in the gospel of the baptism and the blood that Jesus Christ accomplished, the door of the kingdom of heaven was opened wide. The tearing of the veil of the temple declares this very fact.

When we believe in Jesus, it is important to know and believe what Jesus did for us. That is spiritual faith. But weeping over how much it must have hurt when Jesus was nailed to the cross, apart from spiritual faith, is neither spiritual salvation nor spiritual revival.

If we are to obtain spiritual salvation in our hearts, we must believe in the work by which our Lord tore the veil of the temple. Because our Lord received baptism from John and was passed the sin of the world, the veil of the temple was torn when He died on the Cross. The Lord opened the door of the kingdom of heaven. When the Lord died, was the door of the kingdom of heaven opened or not? It was opened wide. Because the Lord came to this earth and did the work of the remission of sin, the veil was torn when the Lord died. And our Lord cried out with a loud voice, *"Father, 'into Your hands I commit My spirit.'" (Luke 23:46),* and then breathed His last.

Before dying on the Cross, our Lord first received baptism from John the Baptist. When Jesus turned thirty, He went out to the Jordan River and received baptism from John, who was baptizing there. At that time all the sins of the world passed on to Jesus. Then the heavens were opened, the Spirit of God came upon Him, and a voice was heard from heaven testifying that the Lord was the beloved Son of God. At this time the door of heaven was opened for the first time, and when Jesus, who had

taken charge of all sins with His baptism, received the punishment for those sins on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn and the door of the kingdom of heaven was opened toward us. The Lord received baptism and died on the Cross in order to bring you and me into the kingdom of heaven. We must think of this work and believe.

The baptism that Jesus, who fulfilled all righteousness, received from John

We call a person who has done a righteous deed a 'righteous patriot.' As the representative righteous patriot of our country, we can point to the patriot Ahn Jung-geun. In the sense that he was a man who did what was right, we call him a righteous patriot who did a righteous deed for his country. Even the Japanese respect the patriot Ahn Jung-geun, who did what was right. The patriot Ahn Jung-geun was a man who believed in God, but more than that, he said, 'Why could I not give this one life of mine for my country? I will give my life and save this country. I will gladly give this one life of mine for a righteous cause,' and by doing a righteous deed for his country he had a great influence on the independence of our country.

Even while he was captured by the Japanese and held in prison, he did not abandon his love for his homeland, did not bend his patriotism for his country, and showed his will with dignity even until the day his death sentence was carried out, moving all who watched him. Until the day he died, he spoke openly of his clear purpose and will. He had a clear purpose and goal in what he did, and because he had a great conviction that it was a righteous deed, he did not bend his convictions and did not shrink even from giving his life for them. Because he did so

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until the day he died, saying that he was giving his life for that work in accordance with a righteous purpose, later generations honor him and call him the patriot Ahn Jung-geun, as a man who did what was right for his country.

What the patriot Ahn Jung-geun did was for the liberation of our country, but for what did Jesus receive baptism from John and die nailed to the cross? We must know this part exactly, and we must throw away fleshly and emotional thoughts such as, 'How much must it have hurt when He died on the cross? How much must it have hurt when the nails were driven in?' Do you still think such thoughts? Now you must throw away such emotional things and have a spiritual heart. The Lord wants you to know and believe what He did for you; He does not want you to weep.

You and I must know why the veil of the temple was torn when Jesus died on the Cross, why He was born on this earth, received baptism from John at the Jordan River, died on the Cross and rose again from the dead, and why the Lord did all these things.

The Lord did this work in order to send you and me to the kingdom of heaven. Until the Lord came to this earth and did these works, the door of the kingdom of heaven was closed. Until the Lord opened that door, no one could enter. But the Lord came to this earth and opened the door of heaven.

The door of heaven was opened like this. Jesus was born on this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty, and died on the Cross. The door of heaven, which had been closed because of sin, was opened by Jesus' baptism and blood, and anyone among you and me who just believes enters the kingdom of heaven. Jesus Christ was passed all our sins and took charge of them through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and because of those sins He was nailed to

the cross. By dying nailed to the cross, shedding His blood, He received the punishment for the sins of you and me in our place. Since He made you and me sinless with His baptism and blood, we enter the kingdom of heaven by believing in that righteous work. Because Jesus Christ made us sinless people, we enter the kingdom of heaven only by faith. Jesus, who tore the veil and opened the door of the kingdom of heaven—He came to this earth, received baptism, and shed His blood and died, and so removed all the sin of the world; so whoever believes enters the kingdom of heaven.

The Lord did every righteous work in order to let you and me enter the kingdom of heaven. The Lord did not come to this earth in order to receive credit, saying, 'I suffered pain for you.' If you and I have sin, we must go to hell, and we perish according to the word that the wages of sin is death. It is an appointed principle that a person is born once and dies once, and after that must be judged; and the person who dies with sin, not having received the remission of sin on this earth, is judged and receives eternal punishment in the fire that is never quenched. The Lord came to this earth and saved you and me in order to let you and me enter not eternal punishment but the kingdom of God, which is eternal life. In order to save us and send us to the kingdom of heaven, the Lord came to this earth and did the work of the baptism and the Cross, which fulfills all righteousness. All mankind enters the kingdom of heaven by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished.

We must believe in our hearts and give thanks for the work by which Jesus came to this earth, received baptism at the Jordan River, died on the Cross, and saved you and me. Do not be like the daughters of Jerusalem, who felt the pain together and wept over Jesus being nailed to the cross; rather, know and believe the fact that for your sake Jesus was born on this earth and, by

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receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, was passed all the sins of you and me. Jesus was nailed to the cross because your sin and mine had been passed to Him through His baptism. In order not to send you and me to hell, all sin was passed to Him through His baptism, and He died on the Cross. And He rose again from the dead and accomplished all that righteous work of saving us, and He made those who know that righteous work, receive it into their hearts, and are thankful for it into the children of God. The Lord is pleased with the spiritual revival in which we believe in the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit and are born again.

God wants the spiritual revival of you and me. God wants us to know and believe what He did and to give thanks sincerely. He does not want us to grieve and feel pain because Jesus died on the Cross. He wants us to know the fact that Jesus took charge of the lifelong sins of you and me at the Jordan River, and to know and believe this fact of salvation: that He was nailed to the cross because of your sins and received that brutal death penalty in our place.

Let us look at Matthew chapter 3 from verse 13. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased.'"*

From the beginning of the Gospel of Matthew, it speaks of the birth of Jesus and of John the Baptist. It says that John the

Baptist was born on this earth first, before Jesus came, and that Jesus was born on this earth six months after John the Baptist was born. After that comes the record of Jesus being circumcised eight days after His birth and going through the rites with His parents, and then there is no record for a long while.

Then suddenly, in Matthew chapter 3, Jesus appears with the words, *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him." "Then"* refers precisely to the time when Jesus turned thirty. At the age of thirty, Jesus began His public ministry of saving us. Jesus was born on this earth to save us because He loved us, and now, when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John. Now He makes clear the reason why He had to receive baptism.

"John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized" (Matthew 3:14–16).

Jesus came to this earth to save you and me from sin, and in order to accomplish the righteous work of saving us, that is, the right work, He received baptism from John and then died on the Cross. Jesus died on the Cross to make you and me sinless, and to make us sinless He received the baptism by which He took charge of sin. When Jesus came to receive baptism from John, John said that he himself rather needed to be baptized by Jesus, but John baptized Him according to Jesus' command that Jesus had to receive baptism in order to fulfill all righteousness.

From verse 15 of the passage comes the reason Jesus received baptism. It says, *"Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized" (Matthew 3:15–16)*. The reason Jesus received

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baptism was that only when John the Baptist baptized Jesus could the sin of the world pass on to Jesus. In other words, 'You baptize Me. It is fitting for Me to receive baptism from you and thus fulfill all righteousness.' Just as the patriot Ahn Jung-geun's shooting of Ito Hirobumi was a righteous deed to save this country, the reason Jesus had to come to this earth and receive baptism from John the Baptist was to fulfill all righteousness, that is, the greatest righteous work in the world.

Jesus Himself received the baptism that fulfills all righteousness. He said that it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way. Here all righteousness is to make all people sinless, so in order to fulfill all righteousness Jesus received baptism from John, and John baptized Jesus. Thereby Jesus was passed the sin of the world. So Jesus held out His head to John the Baptist according to the will of God, and John the Baptist allowed the baptism to be given. When John the Baptist laid his hands on Jesus' head, at that moment all the sins of the world passed on to Jesus. He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*.

All mankind is born inheriting sin from their parents. Because of the sin inherited in that way, we always commit sin, we perish because of sin, and we are cursed because of sin. Also, because of sin, we were those who could not go to the kingdom of heaven. Jesus came to this earth in order to send such people as us to the kingdom of heaven. In order to remove all our sins and fulfill all righteousness, Jesus, though He is God, was born on this earth clothed in human flesh.

Our Lord, who is God, received baptism from John the Baptist when He turned thirty. Jesus received baptism in order to be passed the sins of all people and fulfill all righteousness. Jesus received baptism in order to be passed the sins of you and me. So Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting*

for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15), and then John allowed Him and Jesus received baptism.

The reason Jesus received baptism from John was to remove the sins of you and me. Because we commit sin all our lives, we were souls who could not enter the kingdom of heaven. In order to make such people as us sinless and let us enter the kingdom of heaven, Jesus received the baptism by which He took charge of the sin of the world. He received baptism in order to be passed all the sins of the world, and with that baptism He took charge of all the sins that everyone commits, from Adam until the day this earth comes to an end. Jesus received baptism from John in order to be passed all those sins of the world—the sins people commit with their hearts and the sins they commit with their deeds during the seventy or eighty years they live after being born.

Those who believe in their hearts in Jesus Christ, our true Savior, as purely as a man from the country receive the remission of sin. Jesus did not die on the Cross because He had sin from committing sin Himself. Jesus did not suffer because of His own sin; rather, because He took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John in order to save sinners like us from the destruction of hell, He suffered and died on the Cross for us.

Jesus is my Savior and your Savior. Jesus was born on this earth, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross in order to become the Savior of you and me. With His baptism and blood, Jesus saved you and me from all sins. In order to do the righteous work of making you and me sinless people and letting us enter the kingdom of heaven, our Lord received baptism, died on the Cross, and rose again. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? That is so.

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"The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world"

In our country people often look up to famous people, but all mankind must know that Jesus Christ remitted the sins of all mankind, and look up to Jesus Christ all the more and believe in Him. Jesus Christ came to this earth, and the sins of all people, without leaving out the sins of a single person, passed on to His own head through the baptism He received from John; and bearing the sin of the world He went to the cross, was nailed through both hands and both feet, and received the judgment for the sins of you and me in our place. In order to make us sinless with His baptism and blood and let us enter the kingdom of heaven, Jesus Himself became the door of the kingdom of heaven and opened that door. We must believe in, give thanks to, and praise Jesus Christ, our Savior who did such things.

We must give thanks from the bottom of our hearts by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel of the water and the Spirit must be believed with the heart. We must believe in Jesus not in a fleshly way but spiritually, with the heart. We must know what our Lord did to make me sinless, know the spiritual truth of His baptism and blood, and believe with the heart. And we must give thanks with the heart.

We must know and believe in the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit that Jesus gave us. We must not believe with mere emotions, weeping and wailing and making a commotion, but know with our heads and believe with our hearts, and so reach righteousness and be saved. This is spiritual revival. Since it is said that with the heart one believes unto righteousness and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation, it is exactly as Jesus said when He told John to permit it, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.

Let us read the word of John chapter 1, verse 29: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'"* When Jesus received baptism from John, the sins of all people passed on to Him and all righteousness was fulfilled. Because Jesus was passed the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, He bore the sin of the world.

The sins committed knowingly are the sin of the world, the sins committed unknowingly are the sin of the world, and the sins committed out of weakness or out of being too strong are also the sin of the world. Are the sins we will commit in the future the sin of the world, or not? They are the sin of the world. The sins your parents committed are the sin of the world, and the sins your children committed are the sin of the world. The sins you committed before this very hour are the sin of the world, the sins you commit after this hour are the sin of the world, and the sins we commit until we die are all the sin of the world.

Jesus was passed all the sins of this world when He received baptism. That is why Jesus alone is the true Savior. Jesus is not merely a 'righteous patriot,' nor merely a right man who did a righteous deed. Jesus is the Savior of you and me and of all mankind. If anyone, without a single exception, knows the righteous work Jesus Christ did and believes in his heart in Jesus Christ as the Savior, he becomes a sinless person and receives the remission of sin through that faith. By believing in what Jesus did, one receives the remission of sin and enters the kingdom of heaven. Jesus acknowledges that faith.

We must believe with the heart. Believe with the heart; do not do the foolish things of offering prayers of repentance to Jesus Christ while weeping and wailing and squeezing out tears, overcome by fleshly emotions, and of trying to offer a lot of money. It is foolish to offer everything you have, when you do

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not even have enough to live on, because you heard that if you offer a lot of money to the church you will receive two or three times as much material blessing. The one who says such things is a swindler, and the one who is deceived by such words is a fool.

Today churches gather money and spend huge sums to build church buildings, but is that really the right thing to do in this present age? Is that the right thing? Even though we cannot do a work as right as our Lord's, if we call ourselves people who believe in Jesus, we must know how to love people, know how to love the souls of others, and know how to embrace them in our hearts. The work of preaching Jesus is precisely such a work, and it is the work that pleases Jesus. Those who believe this and practice it make Jesus glad.

Even if you have not brought and offered lumps of gold, the person who receives into his heart and believes this right work, by which Jesus came to this earth and removed the sins of you and me, refreshes the heart of Jesus. That alone is what keeps the work Jesus did from being in vain. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? That is so.

As Jesus died on the Cross, He said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* And as our Lord died on the Cross, after He said, My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me, the last word He spoke was *"It is finished!"* In that way He breathed His last.

When the tomb was opened on the first day, that body had already risen. Jesus' tomb has only its place; there is no corpse. In everyone's tomb there is a corpse, but in Jesus' tomb there is no corpse. Jesus is the Son of God and the Creator, the very One who made you and me. He, as our Savior and Creator, saved you and me. And now He tells you and me to receive spiritual salvation.

The bodies of you and me will someday go before God. If you and I are to be remitted of all our sins and go before God, we must believe in Jesus Christ as our own Savior and believe the fact that He has delivered us from all sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? I hope that all of you will believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive spiritual salvation. You are still offering prayers of repentance because of your personal sins and all your sins. But the Lord is more pleased when we believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which has become the righteousness of God, than with prayers of repentance. I sincerely hope that you will become those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. I will see you again next time. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Paradise entered by faith

< Luke 23:32-43 >

"There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"

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The thief who goes to hell and the thief who goes to Paradise

If we look at the word of Luke chapter 23, Jesus is nailed to the cross on the charge of being the King of the Jews. The king who ruled Judea was the emperor of Rome, and since Jesus called Himself the King of the Jews, they put Jesus to death on that charge. But Jesus was the King of all mankind. Today I want to consider with you the Lord's word to the two thieves hanged on either side of Jesus, that is, the word by which one thief was saved and the other thief was not saved.

Jesus was nailed to the cross together with two thieves. Jesus was nailed in the middle, and the two thieves on either side. That day was the day three men were to be executed. But one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him and mocked Him, saying, *"If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us" (Luke 23:39)*. The evil sinners who go to hell are like this thief.

Then the other thief rebuked the mocking thief and said this: *"Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:40–41)*. He rebuked him, saying, 'Since you and I were born into this world and murdered, committed adultery, stole, and committed sin, it is only right that we receive the same judgment. It is fitting that we die like this as the wages of the sins we sinners have committed. But this Man has done nothing wrong, so how can you blaspheme Him, not fearing God?'

Jesus was dying on the Cross bearing all the sins of the world, not dying because He had committed sin. It was not that Jesus received the judgment for sin because He had some fault. One thief despised Jesus, and the other thief believed in Jesus. One thief believed, 'You are truly One who has committed no sin,

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and yet You are the Savior who bears my sins and is nailed to the cross in my place in order to save me, a sinner.' But the other thief did not believe. He said, "You were nailed because You committed sin too. If You have so much power, save Yourself and try saving us too."

Here we discover the reason one thief was saved and the other thief was not. One person believes in Jesus, receives the remission of sin, and goes to the kingdom of heaven, while another goes to hell by not believing. They committed sin alike, were born as the same kind of sinners, and even the amount of their sin was about the same, yet one sinner went to the kingdom of heaven and the other sinner could not. Here lies the secret of faith. After rebuking the other thief, one thief asked Jesus, *"Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42).* Jesus answered, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)*. In Korean, the word for Paradise is made up of the character meaning 'joy' and the character meaning 'garden,' and it means the joyful kingdom of God. God gave that thief Paradise.

Looking at this word, we who have become righteous can see that a sinner does not go to the kingdom of heaven by some good deed of his own; rather, though all sinners commit sin before God, they go to Paradise if they believe in Jesus Christ. The faith of the thief on the one side was truly right faith. This thief believed that the Son of God was nailed to the cross and received the judgment in the place of sinners, as the wages of their sins. He believed that the Lord's being nailed to the cross was to save me; that the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River in order to have all the sins of sinners transferred to Him was also a right deed; and that His being nailed to the cross was also a deed to save mankind from sin.

Jesus is the Son of God, and the Savior and Messiah who

would save mankind from sin. With this one faith, that thief was remitted of all the many sins he had committed on this earth. The other thief, who blasphemed Jesus, did not believe in Jesus' salvation. That man went to hell because of that one sin of not believing.

Believe in the baptism He received from John and the blood of judgment

Heaven and hell are decided according to whether or not one believes that Jesus delivered sinners from sin with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross. The question is whether one believes that Jesus received baptism from John at the Jordan River in order to have all the sins of sinners transferred to Him, bore those sins, was judged and died on the Cross in the place of sinners, and then rose again. If one believes in the heart in that love of God, by which Jesus bore the sins of sinners and received the punishment in the place of sinners, it is heaven; if one does not believe, it is hell.

Sinners must know that Jesus is the Savior of sinners. Jesus is the Savior of you and me, and the Son of God who delivered sinners from all sins. The sinner who believes that Jesus became the Savior becomes righteous and goes to the kingdom of heaven, and the sinner who does not believe in his heart goes to hell. However good a life one has lived, if one believes that the Creator who made heaven and earth and all things in the universe was born on this earth as the baby Jesus, clothed in human form, that when He turned thirty He had all the sins of sinners transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and that He received the judgment on the Cross in the place of sinners, it is heaven; if one does not believe,

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it is hell. If one believes that all the sins of sinners were transferred to Jesus Christ when John the Baptist laid his hands on Jesus' head, as in the laying on of hands, and baptized Him, one is saved from sin. The baptism Jesus received from John was to save me from sin, and the blood of Jesus was the blood He shed in my place.

Jesus told that thief that he would be with Him in Paradise that day. Some people raise the question of whether Paradise is somewhere between heaven and hell, but in Paradise, that is, the kingdom of heaven, there is nothing but joy and gladness always. Jesus was speaking of the place where one lives joyfully in the kingdom of heaven. That thief believed in Jesus in his heart and received the remission of sin. With faith alone he was acknowledged before God and came to enter the kingdom of heaven. When we think about it, the two thieves nailed on either side were no different from us. We who have become righteous were also once those who had to die as the wages of the sins we had committed. But in order to save sinners, Jesus had all the sins of all sinners transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again. If we had not believed in this gospel of the truth, we too would have had to be judged like the thief who did not believe.

It is said, "*The wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. Whether a big sin or a small sin, whatever the sin, if one has broken the law of God, one is judged. When we who have become righteous think of the time when we were sinners, we can see that we were in exactly the same situation as these two thieves nailed on either side of Jesus' cross.

Jesus, who has no fault or blemish

The thief on the one side said, *"This Man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41)*. Is there anything wrong among the things Jesus did when He came to this earth? All people have faults, but Jesus had no fault. Books written by human beings magnify people and write of them as if they were sages, but the Bible records even the shameful affair between a daughter-in-law and her father-in-law. Because the Bible is the word of God, and the perfect God knows well what kind of beings human beings are, it records the state of sinners just as it is.

If Jesus Christ had had even the slightest blemish, He could not have become the Savior of sinners. How could one who has a blemish himself save others? Jesus' being born on this earth through the body of a virgin was in accordance with the word that God prophesied through the prophet Isaiah: *"Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a Son, and shall call His name Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14)*. In order to save sinners, God came as the baby Jesus through the body of the virgin Mary, clothed in the same human form as sinners. Jesus quietly lived a family life until He turned thirty, and from the age of thirty His public ministry began, in which He put forward John the Baptist, the servant of God who had been crying out for people to repent, and had him work together with Him. The one God used in order to transfer all the sins of mankind to Jesus was John the Baptist.

The reason He had sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John

Let us look at Matthew chapter 3 from verse 13. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him.*

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And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized" (Matthew 3:13–16). Here comes the word that Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, bore those sins and died on the Cross, and then rose again, and so saved us. John the Baptist is the representative of mankind, according to the word, *"Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11)*. Here *"Then"* refers to the time when He was thirty, when He began His public ministry. At the age of thirty, the very first thing Jesus did was to receive baptism from John.

The baptism Jesus received from John means that He had all the sins of sinners transferred to Him. It means that He took charge of all the sins of all the sinners of this world. Something that is over there being moved over here—that is precisely 'transfer.' Why did Jesus have to come to this earth and receive baptism from John? He received baptism from John in order to remove the sins of sinners, to take to Paradise the sinners who believe in Him like this thief on the one side, and to take all the sins of sinners upon Himself.

In our language, too, the word baptism is used in the sense of 'being covered with.' John the Baptist laid his hands on Jesus' head, as in the laying on of hands. The meaning of baptism is precisely 'to be washed,' 'sin passes over,' 'to be transferred,' and 'to be covered over.' Jesus originally has no sin, but when sin is transferred to Him, He becomes like a sinner, and when He bears sin, the Lord must die. Instead of the sinner receiving the punishment, Jesus must receive the punishment. This is the meaning of baptism. It means that Jesus had the sin of the world, the sins of all the people of this world, transferred to Him. With

the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River about two thousand years ago, Jesus had even all the sins of the sinners yet to be born transferred to Him.

One thief said that there was nothing wrong in what this Man had done. Though his own deeds were worthless, Jesus had received baptism from John at the Jordan River in order to save me, a sinner, and He was hanging nailed to the cross, bearing sin in the place of sinners so that sinners would not go to hell. He was saved by believing in his heart in the salvation Jesus accomplished and that He is the Savior of sinners, saying, "Jesus is the very Savior. He is my Savior God. Jesus, I believe in You." How does a sinner receive the remission of sin and how is he born again? Receiving the remission of sin, being regenerated, and being born again all come about by believing that Jesus had sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and in His death on the Cross and His resurrection.

Think about it with the conscience of a sinner. How could Jesus Christ, who received baptism to save sinners and had all the sins of sinners transferred to Him, and who died on the Cross in their place to save sinners from judgment, fail to be the Savior of sinners? I mean, how could Jesus, who has not a single sin, fail to be the Savior of sinners, having received baptism from John, been nailed to the cross, and risen again? Is Jesus not more than enough to be the Savior of sinners? In order to take sinners to Paradise and to remove the sins of sinners, Jesus received baptism from John, was nailed to the cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again. So sinners have been saved through faith.

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The thief who believed in his heart in what Jesus did

Dear beloved saints, of the thieves nailed on either side, one thief entered Paradise by believing in Jesus. A person who has believed in Jesus and been saved from sin is a person who has the same faith as this thief. This thief believed that the baptism Jesus received from John was His having the thief's own sins transferred to Him, and that Jesus' being nailed to the cross was Jesus bearing sin and receiving the punishment instead of the thief, a sinner, receiving it. If you want to believe in Jesus and go to the kingdom of heaven, you can go to the kingdom of heaven only if you believe all that Jesus did. Only if you believe that everything Jesus did is right can you go to the kingdom of heaven. If you say you can believe that Jesus was nailed to the cross but cannot believe in the baptism He received from John in order to have our sins transferred to Him, that is not the same faith as the thief on the one side who was saved. The thief who was saved, while nailed to the cross, rebuked his fellow thief when the other thief blasphemed Jesus, and believed all that Jesus had done and that Jesus was his Savior. Through that faith he received the remission of sin.

People say that they can believe that Jesus was nailed to the cross. Then how could Jesus, who has no sin, be nailed to the cross? Jesus is One who has no sin. According to the word, *"Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" (Galatians 3:13)*, in the Old Testament a cursed sinner was hanged on a tree and put to death, and the cross was the most atrocious method of carrying out the death penalty. What sin had Jesus committed, that He was hanged on a wooden cross, nailed through His hands and feet, and received the punishment of death, shedding His blood? It is written, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of*

God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23). The curse that sinners were to receive was death on the cross, and Jesus died on the Cross because He had all the sins of sinners transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. Jesus' death was the death of sinners, and the baptism Jesus received from John was to have the sins of sinners transferred to Him. The remission of sin is received by hearing the word of God with the ears and believing it with the heart.

Today people believe in Jesus, but because they do not believe as the thief on the one side did, they do not receive the remission of sin. The thief on the one side said that there was nothing wrong in what Jesus had done. It seems this thief had known of Jesus beforehand. It seems he had known, whether by hearing or by seeing, that Jesus had received baptism from John, that He had remitted people's sins and healed their diseases, and the fact that Jesus was the Son of God and the Messiah, without blemish or spot. So when the other thief blasphemed Jesus, he rebuked that thief and said, *"This Man has done nothing wrong" (Luke 23:41)*.

The salvation shown by the sacrificial system of the Old Testament

Jesus was nailed to the cross because He had all the sins of sinners transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. How did an atrocious thief who had never once done a right thing in this world enter Paradise by believing in Jesus? What kind of faith on earth was this faith? We can enter Paradise only if we believe in this right salvation, by which Jesus had the sins of sinners transferred to Him. Without believing in what Jesus did, one can never enter

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Paradise. It is written, *"With the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation" (Romans 10:10)*. We are saved by believing the fact that Jesus is my Savior, that He had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River, and that He was judged in the place of sinners by shedding His blood on the Cross.

Those who have been born again, having believed that all Jesus did is right and received the remission of sin in their hearts, all enter Paradise. What a joyful thing this is! But those who reject the baptism Jesus received and the blood He shed cannot enter Paradise. Some people believe, without the baptism, that Jesus saved us by gathering up all the sin of the world by Himself, bearing it, going to the cross, and dying. If that were so, the word of the Old Testament would not have needed to be written. The Old Testament speaks of the sacrificial system of the Tabernacle. In the sacrificial system, it speaks of the atonement for a year's sins and of eternal atonement, always through the priests descended from Aaron. It said that a common person does not receive the remission of his sins by himself, but that when the priest makes atonement, he surely receives remission. They passed their sins on to the offering through the laying on of hands, and received the remission of sin through the blood of the sacrificial offering.

In the same way, Jesus also had the sins of sinners transferred to Him through His baptism and saved sinners with the blood of the Cross—just as in the Old Testament the high priest passed a year's sins on to a goat or a lamb by laying his hands on it, and remission was received through the sacrificial offering. To receive the remission of sin from God, the animal had to be without blemish, sins had to be passed on to it by the laying on of hands, and its blood had to be put on the horns of the altar of

burnt offering and poured out on the ground without fail. Because the wages of sin is death, one is saved only when the price of death is paid without fail. This is God's promise. If Jesus had come to this earth and simply gathered up the sins of all people by Himself and taken responsibility for them, there would have been no need to establish the priestly system in the Old Testament. God promised the system that saves sinners from sin, showed the Old Testament as the shadow of the New Testament, and in the New Testament sent Jesus so that we would be saved through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

When Jesus came to this earth and began His public ministry and the work of salvation, the very first thing He did was to receive baptism from John, in order to fulfill the word God had promised in the Old Testament. According to the promise of the Old Testament, just as the sacrificial offering had a year's sins of the people of Israel transferred to it through the high priest, Jesus had the sins of all sinners transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, and delivered sinners from sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rising again. Because Jesus had all the sins of mankind transferred to Him at the Jordan River through John the Baptist, He made sinners sinless. The baptism Jesus received from John was the baptism by which He had the sins of sinners transferred to Him, and His being nailed to the cross opened the way for all sinners to enter Paradise by His suffering the punishment of sinners. Our Lord became the way to the kingdom of heaven. Our Lord became the bridge on the way into Paradise, so that no one can enter the kingdom of heaven except through the Lord.

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Two kinds of sinners

How do sinners today believe in Jesus? They do not believe as the thief on the one side did. Some say that Jesus did some things well but also some things badly, and some say they believe in Jesus and yet believe with their own emotions, wondering how much it must have hurt when He was nailed to the cross. But it is not that the remission of sin is received when the flesh of a sinner suffers. Sinners cannot live perfectly like Jesus; they are unstable and commit sin, and they cannot but receive the judgment of hell. Like the two criminals nailed on either side of the cross, human life is to be born on this earth, do nothing but commit sin, and die. In order to save such sinners from sin, our Lord had all the sins of sinners transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, and saved them by being nailed to the cross, shedding His blood and dying, and rising again.

Sinners sometimes pity Jesus, who hung on the cross and shed His blood and died. But there is no need to pity Jesus. That is because Jesus was not nailed to the cross for having committed sin or for lacking power. Jesus received baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again in order to deliver all sinners from sin. In the Bible there is not a single verse that says one receives the remission of sin by repenting every day. If there is even one verse, try to find it. The Bible says countless times that Jesus Christ is the Savior of the world who had all the sins of the world transferred to Him. Many people pity, in a fleshly way, Jesus nailed to the cross, but we have been saved from sin by believing in our hearts and confessing with our mouths that Jesus is my Savior, that the baptism Jesus received from John was His having my sins transferred to Him, and that Jesus' death on the Cross is my death.

Without the baptism Jesus received and the shedding of His blood on the Cross, sinners are those who cannot but be judged just like the two criminals. Without Jesus, sinners are those who must die, be judged, and go to hell. I believe in this gospel, by which Jesus saved us with the water and the Spirit. Through faith, God gave sinners the remission of sin, made them righteous, and gave the righteous Paradise, the kingdom of heaven. Since the Lord said, Today you will be with Me in Paradise, our hearts are in Paradise, and our bodies also will go to Paradise in a little while.

We must know clearly how the Lord gave Paradise to this thief. This man went to Paradise because he believed that all the work of the remission of sin that Jesus did was right. This thief did nothing good at all. He was a sinner who did nothing but robbery and evil deeds from birth until death. He only believed in his heart in the work of the remission of sin that Jesus did, and so he was remitted of all his sins, became righteous, and came to go to Paradise. Then why does the Bible record this? It would have been enough to have only the thief on the one side, so why were there thieves on both sides? It is telling us that all people are divided into two kinds.

One sinner is a person who makes light of Jesus, blasphemes Him, and treats Him as a human being just like himself, and the other sinner is a person who believed in his heart that Jesus is the Savior who saves from sin. There are billions of people in this world, but they can be divided into two kinds of people: those who believe in Jesus as their own Savior and those who do not. Jesus' being born on this earth as a human being and the baptism He received from John were to deliver sinners from sin by having all the sins of sinners transferred to Him, and His death on the Cross was His receiving the punishment instead of sinners having to die. There is one kind of person who receives

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the remission of sin by believing this in his heart, and there is another kind of person who regards Jesus as a human being, makes light of and blasphemes the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished with His baptism and blood, and in the end goes to hell. There are always these two kinds of people in this world. To which side do you and I belong?

With one hundred percent faith

Do we go to the kingdom of heaven by faith, or do we go by works? We go by one hundred percent faith. We go by one hundred percent faith in what Jesus did; it is not ninety-nine percent faith plus one percent human effort. One hundred percent faith means believing with the heart, not believing with works. One believes with the heart unto righteousness and confesses with the mouth and is saved, and actions come out because one believes in the heart that this is right; it is not that one acts first and the heart then becomes more righteous.

Today's humanistic theology is right up to the point of saying that since God saved sinners, we must believe in Him, but it says that sinners too must make some effort of their own in order to go to the kingdom of heaven. Also, those who say they believe according to predestination think that God chose some and did not choose others. So there are many who, even while believing in Jesus, have no assurance, give up their faith, and go to hell. There are people who say that salvation depends on God's choosing. But the choosing was a choosing in Jesus. It was that sinners are delivered from sin and saved by believing in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the blood of the Cross.

The remission of sin does not depend on God's unconditional

choosing. The Bible says, *"Jacob I have loved, but Esau I have hated" (Romans 9:13)*. Even before they were born, God knew that Esau was a man who would live trusting in his own strength and Jacob was a man who would rely on God. So He said, *"I will have mercy on whomever I will have mercy, and I will have compassion on whomever I will have compassion" (Romans 9:15)*. God's choosing is a choosing in Jesus. Any sinner who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross is saved from sin, and any sinner who does not believe faces hell and judgment. Therefore God presented to sinners the way of salvation that He established by the law of faith. All sinners receive the remission of sin through believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood. This is the way to the kingdom of heaven that God has prepared. Believe. Then you are saved from sin. Believe. You become righteous, obtain the right to become children of God, and become a worker of righteousness.

On whom does God have mercy? Jesus came into this world to save sinners; He came to save from sin those who rely on God like Jacob, that is, sinners. But Jesus did not come to those who, like Esau, boast of the strength of their own arms and insist unreasonably, 'I have done many good deeds, so even a little faith means salvation for me. If God does not take me, it is God's loss.' In God's calling there is mercy. God's judgment is to have compassion on those on whom He will have compassion, and to surely judge those who are to be judged. God never has compassion on those who boast of their strength and boast of their good deeds and the things they have done well; He judges them. But to sinners who are lacking like that—who lay bare their sins before God and ask for help, hoping that He will have compassion on them, saying, "I am lacking and weak and have done much wrong, so I have nothing at all to boast of. God,

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please save me and remove all my sins"—God clothes them with the grace of the remission of sin.

To deliver sinners from sin, Jesus was born on this earth in human form, received baptism from John and had the sins of sinners transferred to Him, and shed His blood and died on the Cross and rose again, and so saved sinners from sin. Sinners are saved only when they believe in their hearts in Jesus, who became the Savior of sinners. You are delivered from sin by faith. Believe that Jesus is the Savior. And so be saved.

Sinners are remitted of their sins only when they believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood. But if a sinner blasphemes even one of the baptism and the blood, which are Jesus' work of salvation—saying that Jesus is not the Son of God, or that Jesus came to this earth and could not have all sins transferred to Him, or that Jesus' blood is in vain—such a sinner can never enter Paradise. God brings into Paradise those who believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. Through that faith, sinners receive the remission of sin, enter Paradise, and become righteous.

Learn and believe the right work the Lord accomplished

People are good at saying that one receives the remission of sin by believing in Jesus. But in reality they do not believe in the baptism Jesus received and His blood. Rather than saying they do not believe, it would be more correct to say that they do not know the truth and do not know the way of the remission of sin. Because they do not know about being born again through the word of the truth, they cannot believe, and so they do not believe. If one does not know the truth of the remission of sin, one can

learn it and believe. Then one is saved from sin. There is no need for works to be added in order to be saved from sin. There are many people who try to go to Paradise by keeping the Lord's Day well, doing well at early morning prayer and all-night prayer, serving well, giving many tithes and offerings, and zealously doing evangelism and missions, and there are people who encourage such things. But to become a servant of God one must receive the remission of sin; it does not come from doing forty days of fasting prayer. If one adds works to receiving the remission of sin or going to the kingdom of heaven, one gets farther from the way of salvation.

Jesus was born on this earth clothed in flesh through Mary in order to deliver me and sinners from sin. Do you believe that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist? Do you believe that at that time He had all the iniquities of sinners transferred to Him? As He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*, Jesus had all the sins of sinners transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. And do you believe that, instead of you and me being judged for all our iniquities, He was nailed to the cross and shed His blood in order to save all sinners once and for all and let them escape judgment?

One thief received the remission of sin through believing in his heart that what the Lord did was right. The thief did nothing at all. He only believed in his heart. How did you and I come to go to Paradise? By believing in the right work of salvation that Jesus did, we became the people of God and the people who enter Paradise. There is no other way. There is nothing but to believe in the work by which Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John in order to save sinners, and the work by which He shed His blood on the Cross. He has called into Paradise all the sinners who believe in the right work Jesus

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did. We give thanks that the Lord makes those who believe righteous. The thief on the one side also entered Paradise by believing in Jesus. The remission of sinners' sins was the grace God bestowed on sinners. All sinners have entered Paradise by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Whom does the Lord bless and whom does He judge?

< Luke 23:32-43 >

"There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left. Then Jesus said, 'Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do.' And they divided His garments and cast lots. And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS. Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.' But the other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.' Then he said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'"

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The Lord, who received the death sentence together with two criminals

Jesus received the death sentence from Pilate and also from the people of Israel. When He received the death sentence, two other men also received the death sentence together with Him, and they went up to Golgotha carrying their crosses. Today I will share the word with you on that passage.

Verses 32 and 33 say, *"There were also two others, criminals, led with Him to be put to death. And when they had come to the place called Calvary, there they crucified Him, and the criminals, one on the right hand and the other on the left."* Then, in verse 34, as Jesus was being nailed to the cross, He said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do,"* and the soldiers divided His garments and cast lots.

It was an unjust thing that Jesus received the death sentence. Pilate, too, looked for a crime for which to sentence Jesus to death, but he could not find one. Nevertheless, before the unjust judge Jesus neither appealed nor protested, but stayed still like a sheep silent before its shearers. Why was that? Because He had already taken charge of all the sins of this world with the baptism He received from John the Baptist. He was silent because He had to receive on the Cross, in the place of all mankind, the judgment for those sins.

What is contained in that one word, *"It is finished!"*

The word Jesus spoke at this time was *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* Jesus knew that they were doing it because they did not know any better. So He asked that their sins be remitted, since they did not know what they were

doing. The soldiers who were beside Him cast lots for Jesus' garments and divided them. This word is a fact recorded, without leaving out a single thing, according to the testimony of those who were there at the scene.

Jesus' being nailed to the cross is His putting the final period to the work He came to do, the work of removing the sins of mankind. Listen to the word Jesus spoke when He died on the Cross. He said, It is finished, and died. When Jesus was born on this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and took charge of all the sins of this world once and for all, and then hung on the cross, poured out all His blood, and died, He put a period to that work of saving mankind from sin. So the Lord said, It is finished, as He died hanging on the cross.

This word means that since Jesus came to this earth and put a period to the work of removing the sins of us mankind, there is now no remission of sin for those who do not believe in this truth. Those who believe will receive the blessing that corresponds to it, but for those who do not believe, only judgment is waiting.

How painful it must have been to watch Jesus dying on the Cross! But the Lord said, *"Do not weep for Me, but weep for yourselves and for your children."* We must remember that word. Here He said, *"Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they do."* He asked that their sins be remitted, since what they were doing was done in ignorance. But now, once Jesus dies nailed to the cross, the work of removing the sins of mankind comes to its conclusion there. There is nothing more for Him to do. Everything is contained in this one word: It is finished.

He says, You were those who committed sin, being deluded by Satan the Devil, and you were weak. But He says, Since I made you in My image, I will let you recover My image. It was God's will to remove all sin, make us His children, and bless us.

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In order to accomplish that work, Jesus came and was born on this earth, received baptism from John, died hanging on the cross, and rose again from the dead, and so saved us.

At that moment of dying on the Cross, when in a little while He would breathe His last, the work of removing the sins of all mankind was entirely finished. It was all accomplished. It is finished; it is over; there is nothing more for Me to do in the work I came to this earth to do, the work of removing your sins; now it is perfectly accomplished—that is what the word means. Since the Lord put a period to the work of removing the sins of mankind and finished it all, now only the work of rising again and giving rewards to those who believe and bringing judgment on those who do not believe remains. Then to whom does God give blessing, and on whom does He bring judgment?

The crowd that mocked beneath the cross

Today's passage answers that very question. Verses 35 through 38 say, *"And the people stood looking on. But even the rulers with them sneered, saying, 'He saved others; let Him save Himself if He is the Christ, the chosen of God.' The soldiers also mocked Him, coming and offering Him sour wine, and saying, 'If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself.' And an inscription also was written over Him in letters of Greek, Latin, and Hebrew: THIS IS THE KING OF THE JEWS."*

Here we see those who mocked Jesus. The soldiers also mocked Him. They said, If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself. The people also mocked Jesus. People stood around the cross on which Jesus hung, looking on, and the rulers also stood and sneered. Three crosses were set up on the hill; after nailing the men to the crosses, they raised the crosses. Blood

must have flowed. Watching all of that scene, the people of Israel and the soldiers mocked Jesus.

The people mocked Him, saying, If You are the Christ, the chosen of God, save Yourself; did You not say You were the Son of God? Then, since You said You were the High Priest, the King of kings, the Creator, and the Savior, try saving Yourself. The Roman soldiers said, Are You not the King of the Jews? The people of Israel had tried to set Jesus up as the King of the Jews.

But Jesus did not intend to become the King of the Jews in the flesh. He did not come to become the kind of king who would protect the people of Israel from the Roman soldiers and protect them from the invasion of enemy armies. He is the King who, as the eternal Savior and the eternal God, would save them from the sin of this world, take them to the kingdom of God, and give them eternal blessing. It was said that He would save His people from their sins.

Yet the people mocked Him, and the Roman soldiers mocked Him too. They said, Are You the Christ? Are You the Creator? Are You the Savior who saves the people? Are You a prophet? They said, If You are like God, save Yourself; go on and try it; has it not all been a lie until now? They said, What kind of Christ are You? What kind of God are You? What kind of Creator are You? What kind of Savior of mankind are You? They said, When did You ever remove the sins of mankind? How can You call Yahweh God Your Father? They mocked Him, saying, If Yahweh God is Your Father, would the Father stand by and let You come to such a state? Since Your situation is like this, try praying to the Father. Would only one or two people have gathered there? I do not know for certain, but there must have been hundreds of people gathered there.

Do we not also go and look on when a fire breaks out in someone else's house, and do people not flock together when a

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murder has taken place and there is to be an on-site inspection? This was the place where the death penalty was being carried out. Jesus, whose name was widely known, had been seized and was being nailed to the cross, so two kinds of people gathered there.

Before the cross, people are divided into two kinds

Those who truly believed in Jesus in their hearts gathered there, and a great many who did not believe also gathered there. Even at that time, there were far more who did not believe than those who believed. And so they mocked Him, and the Roman soldiers also said, Are You the King of the Jews?

On what charge did the Roman soldiers seek to put Jesus to death? They said, The people are trying to set You up as the King of the Jews, and if You become the King of the Jews, You become the enemy of Caesar, the Roman emperor. They carried out the sentence with the reasoning: You are an enemy; You are a criminal who has committed treason; therefore You deserve to receive the death sentence.

So when Jesus hung on the cross, they put up over Him a sign that read ‘the King of the Jews.’ And they mocked Him. They said, If You are the King of the Jews, save Yourself first. But the Lord came into this world and, as you and I know, received baptism from John and took charge of the sins of mankind. He said that thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness, that it is fitting to make all people sinless. Because Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind by receiving baptism from John, the sins of all people passed on to Him through His head. And Jesus was nailed to the cross, said, It is finished, and brought it to an end.

But two kinds of people emerge in view of this event. So the

Bible points out that passage clearly. Even among all those people there are two kinds, and even where two men hung side by side, they are divided. They are divided into those who believe and those who do not believe.

To speak of it more concretely, it says that when Jesus received the death sentence, two men also received the death sentence. It says that they were led away together. It says that they were nailed to the cross together. It says that when Jesus was nailed, one man was set up on His left and one on His right. Looking at what these two men do, the Lord is speaking to us. He is telling us what kind of person is saved and what kind of person goes to hell. Now there is nothing more for Him to do.

After Jesus rose again, there is one thing, which is the work of giving the blessing of salvation, and there is another, which is the work of judging. Jesus is the Judge. Who is it that sits on the great white throne and judges in the Book of Revelation? It is Jesus. The One who will come again to this world is also Jesus.

The thief who blasphemed Jesus on the cross and the thief who believed

There are those who blaspheme Jesus, and there are those who believe that Jesus saves sinners. Of the one who blasphemed, verse 39 says, *"Then one of the criminals who were hanged blasphemed Him, saying, 'If You are the Christ, save Yourself and us.'"* That man, nailed to the cross together with Jesus, is now blaspheming Jesus. He does so even though he himself is nailed to the cross and dying.

There is a saying that the crayfish sides with the crab. At the seashore there are both crayfish and crabs, and what they have in common is that they crawl. So they are bound to take sides,

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and those of the same kind are bound to band together and take sides. Sinners unite their hearts with sinners, take sides, and oppose God, while the righteous unite their hearts with the righteous and stand against those who oppose. Yet in the situation of being nailed to the cross together, how much pain he himself must have been in, and how much pain Jesus must have been in! It was a situation in which they should have asked each other whether it hurt and sympathized with each other, but instead he blasphemed.

He said, Are You not the Christ? Did You not always say You were the Christ while You were on this earth? Then, if You are the Christ, try saving Yourself and us; go on and try it. The word Christ means King. It means Creator. It means that He became the High Priest and offered His own body to save mankind. It means Prophet. He blasphemed Him, saying, If You are the Christ, go on and try it.

Verse 40 says, *"The other, answering, rebuked him, saying, 'Do you not even fear God, seeing you are under the same condemnation? And we indeed justly, for we receive the due reward of our deeds; but this Man has done nothing wrong.'" (Luke 23:40–41)*. The prisoner on the other side, hearing the blasphemy, If You are the Christ, try saving us, rebuked that man.

He said, Whether from the rumors we heard while living on this earth or from what we saw with our own eyes, what wrong has this Man done? Did we not see it even when He was tried in Pilate's court? The people and the leaders of the law shook out the dust to dig up a crime, but was not a single thing revealed? Then why do you blaspheme Him? It is fitting that we receive the due reward for what we have done wrong; it is fitting that we are hanged on the cross; but this Man is not so; this Man has done nothing wrong. Here the words, He has done nothing wrong, are also a word meaning justice. In Greek it is dikaiosyne (δικαιοσύνη).

It means that Jesus did only the most just things. He did not oppress others, did not take what belonged to others, and did not trample on the powerless but helped them. He healed the sick, cured them, comforted them, and supplied them with food. He even took charge of their sins. Saying, What is there that is not right? he makes a request of Jesus. It says, *"He said to Jesus, 'Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom.' And Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:42–43).*

The Cross is not only a sign of love but also the standard of judgment

Dear fellow believers, the event of Jesus' death on the Cross does not bring us only good things. Jesus' death on the Cross is the period of salvation, and He is the Christ and the King of kings. But we must know the fact that unless one believes in Him as the Savior of mankind, the Savior who completed our salvation, the event of Jesus' death on the Cross contains a fearful judgment toward those who do not believe. But for those who believe, there is the promise that the thief on the one side received. When he said, Remember me when You come into Your kingdom, *"Jesus said to him, 'Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise.'" (Luke 23:43)*.

From after Jesus died on the Cross, such talk as this has come out. They say that Jesus could not remove all sins; that He removed the sin inherited from Adam, but could not remove all the sins we commit every day. They say that for the remaining sins one must receive the remission of sin by offering prayers of repentance, and that one must be sanctified. These are absurd words. There is such a thing as this: those who do not believe in

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that work by which Jesus saved all mankind perfectly and once and for all pay the price for their blasphemy, and those who believe enter Paradise fully. We must know that this passage is telling us that He will carry out such a judgment.

People look at Jesus' death on the Cross only as something very beautiful. They regard it only as a beautiful thing, a sign of love, by which He was nailed and sacrificed for us and for our sins and so saved us, and they make crosses and wear them as necklaces, put cross rings on their fingers, and make things out of crosses and give them as gifts. But we must know and believe the fact that for those who have not fully accepted that love there is a fearful judgment, by which they enter the boiling pit of the fire of hell.

Since He came to this earth more than 1,900 years ago and died nailed to the cross in A.D. 33, from that time on two kinds of people have continued. One kind of people were those who blasphemed and mocked Jesus. They say that He could not remove all sins; that He could not possibly have removed even the future sins that have not yet been committed; that He did not remove them; that one must offer prayers of repentance; that one must reach sanctification; that one must live a good life—and in this way they do the deed of belittling Jesus' merits. We have been saved by faith; if salvation were by works, we could never be saved.

To diminish the work Jesus did, or to speak words of unbelief, is exactly the same as speaking words of blasphemy. It is hell. Those who believe enter Paradise. We must know that there is judgment.

Today those who believe in Jesus say, I am a sinner; it is true that I have sin. But Jesus is different. Jesus has no sin. He is holy. They say, Since Jesus was passed our sins, is there not sin in Jesus' heart? No. Jesus took charge of sin with His body and, by

offering that body as the sacrificial offering, ended the judgment for our sins. God is One who has no sin. Jesus, as the holy One, was clothed in human flesh and took charge of sin with the baptism He received from John, and He is the One who gave up His own body on the cross and saved us; He is not One who was judged because He had sin.

We must be careful in how we speak of and believe this passage, which says that Jesus died hanging on the cross. If we do not believe the fact that He finished it all, we are treated exactly like the Roman soldiers here, the people of Israel, and the thief who blasphemed Jesus. Did the thief who blasphemed, saying, If You are the Christ, save Yourself, go to hell or not? He went to hell. God surely sends such people to hell. He made hell for people like him and for the Devil.

But God gave the thief on the other side this promise. When he said, Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom, He said, *"Assuredly, I say to you, today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)*. What is Paradise? The first syllable of the Korean word for Paradise is the Chinese character meaning 'joy.' It is a place where one enjoys every kind of joy, including love and delight. That is, apart from enjoying sin. Enjoying sin lasts only for a moment, but all other joys last forever. Such a place is Paradise.

He said, Today you will be with Me in Paradise, yet this man had done nothing for Jesus. Hearing the words blaspheming Jesus, who was nailed to the cross beside him, he merely made this one confession: "I believe in You. You have come to this earth and have done not a single evil thing. I have both heard and seen with my own eyes, and there is nothing You have done that was not right. There is nothing You have done that was not just." That is what he said.

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In what Jesus did there is not a single thing that is not right

Dear fellow believers, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of the sins of all mankind Himself. He, as God, was born on this earth through the body of the virgin Mary in order to be clothed in human flesh. And He received baptism at the age of thirty, and for three years He went about healing the sick and raising the dead.

Once, as Jesus was passing by, a funeral procession was passing. A coffin was being carried out on a bier, and there was a woman following behind it. She was following, beating her breast and mourning. Jesus stopped and asked who that woman was, and the people told Him the whole story. They said that the one in this coffin was that woman's only son, and so that woman was weeping. Jesus told them to stop, and He raised the dead son to life. There are many cases in which Jesus raised the dead. He also raised Lazarus.

When Jesus came to this earth, He never once oppressed others or took what belonged to others, and He gently held off even those who rejected Him. How right a work it was that Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John! It is the work by which He took charge of the sins of you and me.

Since He was born in Israel and lived there, a reward would probably have been offered to anyone who found a charge against Jesus. That is because the chief priests were in a hurry to seize Jesus and kill Him. Yet among the nation of Israel, among those very people who had lived together with Jesus, not a single person came forward saying that Jesus had done anything wrong.

Dear fellow believers, at weddings in foreign countries there is something different from our country. The officiant comes forward and first announces that so-and-so the groom and so-

and-so the bride are getting married, and if anyone in the audience gathered here knows of any impediment to these two marrying, let him make it known, and then this marriage will be void. And he looks around at the audience. He asks whether there is any impediment, and if there is no objection, the wedding proceeds. In our country we just go straight into the wedding. So it also happens that problems arise right after the wedding.

If there is anyone who can say that there is any flaw in the work by which Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, died hanging on the cross, and saved us mankind from sin, let him come forward from anywhere on this earth. The Roman soldiers charged Jesus with treason and killed Him, saying that He had tried to set up another king besides their emperor.

Why did the people of Israel blaspheme Jesus? Because He said that He was the Son of God. They said, If Jesus is the Son of God, does that not mean there is another God? They believed only in the one and only God, Yahweh God, as their God. They had been told, There is only one God; you shall have no other gods before Me; there is none but Yahweh God—yet He said, I am the Son of God; I am the Christ, so they said, Does that not mean there is one more God?

Originally there are three: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. It was so when He created the heavens and the earth, and when He made man He said, Let Us make man in Our image. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are one and the same God to us. The final answer to the doctrine of the Trinity lies here. But they said that He had claimed to be another God besides Yahweh God, and so they said, That man deserves to die; it is blasphemy. So they went to Pilate's court for a trial and demanded that He be nailed and killed. But Pilate said, However much I interrogate this Man, I can find no fault in Him.

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They said, If you let Him go, you are not Caesar's loyal servant. Pilate was a man sent out by Caesar. If he did not judge someone who claimed to be king besides Caesar, Pilate himself would be charged as a traitor, recalled to Rome, and beheaded, so there was nothing he could do. The people of Israel also said, Crucify Him. When he asked what he should do, they said, Release Barabbas, who had been imprisoned for rebellion and murder, and nail Jesus to the cross in his place. Are you and I not people just like that Barabbas?

On this earth we commit sin the moment we open our eyes and do wrong the moment we open our eyes, so are we not all people like that? The point is, when did Jesus ever do anything that was not right? Historians of mankind, explorers, and those who dig up ancient tombs have all rushed in trying to prove the claims that Jesus was not a real person, that Jesus was not the Son of God, that He was not the Creator, that He was not the Savior.

One of them, intending to expose the fiction of this liar and rescue those who believed in Jesus, investigated and investigated again, and instead ended up on his knees, confessing, You are truly God, the Savior, and the true Messiah. And after that he wrote that story as a novel and published it, and that novel was made into a film. It was long ago, so it is not clear whether that work was Ben-Hur or another work.

From now on, those who believe in Jesus must not think of Jesus' death on the Cross only as a good thing. Now He has died, and after three days He will rise again. We must know the fact that Jesus truly came to this earth to remove the sin of this world once and for all, received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of the sins of mankind once and for all, and bore that sin of the world and went and was nailed to the cross. For those who do not believe the fact that by dying there He took charge of the

sins of mankind and, coming to death, brought sin to an end, only a fearful judgment for sin is waiting; they must know this and await the day of judgment.

The difference between one who believes and one who does not believe seems to be no more than the thickness of a sheet of paper, but if this sheet of paper covers my face, your view and mine are blocked from each other. You cannot see me either. Whether one believes or not is whether one accepts or does not accept the grace He has given. It is whether one accepts or does not accept the bright light. The one who does not believe faces hell.

Do you know how fearful the sin of not believing in Jesus' work is?

It is said that Pilate, too, died having lost his mind. After Pilate passed the death sentence on Jesus, historians tell us that he came down with an obsession with cleanliness. After touching something he would wash with water, and after eating a spoonful of rice he would wash again. Saying, I only did it because they made me; it was not I who passed the sentence; it was not I; it was not I, he kept washing his hands, and then lost his mind and died wretchedly.

Dear fellow believers, human beings have what is called a conscience. The Bible tells us that Pilate's wife said something like this: Dear, you are holding a man called Jesus in your headquarters, are you not? The nation of Israel has accused Him and demanded that you seize and kill Him, has it not? I had a dream last night, and I was told to have nothing to do with this Man. She said she had been told that this Jesus was no ordinary man but One connected with God the Father, so her husband

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must not lay a hand on Him. She would likely have pleaded with him to keep this in mind and release that Man.

So Pilate, having heard that, put on his judicial robes in the morning and went out to the judgment seat; and with the story of the dream his wife had told him, and though the people were pressing him so hard, since no crime came to light however much he looked, you cannot imagine how hard he tried to release Him. He stopped in the middle of the trial, and after a good while came out again and said, People of Israel, however much I look, this Man has committed no crime, so I must release Him.

When the people saw that this would not do, they brought up the emperor, saying, If you release Jesus, you are not a true loyal servant of Caesar. So he said, At this rate my political life too will be over; there is nothing I can do; I have done nothing wrong; it is you who are in the wrong. When the people of Israel said, Let that sin be on us and on our descendants, he said, Yes, it is not I who am wrong but you; I have done nothing wrong, and he washed his hands and passed the death sentence.

Even after that, even after Jesus had died, his heart was always in torment. Dear fellow believers, do you know how fearful the sin of not believing is? Do you know Jesus' death on the Cross only as a sign of love? It is true that it is an appearance of love, but there is not only love there. There are people who do not accept Jesus' love. They are the people who do not believe the fact that Jesus received baptism from John, took charge of our sins, and, through His life of thirty-three years, completely accomplished our salvation. Such people He will treat as sinners who opposed and blasphemed Jesus, and He will bring on them the same judgment He brings on the Devil.

We must know that fact. There are people who interpret it too conveniently for themselves and think of it only as an appearance of love. They sing praises, saying, Thank You, I love

You, Lord, I love You. Yet in their own hearts they have not passed their sins on through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, and they hold sin in their hearts. If they say, Lord, I love You, while in that state, those words are mockery.

It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment—I hope you will know that there is judgment. Only a fearful and severe judgment is waiting for those who do not believe. He is preparing to bring judgment on them. He has made the lake that burns forever and is waiting.

Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe, even now. The Lord came to this earth, did the just work, and accomplished our salvation. He did not say in words only that He loved us and saved us. He received baptism from John and took charge of our sins, gave up His own body on the cross and received the judgment for sin, and said, It is finished. I hope that through believing in that Jesus, through believing in the salvation the Lord has given us, you will truly receive salvation in your hearts.

Otherwise, in a little while you will enter hell alive. I preach this word to more than three billion people on this earth. Even though you believe in Jesus, do you not have sin in your hearts? If you believe with such faith, you are mocking Jesus. You will be judged. Repent and turn, and believe the word of the truth of the water and the Spirit, by which He has removed sin. Then you will obtain salvation and obtain eternal life. You will obtain peace in your hearts. This is the word I give you.

Dear fellow believers, love is stronger than death. Because He loved us, He Himself received baptism, He Himself died and rose again, and so He saved us. But it is said that jealousy is as cruel as the grave, and its flames are flames of fire, a most vehement flame, like the fire of the LORD. Jealousy is stronger than the torment Satan the Devil inflicts on us. If one does not accept the love of God but takes the Devil’s side, becoming one

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with the Devil, who opposed God in the Garden of Eden and opposed God in heaven, and blasphemes, mocks, and disregards God, one goes to hell. One receives destruction.

I hope you will not commit such a sin. If you have committed such a sin until now, I hope you will turn and believe. Those who do not believe enter the fire that is never quenched, and even on this earth the judgment of being cursed in the flesh comes upon them. Why does mankind live suffering so much? It is because they do not fully believe in the Lord's love and do not accept it.

No one can be saved leaving out the baptism Jesus received from John

It is said, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19)*, and it is said, *"Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)*. Dear fellow believers, the baptism Jesus received was not a baptism He received out of boredom.

He received baptism from John in order to take charge of the sins of you and me, to remove the sins of you and me, and to receive the judgment for those sins. Then why do people reject Jesus' baptism? A man called Constantine the Great, not satisfied even with his position as the emperor of Rome, sought to become the head of religion and to become like God, and so he altered the gospel of the water and the Spirit into the religion of the cross.

After the Edict of Milan in A.D. 313, the Council of Nicaea was held in A.D. 325, and at that Council of Nicaea the religion of the cross was made. Before that, until A.D. 300, the apostles

and the saints of the early church believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He changed that gospel completely. From that time on, he himself became the chief over those who believed in that religion, whether Christianity or Catholicism. He himself became God.

Even now the Roman religion regards what the Pope says as having the same authority as the word of God. Dear fellow believers, I am not trying to slander the Roman religion. The Roman religion is a worldly religion. The real gospel is the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus' love and Jesus' salvation completed the work of saving us from sin through Jesus' baptism and His death on the Cross.

Dear fellow believers, a creed was made through the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325, and from that time until now, for nearly 1,700 years, people have been deceived. They say that if you believe in the religion of the cross you are saved, that Jesus saved us mankind from sin by hanging on the cross. No. You shall know the truth: we must know that Jesus came to save us and received baptism and took charge of our sins. Believing what one knows is the truth.

It is said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. It is a word that says believing what you know shall make you free. I have put all these words into documents and tell anyone who can oppose or refute them to go ahead and refute them. I tell them to refute them biblically. I tell the whole world—Roman Catholicism, the Russian Orthodox Church, and all the Christians of the whole world—to go ahead and stand against me; I am speaking the truth; do it not with fists but with books. There is no one who can stand against it.

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The baptism Jesus received from John and the Cross are the receipt for our salvation from sin

I believe in Jesus. Through His receiving baptism from John and dying hanging on the cross, the sins of mankind were ended. He ended my sins. He put a period there. From then on He never again does the work of removing sin. That is because He put a period at that time.

Dear fellow believers, we can believe what we know, but we cannot believe what we do not know. If you had lived together with me, you would know me, and if I were trustworthy you would trust me, and if I were not trustworthy you would not. We believe as much as we know. We believe in Jesus, too, as much as we know Him through the word. Do you believe that Jesus came to this earth and, in order to fulfill all righteousness in this way, received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of our sins—that He fulfilled all righteousness? Do you understand? If you know, you can believe.

Next, one knows and feels it as a whole person, and knowing and feeling, Ah, then I have no sin, one believes with the will. To believe as a whole person means precisely that kind of faith. It is to have met the Lord as a whole person. The Lord came as a whole person to save us, received baptism from John and took charge of our sins, and died on the Cross and rose again, and so saved us.

We too must know like that and feel like that. Dear fellow believers, if our sins have passed on to Jesus, do we have sin or not? We do not. Because they have passed on, we have no sin. They have been washed away. He took those sins and went and received the judgment. He died. Then, since the wages of sin is death, is there any more death or not? That is why true resurrection belongs to those who believe.

Those who do not believe come forth to the resurrection of judgment, and those who believe rise again to enjoy eternal life. So although people call the death of the Cross only a sign of love, as suits their convenience, the Cross is also the standard of judgment. Jesus removed sin perfectly and completely. He took charge of it with the baptism He received from John and even received the judgment, and so removed sin completely, so what sin could there possibly be? They say that they have received the remission of original sin, but the sins committed every day still remain. Have those sins not passed on to Him as well? He said that thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. The word 'all' means the whole, everything, the whole world.

Why on earth do people mock Jesus so much? It was because He received baptism from John, because He took charge of our sins, that He was able to die on the Cross. Would it be enough for Him to die on the Cross alone, without taking charge of our sins and without taking them away? I died for you, so just believe—would that do?

Let us take, for example, a parent and a child. A son has run up a great deal of debt. He had put his name in the shop's ledger and taken a great deal on credit, but in ordinary times he had paid it back well. Then, with the economy bad, his company went completely bankrupt, and now he has no ability to pay. The debt is so great that he has no ability to pay. The son, not wanting to worry his father, cannot even bring himself to speak and worries alone, but the shopkeeper makes a fuss demanding that he pay the money, and it is no small sum.

He cannot pay, but somehow his father hears of it. The father gets the money and goes to pay the debt, and when he asks whether there is a credit ledger for his son, the shopkeeper says there is, and that as a matter of fact, because the debt has not been paid, he is about to file a criminal suit. The father says, I

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am his father; I will pay the debt; how much is it? and pays the price, whether by check or in cash. The point is that after that it counts as paid only when it is struck off the credit ledger; would it be settled just because the father says, I will pay it for you?

It was given and received. The father paid the debt, and the shopkeeper received the money. Third, the shopkeeper draws a line right through the credit ledger before the father's eyes. And he tears it out and disposes of it or erases it, and writes out a receipt. He writes the father's name and the shopkeeper's name, stamps it with his seal, and the father receives it. So he goes to his son and says, "Son, I have paid off all your debt, so now eat and get your strength back; why are you so haggard? Now eat, and live in peace; from now on, stop being fond of credit, save your money, and live well." The son is grateful first of all at the word that his debt has been paid.

But he cannot be grateful on hearing those words alone. There must be a document. The father showed him the receipt. He showed it to him, saying, I have settled it like this. This word of the Bible is precisely that receipt. His receiving baptism from John and dying hanging on the cross is the receipt.

This fact is the receipt: In order to save you, I went to the Jordan River at the age of thirty and received baptism from John the Baptist, and in this way I fulfilled all righteousness; I took charge of all sins; and then I died hanging on the cross. He has laid that receipt open before you and me, before all mankind.

But if one sees the receipt and still says one cannot believe, that is mockery. That is taking the Devil's side. On which side will you stand? Will you stand on God's side, or will you stand on the Devil's side? Those who mock are on the Devil's side. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will repent and turn.

Repentance, too, does not mean offering prayers of repentance. Repentance means to turn and be corrected. Suppose

I am going down a wrong road, and someone tells me so. He says, Where are you trying to go, going down this road? The place you want to go is not in the direction you are heading. He says, To get to the place you want to go, you must change direction and go that way; you must turn at such-and-such a place to get there. Hearing that and turning there is repentance. It is changing direction. If you change direction and go, you will get there.

Religion may say that sin disappears if you pray, but the truth is that there is salvation when one believes, including these three things: knowing clearly what the Lord did, feeling it, and acting on it.

I hope you will become those who are saved by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit

I am not speaking in order to instill this in you alone. I make known what I say to the whole world. I make it known to scholars as well. I say, If there is any problem at all with what I say, tell me; if what you say is right, I will give up what I am doing at any time.

I am a person who has met the Lord. I am a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells. Long ago, before I was born again, I would groan for a week to prepare a single sermon, but now it is enough to say, Last week I went up to here, and next week I will go from here to here. God is my Father and the Holy Spirit is in me, so I know what this word is saying. And I am not a person who has studied only a little theology. You may make light of me, but while people study three years or seven years and become pastors and doctors, I am a person who has done far more than that. If others have passed an examination, I am a person who majored in that field.

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I tend to say frankly that what is not so is not so and what is right is right. That is because if I have done something wrong, I can just say I was wrong and turn back. This is my story. This is what I am saying to you and to all the people of the whole world. I want to say that one is saved when one believes on the basis of knowing the truth.

Jesus speaks. Before Pilate He says, Everyone who is of the truth hears My voice. He said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. What is the truth? Jesus is the truth. What Jesus did is the truth. The work by which He took charge of the sins of you and me is the truth. So all the people of the whole world must know this truth.

That He died hanging on the cross means that from now on it is eternal life for those who believe and hell for those who do not believe. We must keep our wits about us. Then when will the Lord come? You and I do not know. No one knows. We do not know whether He will come in 5,000 years or in 5 billion years. But there is something we do know. It was said that though the people of the world do not know, it is made known to the children of light.

As I see it, in the world diseases are so rampant, and new diseases will appear. Earthquakes will occur, and natural disasters like tornadoes will sweep through. Science will advance and challenge God, and evil spirits will enter people's hearts and they will become like people out of their minds. Such things keep happening. Good things are at an end. I feel that it is becoming a world well suited for the Antichrist to appear.

So I am not talking about when the Lord will come; whenever He comes, I am saying, be saved by believing in that work by which Jesus said, It is finished, and died, putting the final period to the salvation of mankind and completing salvation. Those who doubt or do not believe at this point go to

hell. There is no salvation for those who believe only in the religion of the cross. We must know this.

He says, My receiving baptism from John was to take charge of your sins. He says, I took charge of all the sins of your whole lives, I took charge of all the sins of your descendants, and I took charge of all the sins of your ancestors. That is why I die hanging on the cross; it is finished; I have accomplished your salvation—this is what the Lord is saying.

Now there is nothing left for us but to believe. It is to know, feel, and believe. It does not matter when the Lord comes. It is enough to live for our Lord, and to live by the blessings the Lord gives, and then go. How do we know the future? How do I know whether I will die tomorrow, or today, or 150 years from now?

Dear fellow believers, I hope you will become those who believe. I hope you will become those who are saved by believing. If you believe, you receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit does not come upon you as something hot. He comes very quietly, like a dove, and when He works in power He works mightily within, like a ball of fire, and makes us work in power through the word. The Holy Spirit is not a fire that comes down hot.

That such things happened in the early church was because God worked in that way. Because without signs and wonders the languages could not be understood, He revealed Himself through signs and wonders, but in this present age He does it through the word. That is why news comes in immediately even from overseas. Even a man who had pastored in a certain denomination for decades read volumes 1 and 2 of the English edition of our books, received salvation, and separated from the church he had been attending. These days such testimonies are coming in.

I know that you are believing rightly. But I hope that those all over the world who believe only in the religion of the cross will know and believe this truth. I have finished the word. ✉

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Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Faith with a firm core

< Luke 23:44-49 >

"Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, "into Your hands I commit My spirit."' Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous Man!' And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things."

It was about the sixth hour, and the sun was darkened, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. When Jesus Christ died nailed to the cross, He said to one thief, You will be with Me in Paradise, and for three hours there was darkness over all the earth. God the Father could not but turn His face away from that Jesus, who had borne the sin of the world. The Father could not but judge even His own Son, who hung high on the cross.

That is because He had transferred all the sins of the sinners of the whole world to that Son. For three hours the sun was darkened and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. The Bible records that when Jesus hung on the cross,

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darkness came over all the earth and the veil of the temple was torn in two in the middle.

When Jesus Christ, the Son of God, died nailed to the cross, the veil inside the temple was torn. The wall that had blocked the way between sinners and God with the sins of human beings collapsed. Jesus came to this earth and took charge of all the sins of sinners in the most fitting way by receiving baptism from John, and by hanging on the cross and shedding His blood He received in their place all the judgment for the sins of sinners. That the veil of the temple was torn means that our Lord removed all the sins of all the sinners of this world.

Now all sinners believe in the Savior Jesus as their own Savior and come boldly before God the Father. Who prepared that way? It was Jesus who came into this world and prepared that way. He prepared the way of receiving the remission of sin and being saved. Jesus came to this earth, took charge of the sins of sinners with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received all the judgment for the sins of sinners, and so delivered sinners from all the sins of this world. Therefore all sinners must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If one believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, one receives the remission of sin and is saved.

Those who believe in Jesus must have a firm core of faith

When the Lord, the Savior, bore all the sins of all the sinners of the world and died on the Cross, He opened wide the door of the kingdom of heaven. He saved all sinners on the Cross. The Lord made it so that any righteous person who believes in his

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heart that the door of the kingdom of heaven has been opened wide can enter the kingdom of heaven.

Those who believe in Jesus must have a firm core of faith. Here the core refers to a person's faith. God holds fast the righteous who have faith. If a sinner has the faith that believes that before the Lord died on the Cross He took charge of all our sins at the Jordan River through John the Baptist, that sinner has been saved from all his sins once and for all.

By shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, Jesus, the Savior of sinners, made it possible for sinners to enter the kingdom of heaven by believing in His baptism and blood. Whoever believes in his heart in Jesus' baptism and blood, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, enters the kingdom of heaven. Those who enter through the middle of the torn veil are warriors of the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood. Those who have received the remission of sin by believing in Jesus' baptism and blood enter the kingdom of heaven through the door of life the Lord has opened, that is, the door of salvation.

Jesus, who had done nothing wrong, died nailed to the fearful frame of the cross in order to become the sacrificial offering for all sins in the place of sinners, so as to remit the sins of all sinners and save them. Now, if any sinner believes in his heart in Jesus as his own Savior, whoever he is, he enters the kingdom of heaven together with the Lord.

The Lord came to this earth, took charge of all the sins of the world committed by sinners with the baptism He received from John, and received their judgment completely with the blood of the Cross. He shed His holy blood and with that blood paid the wages of the sins of all sinners, and by taking charge of all the sins of sinners with the baptism He received from John, He removed the sins of sinners. And just as all sinners received the

remission of sin when the blood was put on the horns of the altar of burnt offering inside the temple, so, as Jesus Christ, who came to this earth, died on the Cross and shed His blood, every soul that blood touched received the remission of sin. All sinners were remitted of all their sins.

Jesus came in human flesh to save the many sinners of this world who could not but go to hell; He received baptism from John at the Jordan River in order to take charge of the sins of all sinners; and He died on the Cross in order to pay the price of life for all the sinners of the world, and so saved sinners from all sins. Now what sinners must believe is the fact that when Jesus died hanging on the cross as the wages of sinners' sins, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. Now all sinners enter Paradise in the kingdom of heaven by believing in the baptism and blood of Jesus Christ.

What is left for a sinner to do for the Lord in order to receive the remission of sin?

What is there for a sinner to do for Jesus? There is nothing but to believe in the Lord's salvation in his heart. There is nothing but that one thing: to believe in his heart that Christ saved sinners from all sins once and for all by receiving baptism from John and shedding His blood on the Cross. Sinners must know this, and the only thing a sinner has to do is to believe in his heart.

There is no need for a sinner to make any effort in order to be saved, to be nailed to a cross or suffer the pain of a cross, to strive not to commit sin and try to make restitution, or to make any effort in order to enter the kingdom of heaven. The only thing a sinner has to do to be born again is to believe in his heart

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in the truth of salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished, and only that faith gives one the qualification to enter the way to the kingdom of heaven. Only that one thing, entering Paradise by faith like the one thief, has been given to us sinners.

The Lord saved sinners with the baptism He received from John and His blood, and He left sinners only the one thing of believing that fact. So that sinners might believe in the Lord, obtain salvation in their hearts, and enter Paradise, He left them only one thing: to believe. Since Jesus took charge of all the work of removing all the sins of the world, including the lifelong sins of each individual, God opened the way to the kingdom of heaven so that anyone, whether one who has committed great sins or one who has committed small sins, receives the remission of sin if only he believes in Jesus. For sinners only one thing remains—only believe—and this alone is what a sinner has to do before Jesus.

The sinner's part is only this: to enter the kingdom of heaven by believing in his heart in the Savior Jesus, who, before dying hanging on the cross, took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River and was judged on the Cross in the place of sinners.

Those who believe in the salvation by which Jesus remitted sin with the baptism He received from John and His blood have already entered Paradise by faith, and those who do not believe have already entered hell. If we believe that the salvation our Lord accomplished with the baptism He received from John and the blood He shed is complete salvation, we have gone to Paradise.

The veil of the temple was torn. From the time of the Old Testament until Jesus came, that veil still hung there. This veil in Jesus' day was not a thin cloth but something like a carpet woven by the people of Palestine. It was woven so sturdily, with

such tough thread, that it was a veil strong enough to be torn only barely by the force of four horses tied on one side and four horses on the other, whipped and made to run at the same time. It was by no means a cloth that could be torn by accident.

Yet at that moment when Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn. Our Lord tore the veil that had stood between sinners and God the Father. God, seeing that His own Son had been born on this earth, had received baptism from John, and had died nailed to the cross, shedding His blood, said, Now there is no more sin in this world; what stood between Me and you has been done away with like this, and He Himself tore the cloth of the veil inside the sanctuary wide open from top to bottom. Now He has allowed any sinner who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood, since he has received the remission of sin, to come before God, that is, into the kingdom of heaven. Therefore God Himself tore that veil.

God has allowed any sinner who believes in the salvation of the remission of sin that His Son accomplished to enter Paradise. He has opened the door of the kingdom of heaven to any sinner who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood. He says, Since My Son removed all the sins of sinners, sinners need only believe in their hearts in the salvation accomplished by My Son, the Savior Jesus. Then, He says, they enter Paradise by faith, like that thief on the one side.

Dear beloved saints, God the Father unilaterally tore down every wall of sin that had stood between God and sinners. God tore away the wall of sin, that is, the veil, that had blocked the way between sinners and God. Jesus removed all the sins of sinners so that they became as white as snow.

He said, Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red like crimson, they shall be as wool. Although all sinners committed so many sins, challenged

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God, and committed sin deceived by the Devil, on the Lord's side, on God's side, He resolved all the sins of sinners in order to let sinners enter the kingdom of heaven and make them the children of God. The Lord removed all the sins of the world committed by sinners.

Dear fellow believers who are sinners, the word that the veil of the temple was torn means that there is no sin in this world. Jesus accomplished all the work of removing sin. It means that if a sinner only believes in Jesus' salvation in his heart—whatever sins he has committed, if he believes in Jesus' salvation—he enters Paradise.

Is there in the sinner's heart the faith that believes in the salvation the Lord accomplished? The Lord God saved sinners from all sins, but what matters is whether the sinner believes in his heart in the salvation of the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished. God examines whether there is faith in the sinner's heart. If a sinner believes in Jesus' salvation, it is heaven; if he does not believe, it is hell. The Lord, the Savior, speaks. He says, I took charge of all the sins of you sinners through the water baptism and removed all the sins of sinners. Whether a sinner believes or does not believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished decides heaven or hell for that sinner.

As in the confession of a gospel song, when asked the reason there is joy in his heart, the sinner answers that his sins are gone. Even when that Devil sneers and mocks, he answers that Jesus has removed all his sins. To believe that Jesus has removed all the sins of sinners, that sin has all been removed by Jesus, is true faith toward Jesus, and to believe that God loved sinners and removed all the sins of sinners is the faith that overcomes the Devil. This is the faith by which a sinner is saved from the judgment of sin, and the faith that escapes all of God's judgment and all the Devil's condemnation.

God removed the sins of all people who were sinners about 2,000 years ago. Whether or not one believes this gospel, that Jesus removed all the sins of sinners, decides heaven or hell. If one truly believes in the salvation Jesus accomplished by removing sin, one is saved; if one does not believe, one goes to hell.

In the heart of one who has become righteous there is the faith that believes in the salvation from sin that the Lord accomplished. Those who have become righteous believe the truth of salvation: that the Lord, the Savior, came to this earth Himself in order to bring into the kingdom of heaven those who believe in the salvation He accomplished, took charge of all the sins of sinners by receiving baptism from John, and received all the judgment of sin on the Cross. Those who have become righteous have the faith that believes in the Lord. Even if the faith that brings salvation is a very small faith, the faith that believes that the Lord saved sinners is true faith in the Lord.

It is the faith that believes that the Lord saved us from sin, that the Lord removed the sins of sinners. The faith that believes that it was not a human being but the Lord who saved sinners from all sins is the faith that brings salvation. That faith, that the Lord saved sinners from all sins, lets sinners enter Paradise. When a sinner has lived in this world and comes to his deathbed, what does he believe to go to the kingdom of heaven? The righteous who believe that the Lord took charge of all the sins of the world that the sinner committed, so that there is now no sin, and that the Lord has fully saved them, go to the kingdom of heaven. Because the Lord removed all the sins of sinners and became the Savior of sinners, they enter by the Lord's merit, and sinners enter by believing in that merit.

Salvation from sin is not imperfect, because it was not accomplished through the sinner himself. The salvation of the

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remission of sin is perfect because the Lord accomplished it. The object of faith must always be the Lord God. If one believes in the Lord and believes in what the Lord Jesus did, that person's faith becomes perfect.

The salvation a sinner makes up with his own thoughts is not perfect

But if a sinner reckons on his own that Jesus' salvation must be like this or like that, and makes up the remission of sin with his own thoughts, makes up a salvation, makes up a doctrine, and believes it, he is always uneasy. Salvation refers to that salvation by which God saved sinners. The faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is true faith.

Many sinners of this world, in their eagerness to be saved from sin, use more wisdom than God and make up a salvation on their own. Even before they know that salvation by which Jesus saved sinners from all the sins of the world, they are already moved on their own and, with a sinner's own thinking, divide sin into three: original sin, personal sins, and future sins. They suppose that Jesus took away original sin, and that as for personal sins and future sins, if they confess that they did wrong and offer prayers of repentance, they will be saved from sin each time. Unable to think of and not believing that God saved people from sin once and for all, sinners believe wrongly, fail to be saved from sin, and go to hell.

God does not look at a sinner's outward appearance but examines the center of his heart. Because He examines the center of the heart, He says that if one believes without fully knowing the salvation of the truth, that is not salvation.

Concerning the salvation the Lord accomplished by removing all the sins of sinners, God says that they have received the remission of sin, that they have no sin, and that He saved sinners from sin through the Lord's deed. When the Lord asks, I have saved you, a sinner, from all your sins; do you believe in My salvation? if one answers, "Yes, Lord, I believe," and believes in the heart in the salvation the Lord accomplished, God makes that person who believes in the remission of sin accomplished through His Son a child of God. If one believes in that salvation by which Jesus saved sinners from all sins, He gives salvation to that sinner. He gives it when one truly believes in the heart and confesses with the mouth, 'I believe.'

I believe that the Lord took charge of all my sins by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, died on the Cross in my place, and saved me perfectly. I am no longer a sinner. Because the Lord saved me from sin, I no longer have sin. When one has such faith before God, God acknowledges that faith which believes in the remission of sin, makes the righteous person who has been saved from sin His people and child, and lets the one who has become righteous enter Paradise.

But there are sinners who do not properly hear that God became the Savior of all sinners, that is, the work by which the Lord came to this earth and saved sinners, and who just believe unconditionally, saying that Jesus is the greatest, that Jesus is the Almighty, that He is God, and who believe unconditionally that Jesus is the Savior of sinners. A sinner who says he believes without even knowing how Jesus became the Savior of sinners is not acknowledged before God as one who believes in salvation.

The Lord does not acknowledge such faith. The reason sinners are always disappointed even while believing in Jesus is that their faith collapses like a house built on the sand. On what

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was that faith based, that it is so? It is because they believed with their own thoughts and delusions.

In this world two kinds of sinners live, and there are two kinds of faith. One kind is the person who confirms to the end and believes with certainty that God has removed all the sins of sinners. The other kind is the person who believes unconditionally because he likes Jesus. He says he believes unconditionally without even knowing. Such faith is not perfect faith. Because he believed with his own thoughts, that faith ends up collapsing.

In the Gospel of Matthew He says that the one who built his house on the sand collapses when the floods come and the winds blow, but the one who built his house on the rock does not collapse. If a sinner believes unconditionally with his own thoughts, saying, Jesus' salvation must be like this; it must be right that personal sins are remitted every day; Jesus must have died on the Cross for sinners and saved them, that sinner is not saved, because he believed with his own thoughts. Even though he believes, he is not saved, and even though he believes, he cannot go to Paradise. When we held an evangelistic meeting, beside the theme, *"That your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*, we wrote, "Are you still a sinner even though you believe?" If a person believes in Jesus by guessing according to his own thoughts, whoever he is, he is still a sinner even though he believes in Jesus. Sinners, too, say that they believe in Jesus.

But the sinner who has completely thrown away his own thoughts, heard all about how Jesus became his Savior, believed, and accepted the remission of all sins once and for all is one who has built his house on the rock. Because he built his house on the rock, however the storms rage and the floods come, that house of faith does not collapse. That is because the rock supports and protects that house.

When a sinner believes in the Lord, does he believe in the Savior with his own thoughts, or does he believe according to the Lord's word? Jesus Christ, the word of God, is the cornerstone. He is the stone indispensable for building a house, the stone that connects one thing to another. Who is the stone that connects sinners and God? It is Jesus Christ. In the old days people built a house by placing large stones at the four corners, setting up pillars on them, and putting boards on both sides. What sets up the four corners, connects them to one another, and keeps them from shaking is precisely this cornerstone. That is why Jesus was compared to the cornerstone. Through faith in this cornerstone He has made us the children of God, and has let sinners become fully righteous. What is the cornerstone? It is Jesus.

In this world there are many sinners who believe in Jesus according to their own thoughts

A sinner who believes according to his own thoughts is a sinner even if he believes for ten years, a sinner even if he believes for twenty years, and a sinner even if he believes for thirty years or fifty years. The righteous meet many sinners in real life who believe in Jesus. These people believe in Jesus very sincerely in their own way. They have quiet times and pray, read the word, listen to the word of God and study it, and believe the word of God in their own way.

But there are people who always remain sinners even though they believe in Jesus, because they believe the word of God according to their own thoughts. Why are they sinners even though they believe? Why is it hard to believe in Jesus? Why are they sinners even though they believe every day? It is because

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they believe in Jesus while remaining in the state of sinners.

Another reason is that they believe with their own thoughts, without hearing from the born-again righteous the word of the truth that causes a person to be born again. If one believes with one's own thoughts, one is always a sinner. To truly believe in Jesus and be born again, one must meet a servant of God who rightly preaches the word of God, hear the word of the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and believe it; only then does one receive the remission of sin and become born again. If one meets a servant of God who testifies according to the word, hears the word, believes in the heart, and confesses with the mouth, one receives the salvation of the remission of sin. And so one is born again, becomes righteous, and goes to the kingdom of heaven. Those who have become righteous have been saved from sin, and it is truly good. Those who have not yet received the remission of sin must by all means receive the remission of sin.

When Jesus died on the Cross on the hill of Calvary, the veil of the temple was torn. Yet it is a great problem that there are still many sinners who have sin in their hearts while believing in Jesus. Those who are sinners even though they believe in Jesus are countless, far too many. Among 100,000 people who believe in Jesus, not even one has been born again through the word. If 100,000 people say they believe in Jesus, 99,999 of them are people who believe with their own thoughts. They are people who believe in Jesus according to their own thoughts, this way or that, saying, Jesus is almighty; Jesus is the One who saved me; He died on the Cross for me. Among them only one person is one who was saved by hearing the word of God and believing according to the word, not according to his own thoughts, and only that person is one who built his house on the rock.

If the population of this world is 5.5 billion, then even at the

rate of one in 100,000, those who have received the remission of sin come to only 55,000. But I can say before God that there are not even that many on this earth. Even if there are one billion people who believe in Jesus, at the rate of one in 100,000 that is barely ten thousand, and even those are hard to find. The remaining 999,990,000 all believe in vain. They believe as if beating the air. They clamor, "I believe, I believe," as if they would pull up pine trees by the roots, and offer fasting prayers until blood rises in their throats, and go out as missionaries, but it is all in vain. The apostle Paul spoke of my gospel which I preached. Jesus is the gospel, but the apostle Paul told people to believe in that gospel which he preached.

Jesus has completed all the work of removing all the sins of this world

Countless sinners believe in Jesus and yet believe in vain. Everything believed with one's own thoughts fails entirely, is all swept away, all goes to hell, and is all judged. Although Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn, and He completed the work of removing all the sins of the world, because they believed with the thoughts of their own flesh they still have sin and are still under the fear of judgment.

So even until they die they do not have the assurance of salvation and are afraid. Even while living the life of faith every day and attending church, they are afraid every day. When they do something a little well, it seems all right, but if they do something even a little wrong, fear immediately piles up in their hearts and they immediately become sinners. They live every day in fear.

Before going to the morning worship service, they change

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their clothes very neatly, bathe, and go to church properly dressed. Until that hour it is still all right. But after they come back and do something a bit outlandish just once, all that they did in the morning comes to nothing. So they are righteous one moment and sinners the next, righteous again and then sinners again. Because they feel they are sinners who can do nothing about themselves, they say that a sinner cannot become righteous, asking how a sinner could possibly become righteous.

But when Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn. That the veil of the temple was torn means that Jesus removed all the sin of this world. He made it so that whoever only believes becomes righteous, so that even a sinner, if he only believes, becomes righteous and enters the kingdom of God, and becomes a child of God and can enter God's Paradise as a righteous person without sin.

That the veil of the temple was torn means that when one believes exactly in Jesus' salvation, there is nothing left for a sinner to do in order to receive the remission of sin. It is said, *"Where there is remission of these, there is no longer an offering for sin" (Hebrews 10:18)*. Since the Lord removed all the sins of sinners, there is nothing for a sinner to do in order to receive the remission of sin again. There is no need, as in the Old Testament, to take a lamb and say, I have sinned again, and lay hands on its head and pass sins on to it every day.

Where there is remission of these—that is, since Jesus removed all our sins—there is no longer any need to ask for the forgiveness of sins every day for the sins we commit every day, saying, "Lord, please forgive me and wash me." Jesus came into this world and, through His life of thirty-three years, completed once and for all, with the baptism He received from John and the Cross, the work of removing all the sins of this whole universe and world without leaving even a speck. What Jesus did when

He came to this earth for thirty-three years is precisely the remission of the sins of sinners. He washed away and removed all the sins of mankind.

Jesus died on the Cross and the veil of the temple was torn. Then is there anything for a sinner to do now? There is nothing for a sinner to do. Since Jesus removed all the sins of those who believe once and for all through the thirty-three years of His life on this earth, all sinners are saved and go to Paradise if they believe in Jesus. There is no need to cling to Him, saying, "Please forgive my sins; I have sinned again today; small sins are all remitted but great sins are not, so please forgive my great sins too." Jesus removed all sins, without distinguishing between great sins and small sins.

Some sinners say that by believing in Jesus they have received the remission of all their small sins but not of their great sins, and there are those who say that they have received the remission of all their other sins but are sinners because they have not received the remission of one sin alone. Such sinners are sinners who believe according to their own thoughts, and sinners who perish.

To him who is justified by God without working, and who believes on Him who justifies the ungodly, God accounts his faith for righteousness. Our God removed all the sins of sinners so that there would be nothing left for sinners to do. He removed all the sins of sinners so that there would be nothing at all to do in order to receive the remission of sin—no repentance of any kind, no effort of any kind, no good deeds. When Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn. God opened the door of the kingdom of heaven through His Son and made it so that whoever only believes in that Son enters the kingdom of heaven, so what is there for a sinner to do? Did a sinner receive the remission of sin by working? Not at all. Does one go to the

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kingdom of heaven only if one diligently does mission work after believing in Jesus? Not at all.

The righteous preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in obedience to the word of God because they have been born again

When it is said that a sinner has received the remission of sin by believing in Jesus, it does not mean that he has received the remission of sin, is receiving it, and will receive it in the future. A sinner has received the remission of sin once and for all through believing in the thirty-three years of Jesus' life. Is that not so? Sinners who believe with their own thoughts, every one of them, believe that they have received the remission of sin, are receiving it now, and will receive it in the future. There is a fallacy in this. If you turn that statement around, it becomes exactly right. Sinners who believe with their own thoughts all believe backwards.

So God says, My thoughts are not your thoughts. It is reasonable only if one says, I have not yet received the remission of sin because I have not yet heard the gospel, but the moment I hear the gospel in the future, I will receive the remission of sin completely.

But sinners who have not received the remission of sin, that is, sinners who believe with their own thoughts, say that they have been saved, are being saved, and will continue to be saved in the future. That is the thinking of the flesh, not the faith that believes the word of God. How many people on this earth believe like that? If one billion people say they believe in Jesus, then even by a generous estimate 900 million all believe with their own thoughts, and even among the remaining 100 million,

more than 90 percent are sinners who believe with their own thoughts.

He said that for a rich man to enter the kingdom of God is like a camel going through the eye of a needle. Is it possible for a camel to go through the eye of a needle? It is impossible. The needle Jesus spoke of is not some gigantic needle but a very fine needle for sewing clothes, a needle whose eye our eyes can barely see. It is harder for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven than for a camel to go through the eye of such a needle.

Then does that mean the rich cannot go to the kingdom of heaven? That is not what it means; rather, a sinner who has many thoughts of his own cannot enter. It is impossible, in a fleshly sense, for a sinner who believes with his own thoughts to enter the kingdom of heaven. But God can do it. Can God do it, or can He not? He can.

Is it possible or impossible for a sinner to enter Paradise leaving out Jesus? It is impossible. However much he wants to go, he cannot. The spirit indeed is willing, but the flesh is weak. Only a sinner who does not commit sin, that is, a sinner who can keep the Law one hundred percent, enters Paradise. But a sinner who breaks and fails to keep the Law even 0.001 percent cannot enter. Therefore, for a sinner it is utterly impossible.

Then through whom is it possible? Since our Jesus removed the sins of sinners perfectly, a sinner believes in his heart that Jesus removed his sins, and enters Paradise by the way the Lord has opened.

The righteous enter the kingdom of heaven through Jesus Christ, that is, by faith. Although the veil of the temple was torn and the Lord perfectly accomplished the work of removing all the sins of sinners, if a sinner does not believe this but doubts it or blasphemes it, or misunderstands what Jesus did and regards Jesus only as a fearsome being, that sinner cannot enter the

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kingdom of heaven. If one believes that Jesus could not remove all sins, that He removed only original sin, removes personal sins every day, and will remove future sins in the future, and that Jesus is One who removes sin every day, that sinner is a sinner who believes according to his own thoughts, and he cannot enter the kingdom of heaven.

Jesus does not remove sin every day. During His thirty-three years He removed all the sins of this world. Dear fellow believers, do you believe that fact? Therefore, if a sinner wants to believe in Jesus and receive the remission of sin, he need only look carefully at what Jesus did during the thirty-three years He was on this earth and believe it just as it is. Among the words Jesus spoke there is not a single word unrelated to this salvation. The whole Bible is related to this salvation. Living spiritually after being saved, living by faith, being victorious by faith and driving away the Devil—all of this is recorded in the Bible.

Sinners believe in Jesus with their own thoughts

When Jesus died, the veil of the temple was torn. Some sinners say, concerning Jesus' receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, that He received baptism because He was humble, that He bowed His head before a sinner and received baptism in order to set an example, that is, an example of humility. Such sinners are sinners who blaspheme Jesus. The Bible says that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at that time in order to take charge of the sin of the whole world, so if by any chance you think, No, He received it out of humility, you are believing in Jesus from a wrong point of view. That is precisely the sin that leads to hell, and the sin about which God warns us sinners.

The word sin means to miss the mark. In the Bible, sin refers to believing in God and following God with one's own thoughts. When an arrow is shot at a target and at first flies straight but then veers off, flies wherever it will, and hits some absurd place unrelated to its owner's intention, that state is what He calls missing the mark.

Jesus came to this earth and, by receiving baptism in order to save sinners, was passed all the sins of mankind through John the Baptist. Yet there are sinners who, while believing in Jesus, understand that Jesus received baptism at that time out of humility, and who think so and believe it firmly. If one believes like that, it is committing sin against God, and because he believed with his own thoughts as he pleased, although Jesus removed even that sinner's sins, he goes to hell as the wages of his own sin because he thought of and believed in Jesus as he pleased. He goes to hell because that is not believing in Jesus but believing in his own thoughts, and even when he goes to hell he has nothing to say.

Also, when Jesus came to this earth and healed the paralytic, He said, *"Son, your sins are forgiven you" (Mark 2:5)*. And He remitted the paralytic's sins, saying that He would have them know that the Son of Man has power on earth to remit sins. Yet sinners, concerning that fact, only say that the power of Jesus who healed the paralysis is amazing.

Jesus did not only heal paralysis. He healed diseases of the flesh, too, but through this event of healing the paralytic He is telling sinners that the Lord healed and remitted all the sins of sinners whose hearts are paralyzed like the paralytic, that is, that the Lord became the Savior of sinners.

But there are sinners who believe, regarding the healing of the paralytic only as a work meant to show Jesus' power, that is, the power of God. That is believing according to their own thoughts.

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Jesus came to this earth to heal from all sins those sinners who, being paralyzed in heart, want to do good but cannot do good, and truly want to live a good life but cannot. He is telling sinners that during His life of thirty-three years He took charge of all the sins of sinners in His own body with the baptism He received from John, was judged by dying on the Cross, and so saved them perfectly and healed all sinners perfectly.

Sinners believe in Jesus with their own thoughts. They treat Him only as Jesus who has much power, Jesus the Creator, Jesus the Son of God, Jesus who saves anyone who only believes—only as such a Jesus. But through everything Jesus did when He came to this earth to remove the sins of sinners, that is, through His every single move, He is telling sinners that He is the Savior of sinners and the God of salvation. His opening the eyes of the blind, too, was not meant only to display His power, but to reveal that He removed the sin in the sinner's heart so that he could see the kingdom of heaven, and that He has removed that sin which darkened the eyes of the sinner's heart. That is, the Lord is telling us that He opened the eyes of the blind in order to reveal the fact that the Lord became the Savior of sinners.

Sinners know Jesus only as a moralist, and think that if they believe in Jesus with their own thoughts they will become good people. There are sinners who believe in Jesus in order to become great moralists, or to become rich and receive blessings. All such people are sinners who believe according to their own thoughts.

Such sinners cannot go to the kingdom of heaven, because they do not believe the word that says the veil of the temple was torn when Jesus died on the Cross, that is, the work by which God tore the veil of the temple. Sinners go to hell as the wages of their own sins. Believing is truly simple. Believing the fact that the Lord has accomplished is faith, and believing the word

of God as it is written is faith.

Because sinners believe with their own thoughts, they say that the meaning is not complete in the English Bible, so one must look at the Greek; that even that is insufficient, so one must look at the Hebrew; and that one must even look at the Aramaic. A sinner who believes with his own thoughts, even with four or five Bibles at hand, cannot believe in Jesus according to the word, that is, according to the word of God. Why is that? Because he has many thoughts of his own and guesses that it must be like this. Then, if the Bible is written differently from his own thoughts, he regards the Bible as wrongly written and looks up the original text again. But even when he looks at the original text he does not understand. He need only know rightly the true meaning recorded in the word, but a sinner without the word of the truth does not understand even when he looks at the original text. That is why he is called blind. If you bring writing to a blind man, will he understand it?

A sinner who has sin in his heart is blind. Even if writing is brought to him, he does not understand. Even if the reason Jesus received baptism from John is explained to him with the word dikaiosyne in the original text as very fitting, very appropriate, he does not understand. He said that thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness, but the sinner racks his brains, wondering what it means to say it is appropriate, that it is fitting. What is meant here is that if Jesus is to become the Savior of sinners, this method of taking charge of all sin with baptism in this way is the most appropriate and the most fitting method. But this must be understood by threading it together as one, and since he cannot thread it together, he says, This is strange, I do not understand, and closes the book. If he understands even less, he looks at commentaries. But, I am sorry to say, that story is not found even in the commentaries.

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However knowledgeable a sinner may be, without the word of the truth that makes one righteous he does not know this and cannot speak of it. However clear the meaning of the original text may be, without faith one cannot speak of that meaning. Dear fellow believers, even if you are holding a lump of gold in your hand, if you do not have the firm faith that it is a lump of gold, can you say it is a lump of gold? Only when there is faith can one say that this is a lump of gold.

That the veil was torn means that He removed all the sins of all sinners, and that any sinner, if he only believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood, enters Paradise. Now everyone knows, in words at least, that there is nothing at all for any sinner to strive for in order to receive the remission of sin. There is no sinner who does not know it. Even children all know it. As in the song, The kingdom of God, the kingdom the rich cannot enter; the kingdom of God, the kingdom you enter by believing in Jesus, everyone is good at saying it and everyone knows it.

But there must be true faith. The core of our faith must be firm. Lord, I believe. I believe that the Lord became the Savior of sinners. I believe that when the Lord received baptism from John at the Jordan River, He took charge of all my sins. I believe that the Lord received baptism from John for sinners and was judged on the Cross. Though my deeds are lacking, the Lord has saved me. I believe in the Lord. When one has a heart that believes like this, one is saved. Sinners enter Paradise by believing in Jesus.

Jesus, who came clothed in human flesh, is the very Savior who saved sinners from sin

It says, *"The whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things" (Luke 23:48–49)*. Countless sinners knew the fact that Jesus had no sin, the fact that He died on the Cross even though He had no sin. They also knew that Jesus was the Messiah. But when Jesus' physical death came before their eyes, the sinners became utterly discouraged. When Jesus' body died, they beat their breasts and said that a precious man had died, that it was so pitiful, such a loss. Some said it was a pity because they had meant to make Him their son-in-law; some said that a great moralist had died; and some lamented that one of the four great sages had died. The sinners thought it was now all over.

But the sinners did not know that it was the beginning of the completion of our God's salvation. Jesus' death was the very starting point at which God makes sinners righteous, lets the righteous enter Paradise, and, making not this earth but the new heaven and the new earth, begins the kingdom of God anew. The sinners did not know that Jesus' death was the first start of His opening the door of the kingdom of heaven and running that kingdom.

The Devil did not know it either. But after Jesus died, when Satan the Devil rushed in to kill people, there was no sin in people's hearts. There truly was no sin. Satan the Devil knows things uncannily. The Devil knows the fact that all the people of the world have no sin. Since they have no sin, he can neither kill them nor torment them. So Satan the Devil began to lie. He began to lie, saying that it is not that there is no sin but that there

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is; that the Son of God did not come to this earth and remove all sin, but removed only a little and could not remove it all.

Beating their breasts, the sinners returned. But for those who have become righteous, how good and how fortunate it is that Jesus Christ died on the Cross! Truly the work of salvation was accomplished. However much it must have hurt when the Lord died on the Cross, we are truly thankful. If the Lord, thinking of that pain before dying on the Cross, had not been willing to be nailed and had run away, it would have been a disaster. Lord, we truly thank You.

Some people say this: Jesus was afraid before dying on the Cross, and if He were God, why would He have been afraid? So there are those who doubt that Jesus is God. Concerning His praying in the Garden of Gethsemane, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me,"* they say, Was that not because He was afraid? And so, looking at that word, they say, Seeing that He was afraid, He is not God; how could God be afraid? Jesus is a human being, not God, and they deny Jesus' divinity. In the end, they not only cannot believe the fact that Jesus saved sinners, but fundamentally cannot believe in Jesus' divinity.

Jesus is God. He is the One who made human beings and all things in the universe. Who is it that in the beginning said, Let there be, and made the heavens and the earth and all things? It is Jesus Christ. The God who said, Let there be light, was Jesus; the One who divided the waters of the firmament was also Jesus; and the God of the word who said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb that yields seed, and the fruit tree that yields fruit according to its kind, was our Savior Jesus. That very One who came clothed in human flesh was Jesus, the Savior of sinners.

Jesus saved sinners. Jesus died on the Cross because He had taken charge of the sins of sinners with the baptism He received

from John. Because that work was so terrible, before dying on the Cross Jesus prayed, *"O My Father, if it is possible, let this cup pass from Me."* He knew the Father's will to remove the sins of all the sinners of this world and make them His children, and He also knew that He was to make them His own brothers. He only prayed once more, for the last time, "Is there no other way? I obeyed as far as receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River and bearing sin, but now that I am about to die on the cross it is too terrible; is there no other way?" Because Jesus, too, came clothed in flesh like sinners, He knew the pain of the flesh. So it was too terrible for Him, and that is why He prayed like that.

But on the Cross Jesus gave up His own body according to the Father's will. In Pilate's court He made no defense at all. Though Pilate said that if He spoke to him he even had the power to release Him, Jesus said that no one could have such power unless God the Father gave it. Our Lord said nothing before Pilate, like a sheep before its shearers. Even when the Jews, the chief priests, and the Roman officials sneered at Him, He said nothing and did not defend Himself.

The Father's will was for Him to be passed all the sins of sinners onto His own body, to give up His own body on the cross, to die and be judged, and so to pay the price of blood. Because all mankind, who were sinners, receive the remission of sin through the price of Jesus' own death, our Lord silently gave Himself over to the frame of the cross like a sheep before its shearers. And the soldiers nailed Jesus to the cross.

Before dying on the Cross, seeing the faith of the thief on the one side, who said that this Man had done nothing wrong, He said, *"Today you will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)*, and took the righteous one who believed in Him to Paradise. And as Jesus died, He cried out with a loud voice, *"Father, 'into Your*

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hands I commit My spirit.'" (Luke 23:46).

Solely in order to remove the sins of mankind, Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sin of the world, and died nailed to the cross. By doing so, all sinners were saved. The Father raised His Son Jesus again three days after He died, and made all things bow the knee before Jesus Christ. Jesus became the Savior of all the sinners of the whole universe, and became the King of kings. By taking charge of all the sins of sinners, Jesus became the King of those who believe in Him, that is, the righteous.

The Devil saw this and groaned. The Devil thought that if he nailed the Son of God to the cross and killed Him he would reign as king, but rather, by nailing the Son of God to the cross and killing Him, all his power was broken. The Devil can torment people while they are sinners, but he cannot torment the righteous who have no sin. When God made Adam and Eve, the Devil enticed them, made them fall into sin and have sin, and made them sinners by making them challenge God, break the word of God, and not believe. But Jesus, the Son of God, came, took charge of all the sins of human beings, and by dying on the Cross removed the law of death, which is the wages of sin, and paid the wages of sin in full. Therefore from that time on, Satan the Devil could no longer do anything to sinners.

From that time on, the Devil changed his tactics. He works on people's emotions and fleshly thoughts, saying, Believe in Jesus; how grateful you should be that the Son of God died for you like this; think how much it must have hurt Him. He even appears in dreams in the form of Jesus with shackles on His ankles, bleeding profusely, saying, I shed My blood for you like this, so what will you do for Me? In this way the Devil is still working, even now, to keep people from believing the fact that Jesus removed all their sins once and for all during His thirty-

three years, so that they will not receive this salvation by which anyone who only believes can go to Paradise.

Dear beloved saints, I will sum up the word and close. Our Lord came to this earth, and during the thirty-three years of His life, He received baptism from John and bore the sin of this world on His own body, which had not a single sin, and by shedding the blood of His life and dying on the Cross He liberated sinners, that is, all mankind, from all sins. Jesus Christ made it so that whoever believes in Him is saved and enters Paradise. What the Lord did when He came to this earth is precisely the work of tearing the veil of the temple. In order to let anyone enter that temple where God dwells, God sacrificed Jesus' own body and let us receive salvation. This is the purpose of what God did for sinners.

Jesus is the Savior of sinners

Jesus was One who had not a single sin. He shed His blood and died on the Cross because He had taken charge of the sins of sinners with the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River. Jesus died on the Cross because He had taken charge of the sins of sinners at the Jordan River. If He had not taken charge of all the sins of sinners with the baptism He received from John, there would have been no need for Jesus to die on the Cross. Without the event at the Jordan River, Jesus would not have had to die on the Cross, and neither could the Roman soldiers have killed Jesus, nor could Satan the Devil have done anything to Him.

Jesus died on the Cross because He was passed all the sins of all mankind at the Jordan River by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. As the price of being passed those sins, Jesus

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was judged on the Cross in the place of sinners. Through His doing so, I who was a sinner and all sinners have been saved by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear beloved saints, when Jesus died on the Cross, the veil of the temple was torn in two in the middle. What people saw was not that a sinner tore it but that God tore it. God revealed to sinners His Son, who completed salvation so that anyone can believe in Jesus Christ and enter the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is the Savior of sinners. Jesus removed all the sins of all the sinners of this world without leaving a single one, and saved them all. He saved them from sin.

Since our Lord has saved sinners like this, if you believe with a firm core in your heart, you will not lose your salvation. If the core of your heart is weak and you do not believe firmly, Satan the Devil comes and shakes you again. The righteous are those who have been saved, but if the core of their hearts is not firm, the Devil comes again and shakes them, saying, Look at the state you are in; is not what you believe merely an intellectual salvation, a theoretical salvation? Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe firmly. I hope you will firmly believe that Jesus is the Savior of me and of all sinners, that is, of all mankind. ✉

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

We must know Jesus Christ properly, feel Him, and believe in Him with our will

< Luke 23:44-49 >

"Now it was about the sixth hour, and there was darkness over all the earth until the ninth hour. Then the sun was darkened, and the veil of the temple was torn in two. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, 'Father, "into Your hands I commit My spirit."' Having said this, He breathed His last. So when the centurion saw what had happened, he glorified God, saying, 'Certainly this was a righteous Man!' And the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and returned. But all His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things."

"The veil of the temple was torn in two"

Last time I told you that Jesus' death on the Cross is the completion of our salvation and also the beginning of judgment. Jesus gave His own body and opened the door of the kingdom of heaven.

Verse 45 says that the veil of the temple was torn in two in

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the middle. After Jesus was nailed to the cross and darkness came over all the earth for about three hours, the veil of the temple was torn in two in the middle. And when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit, and having said this, He breathed His last.

Where is the place called the Holy Place? Where there is a Tabernacle, a curtain hangs around its outer court, and inside there is a house. If you enter that house and open the first veil and go in, there is the Holy Place. It is called the Holy Place because it is the place where the holy God is present. If you open one more veil from the Holy Place and go in, there is the Most Holy Place. It is called the Most Holy Place because God spoke to the people of Israel from above the ark and was present there.

The word that the veil was torn is a truly astonishing word, and its spiritual meaning for us is great. The veil of the Holy Place was a thick cloth woven to close off the entrance. It was several times thicker than the carpets spread in homes.

Yet when Jesus, nailed to the cross, said, It is finished, and breathed His last, that veil was torn. The place where Jesus died was the hill of Calvary, and the temple was in Jerusalem. Yet when Jesus breathed His last, the middle of the veil of that Holy Place was torn. It was not something done by man. This word that the Bible records is a truly significant word.

The word that the veil of the Holy Place was torn means that the door of the kingdom of heaven has now been opened through Jesus' coming to this earth, receiving baptism from John the Baptist and taking charge of the sins of mankind, and dying hanging on the cross. It means that anyone has become able to enter the Most Holy Place where God is present. In the old days only the high priest entered, and only once a year, but now anyone who has received the remission of sin can enter that place where God is present.

"I am the way, the truth, and the life"

In John chapter 14 there is this word: *"Let not your heart be troubled; you believe in God, believe also in Me. In My Father's house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know" (John 14:1–4)*.

Then Thomas asked, *"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?" (John 14:5)*. He meant, We do not know where the Lord is going, so how can we know and follow? Then Jesus said as follows: *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*.

To come to the Father, one must come through Jesus. Jesus said that He Himself is the way. This word of Jesus, who became the way, the truth, and the life, has the same meaning as the word that the veil was torn in two in the middle. Through Jesus' coming to this earth, receiving baptism from John, and dying, the way has now been opened so that anyone who believes that Jesus took charge of all the sins of mankind and received the judgment can enter the kingdom of heaven.

The thick veil was torn from top to bottom. It was not man who tore it; God tore it.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life; first, what does the word way mean? Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from the dead, and so became our Savior. He removed all our sins. Because Jesus removed our sins and gave us new life with the baptism He received from John, the precious blood of the Cross, His death, and His resurrection, He Himself is the way to the

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kingdom of heaven. Because He is the way to the kingdom of heaven, He said, I am the way.

Second, He said, I am the truth. It means that everything Jesus did when He came to this earth is true. His being born through the body of the virgin Mary was to fulfill the prophecy of the Old Testament. According to the word Immanuel, that is, God with us, God came to this earth clothed in human flesh. And when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of all our sins. In the heart of the person who believes in that baptism, sin is washed away.

The word baptism has the meanings of being washed, being passed on, being buried, and being transferred. Through Jesus' receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, the sins of mankind passed on to Jesus. Since sin passed on to Jesus, in the heart of the person who believes this fact, sin is washed away and sin disappears.

And by dying hanging on the cross and receiving the judgment for sin, Jesus accomplished all the work of removing all sin. He came to this earth and accomplished it all. Therefore what Jesus did for us is the truth. That Jesus saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a lie but the truth.

Third, He said that He Himself is the life. Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of the sins of all sinners, and by dying hanging on the cross He put a period to the judgment for those sins. Therefore whoever believes enters the kingdom of heaven.

To say that Jesus shed all the blood in His body when He was nailed to the cross means that He paid the wages of the sins of you and me. In order to make us sinless, He Himself took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John and received the judgment for our sins on the Cross. He paid the wages of sin in full. He poured out all the blood in His heart. With the price

of that blood He bought us and gave us new life.

Therefore Jesus became to us the life and the truth, and the way by which we can go to the kingdom of heaven. That is why He said, I am the way, the truth, and the life. And He said, No one comes to the Father except through Me. It means that whoever wants to enter the kingdom of heaven enters through Jesus.

He resolved all the sins of mankind so that we could enter the kingdom of heaven. His birth is great, and His receiving baptism from John is great, and when He died hanging on the cross He opened the door of the kingdom of heaven completely. Now anyone who only believes the fact that Jesus became the way of salvation, that He became the way by which we can go to the kingdom of heaven, enters the kingdom of heaven. Jesus is the Savior who prepared the way to the kingdom of heaven for us.

The One who guards the door of the kingdom of heaven is Jesus Christ

What Jesus did is the truth. There is not a single falsehood in it. It is all fact, and there is not the slightest deception.

If you look at what people write, the writing of a person who speaks falsehood is dressed up beautifully to deceive. From a person's writing you can know his whole character. And you can also know whether or not he is telling the truth. He may think he is deceiving, but it is all exposed.

Some books draw your heart in when you read them. Other books, when you read them, you understand well with your head and the sentences are smooth, but they do not touch your heart. Such writing is writing done for the sake of writing, or writing

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that takes someone else's words and transfers them. But when you read some people's writing, it is writing that tells the truth. Even if the expression is a little lacking, because it is writing that tells the truth, when you finish reading it your heart is full. That is because that writing has come inside you.

Jesus said, I am the way, the truth, and the life, and when Jesus died the veil of the Holy Place was torn. What does that tell us? That the door of the kingdom of heaven has been opened.

The apostle John, exiled on the island of Patmos, saw the kingdom of God in a vision. He recorded that the door of heaven was opened and he saw the kingdom of heaven. God showed him that He had gathered His people not on this earth but in His own kingdom and established that kingdom. The book that records that vision is the Book of Revelation.

At the very moment Jesus was nailed to the cross, the veil was torn. To those who believe that Jesus' coming to this earth, His being the Son of God, His being the Savior of mankind, His taking charge of our sins, and His bearing those sins and dying nailed to the cross were all for the salvation of you and me, He Himself opened the door of the kingdom of heaven.

But even though He tore the veil, the door of the kingdom of heaven, what happens if one doubts, does not believe, or mocks what Jesus did? However much the Lord has opened the door of the kingdom of heaven, the One who guards that door is Jesus Christ.

To the person who believes in his heart, saying, Did the Lord not do this work for me? He says, Enter. If someone who is not like that tries to enter at the door, He says, Wait, I do not know you. The man says, Lord, You set me up as a servant of God on this earth and had me preach, and build, and serve, and do overseas missions; I even cast out demons in the Lord's name and performed many wonders of this kind and that—do You not

know me? Still, if He says, I never knew you; do you not have sin in your heart? Did you not fail to fully believe what I did? then he cannot enter.

The One who stands before the door of the kingdom of heaven and guards its entrance is Jesus. Therefore only through Jesus can one come to the Father. He said, No one comes to the Father except through Me.

Jesus became the guarantee of our salvation. He is the One who stood as guarantor for our salvation. That is because He is the One who came to this earth, actually received baptism from John and was passed our sins, and hung on the cross and paid the wages of sin in our place. And because He gave His blood, paid the price, and bought us, we have obtained new life. We have obtained new life by faith.

It is said, *"The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Romans 6:23)*. The gift God has given us is eternal life. Jesus bought the lives of you and me with the price of His own life. Therefore, through faith, the price He paid with His life for us comes back to you and me. That is why He said, I am the life.

Before long, when the time comes, whether we go before God individually or go together, we will go to that kingdom. What is certain is that because Jesus opened the door of the kingdom of heaven and we believe that fact, we enter the Father's kingdom through that Jesus. Dear fellow believers, do you understand? Will you believe?

A faith held on to by will alone, without knowing the truth, disappears

Jesus said, I go to prepare a place for you, and if I go and

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prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. Then Thomas asked. Thomas was a man full of doubts, a man who asked immediately whenever a question arose.

He asked frankly, *"Lord, we do not know where You are going, and how can we know the way?"* The Lord is now saying that in the Father's house are many mansions and that He is going to prepare a place for them. It means He is going to prepare a house for us to live in. Just as workers go in and work when we have prepared a workplace, it means that Jesus is going to prepare fully the place where you and I will go in and live in the future.

When Jesus spoke this word, it was just before He was to hang on the cross. Jesus said, Where I go you know, and the way you know, but Thomas said, We do not know where You are going, so how can we know the way? So he was answering beside the point.

In a little while the Lord would die hanging on the cross, say, It is finished, and breathe His last, and thereby the door of the kingdom of heaven would be opened. Because He accomplished all that work of coming to this earth and saving sinners, whoever believes enters the kingdom of heaven. Jesus was speaking of that salvation, but Thomas still had no faith. He was in a state where it was not even clear whether or not he believed in Jesus as the Savior.

So after Jesus died on the Cross and rose again, He appeared to Mary, appeared to Peter, and appeared to the disciples. He came in through closed doors and showed Himself, He showed Himself to over five hundred brethren, and He showed Himself to many people. But Thomas did not believe.

When the disciples said that they had met Jesus, Thomas said, I cannot believe what you have said; how do you know whether

or not that was Jesus? Jesus was nailed and pierced with a spear, so if He has come back to life as He was, there will be the marks of the nails in His hands and the mark of the spear in His side.

He said that he would believe after he had confirmed the marks of the nails and the mark of the spear directly with his own eyes, touched His face, and heard His voice. The disciples were wrapped in great anxiety because of Thomas. When they said, We saw Him; can you not believe? he meant, It is not that I do not believe you; I will believe after I have confirmed it for certain.

One might say that Thomas, for doing so, was a man without faith, a man full of doubts. But that is not so. That very attitude of confirming and then believing is the way by which one can arrive most exactly at faith. Jesus said, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*.

Why is Jesus the truth? Why is Jesus the way? Because He came to this earth and did all the work of removing our sins, He became the way by which we believe and go to the kingdom of heaven. Calling Himself the truth means, I have truly done it for you, not in words only, but just as I promised I came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist and was passed sin, and was nailed to the cross and received the judgment of sin. It is not a lie but a fact. And calling Himself the life means, With My life I bought your life; I brought back to life the life that was dead and restored it to you.

He said, You shall know the truth. Knowing is connected with faith. If one tries to believe unconditionally without knowing, a faith forced in that way exists for a moment and then disappears. When one says, Lord, I believe, I believe, it seems at the time that one believes, but a faith held on to by will alone, without knowing, disappears.

Believing without knowing is not faith. I tell you that you

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must believe as whole persons. *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17).*

Jesus loved us as whole persons. When we had become sinners, when we had come to go to hell because of our sins, He came to visit us on this earth clothed in human flesh. He was born as a baby through the body of a woman and came to visit us. Knowing that we were those who would go to hell, He came to visit us so as not to send us to hell. And He came to visit us in order to become our Savior.

The Lord felt in His heart how pitiful it is that we die without receiving the remission of sin. That feeling was revealed when Lazarus died.

When Lazarus fell sick and was about to die, his two sisters sent someone to ask Him to come quickly. But Jesus deliberately did not go that day. And He said that Lazarus was not dead but sleeping. And He went there only after Lazarus had been in the tomb for four days.

Martha and Mary came out and said, If only You had come a little earlier our brother would not have died; why have You come so late? Jesus said, If you believe My word, you will see your brother come back to life, and He said, I am the resurrection and the life; I am the One who raises the dead and gives new life to the life that is dead; do you believe this? Martha answered that she believed there would be such a thing on the last day, but surely not now.

Jesus went to Lazarus' tomb. A large stone had been placed to block the tomb. He told the people to move the stone away, and when He said, Lazarus, come forth, Lazarus walked out with his hands and feet bound with strips of linen. Jesus said, Loose him, and let him go.

But the Bible records that when the people wept, Jesus also shed tears before the tomb of Lazarus. Jesus, too, like us human

beings, knew and felt, and acted with His will.

We too must know that Jesus came to this earth and prepared for us the way to the kingdom of heaven. How can we know it? In order to save us, He was born through the body of the virgin Mary; when He turned thirty He was passed the sins of mankind through the baptism He received from John; He bore that sin of the world and went to the cross, was nailed, shed His blood, and suffered death in our place; and He said, It is finished, and died. In order to pay the wages of our sins and the price of death, He Himself took charge of it all and suffered it all.

If we know and believe that fact, that faith does not disappear. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. If we read the word, know it, feel it, and believe it, faith does not disappear. As long as this word exists, it does not disappear. If your faith grows dim, look at the word again. Your faith is renewed and becomes firm.

You come to know and feel, Ah, Jesus came to this earth to send me to the kingdom of heaven, received baptism from John, hung on the cross, and rose again from the dead, and so saved me, and you come to say, He has truly done a thankful thing for me. You come to believe, Since He bore my sins for me and went to the cross and put an end to death, has the Lord not brought me back to life? And so you obtain new life by faith.

You obtain new life through knowing, feeling, and believing with your will. First, to have faith properly, you must know. Second, you must feel. You come to say, Ah, so that is how it is. If you know properly, you feel properly, and if you feel properly, proper actions come out. To believe means to rely on. It is to say, I rely on You, who did that work for me; I believe; I accept.

That very faith is faith as a whole person. When we believe in Jesus, we must believe as whole persons. Do not say, I believe unconditionally. Do not say, I believe because the pastor says so,

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even though I cannot believe it. Since the minister has rightly preached the word recorded in the Bible, you must believe that word—that is believing in Jesus; would it do to believe unconditionally just because someone who is not right says so?

If you do not know the secret of the baptism Jesus received from John, your sins are not washed away

How do people today believe in Jesus? They know and believe only this far: that He came to this earth as the Savior, and that He hung on the cross and shed His blood for us and saved us. Think about it. Believing only this far—that He came to save us, and that He saved us by dying hanging on the cross—has a problem in terms of believing as a whole person.

They do believe that He came and saved us by dying hanging on the cross, but what becomes of the sins I commit? Since I am lacking, I commit sin even now and will commit sin in the future, and since they say He died hanging on the cross because of these sins I commit, I have to think of Jesus on the cross every day, every time I commit sin.

Why is that? Jesus took charge of our sins and washed away our sins with the baptism He received from John. Since our sins passed on to Jesus, the sins of our hearts are washed away, but because they do not know this secret of the baptism, sin is not washed away from their hearts.

Those who say they have obtained salvation by believing only in Jesus on the cross go before the cross every time they sin and pray, “Jesus, who was nailed for me, I believe; I have sinned again; please forgive me.” They say, You shed Your precious blood for me, yet I have sinned again; I will never sin again, and they beat the ground and beat their breasts, wail, resolve, and

fast. But not long after the time of fasting has passed, they commit sin again.

Then they go before the cross again. Since they understand that they were finally saved on the cross, they have to come to the cross and think of Jesus who shed His precious blood, and they sigh, feeling sorry again and again. It would be fine if they could go back and not sin, but it is not that they sin because they want to.

Some people say that since we say that if one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit one becomes a person without sin once and for all, those people are encouraging others to commit sin. Let us think about it. There are some who commit sin because they want to, but are there not many cases in which one commits sin even though one does not want to?

Then why do people commit sin? Committing sin even though one does not want to is because one is weak and because one has no power. There was even a poet who sang that he wanted to live purely, without shame, and then go. But who, born into this world, commits sin because he wants to? A person commits sin because he is weak, and even in making money, thinking that he could make a lot in this way, he leans toward what is unlawful, and later it becomes a crime.

It is not that you will stop committing sin because I say to you, “Now that you have received the remission of sin, do not commit sin.” Because you are weak, if you are in a position to commit sin, you commit sin at any time. This is an unmistakable truth.

In Buddhism there was a certain monk famed for the height of his attainment. He said that he had practiced asceticism facing a wall for ten years. He said that he relieved himself inside the room and handed it out through a small window, and also received and ate the food that came in through that window. For

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ten years he lived in that room without even going outside to look around, and so, he said, people regarded him as a great saint.

If it were you, could you live for ten years without going outside, eating the food given to you, relieving yourself inside, and gazing only at the wall? It is said that he also lived for several years without lying down.

But there is something that man wrote, like a last testament, before he died. He said that since he had deceived countless men and women in this world, his sin was higher than a mountain, and so he could not but fall into a bottomless, endless hell. He left such writing and departed.

What could he have meant by deceiving? People came to him and said that he was a living Buddha, but this man knew his own heart. It meant that although he was inside the room, his heart went outside and did all kinds of things. Only his body did not go out.

Since this man was one who had practiced asceticism, he regarded what was done in the heart and what was done in action as all the same. So he left writing saying that he was afraid he would fall into an endless hell, and revealed himself. He even said, Do not believe what I said, because the words I spoke on this earth, my asceticism, and my Buddhist sermons were all false.

Dear fellow believers, if you are told to commit sin you will commit more, but even if you are told not to commit sin, human beings commit sin because they are weak. Therefore, if we believe that Jesus came as the Savior to us who commit sin, if we believe that He is God and our Savior, we must know by what method He took charge of our sins, and how He was passed and took away the sins in our hearts.

He said, *"You shall know the truth" (John 8:32)*. Only when one knows the truth does one obtain freedom. Only when one

knows the truth can one believe with the will and be saved from sin. You believe as much as you know. If it is not exact, you cannot believe.

If one does not know exactly what the Lord did when He came to this earth—that He took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood, which is His life, on the Cross and bought our lives with the price of His blood, and gave us new life with the price of His death—faith does not arise. If faith does not arise, what result comes out? One goes there and makes demands according to what one knows.

If one knows only that Jesus came to this earth and saved us by dying hanging on the cross, then every time one commits sin one relies on the cross and offers prayers of repentance, saying, Lord, please forgive me, and resolves and vows. And every time one commits sin again, one does so again. One does so for a year, two years, three years, ten years.

Then, if he is a person with a conscience, he comes to think like this. Having vowed not to commit sin, he commits sin again and asks for forgiveness, goes back and commits sin again, and comes again and says, Lord, please forgive me; and as he repeats this, he even reaches the point of thinking, It seems I believed in Jesus too early; if I had come to know and believe that Jesus died hanging on the cross for me an hour before my death, I would not have gone through this hardship. Having believed when young, until he grows old and dies, every time he sins he only goes before the cross and asks for his sins to be forgiven.

What is missing here? He is in torment because he does not know that Jesus received baptism from John and was passed our sins.

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Jesus saved us with the water, the blood, and the Spirit

A person who knows the secret of the baptism Jesus received from John is different. A person who knows that Jesus was born on this earth in order to come as the Savior and took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty, a person who knows that He took charge of the sins of all people at that time, a person who knows the fact that the sins of you and me also passed on to Him at that time, and a person who knows that Jesus died on the Cross, confesses as follows. He confesses, He has opened the door of the kingdom of heaven; since He took charge of my sins and died for me, the wages of my sins have all been paid; I can go to the kingdom of heaven through faith.

My faith is to know and believe that Jesus came, that Jesus is God, the Son of God, and my Savior, and that in order to save mankind, including me, He received baptism from John the Baptist, was nailed to the cross, and rose again from the dead.

Then, when we have done wrong and committed sin, it is not the Cross that we go to first. We go to the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. We confirm in Jesus' baptism, saying, At that time He took charge of this sin I have committed as well; this sin, too, passed on to Him. And then we go to the Cross and give thanks.

Dear fellow believers, do you understand? This word is precisely the word He spoke: *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. We believe as much as we know. Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of Christ. We must first hear the word of God in order to know, then feel, and then believe with the will and obtain salvation.

How exact this is! In mathematics, a person who knows only

the answer without knowing the formula is worthless. If the same problem is set in a different way, the person who knows only the answer cannot solve it. But the person who knows the formula can solve it according to that formula however the problem is set.

We must not leave out one jot or one tittle of what Jesus did

Jesus saved us with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. The water is Jesus' receiving baptism from John, and the blood is His going to the cross and shedding His blood and dying. Then who is the One who did this work for us? The Holy Spirit, that is, God. The holy God came to this earth clothed in human flesh and did this work for us. That is why we say that He saved us with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. This gospel of the water and the Spirit is the truth.

Let me sum up again. A person who believes in Jesus but does not know that Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John, and knows only that He hung on the cross and shed His blood and died—that is, a person who knows and believes only His birth and His death on the cross—cannot live, because his conscience pricks him.

He offers prayers of repentance every time he commits sin, but sin does not disappear just because he offers prayers of repentance. Since the wages of sin is death, the price of blood must be paid without fail. The price of life must be paid. Sin is not resolved without the price of blood. It is said, *"The life of the flesh is in the blood" (Leviticus 17:11)*. Even though Jesus took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, if He had not shed His blood and come to death, He would not have

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paid the price of our lives. That is why He shed His blood, and that is why He died.

If one knows only Jesus' birth and death, one cannot be born again. One must know the truth. Only when one knows that Jesus came to this earth and received baptism and took charge of the sins of you and me can one know and believe that His dying hanging on the cross was for me and that He died in my place. One can believe with the will.

To say that one should believe the word of the Bible unconditionally, without asking or questioning, is superstition. The more one believes in Jesus, the more one must ask, question, and confirm whether it is so in the Bible.

When I teach young people, I do not speak one-sidedly. I let them see everything the people of the world say, and then I explain that content again with the word of God. And after they have heard it all, I take questions. I tell them to ask about everything they wonder about. I tell them that I will answer what I know, and that what I do not know I cannot answer.

I like to be asked questions. Why is that? Because only when questions are asked can I, too, think and give answers. A person who tells you to believe unconditionally is wrong. He tells you to believe unconditionally because he himself does not know.

Long ago, when I was a layman, I also asked questions, and I was scolded a great deal for asking. When I went to seminary, to graduate school, and asked questions, they brushed me off, asking whether a graduate student asks such questions. I said, Professor, in a little while I will become a pastor; while I am a student I can ask you, but after I become a pastor, whom shall I go to and ask? Even when a pastor asks a pastor it does not look good, and it is the same when a pastor asks a professor. After one becomes a pastor there is nowhere to go and learn.

So, because I did not know, I asked the professor, and he said,

Do you ask because you do not even know that? Then I said, Professor, if you know, please answer: why did Jesus receive baptism from John the Baptist? It appears just so in the text and just so in the original. It says, Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness. When I said, Professor, please interpret and explain this text, he could not say a single word.

Not knowing is one thing, but even about what one knows, when someone asks, should one not think from that person's position and answer him? Would it do to disregard the one who asks? So I have become hard to love.

Even now, if there is something I do not know, I ask, What does that mean? What is the meaning? Where in this world is there a person who knows everything? Does one know everything once one becomes a doctor and grows old? What we do not know is vast. When you think about it, most of life is what we do not know, and what we know is very little.

We must always have the attitude of learning. After I have given this sermon, if someone asks a question I must answer that part, and if I cannot answer I must say that I will teach it next time, and look at the word of the Bible and learn again.

It says that the veil was torn. When on the hill of Calvary Jesus said, It is finished, and bowed His head, in the temple the veil was torn. What meaning does this event give to us? Does it not mean that the door of the kingdom of heaven has been opened? It tells us that anyone can enter the kingdom of heaven by believing in that Savior, who came to this earth, received baptism from John and took charge of our sins, died hanging on the cross, shedding His blood, and rose again. This word is clearly here, so why do people not speak of it?

Dear fellow believers, while you are on this earth, is it all right not to know whether you are going to the kingdom of heaven or to hell? A person who believes in Jesus and yet

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believes without knowing whether he is going to the kingdom of heaven or to hell has a serious problem.

We can know for certain. Whenever I may die, the Lord took charge of my sins with the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died, and rose again. By believing in this Lord, I have no sin now, and I will have no sin when I die. I will die according to God's will, but I believe that at the moment I die, the Lord will bring me to life and take me to His kingdom, the kingdom of heaven. I know it. I believe because I know it.

If the Lord were not going to take us to the kingdom of heaven, why would He have come to this earth? What reason would there be for Him to come? There would be no need for Him to come. Why did the Lord receive baptism from John? He received baptism from John in order to take charge of the sins of you and me. We must not leave out one jot or one tittle of what Jesus did. We must know and believe.

"Weep for yourselves and for your children"

Now Jesus dies hanging on the cross. Verse 46 says that when Jesus had cried out with a loud voice, He said, Father, into Your hands I commit My spirit, and having said this, He breathed His last.

Some people say that if Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of sin, is Jesus not a sinner? No. The human being is made up of three things. First is the spirit, next is the flesh, and next is the mind. The innermost core is the spirit. It is the spirit, which cannot be seen with the eyes or grasped, yet actually exists. Next, there is the body made of earth that envelops that soul, and outside that there is the mind. So when the flesh dies, the mind also disappears, and what remains is the

spirit alone. That is why it is also called the soul.

Jesus' spirit is the Spirit of God, the Holy Spirit. Therefore, even though He received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of our sins, He took charge of those sins with His flesh, not with His spirit. That is why, as He died hanging on the cross, He said, Into Your hands I commit My spirit, and breathed His last.

It is not that Jesus' spirit died. When a person dies, it is not that his spirit dies either. At the moment our flesh dies, our thoughts also end, but our spirit does not die. It is appointed for men to die once, and after this there is the judgment. Because we have a spirit, the soul that has received the remission of sin enters the kingdom of heaven when it goes before God, and if one dies without having received the remission of sin, that soul goes to hell. He clothes it with a body again and makes it suffer in hell.

We must know that fact from this word. He said, I commit My spirit to the Father, and said, It is finished, and died. It means that Jesus took charge of our sins with His flesh and shed His blood and died; it does not mean that Jesus' soul died. Do you understand?

The centurion, seeing the word Jesus spoke to one thief and all those things, said, This Man is truly a right Man; He is the Savior of mankind, just as I heard from people. Although there is no word that the centurion believed, seeing what had happened, he glorified God, saying, Certainly this was a righteous Man. He saw Jesus say, It is finished, and breathe His last; he saw Him hang on the cross; and he saw Him speak with one thief. He glorified God, saying, Ah, this Man was truly a right Man; He was not One nailed because He had sin; they said He was the Savior, and truly He is the Savior. In other words, he believed.

Verse 48 says that the whole crowd who came together to that sight, seeing what had been done, beat their breasts and

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returned. These are the people who beat their breasts and wept when Jesus went up carrying the cross. At that time Jesus said, Weep for yourselves and for your children. Here, too, seeing what Jesus suffered, many people beat their breasts and grieved.

We must not stop at grieving. We must believe. He did not hang and die because He had no power; He hung and died on the cross in order to receive the judgment for sin, because He came to this earth to save mankind from sin, received baptism from John the Baptist, and took charge of our sins. I believe we must have the faith that believes that fact in our hearts.

Let us not be people who look on at Jesus' work of salvation, but people who believe

Verse 49 says, *"All His acquaintances, and the women who followed Him from Galilee, stood at a distance, watching these things."* Those who had ordinarily known Jesus came to the scene of the cross and watched. And they stood at a distance and watched these things.

After Jesus rose again and ascended, the work of seizing and killing those who believed in Jesus began. The chief priests of Judaism and their subordinates began it, and the Roman soldiers also did that work. Persecution actually began from that time. Even in this present age, there are many people who persecute us subtly if we say we believe in Jesus.

Looking at this word, I think. Even now many people are merely looking on at what Jesus did when He came to this earth. There are many who are not people who believe themselves, but people who have come to look on.

So among those who attend church there are many who say, Let us go and watch the worship service. It means, Let us go and

see the sight of worship being held. If you go to a large church, there is an orchestra, there are singers, and there is a splendidly adorned choir. They look at how large the sanctuary is, how fine the seats are, what the pastor looks like, and whether or not a famous person appears. They have not gone to hear the word; they are looking around at people.

In this age, too, among those who do not attend church there are many who observe us. They look closely at how those who believe in Jesus live and with what kind of faith they live. But when they look, they all commit sin and offer prayers of repentance, and those who believe in Jesus are even better at lying and at taking what belongs to others. So people who oppose Christianity have arisen, and its credibility has fallen greatly.

In the old days, if a Bible was placed in a real estate office, people would go there to buy and sell houses. But these days it is said that people do not go to a place where a Bible has been put out. Why is that? They say they do not go in for fear of being deceived under the pretext of the Bible and under the pretext of God. So now no one puts out a Bible while doing business. Even those who believe do not put one out.

I hope that we, while believing in Jesus, will not be people who look on at what Jesus did, people who look on at who believes well and who does not, but people who believe directly ourselves. We must know, feel, and believe with our will.

Through the word we can know, feel, and believe. Everything else is false. Everything else is not the truth. Only the word of God is the truth. To say that only the word is the truth is to say that it is fact and that it is true.

It is a fact that Jesus came to this earth to save us. It is also a fact that Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of our sins. It is also a fact that Jesus received baptism from John

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and was passed sin, bore that sin, went to the cross, and was nailed. The Lord saved us like this. He opened the door of the kingdom of heaven. He removed all our sins. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? I believe too. I give thanks. I will close the word. ✉

Sermon 9 by Paul C. Jong

We must live with the faith that dies with Christ and is buried with Christ

< Luke 23:50-56 >

"Now behold, there was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man. He had not consented to their decision and deed. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, who himself was also waiting for the kingdom of God. This man went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Then he took it down, wrapped it in linen, and laid it in a tomb that was hewn out of the rock, where no one had ever lain before. That day was the Preparation, and the Sabbath drew near. And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment."

Joseph of Arimathea, who was waiting for the kingdom of God

Jesus died hanging on the cross. From that time the door of the kingdom of heaven was opened. Anyone who believes that Jesus is our Savior, the One who saved us with the water and the blood, has become able to enter the kingdom of heaven by faith.

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Now Jesus' body had to be buried. In verse 50, Joseph of Arimathea appears with the words, *"There was a man named Joseph, a council member, a good and just man."* This man was a council member. In terms of our country, he was about the equivalent of a member of the National Assembly. His position in Israel was quite high. The Bible testifies that his conduct was good and just.

The people of Israel ran about demanding that Jesus be nailed to the cross, but Joseph was a man who had not been in league with that. He was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews, and was one who was waiting for the kingdom of God.

For a person who believes in Jesus, his origin is very important. If you look at the language a person uses, you can tell how he grew up. One's mother tongue is the language one's parents always used. A person who heard a great deal of the speech his older brother or sister used beside him uses that speech just as it is. So when you listen to what someone says, it is revealed in what kind of environment he grew up as a child. You can tell whether he grew up in a proper home or in a home where the speech was very rough. It has nothing to do with school.

It has nothing to do with what school one attended or how much one benefited from school. One's mother tongue reveals the person. It is a matter of what kind of speech one's parents, family, and the people around one used. One can tell a person's background according to whether he grew up in a home where gentle and proper speech was used, or in a home where rough and harsh words were exchanged.

A person who believes in Jesus and has been born again can also generally be recognized. Even among the people of God who have been saved by believing in Jesus, who removed all their sins, there are many whose thinking still remains in the old

days. Because their background is like that, the old man remains just as it was. If one lived in a lowly place, that old man is still in a lowly place. So there are many who set the purpose of their lives on getting ahead in the world.

There are people who set their purpose on excelling others and being respected. On the other hand, there are people who ask what the big deal is about getting ahead in the world. Getting ahead is one thing; the question is what ideal one pursues. A person differs according to whether he pursues success on this earth, or believes in the Lord and believes the word the Lord promised and pursues the kingdom of heaven.

A person who still pursues in his heart success and being exalted on this earth, even if he has been born again, fails when it comes to following the Lord. That is because his level is already low. Since he has made his own prospering in this world his purpose, even if he has been born again his level falls short.

You can tell when you look at such a person. Even without saying it, you can roughly recognize, How truly shallow he is; how far from noble this person is. Conversely, some people seem to have grown up in very unfortunate circumstances, and yet after believing in Jesus they cherish high ideals.

One becomes such a person through believing the word of the Lord. Through Jesus' death, the veil of the temple was torn from top to bottom. Through the work the Lord did when He came to this earth, and finally through His dying hanging on the cross, one knows that whoever believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has become able to enter the kingdom of heaven. There are people who, hoping for that kingdom of heaven, for the kingdom of God, take part in the Lord's work on this earth as the Lord's bride, as the Lord's servants, as the Lord's people, and unite with it and are faithful to it.

So one can tell where a person has set the purpose of his life.

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The passage says that he was from Arimathea, a city of the Jews. Why does it make known the place name Arimathea? Arimathea is said to be the town where the prophet Samuel lived. Since Samuel, who feared God, lived there, it means that the people of that town learned to fear God. Joseph, too, was a man who cherished such a heart. Since Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind, and received baptism from John and bore the sin of the world and went and died hanging on the cross, Joseph of Arimathea stepped forward.

Joseph of Arimathea, who gave up to the Lord the tomb in which he was to be buried

Joseph went to Governor Pilate and made a request as a council member of the Jews. He demanded, “Governor, please give me the body of that Jesus whom you handed over to be nailed to the cross; I must bury Him in a tomb.” Since Pilate had no reason to refuse, he allowed it. Then Joseph laid Jesus in a tomb hewn out of the rock, that is, the tomb he had prepared for himself.

Asians bury corpses in the ground, but the rich of Israel lay corpses in rock tombs. So it says that he laid Jesus in the rock tomb he had made beforehand for himself. At the time Jesus died hanging on the cross, only a person with very great wealth or a person in high office could have a rock tomb. Common people could not even dream of it.

Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus in the rock tomb in which he himself was to be buried. It is a truly great thing. It means that he gave a great deal entirely to the Lord. In terms of value, it was an enormous piece of property. Ordinary people placed corpses on natural rock or beneath a cliff as it was, but Joseph’s tomb

was a tomb carved out of the inside of the rock. Not only was it enormous in value, but to put it simply, he gave his treasure.

Among those who believe in Jesus, too, there are grades. We have been saved by passing our sins on to Jesus and believing in that work by which Jesus bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, rose again, and saved us. But for those who truly follow the Lord faithfully, there are still two things that remain.

One is the work of burying Jesus in one's own tomb, that is, in one's own heart. It is to receive Jesus into one's own faith. It is to confess that since Jesus' death on the Cross was because He took charge of my sins with the baptism He received from John, I too died with Christ and I too am buried with Him. It is to be a person who has the faith of dying once with Christ and rising again with Christ.

Such a person does not follow the desires of this world. Even while living in this world, he lives according to what the Lord wants, following the Lord's will together with the Lord.

"I have been crucified with Christ"

A man called Joseph of Arimathea appears in the Bible, and he is a truly great man. Why does the Bible record that Joseph buried Jesus in the rock tomb he had made to be buried in himself? It is to tell us how we must live after we have believed in Jesus. Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John and took charge of our sins, and went to the cross and was judged and died, and so saved us from sin. A person who believes that fact buries the Lord together with himself. A person who believes in Jesus has not only obtained salvation by believing, but buries the Lord together with himself in his own heart.

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This is precisely the meaning of Paul's words, I have been crucified with Christ. It is being buried together. It is the confession, I have died; my old man has died. Therefore it is declaring that the desires toward this world are now over. It means that if it is a matter of serving the Lord, if it is a matter of walking with the Lord, one can give up everything in this world. It is a person who has said, I will follow the Lord, and has buried his own desires and his old man together with Christ in the tomb of his heart.

The Lord calls a person who has such faith a precious person. But those who believe only in the gospel of the cross made by Constantine the Great use this word in an absurd place. They quote it: *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)*. They say that since they are people who died with Jesus on the cross, it is now all right however they live. There are many who indulge themselves, saying, I am a man of God, so I am all right.

Using this word, they indulge themselves, saying, My old man has died, so I am now a new person; I am not ruled by anything. And so they live as they please. But the truth is different.

A person who has died with Jesus Christ by faith, a person who has buried the Lord and himself together in the place of faith in his heart, no longer pursues the things of this world.

Let us say that while we live on this earth we have food to eat and an environment in which we can serve the Lord. Let us say that there are brothers and sisters, there is a church, and there is a goal of serving the Lord in the future. If only our circumstances are that much, we do not look back at this world in any situation.

When Jesus Christ died, we also died with Him

In the old days, under a person of high rank there were people like secretaries. They followed him around and helped with his every move. Whenever the master wanted something, they lived preparing everything and presenting it each time. But when the master died or came to the point of ruin, two things happened. There were cases in which those under him betrayed him and went and attached themselves to the master's enemy to make their living, and there were those who died together with the master when he died.

If they were not killed by others, there were those who ended their own lives together when the master died. They laid down their own lives. If one was a person who truly cherished the same purpose as his master, when the master was killed he did not servilely say that he would serve another master. He did not look for a master elsewhere but died together with his own master.

In the old days, persons of high rank such as Emperor Qin Shi Huang, when they died, had their maidservants, servants, and eunuchs buried alive in their tombs. It was done by force. But if the Lord is truly our Lord, if the Lord died on the Cross because of that work by which He took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, then at that time we also died together with Him.

So just as Jesus was laid in a new tomb in which no corpse had ever been buried, we too must become people who bury Jesus in the place of our faith and bury ourselves together with Him. Only such a person can be called a Christian on this earth, one who follows the Lord, and a disciple of the Lord.

We believe in the Lord and, living on this earth, we stop at having been saved. But if you look into the eyes of those who say they have been saved, they are full of the desires of the world.

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There is only the heart that asks, How can I be exalted? How can I live well? How can I succeed?

They say, Since Jesus saved me, I have believed; now I no longer need Jesus, so I will part ways with Jesus; I will live for my own purposes. Such a person is in fact not a disciple of Christ. When a hard situation comes, he forsakes the Lord at any time.

Jesus came to this earth in A.D. 1 and lived a life of thirty-three years. He was born, and when He turned thirty He received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of the sin of the world, and by dying on the Cross He saved us. Yet they boldly throw away that salvation and follow the desires of the world. Such a person is not a disciple of the Lord.

This man called Joseph of Arimathea here is a disciple of the Lord. Jesus did not have only twelve disciples. The Bible makes clear that the man called Joseph was also a disciple of the Lord. Jesus Himself is testifying to it. Jesus' disciples were all martyred while preaching the gospel.

The creeds that took hold after the Council of Nicaea, presided over by Constantine the Great in A.D. 325—what is called the creed of the apostles' faith—were precisely the gospel of the cross. Those who believe that creed think of believing in Jesus as a tool for their own advancement. They say, I have been saved by believing in Jesus, so now that is the end of it; I must get ahead in the world. That is how most of them are.

So when you look at worldly Christianity today, the pastors demand only money, the elders demand only money, whether by swindling or by whatever means, and the deaconesses and deacons under them are all the same. Dear fellow believers, for those who believe the gospel of the cross resolved at the religious council presided over by Constantine the Great, it ends at saying, Jesus is my Savior; He saved me.

When we speak of A.D. 1 to A.D. 33, the term A.D. refers to

Jesus' birth. Jesus' birth was the beginning, and that was year 1. Jesus received baptism at the age of thirty and died at the age of thirty-three. Those who believe in Jesus' water and blood believe like this. They believe that since Jesus took charge of my sins when He received baptism, my sins also passed on to Him at that time, and I also passed on to Him at that time. They believe that my old man also died together with Jesus when He died nailed to the cross.

Because they had such faith, they were able to become disciples of Christ. They lived together with Christ for the glory of Christ. They lived by the faith that they die once on this earth together with Christ, and live in the kingdom of God together with the glory of God.

Dear fellow believers, among those who believe only in the gospel of the cross there are many who use Jesus. Why do anti-Christians arise? Not all are like this, but why do large churches do so well? Dear fellow believers, do you know the secret? At a large church, all the people in the neighborhood attend that church. Why is that? Because if you attend there, business goes well. If you register at a large church and become an elder, a deacon, or a deaconess, the many people who come to that church buy the goods from your shop, and business goes well.

So some churches are churches that solve the livelihood of the residents, churches that solve the problems of food, clothing, and shelter for the people of that neighborhood. How do they solve them? Because the formula holds that if you attend that church, the church members come to your store and buy goods.

But those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which was completed in the time of the early church, between A.D. 1 and A.D. 33, are different. Our Savior was born on this earth clothed in human flesh, received baptism from John and took charge of our sins, and hung on the cross and paid all

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the wages of our sins and opened the door of the kingdom of heaven. Those who believe in that Lord die on the cross together with Christ through that faith and bury Jesus in their hearts. I bury the Lord in my heart and I also die together with Him, and when Christ rises again I also rise again together with Him. It is believing in the water, the blood, the death, and the resurrection together. Therefore they become people who enter the kingdom of heaven united with the Lord, and become workers.

You must become people who bury Jesus Christ together with yourselves in your hearts. Without doing so, you cannot follow the Lord. As you follow the Lord, problems arise that bring loss to you. At that time you cannot follow the Lord.

We must be crucified together with Christ. When Christ died, I also died. We must come down from the seat where we reigned as king and be buried together with Christ in the empty tomb of our hearts. Through being buried, we become people who no longer follow the desires of the world. We become people who like what Christ says is good and dislike what Christ says is bad. Even if we are not perfect, we become at least that much.

When we live with such faith, we live the Christian life together with the Lord. We live a life of being the salt and the light of this world, live a life of giving glory to Christ, and then meet the Lord. Have you died with Christ in your hearts, by faith? And have you been buried? Have you buried Him? You must bury Him. If you do not bury Him, you can never follow the Lord. You may be born again, but you cannot follow. You cannot become a disciple of Christ. On the contrary, you become a person who betrays Jesus.

Such a person becomes like Judas, who sold Jesus for thirty pieces of silver. Dear fellow believers, do you know how many people betray Jesus even after they have believed? The Lord calls such a person the one who received one talent, and says that

He will appoint him his portion with the unbelievers. I do not want to become such a person.

Jesus took charge of all our sins with the baptism He received from John

I met the Lord through the word. I always agonized. I always agonized, asking, What does this word mean? Why did Jesus receive baptism from John? I always asked, and I asked everyone who was said to be great. Yet I could not find out.

I tried to examine my heart in the light of the word. I said, The Lord said in Genesis 3:15 that He would come as the Seed of the woman, and the Lord gave the Law. Then, I said, He gave the law of sacrifice, and the people of the Old Testament removed sin through the laying on of hands. I said, Looking at the Book of Malachi, it says that the Elijah who was to come would do such and such. Coming to the New Testament, I said, Jesus was born and, before He died, received baptism from John, and so I examined my heart step by step according to the word. There is a context in the word. It does not work just by reading everything unconditionally.

When reading the word of Matthew chapter 3, there is the passage that says, Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness, and when He had been baptized, Jesus came up from the water. Because I always stopped at this part, I stopped there that day too. As I was asking, Why did He receive baptism? Who is John the Baptist? it dawned on me brightly, as if a light had been switched on in my head.

Is it not John the Baptist who played the role of the high priest of the Old Testament? Is he not the greatest among those born of women? Yes, the representative of human beings is John

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the Baptist. Then why did he baptize Him? When the high priest of the Old Testament, representing Israel, laid his hands on the sacrificial offering on the tenth day of the seventh month, did sin not pass on to it? He gave me understanding as if the Holy Spirit had come beside me and taught me. For thirty minutes I could not speak.

He said that at this time Jesus received baptism from John and fulfilled all righteousness. It means that in order to do the work of washing away the sins of all people, He received baptism from John and took charge of sin. Then did my sins not pass on to Him too? Since I too am a person of the world, my sins also passed on to Him. Then did not my past sins, my present sins, and—though I do not know how much longer I will live—my future sins also pass on to Him?

If it is so even when I look at myself, one person, is it not so for all people, for all mankind? Since Jesus said He is the Alpha and the Omega, when Jesus received baptism the sins of mankind passed on to Him entirely, from the beginning. Since John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, baptized Him, did the sins of all the people of the whole world not pass on to Him? Yes, they have all passed on; He has taken charge of them all; He has washed them all away. And He bore the sin of the world and went to the cross; as He died nailed to it, He said, It is finished. He died and rose again and became the Savior. In this way, like a tangled skein being unraveled, the words I had wondered about began to be unraveled.

Then it was over. Until then I had been in such distress because of the sins I had committed that I could not bear it, but at that time my heart became calm and my feelings, too, were like a calm lake. As when a small pebble falls into a lake and the calm ripples spread out, ripples arose in my heart. Peace came to my heart.

I said, So this is how the Lord has become my Savior. I could not say anything. I just sat quietly. I could not talk with anyone. And I sank into thought.

Then I asked, What about the people of the whole world? What about present-day Christianity? I asked, Why do people not make this truth known? If they made it known, people would quickly receive the remission of sin. Then I thought, What about Berkhof, who is called a master of Christian theology and a master of systematic theology? What about those famous theologians—what about Calvin, what about Martin Luther, what about Wesley? What on earth are these people? From then on I began to look up the literature.

No one spoke of it. When they come to this part, they mumble. They pass over it vaguely. They say that Jesus received baptism because He was humble, and that it was to announce the beginning of His public ministry. These are outrageous words. Is it not clearly recorded in the Bible? It said that in this way all righteousness is fulfilled. It means that by receiving baptism from John, Jesus makes all people right and makes them sinless.

Then what is it in the original text? In Greek it is houtos (οὕτως) dikaiosyne (δικαιοσύνη). What does that mean? It means that in this manner, by this method, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of the sins of mankind, and so was passed all the sins of human beings once and for all. And it means that He took charge of the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John in order to go to the cross and bring it to an end.

I met the Lord through the word in that way. Long ago I believed in the gospel of the cross made by Constantine the Great. So every time I committed sin, every time my heart ached, I went to the cross and clung to it, weeping. When my heart ached too much and the sins I had committed seemed too heavy,

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I fasted three days at a time. Doing so, I repented and held on to the Lord. I beat my breast, saying that I did not know why I had gone out toward the world again when the Lord had died on the Cross for me.

I did so because I believed leaving out Jesus' receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River. It said, You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free, and there must be something one knows. The Lord came to this earth as our Savior and received baptism and took charge of our sins, but without knowing that fact I had clung only to the cross. The shedding of blood on the Cross is to pay the wages of our sins, to give us new life, and to end the judgment for our sins.

It was through the baptism He received from John that Jesus took charge of sin. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus did the public work of making mankind sinless. The baptism Jesus received from John is the start of His public ministry. The Lord saved us in that way. Going back to A.D. 1, during the thirty-three years of His life He not only took charge of our sins but also received all the judgment. He also gave us new life and opened the door of the kingdom of heaven. We have come to go to the kingdom of heaven by faith, and we have been able to become disciples of the Lord by faith.

Yet people hold on to the gospel of the cross. It is the gospel of the cross that Constantine resolved together with his subordinates at the religious council held at Nicaea. From that time, people seized and killed all those who spoke of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, do you know what those who are branded as heretics within the church today are afraid of? It is being buried alive. It is being rejected by people while still alive. It is being ostracized not by one or two people but by countless people. From the time that resolution was made at the Council

of Nicaea in 325, presided over by Constantine the Great, it was said that those who believe in Jesus must speak only of the gospel of the cross.

To speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, or to say that the gospel of the cross was wrong, meant death in every case. There were many who had said this, and they were all killed. If you look at the Bible, the apostle Paul also speaks continually of baptism. In Romans it is baptism, in Galatians it is baptism, and in Ephesians it is baptism. He speaks of baptism continually. He does not speak only of the blood of the Cross.

When the apostles speak of the blood of the Cross, they speak in a state in which the baptism Jesus received from John is presupposed. Even when they say that the door of the kingdom of heaven was opened through the Cross, they speak presupposing Jesus' birth and the baptism He received from John.

I met the Lord. And it was hard. I wondered whether what I knew was wrong. As a person who majored in theology, I respect the opinions of others. I investigated everything and asked everyone. I went to the dean and asked, I went to professors and asked, and I went to doctors and asked. I went to all the many ministers I knew and asked. There was no one who knew the word just as it is in the Bible.

So I held up this word and asked what it meant. I said, If you do not know, never mind, but do you know what this word means in Greek? I said, Let us bring the Greek Bible and a dictionary and try; does this word not mean this? If the Bible is written like this, what more is needed? What use is doctrine? From then on I began to clash with people.

When I ask, Do you have sin in your heart? the ministers who believe only in the gospel of the cross say, Where is there a person without sin? They say that sin disappears when we are

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sanctified, and ask where there is a person without sin. Then why did Jesus receive baptism as the first work of His public ministry? The four Gospels—Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John—record the deeds of John the Baptist before Jesus' birth. Why do the four Gospels speak of the birth of John the Baptist and his ministry? Why was it prophesied beforehand in the Book of Malachi?

I came to know the Lord in this way. Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of my sins, and by dying on the Cross Jesus also ended the judgment for my sins. I too died there together with Jesus, was buried together with Jesus, and rose again together with Jesus. What Jesus did when He came to this earth is a work for me and a work for all the people of the world. I came to know and believe that way through the word.

After that I began to testify to this truth. I received much persecution. But those who met me were born again. Even those whose faces had been dark, after hearing the word, had faces that shone brightly, and they rejoiced and did not know what to do with themselves.

All this while I have preached only the gospel of the water and the Spirit to you. Why have I done so? Because even without going so far as to say that Constantine altered the gospel of the water and the Spirit into the gospel of the cross, I hear all kinds of talk just for preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit. A certain pastor living in our region said that I was wrong, so I got angry and said, Let us meet once, and I met him.

When I said, I hear you said I was wrong, so speak, he said he was sorry. I asked, Is it something that can be settled by saying you are sorry? Give me your grounds; if you did wrong, why did you do it? He said that his church members had come to our church and heard my sermon, and since his church was a newly planted church with only a few people, they had all tried to pack up and move to our church. So, he said, in his great haste

he had spread the rumor that that church was wrong, and had even brought up an incident known to the world and made people stay put.

Since he said he was really sorry, I spoke. I said, Then you should have held on to them and told them not to go; why did you say our church was wrong? Now that you have met me, speak here and now—but he only kept saying he was sorry. I said, Would it do to kill a person and then say you are sorry? I said, Those people should have heard my sermon and received the remission of sin, but if you go around spreading rumors, these people will not try to hear my sermon—is that right or not?

I said, As a fellow pastor, should you not bow your head? I said, Is it not because you amount to no more than that, that you say we are wrong for fear of losing your church members? I said, If God is doing the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth and saving people through me, are you not hindering the work of God? Then he said he was sorry and that he would treat me to lunch, and asked me to go to some restaurant.

I said, I did not come to you because I had nowhere to eat. I said, Let me go to your church and preach, and you come to our church and preach. I said, Let us do it for just one week—Sunday morning and evening, Wednesday evening, and Friday, just four hours. I said, If you are right and I am wrong, let us find out for once who is right and who is wrong. If I preach for just four hours, I can settle it all. There were things like this and things like that.

Dear fellow believers, the gospel of the cross looks very similar to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but it is a pseudo-gospel. Did Jesus take charge of our sins on the cross? He had already borne the sin of the world and gone and died on the Cross. When did He bear it and go? He took charge of it

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when Jesus received baptism from John. He bore it and went at that time.

People ask what is so important about that; is it not enough just to believe? It is not so. The human conscience is like a very fine scale. Even if one does not know, if something catches on the conscience, it cannot be accepted. Only a person whose conscience has rotted through passes it as it is. A person whose conscience is truly pure cannot do so. Every time he commits sin, he goes to the cross and repents and asks for his sins to be washed away. But when it is repeated once, twice, ten times, a hundred times, a thousand times, the conscience cannot accept it.

Isaiah testified like this to the work the Lord did when He came to this earth: *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we are healed" (Isaiah 53:5).* Why was He wounded, bruised, struck, chastised, and made to suffer? Because He received baptism. Because He took charge of our sins. That is why the conscience of our hearts obtains liberation. It obtains salvation. The heart obtains salvation from sin.

No one is a perfect person. To say that someone has a human touch is the same as saying that that person, too, is a person who is lacking. Some people think they are perfect and do not even speak but only put on airs of dignity.

A certain revival speaker, preaching, said, Rule over this corruptible flesh. It was a sermon telling people that when dawn comes they should strike their own bodies and say, Get up and go, you corruptible body, and that when they do not want to go to early morning prayer they should strike themselves and say, Get up and go. A certain deaconess of that church was discouraged as she listened to that sermon. That was because she

had already done that much and more. She had done early morning prayer and offered prayers of repentance and lived for the Lord, yet there was still sin in her heart and it was too hard. Trying to gain something in her heart through that revival meeting, she instead heard that she must try even harder, and lost the strength of her heart.

She said, I have believed everything just as you said, yet my sins have not disappeared and there is no peace in my heart, so what on earth is this? She said, I cannot do any better than this. She was in despair, saying, Until now I have never missed early morning prayer and I have served the Lord, but I cannot do any better. Then she met me, who believes in and preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and as she listened to the sermon her heart came alive and her faith came alive. There is such a person, who obtained peace in her heart, received the remission of sin, and obtained salvation.

The one thing missing from the Apostles' Creed

Dear fellow believers, you and I were all like that. By whom were we deceived? We were deceived by Satan the Devil. The Lord prepared this salvation and the kingdom of heaven, which were completed between A.D. 1 and A.D. 33. But who altered this gospel of salvation? Who kept people from going to the kingdom of heaven? A man called Constantine committed that deed through the Council of Nicaea in A.D. 325.

If you look at the Apostles' Creed, it says, "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." This is right, is it not? It is right that the almighty God made this universe, is it not? It says, "And in Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord." It is right that Jesus came as our Savior and saved us, is it not? It

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says, “Who was conceived by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary.” Is that not right? He was born through the body of the virgin Mary in order to come to this earth, was He not? It says, “Suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died.” Is that not right?

Then what is missing? It ought to say, born of the Virgin Mary, received baptism from John the Baptist and took charge of our sins, and then suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died. But Jesus’ baptism is missing from the Apostles’ Creed.

All the rest is right, but they took out the core. This is what is called alteration. Dear fellow believers, once something is altered, it is the end. The gospel of the cross was made in A.D. 325, and it has come down to today, the year 2022. The gospel the apostles believed in the time of the early church was the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But that gospel was altered into the gospel of the cross, and people have been deceived for about 1,700 years until now. People have been deceived about the word of the Bible, the word Jesus spoke, for about 1,700 years. And so, since sin does not disappear even though people believe the gospel of the cross, they become anti-Christians.

Even if I want to be faithful for the Lord, I have too many troubles of my own. The point is, how can I believe in Jesus and be faithful when there is sin in my heart and there is no peace in my heart? That is how it has come to this state today. However much one shouts, it is of no use. If I went out with a loudspeaker and shouted, they would call me a madman. I need only preach quietly to you like this, translate it into documents, and make it known to the whole world. I need only put out books.

Those who will read, read; those who do not want to read, do not read. Those who will believe, believe; those who will not believe, do not believe. Those who will be stubborn are stubborn, and those who will yield their stubbornness yield it. Faith is

freedom. Concerning the last age, it is said, *"He who is unjust, let him be unjust still; he who is filthy, let him be filthy still; he who is righteous, let him be righteous still; he who is holy, let him be holy still" (Revelation 22:11)*. It is the final harvest. Now those who will believe, believe, and those who will not believe, do not believe.

Be buried together with the Lord in the empty tomb of our hearts

But we must at least make it known. The man of Arimathea is a very noble man. The nation of Israel places corpses in rock tombs, and when they have decayed, they set the bones aside beside them and bury all the members of the household there generation after generation. But Joseph buried Jesus in an empty tomb, a new tomb, in which no one had ever been buried.

Dear fellow believers, you and I have never once died by faith and been buried in the tomb of our hearts. We must be buried together with Jesus in the heart of faith of you and me, in the tomb of faith. We must die once. We have already died together with Christ. We must rise again together with Christ. We must know it and acknowledge it.

Dear fellow believers, it was said that the man of Arimathea was one who was waiting for the kingdom of God. If we are those who are waiting for the kingdom of God, we must receive baptism together with Christ, die on the cross together with Him, be buried together with Him in the tomb of our hearts, be buried together with Him in the tomb of faith, and then rise again together with Christ. Dear fellow believers, do you not want to do so? Do you not hope to do so? I hope that you will all become such people.

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I have died together with the Lord. Now I will live for Christ, live together with Christ, and rise again together with Christ. All of you are the same. Dear fellow believers, while living on this earth, if we do not bury ourselves together with Christ in the tomb of faith in our hearts, we cannot follow the Lord. If by any chance the Antichrist comes while we are alive, we will not be able to die at that time. We might even betray Him. The Holy Spirit will powerfully stop us, saying that that is not the way.

Dear fellow believers, we must prepare our faith. It is believing with the heart. It is believing with the heart unto righteousness. It is dying together with Christ by believing with the heart. Faith is the evidence of things not seen. We come to live according to what we believe.

Even so, what more do we have to lay down for the Lord? We do not change. We do go a little beyond the limits of our flesh, but we cannot do so to the point where the flesh dies. But with the heart we can die. We can die together with Christ and rise again together with Him.

When we receive baptism together with Him, die together with Him, and rise again together with Him in our hearts, then whatever problem comes, if we pray to the Lord, the Lord gives us power and enables us to bear everything. We live by faith and go by faith. It is said that God took Enoch, who lived by faith, so that he did not taste death.

Become a spiritual Joseph of Arimathea

I do not have the enormous ambition of going without tasting death if the Lord comes while I am alive. I will serve the Lord together with you and, when the time comes, go without regret. In fact I am glad. Living for the Lord every day is a succession

of hard work. I cannot even die on my own. I must do what is necessary for you and supply you with the word, and prepare one by one the things you need in the flesh. That work of enabling you to live is my work.

What Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth was also like that. He said, My Father works, and I also work. If you look at John chapter 4, Jesus was preaching the word to the Samaritan woman. At that time the disciples brought Him the bread they had gone into the town and bought. But the Lord said, I have food to eat of which you do not know. The disciples wondered, We did not give Him anything to eat, so who brought Him something? The food the Lord was speaking of was not bread. That work of preaching the word to one soul and doing the will of Him who sent Him was precisely the Lord's food.

Dear fellow believers, for us too, the work of serving the Lord becomes our food. That work of serving the Lord that you and I are doing now becomes the food of our spirits. Even though we have faith, if we do not do the Lord's work, we end up doing absurd things. But when we do the Lord's work, we feel a sense of accomplishment. Our hearts are glad. The Holy Spirit in our hearts is satisfied. Though the flesh is weary, the Holy Spirit gives joy to our hearts.

Through my serving like this, many souls have benefited. We all come to such a place. I give thanks. I hope you will become spiritual Josephs of Arimathea. I have finished the word. ✉

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Sermon 10 by Paul C. Jong

Why did the women who came from Galilee follow Jesus?

< Luke 23:55-56 >

"And the women who had come with Him from Galilee followed after, and they observed the tomb and how His body was laid. Then they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And they rested on the Sabbath according to the commandment."

The women of Galilee who followed Him even to the tomb

Today's passage says that the women who had come with Jesus from Galilee followed after and observed how His body was laid. The women of Galilee did so in order to know where Jesus' body was laid. And it says that they returned home and prepared spices and fragrant oils.

These were the women who had kept following Jesus from the Sea of Galilee. They followed Him when Jesus performed the miracle of the five loaves and two fish. They followed Him when He taught on the mountain and when He performed signs and wonders. They were people who followed after Him wherever He went.

When Jesus died hanging on the cross, they stood at a

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distance and watched the whole scene. The Sabbath of the Jews begins at sunset on Friday and lasts until sunset on Saturday. Therefore Jesus' body had to be buried before the Sabbath began. That is because once the Sabbath comes, no work can be done. One can neither work nor hold a burial.

So Joseph of Arimathea went to Pilate and asked for the body of Jesus. Before the Sabbath began, he took the body down from the cross. He cleansed it, prepared it for burial, clothed it in white, and wrapped the whole body in cloth. And he laid it in his own rock tomb.

The women who had followed Jesus from Galilee watched that scene. Watching the whole scene attentively, they saw Jesus buried in the tomb, and then returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils. And as soon as the Sabbath ended, at dawn on the first day after the Sabbath, they went to the tomb.

When they went to the tomb, the stone door had been moved away and the body was gone, and a great commotion arose. Who were the ones who went to the tomb at dawn? They were the women who had followed Jesus from Galilee.

Why did they follow Jesus?

Then why would they have followed Jesus? We need to think about this question for a moment. Among those who followed Jesus there were many disciples and many other people. But why did these women who came from Galilee follow Jesus?

They saw Jesus say, It is finished, and die on the Cross, and they watched everything, even the body being taken down and buried in the rock tomb. And they returned and prepared spices and fragrant oils, and went to the tomb at dawn on the first day after the Sabbath. It was in order to anoint the body with oil and

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pile up spices around the body so that it would not give off the smell of decay and so that no worms would breed. They prepared very meticulously.

Why did they follow Jesus so much? Who told them to follow Jesus? Now Jesus had been arrested, nailed to the cross, and made an object of people's mockery. It was a situation in which, if things went wrong, they too could suffer great harm.

Yet without reckoning such things, they followed all the way to the place where Jesus' body was, and tried to do that work. They watched attentively and prepared. Those steps of theirs mean that they believed in Jesus and also that they loved Him.

Although Jesus had died, they could not abandon and turn away from the One they loved. They did so in order to do their best, even though He had died, to anoint Him with spices and fragrant oils and preserve Him well.

Then what led them to that place? The first reason is that these women loved Jesus. There is a reason they followed Him even after Jesus had died. It is because in ordinary times Jesus had treated them just like a mother. He had embraced, resolved, and loved their souls, their faults, and their problems.

When Jesus died hanging on the cross, the veil of the temple was torn from the top, and the way by which believers can enter the kingdom of heaven was opened.

When these women thought of Jesus, what kind of Person would they have regarded Him as? They regarded Him as the One who accepted everything of theirs and resolved all their problems. They regarded Him as the One who did not lay their sins to their charge but took charge of the problem of those sins by receiving baptism from John. And they regarded Him as that Jesus who had died in their place and was now buried in the tomb. That is why they were following Jesus.

Otherwise, could they have done so? It was a time when even

Jesus' disciples were hiding in fear. That bold Peter and the disciples had gone into some house and were hiding. Yet the women—Mary Magdalene, Joanna, the other Mary, and others—went with spices and fragrant oils. When they got there, the door of the rock tomb was open, and the linen that had wrapped Jesus' body was folded neatly at the head, but the body was not there.

So they wept and asked to be told where our Lord's body had been moved, saying that they would go and bring Him back. At that time two men in shining garments stood beside them and said as follows: *"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee" (Luke 24:5–6)*. Hearing that, they returned and told the eleven apostles.

Think about why these women followed and loved Jesus. When you deal with your father or mother, why do you feel compassion and love for your parents? It is because when you were in pain, they shared that pain with you, embraced you, and resolved it. It is because your parents resolved all the problems you caused.

So when you think of your mother or father, such love remains in your heart, and you love them not by calculating gain and loss but because that love is so great. Because everything is contained in that one word mother, you respect, love, follow, and serve your mother.

What if your parents had never loved you? If they had not done the work of taking your problems on as their own and resolving them so that their child would not be hurt, would love remain in your heart? You would have no tender feelings toward your parents.

The women of Galilee were the same. When Jesus was nailed and His body was taken down and laid out, they followed at a

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distance and watched as the body was cleansed, prepared for burial, and moved to the rock tomb. And having prepared spices and fragrant oils, they went to the tomb at dawn on the first day after the Sabbath. Seeing that Jesus was not in the tomb, they went to the disciples and told them that Jesus had risen.

Because we know Jesus' love, we love Him, follow Him, and serve Him

I am telling you this because I want to ask why you and I also follow Jesus. There is surely a reason we follow Jesus.

Jesus did not lay to our charge the problem of the wrongs and sins we commit on this earth. He told us to lay all of that on Him, and He received baptism from John and embraced the whole problem of our sins. And He went to the cross, received the judgment for those sins in our place, and died, and so opened the door of the kingdom of heaven. Therefore we love Jesus, and because we have known and received that love, we come to follow the Lord.

We have become those who cannot but follow Jesus. You and I follow the Lord because He loved us and did not lay our problems to our charge but resolved them all. Because we know that love, we love Jesus, follow Him, and serve Him.

We have received the remission of sin by faith. Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so did the work of saving us. He did not lay to our charge our problems, the problem of death, the problem of sin, and the problem of being judged. Even the curse, suffering, and calamity we were to suffer, Jesus Himself dealt with entirely.

What if the Lord had not done that work for us? The responsibility for the shortcomings of you and me, for our sins,

and for the problems we have caused would all be ours. If we had to take responsibility for and resolve all our problems ourselves, there would not be a single day, while living on this earth, when a smile would come to our lips.

That is because it is so fearful, and because if we do even the slightest wrong we must receive the punishment for it. We too, while living on this earth, do wrong at times and have things we must take responsibility for, and there are many wrongs we commit knowingly or unknowingly. If we had to take responsibility for all of that, where would there be a day to smile?

We would only be afraid and trembling. We would even be driven to the point of having to harm others in order to hide our own wrongs. How fearful is that? We are people who cannot but be so.

The problem of our wrongs and sins, the problem of death, and the problem of going to hell were originally what we had to take responsibility for. But Jesus received baptism from John and took charge of and bore all the wrongs and problems we committed. And by receiving all the judgment on the Cross, He Himself took full responsibility even for our death, even for the punishment of hell.

That is why we love Jesus. Like the women of Galilee who appear here, we cannot but love Him, cannot but follow Him, and cannot but respect Him. Because the Lord loved us, we have become those who cannot but love the Lord and cannot but follow the Lord. If the Lord had not loved us first, if the Lord had not taken responsibility for our problems, we could not follow Jesus.

What does it mean that the women of Galilee followed the Lord? It means that they knew that Jesus had become their Savior. It means that they also knew that Jesus was suffering because of them. Jesus' eleven disciples also knew it in the same way.

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How is it with you? Are you following the Lord? While following the Lord, are there not times when it is too hard, when at times you want to give up, and when you feel regret, wondering what your life is? There are many such times, and many hard times. But because the Lord gave us His love and took responsibility for all our problems and resolved them all, we cannot but follow the Lord.

Jesus took full responsibility for our wrongs and shortcomings

Jesus asked Peter. He asked, Do you love Me? Do you love Me more than these? When Peter answered, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You," He said, *"Feed My lambs" (John 21:15)*. When He asked again, Peter gave the same answer, and He said, *"Tend My sheep."* It means to rebuke what is wrong and correct it, and to lead them well so that they do not go down the wrong way. When He asked a third time, Peter gave the same answer, and He said, *"Feed My sheep" (John 21:17)*.

Why did Jesus ask Peter as many as three times whether he loved Him more than these? Because Peter had strongly denied Jesus three times.

Jesus said that tomorrow He would be arrested and nailed to the cross. Then Peter said, Even if everyone abandons the Lord, I will not abandon You; I will follow You. But when it actually happened, he could not do so.

He had said he would not deny Him, but while Jesus was being questioned in the courtyard of the high priest's house, he was watching from a distance, warming himself at the fire. At that time a servant girl who worked at the court came and said, You also were with Jesus of Galilee. Then he denied it, saying,

No, I absolutely do not know that man. When other people came and said they had seen him with Jesus, he even went so far as to deny it, saying, I do not know that man.

Peter was always pricked in his heart by the fact that he had denied Him. He had the thought, He loved me so much, so how could I have denied Him three times?

But Jesus came to him and asked three times in a row, Do you love Me more than these? And as He did so, He said, Feed My sheep; tend My sheep; feed My sheep. What could this question mean? It is that He does not lay on Peter the responsibility for what Peter did wrong, but asks him, Did I not take charge of even that sin?

He is saying, Before I hung on the cross, as I performed the Passover rite, did I not say, This is My body which is for you; take, eat; and, This is My blood which is shed for many; take, drink?

After performing that rite, Jesus poured water into a basin and washed the disciples' feet. When He washed Peter's feet, Peter drew back, saying, *"Lord, are You washing my feet?"* Then Jesus said, *"What I am doing you do not understand now, but you will know after this" (John 13:7)*. When Peter said, *"You shall never wash my feet!" (John 13:8)*, Jesus said, *"If I do not wash you, you have no part with Me."*

Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins Peter did wrong by receiving baptism from John. It means, I have taken full responsibility for what you were to be responsible for. It means, I have resolved all of it—the punishment you were to receive, hell, and all that responsibility. Jesus took charge of all those sins with the baptism He received from John and resolved them all with His death. He resolved them all by shedding His blood.

Jesus received and resolved all the sins, all the responsibility, and all the shame that catch on our consciences. If we know and

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believe that fact, we cannot but follow Jesus. That is why we love Jesus.

What if Jesus had not taken full responsibility for the wrongs and shortcomings of you and me? If He had shifted all those shortcomings onto us, we would love Him only when being saved, and after being saved we would all leave. But when we come to know it, the Lord has taken full responsibility for all the sins, shortcomings, and wrongs of our whole lives.

Is that not so? Every time your wrongs are pointed out, because that pointing out is hard and shameful, you struggle not to admit it. But once you admit it, did Jesus not take charge of that sin, too, with the baptism He received from John? Even that sin in which you do wrong Jesus already took charge of when He received baptism from John, and took full responsibility for. He took full responsibility for it by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross. That is why we cannot but love Jesus and cannot but follow Jesus. We are those who cannot but follow.

We follow and serve the Lord because the Lord loved us first

So we are following Jesus because we love Him. That is also why the women of Galilee here followed Jesus. They could have thought that since He had now died, it was all over. Since Joseph of Arimathea had buried Him in his own rock tomb, what could women who had no money and nothing at all have done for Him? Yet they returned and prepared fragrant oils and spices, and came to the tomb on the first day after the Sabbath.

How is it with us? While following Jesus, do you perhaps have the feeling that you want to leave because things do not suit your will? But if you truly believe in Jesus, if you believe that

Jesus is the One who took responsibility for all your problems and resolved them all, could you not follow Him? Could you leave?

Whether to leave or not to leave is the freedom of you and me. But even if we leave, there is no better way out. If we know this fact, we cannot leave. And we cannot but love Him. Is it that Jesus does not even love us, and we have made up a Jesus and are serving Him while saying that we love Him?

It is written in the First Epistle of John as follows: *"In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins" (1 John 4:10)*. Because He loved us first and took full responsibility for our problems, we love the Lord and follow Him.

That we now follow and serve the Lord is because the Lord loved us first. When we follow the Lord, does the Lord just keep silent? When we pray He answers, and in order to supply what we need in due season He is blessing our surroundings and circumstances very meticulously. That is how we are living.

Do you think we are living because we do well and run our business well? In fact it is not so. The Lord serves us far more than we serve the Lord. He supplies us more so that we may bear more spiritual fruit. He gives us more blessings so that we may bear more fruit.

Therefore, if we know the Lord's love, we cannot but follow the Lord. And we cannot but love the Lord. Today's passage is telling us precisely that word.

The disciples who followed Jesus were all, like you and me, those who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. They too followed Him because the Lord had resolved all their problems. Because He gave them more blessings, they followed and loved Him even to the point of martyrdom. If we too truly know the Lord's love, if we know that the Lord is the Savior of

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you and me, we have become those who have received the blessing of having no choice but to follow the Lord. Let us be those who give thanks to God by faith. I will close the word. ✉

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CHAPTER

24

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Luke Chapter 24

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

Luke chapter 24 begins with the scene in which the women hear the news of Jesus' resurrection at the empty tomb, and shows the process in which the two disciples of Emmaus and the apostles come to realize the meaning of the Cross and the resurrection through the Scriptures and receive the mission of preaching the gospel, up to the ascension of Jesus. We will examine each text in turn through the general interpretation of its context and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

1. The empty tomb and the news of the resurrection (24:1–12)

"Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be

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crucified, and the third day rise again."' And they remembered His words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened."

General interpretation of the text

At dawn on the first day of the week, the women go to Jesus' tomb with the spices they had prepared. But the stone that had blocked the tomb had been moved away, and the body of Jesus was not to be seen.

Two men in shining garments appear and ask, *"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"* They remind the women of the word Jesus spoke when He was in Galilee, that He would suffer, be crucified, and rise again on the third day.

The women remember Jesus' words and deliver the news of the resurrection to the apostles. Although the testimony of women was socially held in low regard at that time, Luke records the women as the first witnesses of the resurrection.

The apostles regard the women's words as an idle tale, but Peter runs to the tomb. He sees only the linen cloths lying there and goes back marveling. He did not understand everything from the empty tomb alone, but the fact that everything had not ended with Jesus' death begins to be revealed.

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The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—When we remember the word, we come to believe in the resurrection

At dawn on the first day of the week, the women went to Jesus' tomb with the spices they had prepared. They loved Jesus, but they did not go there believing that the Lord would rise again. They went to anoint the body of the dead Jesus with spices.

But the stone that had blocked the tomb had already been rolled away, and Jesus' body was not to be seen. The two angels said, *"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"* and made them remember the word Jesus had spoken, that He would be crucified and rise again on the third day.

The women did not believe merely by seeing the empty tomb; they remembered the word Jesus had spoken beforehand. Faith does not come from one's own expectations or feelings; it begins with knowing and believing the work of salvation the Lord has spoken of.

When Jesus received baptism from John, He took charge of all our sins. Bearing those sins, He was judged on the Cross and rose from the dead. The empty tomb shows that Jesus' work of salvation did not fail and that He overcame the power of sin and death.

But the apostles regarded the women's words as idle tales and did not believe them. Even when one sees the empty tomb, if one does not realize through the word what it means, it is hard to reach complete faith.

2. The two disciples on the way to Emmaus (24:13–24)

"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?' Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?' And He said to them, 'What things?' So they said to Him, 'The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.'"

General interpretation of the text

Two disciples talk about what has happened to Jesus as they go from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The risen Jesus draws near and

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goes with them, but they do not recognize Him.

The disciple named Cleopas says that Jesus was a prophet mighty before God and the people, and that they had expected Him to be the one who would save Israel. But because the religious leaders had Jesus crucified, their hope seemed to have collapsed.

Though the women had reported the empty tomb and the message of the angels, and some disciples had gone to check the tomb, they still could not accept the meaning of the resurrection.

The two disciples do not recognize Jesus even though He is walking with them. This shows not merely a problem of the eyes but a problem of spiritual perception, of failing to understand the Cross and the resurrection.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must see the Cross as the fulfillment of salvation

The two disciples going to Emmaus did not recognize Jesus even though He drew near and went with them. The fundamental reason their eyes were veiled was that they did not see Jesus' death as the fulfillment of the salvation written in the Scriptures.

The two disciples knew Jesus as a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and the people. They also expected that Jesus would redeem Israel. But in the salvation they expected, the idea of restoring a worldly kingdom and of practical liberation occupied a large place. When Jesus died on the Cross, their expectations collapsed as well.

They had also heard the women's testimony about the empty tomb, but they could not believe with the heart the fact that Jesus had risen. If one thinks of the Cross as a failure, one cannot

understand the resurrection either. Only when we know why Jesus received baptism and why He had to die on the Cross does the meaning of the resurrection also become clear.

Because Jesus had taken charge of our sins with His baptism, He received the judgment for those sins on the Cross. Therefore the Cross was not Jesus' failure or defeat but the righteous judgment of God for saving sinners. The resurrection is the evidence that this salvation was perfectly accomplished.

3. He explains the Scriptures and reveals Himself (24:25–35)

"Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' And He went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?' So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread."

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General interpretation of the text

Jesus rebukes the two disciples for being slow to believe the words of the prophets, and explains that it was fitting for the Christ to suffer and to enter into glory.

Jesus expounds the things concerning Himself from the writings of Moses and all the prophets. This does not simply mean that the whole Old Testament mentions Jesus directly; He showed that God's work of salvation was directed toward the Messiah who would suffer and obtain glory.

When the two disciples eat with Jesus, He blesses the bread, breaks it, and gives it to them. At that moment their eyes are opened and they recognize Jesus, but Jesus vanishes from their sight.

They confess that their hearts burned when Jesus explained the Scriptures on the road. They return to Jerusalem at once and tell the other disciples that they met Jesus and recognized Him when He broke the bread.

Faith in the resurrection is not merely information about the empty tomb; it leads to realizing the meaning of the Cross and the resurrection through the Scriptures, believing in the living Jesus, and delivering that news to others.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must realize the perfect salvation through the Scriptures

Jesus rebuked the two disciples as people slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken. And beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, He explained in detail the words concerning the Christ written in the Scriptures.

What the disciples needed was not new rumors or more amazing miracles. It was to realize, through the Scriptures already written, that the suffering and resurrection of the Christ were God's plan of salvation.

In the sacrifices of the Old Testament, the sinner laid his hands on the sacrificial offering and passed his sins on to it, and then the offering shed its blood and received the judgment. This promise of salvation was fulfilled through Jesus in the New Testament. Jesus took charge of our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind; bearing the sin of the world, He shed His blood on the Cross and rose from the dead.

Therefore, to know the Scriptures rightly is not to look at the Cross alone by itself or to emphasize the resurrection alone. We must connect Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection with one another and know them as the one perfect salvation God has accomplished.

The hearts of the two disciples burned when Jesus opened the Scriptures to them. Afterward, when He broke the bread and gave it to them, their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus. Those who come to know the risen Lord through the word rise up from the place of discouragement. The two disciples, too, returned to Jerusalem at once and testified to the risen Lord they had met.

4. The risen Jesus who appeared to the disciples (24:36–43)

"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

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And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence."

General interpretation of the text

While the disciples are talking about what happened at Emmaus, Jesus appears in their midst and says, *"Peace to you."*

The disciples are afraid, thinking that Jesus is a spirit. Jesus shows them His hands and His feet and tells them to touch Him themselves. He says that a spirit does not have flesh and bones, but that He has them.

When the disciples still find it hard to believe because of joy and amazement, Jesus takes a piece of broiled fish and eats it in their presence. This shows that the resurrection was not merely a hope that arose in the hearts of the disciples or an event in which only Jesus' soul came back to life.

The risen Jesus is the same person as before His death, but He is in a new state of life that is no longer under the dominion of death. Luke emphasizes that the resurrection was a real and bodily event.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—Jesus rose again in a real body

Jesus appeared in the midst of the disciples and spoke peace to them, but the disciples were terrified and frightened and thought the Lord was a spirit. Jesus showed them His hands and His feet and told them to touch Him themselves. A spirit does not have flesh and bones, but the risen Jesus had flesh and bones. The Lord also ate broiled fish in the presence of the disciples.

Jesus' resurrection is not a symbol meaning that His ideals or His teaching came back to life in the hearts of the disciples. The very Jesus who died on the Cross rose from the dead in a real body.

The wounds that remained in Jesus' hands and feet were the evidence that He had really received the judgment for our sins. Jesus could say, *"Peace to you"* because He had already taken charge of our sins and received all the judgment for them.

The risen Jesus does not die again but lives forever. To those who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the same resurrection of the body is promised. Not only the souls of the saints are saved; when the Lord comes again, our mortal bodies, too, will rise again as glorious bodies that do not decay.

Therefore those who believe in the resurrection do not think that everything ends with death. Even amid present weakness and suffering, they look toward the eternal new life they will enjoy with the Lord.

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5. The fulfillment of the Scriptures and the mission of the disciples (24:44–48)

"Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.'"

General interpretation of the text

Jesus says that all things written concerning Him in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. This means that the whole Old Testament, within God's plan of salvation, points toward Jesus' death and resurrection.

Jesus opens the hearts of the disciples so that they may understand the Scriptures. It was not enough for the disciples merely to have seen Jesus' resurrection; they had to understand the meaning of that event through the Scriptures.

The Christ suffers and rises from the dead on the third day, and repentance that leads to the remission of sin is to be preached in His name to all nations. This gospel begins at Jerusalem and expands beyond the boundaries of nations and regions.

The disciples are witnesses of all these things. A witness is not someone who conveys his own thoughts but someone who faithfully conveys the death and resurrection of Jesus, which he

himself saw, heard, and experienced.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must preach the gospel of the remission of sin to all nations

Jesus said that all the words written concerning Him in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled. And He opened the hearts of the disciples so that they could understand the Scriptures.

The center of the Scriptures does not lie in man becoming righteous by his own deeds. It lies in the fact that God saves sinners by sending the Christ to take charge of their sins, to receive the judgment, and to rise from the dead.

Jesus said that the Christ would suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and that repentance that leads to the remission of sin would be preached in His name to all nations.

This repentance does not mean shedding tears every time one sins and washing away one's sins by repeatedly asking for the remission of sin. It is turning back from the wrong way of thinking that one can solve the problem of sin with one's own good deeds and religious efforts. We must also turn back from the error of believing only in the Cross while leaving out the fact that Jesus took charge of our sins with His baptism.

We must know and believe with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit: that Jesus took charge of all our sins with His baptism, received the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead. This is the gospel that leads to the remission of sin, and the word the disciples had to preach to all nations.

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6. The command to wait for the Holy Spirit (24:49)

"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus says that He will send to the disciples what the Father has promised. This refers to the Holy Spirit.

The disciples had witnessed Jesus' resurrection and learned the word, but they were not to start their mission at once with their own wisdom and strength alone. They had to wait in Jerusalem until they received the power that comes from on high.

The preaching of the gospel and the mission of the Church cannot be carried out by human zeal or ability alone. The disciples must become witnesses of Jesus by receiving the power and guidance of the Holy Spirit. This promise leads on to the descent of the Holy Spirit in the Book of Acts.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have received the remission of sin

Jesus said to the disciples that He would send what the Father had promised. The disciples had to stay in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. This promise leads on to the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost in the Book of Acts.

The Holy Spirit is not someone we receive merely through

mystical experiences or emotional excitement. When a sinner knows and believes the fact that Jesus has removed all his sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so receives the remission of sin, the Holy Spirit comes upon that cleansed heart.

The purpose for which the power of the Holy Spirit was given to the disciples was not to have them boast of their own spiritual power. It was to have them testify to the risen Jesus and the gospel of the remission of sin in Jerusalem, in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.

The Holy Spirit is not one who creates the gospel anew; He testifies to the salvation Jesus has already accomplished. He also helps those who have received the remission of sin to realize the gospel, preach it boldly, and serve souls in union with the Church.

7. The ascension of Jesus (24:50–53)

"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."

General interpretation of the text

Jesus leads the disciples to the vicinity of Bethany and lifts up His hands and blesses them. While blessing them, He is parted from them and goes up into heaven.

The ascension does not mean that Jesus abandoned the

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disciples and went far away. It means that Jesus was exalted by God and reigns as King, and that the time had come for the disciples to begin their mission through the Holy Spirit.

The disciples worship Jesus and return to Jerusalem with great joy. Right after Jesus' death they had fallen into fear and sorrow, but after experiencing the resurrection and the ascension they praise God with joy and assurance.

The Gospel of Luke begins in the temple and ends in the temple. But the story does not end completely here. After receiving the Holy Spirit in Jerusalem, the disciples come to preach the gospel of Jesus to the world, and that account continues in the Book of Acts.

The perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—We must live waiting for the ascended Lord

Jesus led the disciples out as far as Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them. And while He was blessing them, He went up into heaven.

The disciples did not fall into sorrow even though Jesus had departed. They returned to Jerusalem with great joy and praised God. Those who had scattered in the face of the Cross and grieved on the road to Emmaus were transformed, after meeting the risen Lord, into witnesses with joy and hope.

The ascended Jesus is alive even now and is at the right hand of the throne of God. And He will come again at the time He has promised. At that time He will raise again the bodies of those who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and lead them into the eternal kingdom of God.

Therefore the saints must not live thinking only of the circumstances of the world and the cares of life. They must think of the Lord who is coming again, the resurrection of the body, and the eternal kingdom of God. When they have this hope, they can keep their faith even in the face of present suffering and death, and they can know that their labor for the gospel is not in vain.

Conclusion of Part 1—The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Luke chapter 24 conveys

Luke chapter 24 begins with sorrow and unbelief but ends with joy and praise. The women who had forgotten Jesus' words remembered them; the two disciples who were going down to Emmaus in disappointment came to understand the Scriptures and returned to Jerusalem. The disciples who had been afraid met the risen Lord and became witnesses of the gospel.

Jesus' resurrection must not be separated from the Cross, nor must the Cross be separated from Jesus' baptism. Jesus took charge of all our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for sin on the Cross, and rose from the dead. This is the perfect salvation He accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Jesus' resurrection is not merely an amazing event of the past. It gives us the remission of sin and new life, and gives us the sure hope that our bodies, too, will rise again in the future. Those who have received the remission of sin by knowing this gospel and believing it with the heart must look toward the resurrection and the second coming, and preach the word of the remission of sin to all the souls who do not yet know the gospel. ✉

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

Jesus who rose again as He had said and completed salvation

Beginning the sermon

In Part 1 we examined each passage of Luke chapter 24 side by side through the general interpretation of the text and the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Now, following the flow of the same text, we will look closely at the fact that Jesus rose again as He had said, at His opening the hearts of the disciples so that they could understand the Scriptures, and at the mission He entrusted to them to preach the gospel of the remission of sin to all nations.

The women who found the empty tomb, the two disciples going to Emmaus, Jesus who appeared in a real body among the disciples, His opening the hearts of the disciples so that they could understand the Scriptures and entrusting the gospel of the remission of sin to them, and the event of His ascension are connected with one another in a single flow. These words show the fact that Jesus took charge of our sins with His baptism, was judged on the Cross, and then really rose again and completed salvation, and that He has given the remission of sin and the hope of the resurrection to those who believe this gospel.

The expository sermons that follow trace the flow of the text and examine how the gospel of the water and the Spirit—by

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which Jesus took charge of the sins of mankind with the baptism He received from John and completed salvation with the Cross and the resurrection—is testified to in each passage.

Jesus who rose again as He had said

"Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."' And they remembered His words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened" (Luke 24:1–12).

"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"

At dawn on the first day of the week, the women who had

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followed Jesus from Galilee went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared. Because they knew the grace of Jesus, who had loved them first and taken charge of the problem of sin and death for them, they had followed Him even to the place of the Cross and the burial and tried to serve Him to the end. But the fact that they went with spices means that they thought Jesus' body would still be in the tomb. Though they loved the Lord, they had not yet firmly established in their hearts His word that He would rise again on the third day.

When the women arrived at the tomb, the stone that had blocked the entrance had been rolled away, and when they went inside, Jesus' body was not to be seen. Jesus had really died on the Cross and been wrapped in linen and buried in the tomb, but as He had said, He overcame death and rose again. The stone that was rolled away, the empty tomb, and the linen cloths that Peter confirmed afterward testify that Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection are facts accomplished in history.

The two men in shining garments said to the troubled women, *"Why do you seek the living among the dead?"* Jesus was no longer lying in the tomb; He was the Lord who had overcome sin and death and risen. The women had come to serve the body of the dead Jesus, but now they heard the news of the resurrection of the living Jesus. Faith does not remain in sorrow for the Jesus who died; it is believing in the Savior who rose again and lives forever.

"They remembered His words"

The two men declared, *"He is not here, but is risen!"* and told them to remember the word Jesus had spoken when He was in Galilee. The meaning of the empty tomb became clear when

they remembered the promise of the Cross and the resurrection that Jesus had spoken beforehand. The Lord had already said that He must be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and rise again on the third day. The betrayal by men and the crucifixion were evil deeds, but no evil could overthrow the will God had established to save sinners.

Before He was crucified, Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Bearing the sins He had taken charge of with His baptism, He was delivered into the hands of sinners and died shedding His blood on the Cross, thereby receiving all the judgment for sin, and He rose again on the third day, as He had said.

Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection are one righteous work of God that saves sinners. Through His baptism our sins passed on to Jesus; through the blood and death of the Cross the price of those sins was paid; and through the resurrection the eternal life that overcame sin and death was revealed. The resurrection testifies that the work of salvation, in which Jesus took charge of all our sins and was judged, was perfectly accomplished.

After rising from the dead, Jesus went up into heaven, and He is alive even now. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of all their sins and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and they obtain eternal life and will take part in the resurrection of the body in the future.

The women who delivered the news of the resurrection

When the women remembered Jesus' words, they returned from the tomb and delivered the news of the resurrection to the

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eleven apostles and to all the rest. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the women with them had watched Jesus' death and burial, and now they became concrete witnesses who had confirmed the empty tomb and heard the word of the resurrection. Those who had come to anoint the dead Jesus with spices were transformed into witnesses of the resurrection who proclaimed the risen Lord.

But the apostles regarded the women's words as idle tales and did not believe them. Even if one has listened to Jesus' words for a long time, if one does not believe those words with the heart, one is weighed down by the death and despair before one's eyes. Faith in the resurrection does not take human experience and thought as its standard; it is believing that Jesus accomplished exactly what He had said.

Peter arose and ran to the tomb and stooped down to look in. Jesus' body was not there; only the linen cloths remained. He confirmed the evidence of the empty tomb with his own eyes, but he went away marveling at what had happened, not yet realizing its meaning. Even a fact confirmed with the eyes reveals its saving meaning clearly only when it is received together with Jesus' word. Just as the women remembered the word and became witnesses of the resurrection, the disciples, too, would go on to meet the risen Lord and believe that word.

The saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit hold on not to their own circumstances and feelings but to the salvation Jesus accomplished as He had said. Jesus took charge of all our sins with His baptism, ended the judgment for those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us new life. Therefore the saints do not despair in the face of sin and death; they believe in the living Jesus and the hope of the resurrection, and preach the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world.

The Lord who turned the discouraged disciples back

"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?' Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?' And He said to them, 'What things?' So they said to Him, 'The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.' Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But

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they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' And He went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?' So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luke 24:13–35).

The two disciples going to Emmaus with sad faces

On the very day Jesus rose again, two disciples were leaving Jerusalem and going to Emmaus. They talked about the Cross and the empty tomb, but there was a look of sadness on their faces. They had expected Jesus to be the one who would redeem Israel, but when He died on the Cross, they thought their hope had ended as well. They even knew the news that the women had seen the empty tomb and heard the angels say that Jesus was alive, but they could not believe in the resurrection with the heart.

The risen Jesus drew near and went with them, but the eyes of the two were veiled, and they did not recognize Him. The Lord had already risen and was walking beside them. The text records that their eyes were restrained, and Jesus went on to expose their condition of being slow of heart to believe the words of the prophets. Hearts that interpreted their circumstances by their own thinking were discouraged even

while seeing what the Lord had accomplished as He had said, but Jesus enlightened their eyes and hearts with the word.

They described Jesus as a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people. They also said that they had hoped He was the one who would redeem Israel. But they had not yet realized God's will that the Christ would save not only Israel but all mankind from sin and judgment through the Cross. Even though they had heard the testimony about the empty tomb, they were held captive by the fact that they had not seen Jesus themselves, and they could not accept the resurrection.

"In all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself"

Jesus rebuked them, calling them *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken."* What they lacked was not new rumors or evidence but a heart that believed the word of God already written. For the Christ to suffer and enter into His glory was something that had to be fulfilled in God's plan of salvation. The Cross was not the failure of salvation but the way that gives life to sinners, and the resurrection was the glorious victory that showed that the Christ had overcome sin and death.

Beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, Jesus explained in detail the words concerning Himself written in all the Scriptures. The transfer of sin and the death and blood of the sacrificial offering recorded in the Law of Moses, and the suffering and glory of the Christ foretold by the prophets, all testified to Jesus Christ. That word of salvation was fulfilled in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, died shedding His blood on the Cross,

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and rose again on the third day.

The two disciples knew the facts about the Cross and the empty tomb, but they did not know that those events were the gospel that saves them. When Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, the scattered events were linked together into one salvation. To realize the word is to believe with the heart that Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection are the salvation that removed our sins and gave us eternal life.

"Did not our heart burn within us"

When they drew near to Emmaus, the two disciples constrained Jesus to stay with them, saying that the day was far spent. When Jesus went in with them, took bread, blessed it, broke it, and gave it to them, their eyes were opened and they recognized the Lord. The one who opened their eyes was the risen Lord, who had walked with them while explaining the word to them. Jesus made Himself known in the breaking of the bread, and the disciples realized that the word concerning the Cross and the empty tomb had really been fulfilled.

After Jesus vanished from their sight, the two disciples confessed that their hearts had burned while the Lord talked with them on the road and opened the Scriptures to them. This burning was the response of realization and faith that arose when the suffering and resurrection of the Christ were made plain by the word of the gospel. When they believed the word in their hearts, sorrow and discouragement retreated, and assurance and hope toward the living Lord arose.

The two rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem. Those who had left Jerusalem in disappointment went back to testify to the risen Lord. There the eleven apostles and those with

them were saying that the Lord had risen indeed and appeared to Simon. The two disciples, too, told what had happened on the road and how Jesus had made Himself known to them. Those who understand the Scriptures and believe in the resurrection turn back from the road of discouragement and become witnesses of the gospel.

Even those who have received the remission of sin can forget the Lord who is with them and have their hearts darkened if they are held captive by their own thoughts and the circumstances before their eyes. At such times the saints confirm again, before the word of the gospel, that Jesus has already taken charge of all their sins with His baptism and ended the judgment on the Cross. Establishing clearly in the heart the remission of sin that was completed once and for all is the faith that returns to the gospel.

Those who have confirmed within the gospel of the water and the Spirit that all their sins have already disappeared obtain boldness before God and walk with the living Lord, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. They do not see Jesus' Cross as a failure or a tragedy, but believe in it as the righteous salvation of God, who solved the whole problem of sin and death with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. Those who believe this gospel, even in discouragement, have their eyes and hearts enlightened by the word and recover the hope of the resurrection, and in union with the Church they preach the living Jesus and the completed gospel to the world.

Jesus who rose again in a real body

"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit.

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And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence" (Luke 24:36–43).

"Peace to you"

While the two disciples who had gone to Emmaus were telling how they had met the risen Jesus on the road and recognized the Lord when He broke the bread, Jesus Himself stood in their midst. They had heard the testimony of the women, the news of the empty tomb, and even the news that He had appeared to Simon, but when the disciples saw Jesus in person they were terrified and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit. Although He had spoken of the resurrection many times, doubt still remained in their hearts, weighed down by the reality of death.

The first word the risen Jesus proclaimed was *"Peace to you."* When Jesus was arrested, the disciples had scattered, and Peter had denied the Lord three times. But the risen Lord did not cast them out; He gave them the peace of salvation. This peace is the true peace enjoyed by those who have been reconciled to God because the judgment for sin has ended.

Jesus had already taken charge of all the sins of the disciples and of all mankind on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Bearing those sins, He died

shedding His blood on the Cross, thereby receiving all the judgment for sin, and He rose again on the third day and overcame sin and death. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed by Jesus' baptism, the blood and death of the Cross, and the resurrection, receive the remission of all their sins and enjoy peace with God.

"A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have"

Jesus asked, *"Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?"* Then He said, *"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see."* The one standing before the disciples was the very Jesus who had been crucified and died. By showing them His hands and His feet and letting them touch Him themselves, the Lord confirmed to them that the body that had died on the Cross had risen again.

Jesus said, *"A spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have."* Jesus' resurrection was not a matter of His soul alone continuing to exist or of Jesus living on in the memory of the disciples. It was the resurrection of a real body, in which the body that had really died on the Cross overcame the power of death and rose again. The disciples could see His hands and His feet and could touch His risen body.

"They gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence"

The disciples still did not believe for joy, and marveled. Because the resurrection was such a great and amazing thing, even while seeing the Lord before their eyes they could not fully

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accept the fact in their hearts. Jesus asked whether they had anything to eat, and then He took a piece of broiled fish and ate it in their presence. His showing them His flesh and bones and eating food clearly confirmed that the one before the disciples was Jesus, risen in a real body.

Jesus' resurrection shows that the salvation He accomplished with His baptism and the Cross completely overcame sin and death. Jesus took charge of sin with His baptism, paid the full price of that sin on the Cross, and then rose from the dead. Without the resurrection, neither the salvation that overcame sin and death nor the eternal life and resurrection of the body to be given to the saints could stand complete. Because Jesus really rose again as He had said, the salvation and the hope of resurrection of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are certain.

After rising again in a real body, Jesus went up into heaven and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Just as the Lord, whose body had died, rose again and began a new life, to those who have received the remission of sin and the Holy Spirit is promised a new life in which they will rise again with incorruptible bodies in the future and live with the Lord forever.

Therefore the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit do not regard death as the end of everything. They believe that Jesus, who rose again in a real body, is our Savior, and that our bodies, too, will rise again following His resurrection. The saints believe the written word rather than their own feelings and the circumstances before their eyes, and they enjoy peace with God in the fact that all their sins have disappeared through Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. And holding the hope of the resurrection and eternal new life, they preach the completed gospel of the water and the Spirit to the world.

The Lord who entrusted the gospel of the remission of sin

"Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.'" (Luke 24:44–49).

"He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures"

The risen Jesus reminded the disciples of the words He had already taught them while He was with them. All things written concerning Jesus in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms had to be fulfilled. Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection were not events that happened suddenly; they were the work of salvation that God had promised through the Scriptures and accomplished when the time came.

The disciples knew the Scriptures and had listened to Jesus' words for a long time, but they did not fully understand the meaning of the Cross and the resurrection. When Jesus opened their hearts, they came to realize the fact that the Scriptures testify to the Christ and the salvation He would accomplish. To

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understand the Scriptures rightly is not simply to accumulate much knowledge; it is to know who Jesus is and how He saved sinners.

The transfer of sin and the death and blood of the sacrificial offering shown in the Law of Moses, and the suffering and glory of the Christ recorded in the Prophets and the Psalms, were fulfilled in Jesus. Jesus took charge of the sins of all the people of the world on His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Bearing those sins, He died shedding His blood on the Cross, thereby receiving all the judgment for sin, and by rising from the dead on the third day He overcame sin and death.

The suffering of the Christ was not a failure suffered for lack of power. It was the suffering of salvation, in which Jesus, who had taken charge of sin, was judged in place of sinners. The resurrection on the third day, too, was not a story created by the expectations of the disciples but an event in which the written word of God was really fulfilled. Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection are the righteous saving work of God, who saved sinners.

"Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem"

Jesus said that repentance that leads to the remission of sin would be preached in His name. Repentance that leads to the remission of sin is turning back from the thought of washing away one's sins with one's own deeds and prayers of repentance, and believing the gospel that Jesus has already removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. Those who turn away from the thought that they are still sinners and from

their own righteousness, and accept the righteousness God has completed, receive the remission of all their sins.

To believe in the name of Jesus is not merely to call on His name but to believe what He has accomplished. It is to believe with the heart that Jesus took charge of all my sins with His baptism, was judged in my place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and became my Savior. By this faith a person is saved from all sins, becomes righteous, and obtains eternal life.

This gospel of the remission of sin had to be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Jesus' salvation is not a salvation given only to the Jews but a salvation for all the sinners of the whole world. Whatever nation or country they belong to, those who believe what Jesus accomplished with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection obtain the remission of sin and eternal life.

Jesus said to the disciples, *"You are witnesses of these things."* The disciples were people who had seen and heard Jesus' ministry, His death on the Cross, the empty tomb, and His resurrection in a real body. Now they had to preach to the world the facts they had seen and the gospel of salvation they had come to realize through the Scriptures. When they preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, those who hear and believe receive the remission of sin; if this gospel is not preached, people go on living with their sins as they are.

The authority to remit sins belongs to Jesus Christ, and the disciples preach the gospel He completed so that sinners may hear of salvation and believe. It is not the ability of man himself that removes sin; it is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished that washes away the sins of those who believe. Therefore those who have received the gospel must not keep this precious news of the remission of sin only within themselves but deliver it to other souls.

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"Until you are endued with power from on high"

This mission is not something accomplished by human wisdom and zeal. Jesus said that He would send what the Father had promised, and told them to stay in Jerusalem until they were endued with power from on high. What the Father had promised was the Holy Spirit. At Pentecost the disciples would be endued with the power of the Holy Spirit and preach the gospel of the resurrection and the remission of sin from Jerusalem toward all nations.

The Holy Spirit, who came at Pentecost, dwells in the hearts of those who have received the remission of all their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Those who have received the remission of sin receive the Holy Spirit as a gift and become children of God, and the Holy Spirit gives them, in their hearts, the power and wisdom to serve and preach the gospel.

Therefore the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are witnesses of the resurrection and people entrusted with the gospel of the remission of sin. Not relying on their own ability but on the power of the Holy Spirit who dwells in their hearts, the saints preach the truth that Jesus removed all sins with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. When this gospel that leads to the remission of sin is preached to all nations, those who believe are saved from sin, reconciled to God, and obtain eternal life.

The ascended Lord and the hope of the resurrection

"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed

them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen" (Luke 24:50–53).

The Lord who went up into heaven while blessing the disciples

The risen Jesus led the disciples out as far as Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them. The Lord did not abandon the disciples, who had fled in the face of the Cross and had been slow to believe in the resurrection. After opening their hearts so that they could understand the Scriptures and establishing them as witnesses who would preach the gospel of the remission of sin to all nations, He blessed them so that they would live within the salvation He had completed and the gospel ministry they were to carry out.

While Jesus was blessing the disciples, He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. The ascension is the event in which Jesus, who had died on the Cross, entered the glory of heaven after rising again in a real body. Jesus took charge of all the sins of the world by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, ended the judgment for sin by dying shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again on the third day and overcame sin and death. Having completed salvation, the Lord ascended and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

Jesus, who went up into heaven, is alive even now and reigns as the King of kings. Though the saints cannot see Jesus with the eyes of the flesh, they believe the written word and receive the rule and guidance of the living Lord at the right hand of God.

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The disciples who returned to Jerusalem with great joy

The disciples worshiped Jesus as He ascended. They did not regard Jesus as a dead prophet or a teacher to be respected; they believed in Him as the living Lord and God, who rose from the dead and went up into heaven. The disciples who had fled in fear in the face of the Cross and had not believed the news of the resurrection now became people who believed in Jesus' baptism, the Cross, the resurrection, and the ascension, and worshiped Him.

Even though Jesus had departed from before their eyes, the disciples returned to Jerusalem not with sorrow but with great joy. They believed that Jesus had really risen again and entered the glory of heaven, and that He would send the Holy Spirit He had promised. They also hoped that the Lord would come again and that they themselves would rise again and live with the Lord forever. Faith in the Lord who rose again and ascended changed the sorrow of parting into the joy of an eternal reunion.

The disciples' return to Jerusalem was an act of obedience to the Lord's word to stay in the city until they were endued with power from on high. They did not scatter according to their own thinking but waited for the Holy Spirit He had promised. The preaching of the gospel is not something begun by human wisdom and strength; it is the work of God accomplished by the power of the Holy Spirit.

The disciples were continually in the temple praising God. Their praise was thanksgiving for the fact that Jesus had taken charge of all sins, been judged on the Cross, and risen again and ascended to become the eternal Savior. Those who have received the remission of sin and the hope of the resurrection give thanks to God and worship Him, and in union with the saints they serve the gospel and the souls the Lord has entrusted to them.

The saints who live in the hope of the resurrection

After Jesus ascended, the disciples waited in Jerusalem for the Holy Spirit He had promised, and endued with the power of the Holy Spirit, they preached the gospel in Jerusalem, Judea, and Samaria, and to the end of the earth. The ending of the Gospel of Luke, which records the salvation Jesus accomplished, leads on to the Book of Acts, in which the disciples who received the Holy Spirit preach that gospel to the world.

Today, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believe that all sins passed on to Jesus through His baptism, that the judgment for those sins ended through the blood and death of the Cross, and that eternal life was given through the resurrection. By this faith they receive the remission of all their sins and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift and become children of God. Because Jesus, who went up into heaven, is our living Lord, a new life awaits the saints, in which their bodies will rise again in the future and they will live with the Lord forever.

Therefore the saints do not despair even in the face of present suffering and death. This is because Jesus, who rose again and ascended, has blessed us and promised us eternal new life. This hope of the resurrection gives the saints great joy, patience, and boldness, and makes them praise God and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the end by the power of the Holy Spirit. ✉

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Questions and Answers on Luke Chapter 24

[Question] 1. Around what fact does Luke chapter 24 unfold?

Luke chapter 24 unfolds around the fact that Jesus, after dying on the Cross and being buried, really rose from the dead on the third day. Beginning with the empty tomb, it records the process in which Jesus, who rose from the dead, appeared to the disciples, made them understand the Scriptures, established them as witnesses who would preach the gospel of the remission of sin to all nations, and then went up into heaven.

First, at dawn on the first day of the week, the women went to the tomb with the spices they had prepared, but they did not find Jesus' body. The stone had been rolled away from the tomb, and two men in shining garments told them that Jesus had risen.

"Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."'" (Luke 24:5–7).

Second, Jesus, who rose from the dead, went with the two disciples on their way to Emmaus. The two disciples were in sorrow and confusion over Jesus' death on the Cross, and they did not recognize that the one speaking right beside them was Jesus. Jesus said that the Christ had to suffer and enter into glory, and He expounded in detail what was written concerning

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Himself in the writings of Moses and all the prophets.

Third, Jesus appeared in person among the gathered disciples, showed them His hands and His feet, let them touch Him, and ate broiled fish before their eyes, thereby confirming that He had risen bodily. He clearly testified that the very Jesus who had been crucified had risen in the body.

Fourth, Jesus taught that His suffering and resurrection were the fulfillment of the words written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms. And He opened the hearts of the disciples so that they could understand the Scriptures, and made clear what they were to preach.

"Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.'" (Luke 24:44–49).

Fifth, Jesus led the disciples out as far as Bethany, blessed them, and went up into heaven. After witnessing the resurrection and the ascension, the disciples worshiped Jesus, returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and praised God in the temple. The disciples who had fled in fear in the face of the Cross were transformed, after meeting Jesus, who rose from the dead, into witnesses who worshiped God with joy.

The resurrection emphasized in Luke chapter 24 is the completion of the salvation that followed from Jesus' baptism

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and the Cross. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and died, and, after being buried, completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead on the third day. The resurrection shows that the salvation of the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished is true and perfect, and it testifies that He is the Son of God and the Savior who overcame sin and death.

[Question] 2. In Luke chapter 24 verses 1–4, what did the women who went to the tomb at dawn on the first day of the week see there?

The women who went to Jesus' tomb at dawn on the first day of the week saw that the stone that had blocked the tomb had been rolled away. When they went into the tomb, the body of the Lord Jesus was not to be seen, and while they were perplexed about this, they saw two men in shining garments standing by them.

"Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments" (Luke 24:1–4).

The first fact the women found at the tomb was that the stone had already been rolled away. Because the stone that had blocked Jesus' tomb had been moved, they were able to go inside the tomb. The second fact was that the body of the Lord Jesus was not inside the tomb. The women had seen the place of

Jesus' burial with their own eyes, so they had not gone to the wrong tomb. The tomb they had clearly identified was open, and Jesus' body was not to be seen there.

"Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."'" (Luke 24:5–7).

Jesus' empty tomb testifies that He overcame sin and death and rose from the dead. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and died, and, after being buried, overcame the power of sin and death by rising from the dead on the third day. The rolled-away stone and the empty tomb the women saw, and the testimony of the two angels, reveal that the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished is the true gospel of salvation.

[Question] 3. In Luke chapter 24 verses 5–7, when the women were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, what did the two angels tell them concerning Jesus?

The two angels told the women not to seek Jesus, the living One, among the dead. They told them that Jesus was not in the tomb but had risen, and that they should remember the word He had spoken when He was in Galilee, that He must be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and rise again on the third day.

"*Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth,*

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they said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."'" (Luke 24:5–7).

The angels first reminded the women that they were seeking the living One among the dead. The women had come to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices, and they were perplexed when they saw that the stone had been moved and the body was not there. They loved Jesus, but because they had not yet realized the resurrection He had spoken of beforehand, they were seeking the living One in the tomb. The angels proclaimed Jesus, who had already overcome death and risen, as *"the living."*

The testimony of the angels shows that Jesus' resurrection was an event fulfilled within God's plan of salvation, just as He had said beforehand. Jesus had clearly said not only that He would be delivered into the hands of sinners and crucified, but also that He would rise again on the third day. The Cross and the resurrection are one work of salvation that Jesus accomplished to save sinners.

The news of the resurrection the angels delivered testifies that the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished is perfect. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, was delivered into the hands of sinners, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and died, and, after being buried, rose from the dead on the third day. Jesus, who rose from the dead, is the Son of God who overcame sin and death, and the Savior who gives the remission of sin and eternal life to those who believe in Him.

We, too, in difficult circumstances and fear, must not judge God's will only by what is visible before our eyes, but must remember Jesus' words. When we believe the word that Jesus

completed our salvation by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and rising from the dead, our worry turns into the hope of the resurrection. And like the women, we must deliver to others the good news of Jesus, who rose from the dead.

[Question] 4. In Luke chapter 24 verses 13–16, to whom did Jesus, who rose from the dead, draw near and go with on that day?

On that day Jesus, who rose from the dead, appeared to two disciples who were going from Jerusalem to Emmaus. The name of one of the two was Cleopas, and the name of the other was not recorded. Jesus drew near and went with them, but the two disciples' eyes were veiled, and they did not recognize that the one beside them was Jesus.

"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him" (Luke 24:13–16).

At that very time Jesus, who rose from the dead, drew near to them and walked with them. Jesus did not turn away from the two disciples who were leaving Jerusalem in discouragement; He came to them in person on their road. Because the eyes of the two disciples were veiled, they did not recognize Jesus, whom they had followed for a long time, even as He spoke beside them. Though they were talking about the events concerning Jesus, they did not know that they were walking with Jesus, the Lord

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of those events.

Jesus first had the two disciples say what they believed and why they were sorrowful. Then He taught them so that they would realize the suffering and resurrection of the Christ according to the words the prophets had written. By expounding in detail, beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, the words concerning Himself written in all the Scriptures, He made them know that the suffering of the Cross was the way by which the Christ enters into glory and saves sinners.

"Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:30–32).

Jesus, who rose from the dead, took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and died, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead on the third day. Even when we are discouraged because of the circumstances before our eyes, we must confirm again, through the written word, the salvation Jesus accomplished. When we believe that Jesus saved us by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and rising from the dead, faith and hope become clear in our hearts, and we can rely on Jesus, who walks with us, and deliver the good news of the resurrection.

[Question] 5. In Luke chapter 24 verse 18, of the two disciples heading for Emmaus, who is the one whose name is recorded in verse 18?

Of the two disciples heading for Emmaus, the one whose name is recorded is Cleopas. Luke identifies one of the two as Cleopas, but he did not record the name of the other disciple walking with him.

"Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?'" (Luke 24:18).

When Jesus asked what they were talking about on the road, the two stood still with sad faces. Then Cleopas answered on their behalf. He asked whether Jesus was the only one staying in Jerusalem who did not know the great events that had happened recently. These words show that Jesus' death on the Cross was a public event widely known to the people of Jerusalem, and that Cleopas' heart was full of shock and sorrow because of it.

Cleopas knew many facts about Jesus, but he did not connect them by faith with the promise of the Scriptures that the Christ had to suffer and enter into glory. So even though Jesus, who rose from the dead, was beside him, he did not recognize Him in his sorrow and confusion. Jesus awakened Cleopas and the disciple going with him to the fact that they were slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken, and explained in detail the words written concerning Himself in the writings of Moses and all the prophets.

"Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them

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in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25–27).

Cleopas' story shows that knowing the events concerning Jesus must go together with realizing and believing, through the Scriptures, the meaning of salvation contained in those events. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and died, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead on the third day. When we realize and believe this meaning of salvation through the Scriptures, the Cross is seen as the saving event that accomplished the remission of sin, and the empty tomb becomes the evidence of the resurrection, that Jesus overcame sin and death.

[Question] 6. In Luke chapter 24 verses 19–22, what kind of person did the disciples, including Cleopas, believe Jesus to be and expect Him to be?

The disciples, including Cleopas, saw Jesus as a prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and expected Him to be the one who would redeem Israel. When Jesus was crucified and died, their expectations collapsed, and even after hearing the news of the empty tomb from the women, they still could not fully believe the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

"And He said to them, 'What things?' So they said to Him, 'The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today

is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us.'" (Luke 24:19–22).

First, the disciples saw Jesus as a prophet with power in word and in the works He did. Jesus taught the word of God with authority, and He showed His power by healing the sick, casting out demons, and raising the dead. Jesus' words and works revealed before all the people the fact that He was the One sent by God. Cleopas' words contain the respect and faith of the disciples who had seen and heard Jesus' ministry with their own eyes.

They also expected that Jesus would redeem Israel. This confession shows that the disciples looked to Jesus as the Savior. They waited for the salvation God had promised to be accomplished through Jesus. Between the way of salvation they expected and the way of salvation God was accomplishing through Jesus, there was still a part they did not understand.

When the chief priests and the rulers delivered Jesus to be condemned to death and crucified Him, the disciples thought that the hope of redemption had also ended. By saying *"we were hoping"* in the past tense, Cleopas revealed their collapsed expectations. Because they had not realized that Jesus' Cross was the way by which salvation is fulfilled, they took His death on the Cross as the end of their hope. It was the third day since Jesus had died, and the women had reported the empty tomb and the news of the angels, but they were astonished and confused, unable to connect those facts with faith in the resurrection.

The disciples' confession that they saw Jesus as a mighty prophet and the Redeemer contained faith in Jesus' true ministry and identity. Jesus is the Christ promised in the Scriptures and the Son of God. He is the One who saves from sin and death by passing through suffering and death and rising from the dead.

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"'Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:26–27).

The redemption Jesus accomplished is the salvation that delivers all sinners, including Israel, from sin and death and makes them the people of God. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross and died, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead on the third day. Therefore Jesus is a prophet mighty in word and deed, and He is the Christ, the Son of God, and the Savior who accomplished the redemption of sinners with His own body.

[Question] 7. In Luke chapter 24 verses 25–27, how did Jesus rebuke and teach the two disciples who had not realized the meaning of the Cross and the resurrection?

Jesus rebuked the two disciples as people slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken. Then, after saying that the Christ had to suffer and enter into His glory, He explained in detail, beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, the words concerning Himself written in all the Scriptures.

"Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself" (Luke 24:25–27).

Jesus' first response was to rebuke the two disciples for their slowness to believe. The two had expected Jesus to be a prophet mighty in word and deed and the one who would redeem Israel. They also knew that Jesus had been crucified and died, that the women had found the empty tomb, and that the angels had told them Jesus had risen. Yet they had failed to connect all these facts with the words the prophets had written beforehand and to believe them.

Jesus' second response was to awaken them to the fact that the suffering and the glory of the Christ are connected within God's will. The word that the Christ had to suffer and enter into His glory makes clear that the Cross is the event that fulfills God's plan of salvation written in the Scriptures. The Christ had to suffer and die in place of sinners, and then rise from the dead and enter into glory. The very Cross over which the disciples despaired was the way that accomplishes the salvation of sinners.

Jesus' third response was to explain Himself in detail through the Scriptures. Beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, Jesus expounded the saving work of the Christ written in the Scriptures. The sacrifices and the sin offerings recorded in the Law of Moses, and the suffering and glory of the Messiah foretold by the prophets, pointed to the salvation Jesus would accomplish. The promises of the Old Testament and Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection are connected with one another within God's one plan of salvation.

"Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day'" (Luke 24:44–46).

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The salvation of Jesus that all the Scriptures testify to was completed with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, was judged and died on the Cross while bearing that sin, and rose from the dead on the third day. The sin offerings of the Old Testament and the prophecies concerning the Messiah were fulfilled in this saving work Jesus accomplished. Therefore, to believe in Jesus' suffering and resurrection is to believe that He took charge of our sins and was judged as He had said, and that He overcame sin and death.

If we, too, judge the work of Jesus only by our own expectations and the circumstances before our eyes, we may miss God's saving will even while knowing part of the Scriptures. Faith becomes clear when we receive with the heart all the words the prophets spoke and realize how those words were fulfilled in Jesus. We must look to Jesus, to whom the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms testify, and believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, receiving the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and rising from the dead. When we believe that word, our discouraged hearts are restored, and we can preach with joy Jesus, who rose from the dead.

[Question] 8. In Luke chapter 24 verses 28–29, when the day was far spent, what did the two disciples who had reached Emmaus earnestly ask of Jesus?

The two disciples who had arrived at Emmaus pleaded with Jesus, *"Abide with us" (Luke 24:29)*. Since it was toward evening and the day was already far spent, they constrained Him

not to go farther but to stay with them, and Jesus accepted their request and went in to stay with them.

"Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' And He went in to stay with them" (Luke 24:28–29).

While coming from Jerusalem to Emmaus, the two disciples did not know that the one who went with them was Jesus, who rose from the dead. Jesus explained to them in detail the suffering and glory of the Christ from the writings of Moses and all the prophets. The two, who had been in sorrow and confusion, listened to the words of the Scriptures, and afterward they confessed to each other that their hearts had burned while Jesus opened the word to them.

When they drew near to Emmaus, their destination, Jesus appeared as if He would go farther. Since it was toward evening and the day was already far spent, the two disciples earnestly asked Him to stay with them. The word *"constrained"* shows that this was not a casual greeting but an earnest request that Jesus would by all means stay with them.

Jesus accepted the plea of the two disciples and went in to stay with them. Jesus, who had listened to the two disciples on the road and opened the Scriptures to them, now sat down with them at their table. Even while the disciples did not recognize Jesus, the Lord did not leave them but drew near and went with them, and He accepted their invitation and stayed with them.

"Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while

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He opened the Scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:30–32).

Having recognized Jesus, the two disciples did not stay that night but rose up at once and returned to Jerusalem. Those who had asked Jesus to stay because the day was far spent, once they had confirmed the fact of the resurrection, went back along the dark road and delivered this news to the eleven apostles and the other disciples. The joy of having heard the word and recognized Jesus moved them back to Jerusalem. They testified to what had happened on the road and to the fact that Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of the bread.

Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. We, too, when we are discouraged or our hearts are dark, must draw near to the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished and believe with the heart in the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and His resurrection from the dead. When we walk with the Lord in the word, our hearts burn again, and we gain the strength to deliver to others the good news of Jesus, who rose from the dead.

[Question] 9. In Luke chapter 24 verses 30–31, what happened to the two disciples of Emmaus when Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them?

When Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke it and gave it to them, the eyes of the two disciples were opened, and they recognized that the one who had walked with them and opened the word to them was Jesus. The moment they recognized Jesus, who rose from the dead, He vanished from their sight.

"Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that

He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight" (Luke 24:30–31).

The two disciples walked with Jesus from Jerusalem to Emmaus but did not recognize Him. Luke chapter 24 verse 16 records that their eyes were restrained so that they did not know Him. They knew about Jesus' crucifixion and death and the news of the empty tomb, but they had not yet realized the meaning of the Scriptures, that the Christ had to suffer and rise from the dead and enter into glory.

On the road Jesus explained in detail, beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, the words concerning Himself written in all the Scriptures. As the two disciples listened to those words, their hearts burned, but until they arrived at Emmaus they did not know that the one speaking beside them was Jesus. They constrained Jesus to stay with them because the day was far spent, and Jesus went in with them and ate with them.

At the meal Jesus took bread, blessed it, and broke it and gave it to the two disciples. At that very moment their eyes were opened and they recognized Jesus. Here, the opening of their eyes refers to the spiritual realization by which they at last clearly recognized who it was that had been walking with them on the road. After awakening their hearts with the words of the Scriptures, Jesus, in the breaking of the bread, made them recognize that He was the Lord who had risen from the dead.

In the two disciples' coming to recognize Jesus, Jesus' grace in taking the initiative is revealed. Jesus first drew near to them and went with them, opened the Scriptures to them, and made Himself known when He broke the bread and gave it to them. Luke chapter 24 verse 35 records that the two disciples told the other disciples how Jesus had been made known to them in the breaking of bread. At the center of this event is Jesus, who rose

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from the dead, who came to the discouraged disciples and made them understand through the word.

"And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?' So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luke 24:32–35).

Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. We, too, must clearly realize through the Scriptures the salvation Jesus accomplished, and believe with the heart in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the fact that He rose from the dead. The saints who believe this word of salvation live as witnesses who preach with joy Jesus, who rose from the dead.

[Question] 10. In Luke chapter 24 verse 32, after Jesus vanished from their sight, how did the two disciples confess the state of their hearts while they listened to the word on the road?

When Jesus vanished from their sight, the two disciples said to each other, *"Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)*. They at last realized and confirmed to each other that their hearts had burned while Jesus explained through the Scriptures the suffering of the Christ and His resurrection from the dead.

"And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?'" (Luke 24:32).

When the two disciples left Jerusalem, they had sad faces. They had expected Jesus to be a prophet mighty in word and deed and the one who would redeem Israel, but when Jesus was crucified and died, they thought that hope had ended as well. They knew that the women had reported the empty tomb and the news of the angels and that others had checked the tomb, but they could not accept by faith the fact that Jesus had risen from the dead.

Jesus, who rose from the dead, drew near to the two disciples and walked with them. He awakened them to their attitude of being slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets had spoken, and taught them that the Christ had to suffer and enter into His glory. Then, beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, He explained in detail the words concerning Himself written in all the Scriptures.

The hearts of the two disciples burned as Jesus opened these words to them. As the meaning of the Cross and the empty tomb, which they had not understood, was made plain one by one through the words of the Scriptures, faith arose in their hearts. As they realized that the suffering of the Christ was according to God's plan of salvation and that Jesus had risen from the dead and entered into glory as He had said, faith and hope came alive in their hearts, which had been sunk in sorrow.

While they were walking on the road, the two disciples did not recognize that the one beside them was Jesus. When Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them, their eyes were opened and they recognized Him, and Jesus vanished from their sight. At that moment the two recalled the change that had already taken place in their hearts while they listened to the word on the road.

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Even before they recognized Him, Jesus' words had been dispelling their sorrow and unbelief and enlightening their hearts to believe in the resurrection from the dead.

"So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luke 24:33–35).

The center of the Scriptures Jesus opened to them was the fact that the Christ had to suffer and enter into glory. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. When the two disciples realized this flow of salvation through the Scriptures, their hearts burned, and after recognizing Jesus, who rose from the dead, they delivered the news with joy.

We, too, when our faith grows weak and we are discouraged, must return to the written word. As we hear of the salvation to which the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms testify and which Jesus fulfilled, we must believe with the heart in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the fact that He rose from the dead. When the word makes us clearly realize the salvation Jesus accomplished, faith and thanksgiving come alive in our hearts as well, and we can deliver to others the good news of the Lord, who rose from the dead.

[Question] 11. In Luke chapter 24 verses 33–35, where did the two disciples who confessed that their hearts had burned return to at once, and what did they report?

The two disciples rose up at once and returned to Jerusalem. There they met the eleven apostles and those gathered with them, and told them what had happened on the road and how Jesus had been made known to them when He broke the bread. They testified to the other disciples of the joy of having recognized Jesus, who rose from the dead.

"So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread" (Luke 24:33–35).

The first change that took place in the two disciples was a change of direction. They had left Jerusalem in discouragement, but after recognizing Jesus they returned to Jerusalem immediately. They went back along the same road, but their hearts and purpose were completely different. Those who had left thinking of the Cross as the end of their hope now realized the suffering of the Cross as the fulfillment of the Scriptures, and went back to proclaim Jesus, who rose from the dead.

The second change was that they went forward to testify to the resurrection. The two went to the place where the eleven apostles and those with them were gathered. They told how Jesus had drawn near and gone with them on the road, how He had expounded the Scriptures in detail, and how He had been made known to them when He broke the bread. They shared with the community of faith the fact of the resurrection, which they

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themselves had seen, heard, and realized.

"Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.'" (Luke 24:46–48).

Jesus' suffering and His resurrection from the dead are the gospel of the remission of sin that must be preached to all nations. The action of the two disciples in returning from Emmaus to Jerusalem and proclaiming the resurrection shows in advance the mission of witnesses that the disciples would carry out. The saints who believe the news of the resurrection live as witnesses who tell others who Jesus, who rose from the dead, is and what salvation He accomplished.

Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The two disciples realized this meaning of salvation through the Scriptures, and after meeting the risen Jesus they proclaimed the resurrection at once. We, too, must believe with the heart in the remission of sin that Jesus accomplished by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, and we must live as witnesses who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to our families, our neighbors, and all people.

[Question] 12. In Luke chapter 24 verses 36–37, while the two disciples of Emmaus were speaking of the resurrection, what happened among the gathered disciples?

While the two disciples of Emmaus were telling what had happened on the road, Jesus, who rose from the dead, stood in person in the midst of the disciples and said, *"Peace to you" (Luke 24:36)*. Seeing Jesus, who had appeared suddenly, the disciples were terrified and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit.

"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit" (Luke 24:36–37).

Those gathered were sharing the news that the Lord had risen indeed and appeared to Simon, and the testimony of the two disciples of Emmaus. At that very moment Jesus stood in person in their midst. Following the women's testimony of the empty tomb, His appearance to Simon, and the testimony of the two disciples of Emmaus, Jesus, who rose from the dead, now revealed Himself also where many disciples were gathered.

The first thing Jesus said to the disciples was a proclamation of peace. After Jesus was arrested, crucified, and died, the disciples had been in fear and confusion. Jesus came into the midst of such disciples and gave them peace. This peace is the peace that Jesus, who rose from the dead, gives by having overcome sin and death and completed salvation. It is the true peace He gives to the hearts of those who have received the remission of sin and whose relationship with God has been restored.

Seeing Jesus standing before their eyes, the disciples were

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terrified and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit. Although they had already heard the news of the resurrection from several people and Jesus stood in person in their midst, the fact that a dead man had risen bodily was so astonishing that doubt arose in their hearts.

"And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence" (Luke 24:38–43).

By showing them His hands and His feet, Jesus made them know that He was the very Jesus who had been crucified. He also told the disciples to handle Him, and said that He had flesh and bones that they could see and touch. Then He took a piece of broiled fish and ate it in their presence. Through seeing Jesus' hands and feet, His having flesh and bones that could be touched, and His eating food, the disciples confirmed that Jesus had risen from the dead in a real body.

The peace Jesus proclaimed comes from the gospel of the water and the Spirit that He accomplished. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Jesus, who rose from the dead, showed the disciples the fact that the salvation He accomplished is perfect, and He gave true peace and the hope of the resurrection to those who have received the remission of sin.

We, too, must believe in the resurrection of Jesus in a real

body, as recorded in the Scriptures. The word that Jesus, who rose from the dead, showed His hands and His feet and ate food gives the saints the hope of obtaining the resurrection of the body in the future and living with the Lord forever. We must believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, and we must preach the gospel of the resurrection in the peace He gives.

[Question] 13. In Luke chapter 24 verses 38–41, how did Jesus confirm His resurrection to the disciples who were afraid and doubting?

After asking the disciples why they were troubled and why doubts arose in their hearts, Jesus told them to look at His hands and His feet, to know that it was He Himself, and to handle Him themselves. He made clear that He had flesh and bones that they could see and touch, and He showed them His hands and His feet. When the disciples still did not believe for joy and marveled, He also asked whether they had any food.

"And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?'" (Luke 24:38–41).

First, Jesus said, *"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself" (Luke 24:39).* The one standing before the disciples was the very Jesus who had been crucified and died. By showing them His hands and His feet, Jesus made them know that the

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Jesus before His death and the Jesus who rose from the dead were the same person. Looking at His hands and feet, the disciples could confirm that the Lord they had followed had really risen.

Second, Jesus said, *"Handle Me and see" (Luke 24:39)*. Jesus said that He had flesh and bones, just as they saw. Jesus, who rose from the dead, had a real body that the disciples could see and touch. By having them confirm His body for themselves, Jesus changed the disciples' fear and doubt into faith.

Third, Jesus asked whether they had any food, and He ate in their presence the broiled fish the disciples gave Him.

"So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence" (Luke 24:42–43).

Jesus' eating food confirmed even more clearly that His resurrection was the resurrection of a real body. The disciples saw Jesus' hands and feet, heard the word that His body could be touched, and together saw Him eating food. Through their seeing, their touching, and His eating food, Jesus confirmed the resurrection of His body in several ways.

The resurrection of Jesus' body testifies to the completion of the salvation accomplished with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The same Jesus who was crucified overcame sin and death by rising in a glorious body, and He gave those who believe in Him the remission of sin, eternal life, and the hope of the resurrection of the body.

We, too, when faced with words that are hard to understand, must hold on to the words Jesus Himself spoke and the evidence of the resurrection recorded in the Scriptures. Believing in Jesus,

who rose from the dead and showed His hands and His feet and ate food, we must boldly preach to others the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead.

[Question] 14. In Luke chapter 24 verses 41–43, when the disciples rejoiced yet found it hard to believe, by what action did Jesus further confirm the resurrection of His body?

Jesus asked the disciples whether they had any food. When the disciples gave Him a piece of broiled fish, Jesus took it and ate it in their presence. Through the action of eating food, Jesus showed even more clearly that He had risen from the dead in a real body.

"But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence" (Luke 24:41–43).

At first, when Jesus appeared in their midst, the disciples were terrified and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit. Jesus showed them His hands and His feet, told them to handle Him themselves, and made clear that He had flesh and bones that they could see and touch. Seeing Jesus, who rose from the dead, the disciples moved from fear to great joy, but because it was so astonishing and joyful, they found it hard to believe the fact fully at once.

In order to establish the disciples' faith even more clearly, Jesus asked whether they had any food. When the disciples gave Him a piece of broiled fish, Jesus took it and ate it before the

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eyes of all the disciples. Luke records in order that Jesus received the food in His hand and that He actually ate it. This action was concrete evidence that enabled the disciples to see Jesus, who rose from the dead, with their eyes and to confirm His body.

Showing His hands and His feet, saying that He had flesh and bones, and eating the broiled fish all testify to one fact: Jesus, who had died on the Cross and been buried in the tomb, rose from the dead in a real body. The one before the disciples was the very Jesus they had followed, and His resurrection was the resurrection of the body. By showing this evidence where many disciples were watching together, Jesus established them as sure witnesses of the resurrection.

"Him God raised up on the third day, and showed Him openly, not to all the people, but to witnesses chosen before by God, even to us who ate and drank with Him after He arose from the dead" (Acts 10:40–41).

The apostles were witnesses who had seen Jesus, who rose from the dead, with their own eyes and eaten with Him. They had confirmed Jesus' hands and feet, and they were also present where He ate food. God established them as witnesses chosen beforehand and had them proclaim Jesus' death and resurrection to all people. His eating food before the disciples became an important experience that supported the apostles' testimony of the resurrection.

This resurrection testifies to the completion of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Jesus, who rose from the dead and ate the broiled fish, is the Son of God who overcame sin and death, and the Savior who gives

us the remission of sin, peace, and new life.

We, too, must believe with the heart the testimony of the resurrection the disciples delivered and the words recorded in the Scriptures. The fact that Jesus, who rose from the dead, appeared among the disciples in a real body and ate food gives us the sure hope of the resurrection. We must believe that Jesus saved us by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, and, holding the hope of eternal life He has given, we must boldly preach the gospel of the resurrection.

[Question] 15. In Luke chapter 24 verses 44–49, for what purpose did Jesus open the hearts of the disciples so that they could understand the prophecies and the words of the Scriptures?

The purpose for which Jesus opened the hearts of the disciples so that they could understand the prophecies and the words of the Scriptures was to make them know that all the words written concerning Him in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms had been fulfilled. He also made them realize the fact that the Christ had suffered and risen from the dead on the third day, and that repentance that leads to the remission of sin must be preached in His name to all nations. Jesus established the disciples as witnesses of all these things, and had them wait for the power from on high that the Father had promised, so that they could preach the gospel.

"Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding,

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that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.'" (Luke 24:44–49).

Jesus spoke of the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms. This shows that the whole Old Testament testifies to Jesus. God had long ago recorded in the Scriptures the suffering of the Messiah and His resurrection from the dead, and He fulfilled that saving will exactly in Jesus. Having seen Jesus, who rose from the dead, before their eyes, the disciples now had to realize that event by connecting it with God's plan recorded in the Scriptures.

The words the disciples had to realize also included the promise that repentance that leads to the remission of sin would be preached to all nations. Repentance is turning back from the way of one's own thoughts and unbelief and returning to God, and believing with the heart in the salvation Jesus accomplished. A sinner acknowledges his own helplessness and sin and receives the remission of sin by believing in the salvation Jesus completed. This is the turning of faith that is preached in the name of Jesus to all nations.

This news of the remission of sin is contained in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Those who believe this gospel of salvation receive the righteousness God accomplished and obtain the remission of sin

and new life. The disciples had to deliver this fact of salvation, which they themselves had seen and heard, to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

Jesus said to the disciples, *"You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48)*. A witness conveys exactly the facts he has seen and heard. The disciples had seen Jesus' ministry and suffering, had met Jesus, who rose from the dead, and had realized the fact that the Scriptures were fulfilled in Him. Therefore they were established as witnesses who would deliver the salvation Jesus accomplished to the whole world.

"'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'" (Acts 1:8).

We, too, when we read the Scriptures, must realize Jesus, who is at their center, and the salvation God accomplished through Him. We must believe that Jesus saved sinners by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, and we must clearly know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which gives the remission of sin. And believing in this salvation according to the written word, we must rely on the power God gives and live as witnesses of Jesus to everyone, beginning with those close to us.

[Question] 16. In Luke chapter 24 verse 47, what mission did Jesus entrust to the disciples?

Jesus entrusted to the disciples the mission of preaching repentance that leads to the remission of sin in His name. This mission had to begin at Jerusalem and reach all nations. As witnesses who had seen and heard Jesus' ministry, His suffering,

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and His resurrection from the dead, the disciples had to deliver to the whole world the salvation Jesus accomplished and the remission of sin received by believing in Him.

"'And that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.'" (Luke 24:47–48).

The center of the mission Jesus entrusted is the remission of sin. All people are separated from God because of sin, and by their own strength they cannot escape the judgment for sin. God sent Jesus to save sinners, and Jesus fulfilled all of God's will written in the Scriptures. The disciples had to preach the way by which sinners obtain the remission of sin by believing in the name of Jesus and return to God.

Here, repentance means turning back from the wrong way and returning to God. A person must turn back from his own thoughts, unbelief, and self-reliance, and believe with the heart in the salvation Jesus accomplished. The repentance preached in the name of Jesus is the way by which a sinner turns back from the way of relying on his own deeds, accepts the righteousness of God, and obtains the remission of sin by believing in the salvation Jesus completed. Through this faith one's relationship with God is restored and one obtains new life.

The content of salvation the disciples were to preach is based on Jesus' suffering and His resurrection from the dead. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection from the dead, which He accomplished, reveal the righteousness of God that saves sinners completely. Therefore the disciples had to preach clearly the gospel of the water and the Spirit, completed in the name of Jesus.

This mission began at Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place where the events of Jesus' crucifixion, death, and resurrection from the dead took place, and the place where the disciples had witnessed all those things with their own eyes. God caused the news of the remission of sin to be preached from there, and caused the gospel to reach all nations by way of all Judea and Samaria. Jesus' salvation is a salvation directed toward all the sinners of the whole world.

Jesus called the disciples *"witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48)*. The disciples were people who testified exactly to what they had seen and heard of the things Jesus did. They had seen Jesus' words and ministry up close, and they knew of His suffering on the Cross and of the fact that they had met Jesus, who rose from the dead. Moreover, Jesus had opened the Scriptures and made them realize that all those events fulfilled God's promises. Therefore they were established as witnesses who would deliver the salvation Jesus accomplished to the whole world.

"'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'" (Acts 1:8).

This mission continues today to the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must first believe with the heart the word that Jesus completed salvation by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead. Then, beginning with our families and neighbors, we must deliver the name of Jesus and the salvation He accomplished to everyone who needs the remission of sin. Relying on the power God gives, preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that even one soul may receive the remission of sin and return to God is the way to follow the mission Jesus entrusted to the disciples.

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[Question] 17. In Luke chapter 24 verse 48, what role were the disciples to take on in the work of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit from then on?

The disciples were to take on the role of witnesses who testify to all the things of the salvation Jesus accomplished. They had seen and heard Jesus' words, ministry, and suffering, and they had met Jesus, who rose from the dead, in person. Moreover, as Jesus opened the Scriptures to them, they had realized that all these things fulfilled God's promises. Now the disciples had to testify to the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that repentance that leads to the remission of sin would be preached in the name of Jesus to all nations.

"Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.'" (Luke 24:46–48).

A witness is a person who clearly states the facts he has seen and heard. The disciples had gone about with Jesus and seen His words and ministry up close, and they had met Jesus, who was crucified and died and then rose from the dead in a real body. They had seen Jesus' hands and feet, and they had also seen Jesus eating food. Jesus opened their hearts so that they could understand the Scriptures, and made them know that the suffering of the Christ and His resurrection from the dead were the saving events fulfilled according to the Scriptures.

The disciples' testimony had definite content. They had to proclaim the fact that the Christ had suffered and risen from the dead on the third day. They also had to preach repentance that leads to the remission of sin in the name of Jesus. A sinner

receives the remission of sin by turning back from his own thoughts and unbelief and believing in the salvation Jesus completed. The disciples were witnesses who faithfully delivered the facts of salvation recorded in the Scriptures and fulfilled in Jesus.

At the center of the salvation the disciples were to testify to is the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection from the dead are the perfect salvation God accomplished for sinners. The disciples had to proclaim to the whole world the fact that Jesus took charge of all sins and overcame the power of sin and death.

The disciples' testimony had to be preached to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the place where Jesus' Cross and His resurrection from the dead took place, and there the disciples testified to the saving events that had been accomplished there and to Jesus, who rose from the dead. The testimony that began there continued through all Judea and Samaria to the end of the earth. Through the disciples, God caused the news of salvation for all nations and all people to be heard.

"'But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.'" (Acts 1:8).

"'For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.'" (Acts 4:20).

Today the saints believe in the salvation Jesus accomplished through the eyewitness testimony the apostles recorded, and they deliver to others the remission of sin they have received.

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First we must believe with the heart the word that Jesus completed salvation by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead. Then, relying on the power God gives, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to our families, our neighbors, and all people. To receive and believe the apostles' unique eyewitness testimony as the written word, and to preach the remission of sin we have received and that gospel—this is the life of gospel witness that the saints today are to carry on.

[Question] 18. In Luke chapter 24 verse 49, what did the disciples have to wait for, staying in Jerusalem, before going out to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Before going out to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the disciples had to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit whom the Father had promised. Jesus commanded the disciples not to leave the city until they were endued with power from on high. After receiving the power of the Holy Spirit in obedience to Jesus' word, they were to preach the salvation of Jesus to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.

"'Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.'" (Luke 24:49).

In verse 49, what the Father had promised refers to the Holy Spirit, whom He would send to the disciples. Even before He bore the Cross, Jesus had promised the disciples that He would send them the Holy Spirit, the Helper. Jesus, who rose from the dead, now told them to stay in Jerusalem and wait, because that

promise was about to be fulfilled. Luke also recorded the same command more concretely in the Book of Acts.

The disciples had seen and heard Jesus' ministry and suffering, and they had met Jesus, who rose from the dead, in person. As Jesus opened their hearts, they had also realized the meaning of the Scriptures, and they knew the fact that they were witnesses who would preach the word of the remission of sin to all nations. To this had to be added the power from on high that God gives. The Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and enabled them to boldly preach the word they had realized, and to carry out the mission of witnesses even amid tribulation and persecution.

Jesus' command contains obedience that follows God's time and God's way. The disciples stayed in Jerusalem as Jesus had appointed, and gathered together and prayed with one accord as they waited for the fulfillment of the promise. This waiting was a time of holding on to Jesus' word, being united with one another, and preparing in faith for the power God would give.

The word to stay in Jerusalem also shows His intention that the disciples prepare for their mission within the word and the unity of the Church. The disciples gathered in one place and prayed, waiting for God's promise. God poured out the Holy Spirit in the midst of that community and had them testify to Jesus with one heart. The Church is the place where the saints who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are united with one another in the word and together carry out the preaching of the gospel to the whole world.

The power of the Holy Spirit was the power that established the disciples as witnesses of Jesus and caused the gospel to be preached to the end of the earth. After the Holy Spirit came, Peter boldly proclaimed before many people Jesus' death and His resurrection from the dead. The apostles and the saints

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preached the name of Jesus even amid persecution, and through them the Holy Spirit caused the news of the remission of sin to reach many nations. The mission Jesus entrusted was accomplished by the power God gives.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that the disciples were to preach is the salvation Jesus completed. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. To those who have received the remission of sin by believing this word with the heart, God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift and leads them to deliver to others the salvation Jesus accomplished. Faith in the gospel, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, and the life of a witness are connected with one another within God's salvation.

We, too, must obey Jesus' word and preach the gospel, relying on the power God gives. First we must believe with the heart that Jesus removed all our sins by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, and so receive the remission of sin. Then, praying within the word and the unity of the Church, we must carry out the mission of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to our families, our neighbors, and all people by the power the Holy Spirit gives.

[Question] 19. In Luke chapter 24 verses 50–51, what meaning does the event in which Jesus blessed the disciples and was carried up into heaven have?

Jesus' being parted from the disciples and carried up into heaven means His ascension, by which He completed the work

of salvation He was to accomplish on earth and returned to God the Father. Jesus, who rose from the dead, sits at the right hand of the throne of God and reigns as the King of kings, and He sends the Holy Spirit He promised to the disciples so that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached to the whole world. Moreover, Jesus' ascension guarantees that He will come again in the future.

"And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven" (Luke 24:50–51).

Jesus led the disciples out as far as Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them. And while He was blessing them, He was carried up into heaven. Luke shows that Jesus' earthly ministry ended with a blessing toward the disciples. Even at the moment Jesus departed, the disciples were under His blessing, and afterward they came to carry out the mission of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit within that blessing and promise.

Jesus' ascension shows that the work He did on this earth to save sinners was completed. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. After rising from the dead, for forty days He showed the disciples by sure evidence that He was alive, and spoke of the things of the kingdom of God. After finishing all those things, He went up into heaven.

"But this Man, after He had offered one sacrifice for sins forever, sat down at the right hand of God, from that time waiting till His enemies are made His footstool. For by one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:12–14).

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Jesus perfected forever those who believe, by one eternal sacrifice. He took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, paid the full price of that sin on the Cross, and completed salvation by rising from the dead. Jesus, who sat down at the right hand of God, shows that His sacrifice was the perfect sacrifice that removed sin once and for all, forever. Those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit receive the remission of sin and are made righteous through this salvation Jesus completed.

The ascended Jesus is the Lord who rules over all things at the right hand of the throne of God. Angels and authorities and powers are subject to Him, and Jesus, as the Head of the Church, leads the saints. Reigning in heaven, Jesus sent the Holy Spirit He had promised and gave the disciples power to preach the gospel to the end of the earth. The disciples' ministry continued within the reign of Jesus, who rules in heaven, and the work of the Holy Spirit.

"Now when He had spoken these things, while they watched, He was taken up, and a cloud received Him out of their sight. And while they looked steadfastly toward heaven as He went up, behold, two men stood by them in white apparel, who also said, 'Men of Galilee, why do you stand gazing up into heaven? This same Jesus, who was taken up from you into heaven, will so come in like manner as you saw Him go into heaven.'" (Acts 1:9–11).

Jesus, who was carried up into heaven, will come again just as the disciples saw Him ascend. The ascension was an event of blessing that gave the disciples the hope of the second coming. When Jesus comes again, He will take the saved saints into the eternal kingdom, judge the living and the dead with justice, and reveal the kingdom of God completely.

We, too, must believe in the ascended Jesus as the Savior

who is alive and reigning now. We must believe that Jesus completed salvation by taking charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead, and that He is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Relying on the power the Holy Spirit gives, we must preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and live in obedience to His word, hoping for the day when Jesus comes again.

[Question] 20. In Luke chapter 24 verses 52–53, with what heart and attitude did the disciples return to Jerusalem after Jesus ascended?

After Jesus ascended, the disciples worshiped Him and returned to Jerusalem with great joy. In obedience to Jesus' command they waited for the Holy Spirit He had promised, and they were continually in the temple praising God. The disciples' hearts were full of the joy of believing in Jesus, who rose from the dead and was carried up into heaven, and that faith was expressed in worship and obedience.

"And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen" (Luke 24:52–53).

The disciples first worshiped Jesus. They had met Jesus, who rose from the dead, in person, and as Jesus made them understand the Scriptures, they had come to know for certain that He was the promised Christ. Now, as they watched Jesus being carried up into heaven, they worshiped Him as the Lord who would sit at the right hand of the throne of God and as the King of kings. The worship they offered to the ascended Jesus was the disciples' confession of faith in His identity and His saving work.

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There was great joy in the disciples' hearts. Although Jesus had departed from before their eyes, they knew that He had overcome the power of death and risen, completed the work of salvation, and returned to God the Father. Jesus had blessed them as He ascended, and He had promised to send the Holy Spirit whom the Father had promised and to come again in the future. This faith and these promises gave the disciples' hearts great joy.

This joy was the joy that comes from the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for that sin on the Cross, and completed the gospel of the water and the Spirit by rising from the dead. The disciples had seen Jesus, who rose from the dead, and had heard the word that He had fulfilled all the promises of the Scriptures. The salvation Jesus completed and the news of the remission of sin filled their hearts with joy.

The disciples returned to Jerusalem in obedience to Jesus' command. Jesus had commanded them to stay in Jerusalem until they received the power of the Holy Spirit whom the Father had promised. Following Jesus' word, the disciples gathered in one place and waited for the Father's promise. Their obedience came from the faith that Jesus' word would surely be fulfilled.

"Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath day's journey. And when they had entered, they went up into the upper room where they were staying: Peter, James, John, and Andrew; Philip and Thomas; Bartholomew and Matthew; James the son of Alphaeus and Simon the Zealot; and Judas the son of James. These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers" (Acts 1:12–14).

The disciples prayed steadfastly with one accord. Jesus' ascension gathered them into one in the word and in prayer. Together they waited for the Father's promise, and they prepared to carry out the mission of witnesses by the power of the Holy Spirit that God would give. Worship, joy, obedience, and prayer were the constant attitude of the disciples who believed in the ascended Jesus.

The disciples were also continually in the temple praising God. Thinking of the salvation Jesus had accomplished, they publicly gave glory to God. The Gospel of Luke begins with the scene in which Zacharias hears the words of the angel in the temple, and ends with the scene in which the disciples praise God in the temple. This shows, with praise and joy, that the salvation God promised was fulfilled in Jesus.

We, too, must believe the word that Jesus completed salvation by taking charge of our sins through the baptism He received from John, being judged on the Cross, and rising from the dead. Those who have received the remission of sin by believing this gospel of the water and the Spirit can worship the ascended Jesus and praise God with the joy of salvation. Moreover, we must pray within the word and the unity of the Church, wait for the day when Jesus comes again, and live preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit by the power the Holy Spirit gives. ✉

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Those who remembered the Lord's word and returned from the empty tomb

< Luke 24:1-12 >

"Now on the first day of the week, very early in the morning, they, and certain other women with them, came to the tomb bringing the spices which they had prepared. But they found the stone rolled away from the tomb. Then they went in and did not find the body of the Lord Jesus. And it happened, as they were greatly perplexed about this, that behold, two men stood by them in shining garments. Then, as they were afraid and bowed their faces to the earth, they said to them, 'Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee, saying, "The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again."' And they remembered His words. Then they returned from the tomb and told all these things to the eleven and to all the rest. It was Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the other women with them, who told these things to the apostles. And their words seemed to them like idle tales, and they did not believe them. But Peter arose and ran to the tomb; and stooping down, he saw the linen cloths lying by themselves; and he departed, marveling to himself at what had happened."

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The women who had come from Galilee following Jesus saw Joseph of Arimathea lay the Lord's body in the tomb, and they went back and prepared spices. At dawn on the first day of the week, they went to the tomb again with the spices they had prepared. What they intended to do was to anoint Jesus' body inside the tomb with spices. Even then, they had not gone there believing that the Lord had risen from the dead. When the stone that had blocked the tomb had been moved and the body was not to be seen even when they went inside, rather than rejoicing over the resurrection, they were first perplexed. Even with an empty tomb before one's eyes, if one does not know the meaning of that event through the word, one can be perplexed even while seeing what God has accomplished.

The two men in shining garments did not explain the meaning of the empty tomb by human conjecture. They made the women remember the word Jesus had already spoken when He was in Galilee. The question *"Why do you seek the living among the dead?" (Luke 24:5)* pointed out that the women were seeking the risen Lord in a tomb where a body is laid. Jesus was not there; He had risen, just as He Himself had said.

Jesus who rose again as He had said

The women saw that the stone had been moved, and they also confirmed that the Lord's body was gone. But from those two facts confirmed with their eyes alone, they could not know who had moved the stone, where the body had gone, or what had happened. Only when the two men testified, *"He is not here, but is risen! Remember how He spoke to you when He was still in Galilee" (Luke 24:6),* did the meaning of the empty tomb become clear. The resurrection is not an interpretation people

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made up after seeing the empty tomb; it is an event Jesus foretold and accomplished at the appointed time.

While the Lord was with the disciples, He had said that He would be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and rise again on the third day. The women had forgotten that word and, preparing spices, sought the Lord who had died. When they heard the words of the angels and remembered Jesus' words, they left the tomb and proclaimed the risen Lord. Luke wrote, *"They remembered His words" (Luke 24:8)*, making clear what the women had heard before they returned from the tomb.

Jesus rose again as He had said, before the disciples understood it. Only after remembering the word the Lord had spoken beforehand did the women know what had happened at the empty tomb. The risen Jesus is the Lord of life, who overcame the power of death, and He is God Himself in essence. Those who have received the remission of sin hear this gospel again and again and remind themselves of the salvation the Lord accomplished and of His promise to raise the bodies of His people again as well. This is for us to confirm the salvation we have received and to live giving thanks to the Lord.

The women went to the tomb to anoint Jesus' body with spices. They had forgotten the word that the Lord would rise on the third day. When the angels reminded them of that word, the women knew that Jesus had risen and returned from the tomb. Today the Church, too, must teach concretely how Jesus removed our sins. Jesus had all the sins of all mankind transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Taking charge of those sins, He carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in our place, shed His blood, and really died, and He rose again on the third day. Those who believe this word with the heart receive the remission of all their sins, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and

become children of God.

In the word the angels made them remember, there was a clear order: *"The Son of Man must be delivered into the hands of sinful men, and be crucified, and the third day rise again" (Luke 24:7)*. Before He was arrested, Jesus already knew what would come upon Him, and He spoke to the disciples again and again of His suffering and resurrection. Therefore the empty tomb the women encountered was the place where the Lord's prophecy had been fulfilled exactly. By testifying together to the event that took place and the word He had given beforehand, God made clear to the disciples what they were to believe.

After speaking of the empty tomb the women were looking at, the angels made them remember the words of Jesus they had heard in Galilee. And they testified that the death on the Cross and the resurrection on the third day that the Lord had spoken of had really been accomplished. The resurrection the Church preaches must include who the risen One is and what salvation He accomplished. Jesus Christ, who is God Himself in essence, came to this earth clothed in a human body and had all the sins of all mankind transferred onto His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. Taking charge of those sins, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and died, and rose again on the third day. Man cannot overcome the power of death by his own strength, but by rising from the dead Jesus revealed that He is the God who saved us. The Lord who rose from the dead went up into heaven and sits at the right hand of the throne of God, hearing the prayers of His people. We must receive the remission of sin by believing with the heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which He completed from His baptism to the Cross and the resurrection, and we must pray relying not on our own zeal and deeds but on the Lord who is at the right hand of the throne.

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The risen Lord ended the judgment for sin with His baptism and the Cross

The two men reminded the women of the word that the Lord had to be crucified and rise again on the third day. This order contains why the Lord died and why He rose again. Jesus Christ, who is God Himself in essence, came to this earth clothed in a human body to save us, who were placed under sin and death. The Lord, who had no sin at all, received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, when He began His public ministry, and at that time He said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*.

Through that baptism He received from John, Jesus had the sins that all the descendants of Adam would commit until the end of the world transferred onto His own body. So the next day John the Baptist pointed to the Lord and testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*. Taking charge of all the sins of the world transferred to Him through His baptism, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha. And because of those sins He was judged in our place, shed His blood, and really died. Luke wrote, *"Having said this, He breathed His last" (Luke 23:46)*, testifying that the Lord's death was a real event.

Jesus, who really died, really rose from the tomb on the third day. Jesus' resurrection testifies that He is the Lord of life, who overcame the power of death, and God Himself in essence. It also reveals the fact that the Lord received all the judgment for all the sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, and overcame sin and death. In this way Jesus had sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, took charge of that sin and carried it all the way to the cross,

was judged in our place, shed His blood and died, and then rose again, fulfilling all the righteousness God had ordained and completing our salvation. Therefore the angels made the women who were seeking a dead body remember the Lord who had already risen and the words He had spoken.

When a person believes with the heart this gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed, God remits all of that person's sins at one time, gives him the Holy Spirit as a gift, and makes him His child. God says that the one who believes in the saving work of His Son has no sin. The Scriptures testify, *"By one offering He has perfected forever those who are being sanctified" (Hebrews 10:14)*. Because Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body, finished the judgment for them, and rose again, we who believe are the righteous who have received the remission of all our sins—past, present, and future—once and for all.

The empty tomb also shows how the problem of our sin was ended. Taking charge of all the sins of the whole world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, Jesus carried them all the way to the cross and received the judgment for those sins without anything left over, and after really dying He overcame sin and death and rose from the tomb. Through the resurrection God revealed that the salvation His Son accomplished is perfect, and we receive the remission of sin by believing this completed fact, not by the measure of our own deeds.

Even after becoming children of God, we can actually do wrong because our flesh is insufficient. At such times, as children of God who have already received the eternal remission of sin, we neither hide our wrongs nor take them lightly, but correct our thoughts and actions because the word is right. Since God has declared us righteous, we do not correct our wrongs in

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order to be saved again. We who have already become children of God must acknowledge our wrongs, correct our actions, and then continue the work the Lord has entrusted to us.

Do you still think that you must wash away your own sins by yourselves? Listen through the word to what the Lord has accomplished. Jesus had all our sins transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist. Taking charge of those sins transferred to Him, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and really died, and then rose from the tomb. To those who believe this fact with the heart, God gives the remission of all sins and the Holy Spirit, and makes them His children.

The women who remembered the word left the tomb and proclaimed the resurrection

When the women remembered the Lord's word, they did not keep lingering before the empty tomb. They went back to where the eleven apostles and the other disciples were and told them all that they had seen and heard. Luke specifically recorded the names of the women, including Mary Magdalene, Joanna, and Mary the mother of James, making clear who delivered this news to the apostles. They went to the tomb, saw that the body was not there, heard the testimony that the Lord had risen, and, after remembering Jesus' words, delivered that fact.

Here we must look carefully at the order. The women did not testify in order to create the resurrection; they delivered the fact because the Lord had risen first. Neither did the words they delivered complete the resurrection, nor did they become witnesses because the eleven apostles believed them immediately. Jesus' overcoming death and rising came first, and

they reported what had already happened, just as they had seen and heard it. Today we, too, must deliver accurately the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus completed to the souls who do not yet know it.

The apostles regarded the women's words as idle tales and did not believe them. Even those who had been closest to Jesus did not believe in the resurrection right away at the moment they heard another person's testimony. Even if one has attended church for a long time and knows many events of the Bible, one may still not believe as fact the words the Lord spoke. Therefore the one who preaches the gospel must make clear exactly what Jesus said and what He actually accomplished, regardless of the position or career of the listeners.

The apostles did not believe the women's words, but the women had already delivered what they had seen and heard. The fact that the Lord had risen was not news that changed according to the response of the hearers. They went to the disciples with the words they had heard from the angels and the words of the Lord they had come to remember again, and Luke did not hide but recorded even the apostles' unbelief. We who have been entrusted with the gospel must preach according to the Scriptures, regardless of the response of the listeners, how sin was transferred to the Lord, judged, and removed.

If there is someone who attends church but still cannot believe in Jesus' resurrection, we must first listen to which part he is unable to accept. Then we must explain step by step what the women saw at the empty tomb, what they heard from the angels, and what Jesus had said before that. In Galilee Jesus had said beforehand that He would be delivered into the hands of sinners, be crucified, and rise on the third day. After seeing the empty tomb, the women remembered that word and told the apostles that the Lord had risen. Those who hear this testimony

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must know that Jesus, who overcame death, is God Himself in essence, and that He completed the salvation of sinners with His baptism, the Cross, and the resurrection. Through the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately preached, the Holy Spirit leads a person's heart to believe in the salvation of Jesus Christ.

Peter, having heard the women's words, arose and ran to the tomb. He saw only the linen cloths and went away marveling at what had happened. Peter confirmed the empty tomb with his own eyes, but on the spot he did not confess that the Lord had risen. Luke chapter 24 goes on to record the scenes in which the risen Jesus appears to the disciples, opens the word to them, and shows them His hands and His feet. God testified to the empty tomb together with the word Jesus had spoken beforehand, and so made the disciples believe in the resurrection.

The word of the resurrection sets our direction right

We who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit already believe that Jesus completed salvation and rose from the dead. When we meet unexpected things and our thoughts drift away from the word, we must hear the gospel again, remind ourselves of the salvation the Lord accomplished, and check whether what we believe is the same as the Scriptures. Such reminding is not a procedure for receiving salvation again. It is for giving thanks for the salvation we have already received and correcting our own thoughts and actions to fit the word.

Jesus really died on the Cross, and the women, too, grieved because of that death. But the Lord rose from the tomb, and in the future He will raise the bodies of His people again as well.

We believe in this resurrection even when we meet illness and death up close. That is why we can preach the gospel together with the Church and continue the work the Lord has entrusted to us.

When the women remembered Jesus' words, they returned from the tomb and proclaimed the resurrection to the other disciples. They no longer sought the risen Lord among the dead bodies, and they reported exactly what they had seen and heard. We who have received the remission of sin must also believe that Jesus rose from the dead, and preach the word of salvation to the souls who are still under sin and judgment.

The members of the Church read together and often hear the word concerning the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection. This is in order to confirm through the word the salvation they have already believed and received, and to live in thanksgiving, reminding themselves of what the Lord has accomplished. The women heard the words of the angels, remembered the resurrection Jesus had spoken of beforehand, and delivered that news to the apostles. Jesus' resurrection testifies that He is the Lord of life, who overcame death, and that He is God. Today the Church must remind itself together of the saving work this Jesus accomplished, and preach it to those who do not yet know the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The women who remembered the word left the tomb and went to where the disciples were gathered. They, who had been looking for Jesus' body, told the people that the Lord had risen. We, too, must believe in the salvation the risen Lord accomplished and deliver it exactly as it is to those who do not yet know this news.

Dear fellow believers, we must receive the angels' question in our hearts as well. Are we not still seeking the risen Lord

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among the dead? Just as He had said, Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had all our sins transferred onto His own body. Then, taking charge of those sins transferred to Him, He carried them all the way to the cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and really died, and then rose again. Now let us remember the Lord's word, believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit—that all sins have been removed once and for all—and, like the women who turned their backs on the empty tomb and delivered the news of the resurrection, testify to this salvation together with the Church. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who opened the Scriptures and turned the discouraged disciples back

< Luke 24:13-35 >

"Now behold, two of them were traveling that same day to a village called Emmaus, which was seven miles from Jerusalem. And they talked together of all these things which had happened. So it was, while they conversed and reasoned, that Jesus Himself drew near and went with them. But their eyes were restrained, so that they did not know Him. And He said to them, 'What kind of conversation is this that you have with one another as you walk and are sad?' Then the one whose name was Cleopas answered and said to Him, 'Are You the only stranger in Jerusalem, and have You not known the things which happened there in these days?' And He said to them, 'What things?' So they said to Him, 'The things concerning Jesus of Nazareth, who was a Prophet mighty in deed and word before God and all the people, and how the chief priests and our rulers delivered Him to be condemned to death, and crucified Him. But we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel. Indeed, besides all this, today is the third day since these things happened. Yes, and certain women of our company, who arrived at the tomb early, astonished us. When they did not find His body, they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said He was alive. And certain of those

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who were with us went to the tomb and found it just as the women had said; but Him they did not see.' Then He said to them, 'O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?' And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself. Then they drew near to the village where they were going, and He indicated that He would have gone farther. But they constrained Him, saying, 'Abide with us, for it is toward evening, and the day is far spent.' And He went in to stay with them. Now it came to pass, as He sat at the table with them, that He took bread, blessed and broke it, and gave it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they knew Him; and He vanished from their sight. And they said to one another, 'Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?' So they rose up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem, and found the eleven and those who were with them gathered together, saying, 'The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon!' And they told about the things that had happened on the road, and how He was known to them in the breaking of bread."

The two disciples knew well the events that had taken place in Jerusalem. They knew the fact that Jesus had been mighty in word and deed, and they also knew the fact that the chief priests and the rulers had delivered the Lord to be condemned to death and crucified Him. They had even heard the news that the women had seen the empty tomb and that the angels had said the Lord had risen. Yet even knowing all those facts, the two were

leaving Jerusalem and going to Emmaus with sad faces.

The problem was not that they knew nothing. They interpreted the events that had happened according to their own expectations, and the moment they saw the Cross, they judged that the hope that Jesus would redeem Israel had ended. Though the Lord was walking right beside them, they talked only about what they thought they had lost. The risen Lord drew near to the two and listened to their words. Then He explained from the writings of Moses and all the prophets why the Christ had to suffer and enter into glory.

Even if we know many facts, we become discouraged if we miss the meaning of the word

Jesus asked the two disciples what they were talking about. In answering that question, the two revealed with their own mouths what facts they knew and how they were interpreting those facts. Cleopas answered that Jesus of Nazareth had been a mighty prophet and had been crucified, and that they had hoped He was the one who would redeem Israel.

The words *"we were hoping that it was He who was going to redeem Israel" (Luke 24:21)* contain the judgment that their expectation had already ended. Because the two disciples expected redemption as a political and visible restoration, they saw the Lord's death as evidence that salvation had failed. But in order to accomplish the redemption God had ordained, the Christ received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and at that time the sins of the whole world were transferred onto the Lord's body. Taking charge of those sins, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in place of all mankind, really shed His blood and died,

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and rose again on the third day. The Cross they thought was a failure was the way of salvation by which God delivers man from sin and death.

We, too, can become discouraged when what we hoped for does not come to pass. At such times, the fact we must confirm is that Jesus had all our sins transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, took charge of those sins to the end and carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, and there was judged in our place, shed His blood and really died, and then rose again. Even if our health deteriorates or our possessions and worldly position change, the salvation Jesus completed remains the same. We who have received the remission of sin must believe in this salvation regardless of our present circumstances and continue the work the Lord has entrusted to us.

The two disciples had also heard the testimony of the women. They knew the report that the tomb was empty and even that the angels had said the Lord had risen, but they said, *"Him they did not see" (Luke 24:24)*. Because they had not seen Jesus with their own eyes, the two did not believe the testimony that the Lord had risen, and they left Jerusalem with sad faces. They should have believed the testimony they had already heard and the word Jesus had spoken beforehand.

The two told in turn what they had believed, why they were disappointed, and even the news about the empty tomb. After listening to their explanation, Jesus pointed out that they were slow to believe the words of the prophets. When we help a discouraged member in the Church, too, we must first listen to what that person has heard and what conclusion he has reached. Then we must read together with him the word concerning the suffering and resurrection of the Christ and help him confirm the fact that the Lord has already completed salvation and has also

promised the resurrection of the body.

In the words of the two disciples, correct facts and a wrong conclusion were mixed together. The statement that Jesus had been crucified was a fact, but the judgment that the hope of redemption had ended with that death differed from the Scriptures. Just because someone speaks a verse of the Scriptures does not mean his interpretation is automatically right as well. We must examine whether the word quoted fits the surrounding context and the whole ministry the Savior accomplished, and interpret it accurately.

The Lord corrected the disciples' thinking with the Scriptures

Jesus said to the two disciples, *"O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25)*. The Lord pointed out their wrong interpretation in the midst of their sorrow. What they were slow of heart to believe was the word of God that the prophets had written. The first thing the Lord did was to explain in detail, beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, the things concerning Himself written in the Scriptures.

The word *"Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?" (Luke 24:26)* makes clear the order of suffering and glory. The two disciples judged that the hope of redemption had ended as soon as the suffering began, but the Scriptures had already testified that the Christ would pass through suffering and enter into glory. The Lord's Cross and resurrection were exactly according to the plan of salvation God had promised in the Scriptures, and God accomplished the salvation of sinners without the slightest deviation.

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Jesus explained the Scriptures in detail even before the two recognized Him. As the two disciples listened to that word, they came to know that the Cross was not the failure of salvation and that the Christ had suffered and risen again according to the Scriptures. Today the Church, too, must teach clearly how the Scriptures testify to the salvation of Jesus Christ. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, the sins of all mankind passed on to the Lord's body. Taking charge of those sins to the end, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in place of all mankind, really shed His blood and died, and rose again on the third day.

The risen Lord came to the disciples who were leaving Jerusalem and pointed out that they had not believed the words of the prophets. Then He explained the Scriptures in detail and made them know the meaning of the Cross and the resurrection. Even those who have already become children of God can understand what has happened differently from the Scriptures. At such times we must compare the conclusion we have reached with the word, acknowledge that the word is right, and actually correct our own choices and actions.

All the Scriptures testify to the Savior who suffered and rose again

The word that Jesus explained the things concerning Himself written in all the Scriptures shows who the center of the Scriptures is. The Scriptures are not a book that collects methods by which man lives a good life and reaches God by his own strength. They testify to how God, through His Son, took charge of, judged, and removed the sins that sinners cannot remove by themselves. The reason the two disciples thought of the Cross as

a failure was also that they put the redemption they wanted ahead of the redemption the Scriptures speak of.

Beginning at the writings of Moses and all the prophets, the Lord explained in detail the things concerning Himself written in all the Scriptures. Leviticus records how Aaron would *"lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat" (Leviticus 16:21)* and send the goat away. Hebrews testifies, *"Without shedding of blood there is no remission" (Hebrews 9:22)*. These words show that in the sacrifices of the Old Testament, when the representative laid his hands on the head of the offering, the sins of the people passed on to the offering, and the offering received the judgment for sin by shedding its blood and dying. Jesus had the sins of all mankind transferred onto His own body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and He carried those sins all the way to the cross and died shedding His blood.

When the Scriptures are explained in detail, the listener comes to know why the Christ had to suffer, how that suffering relates to his own sins, and what was completed by the resurrection. Those who teach the word must make clear accurately, in plain words, the relationship between the transfer of sin, the judgment, and the resurrection. Then the listener knows where his sins were moved and how they were judged and removed, and he can believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit as his own salvation.

Jesus Christ, who is God Himself in essence, came to this earth clothed in flesh through the body of the virgin Mary in order to save sinners. When the Lord turned thirty, He received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, saying, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to*

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fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15). Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the whole world transferred onto His own body. Thus John the Baptist, after seeing the Lord, was able to testify, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)*.

Taking charge of the sins transferred onto His own body, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha. On the Cross He received the judgment for all those sins in our place and really died shedding His blood, thereby paying the full price of sins. By rising from the tomb, Jesus revealed that He is the Lord of life whom even death could not hold, that is, God. In this way the Lord had sin transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John. He took charge of the transferred sin to the end and carried it all the way to the cross of Golgotha, and there He was judged in our place, really shed His blood and died, and then rose again, completing all the righteousness of God and our eternal salvation.

When we believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart, we receive the remission of all our sins once and for all, receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, and become children of God. It is not our deeds that make salvation perfect; we receive the remission of sin by believing, exactly as the word says, what the Lord has already perfectly accomplished. What the disciples going to Emmaus needed was also not to add their own zeal but to realize how the Scriptures testify to the baptism, suffering, and resurrection of the Christ. Today we, too, when we hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit accurately, do not see the Cross as a failure but believe in the risen Jesus Christ as our perfect Savior.

When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, our sins were transferred onto the Lord's body. So the judgment the Lord received on the Cross was the very judgment for our sins. The

Lord received that judgment and really died, and He rose again on the third day. We who believe in the risen Lord can believe that Jesus paid the full price of our sins and that God has remitted all our sins.

The hearts and the steps of the disciples who heard the Scriptures changed together

When the two disciples drew near to Emmaus, the day was drawing to a close. They constrained the one who had walked with them and opened the Scriptures to them to stay, and Jesus went in with them. At the meal, when the Lord broke the bread and gave it to them, their eyes were opened and they recognized that the one who had walked with them was none other than the Lord. Luke records that the Lord then vanished from their sight. The two disciples remembered the words of the Scriptures they had heard on the road, and they knew that the one who had walked with them was the risen Lord.

They said to one another, *"Did not our heart burn within us while He talked with us on the road, and while He opened the Scriptures to us?" (Luke 24:32)*. The risen Lord first walked with them and opened the Scriptures to them, and as the two listened to that word they came to know the Cross and the resurrection rightly. Only afterward did they tell each other that their hearts had burned while they listened to the word. Luke records that the Lord first explained the Scriptures and that the disciples' hearts burned after they heard that word.

Having realized the word, the two disciples rose up that very hour, even though the day was over, and returned to Jerusalem. Those who only a little while before had left Jerusalem with sad faces now went back along the same road. They met the eleven

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apostles and the other disciples and told them how the Lord had opened the Scriptures to them on the road and how they had recognized the Lord when He broke the bread. What the two disciples actually did after hearing the Lord's word was to return to Jerusalem and make the resurrection known.

The distance of the road back to Jerusalem was the same as when they had come to Emmaus, and it had already grown dark. Earlier, the two disciples had left Jerusalem thinking that the hope of redemption had ended with the Cross. Now, because they knew that Jesus had suffered and risen again according to the Scriptures, they walked the night road back to Jerusalem. And they told the disciples what they had seen and heard on the road.

Those who have received the remission of sin already believe the gospel that Jesus Christ, who is God Himself in essence, came as a man and had the sins of the whole world transferred onto His own body when He received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and that, taking charge of those sins to the end, He came to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in our place, shed His blood and died, and rose again on the third day. When a member is discouraged by meeting something different from his expectations, the Church can read and hear this gospel together with that member and reflect together on the salvation the Lord completed. This is not a matter of having that member saved again; it is helping him confirm the salvation he has already received and give thanks to the Lord. That member can acknowledge the part he misjudged, consult with the Church, and continue the work entrusted to him.

Those who are sure of the resurrection return to the Church and testify

When the two disciples arrived in Jerusalem, the eleven apostles and the other disciples were gathered together. They heard the testimony, *"The Lord is risen indeed, and has appeared to Simon" (Luke 24:34)*, and they themselves told what had happened on the road and how they had recognized the Lord when He broke the bread. People who had met the risen Lord in different places gathered in one place and testified that Jesus had really risen. The Church heard that testimony together, believed in the same resurrection, and delivered it to others.

Today the Church, too, must gather together and hear again and again of the risen Lord and the gospel of the water and the Spirit He completed. Those who teach the word must teach from the Scriptures that Jesus had our sins transferred onto His own body when He received baptism from John the Baptist, carried those sins all the way to the cross, was judged and died, and rose again on the third day. As the members hear this gospel, they must confirm the salvation they have already received, remind themselves of the grace the Lord has bestowed, and give thanks to God. They must also continue the rightful work of serving the Church and the gospel as children of God.

Are you, too, thinking that even the Lord's promise has ended because what you hoped for did not come to pass? Jesus drew near to the discouraged disciples and opened the Scriptures to them, and made them know that the Christ's suffering and rising again were God's plan of salvation. We, too, must hear the word that Jesus died and rose again according to the Scriptures and completed salvation. Let us believe in the salvation the risen Lord accomplished, and preach this gospel together with our brothers and sisters.

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At the end of the road to Emmaus, the two disciples came to know the suffering and glory of the Christ through the Scriptures, confirmed the risen Lord, and returned to Jerusalem and became witnesses. We, too, must hear and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit through the word. Jesus had all our sins transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, carried those sins all the way to the cross, was judged in our place, shed His blood and died, and then rose again. Let us deliver this salvation to those who do not yet know it. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

By rising again, the Lord gave us the hope of the resurrection

< Luke 24:36-53 >

"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon

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you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.' And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."

Among the writers of the Gospels, Luke is a very gentle person in human terms. Mark, who wrote the Gospel of Mark, is a man of faith and very direct. Matthew, who wrote the Gospel of Matthew, was a tax collector. He was a man who had collected taxes, but after he became a disciple of Jesus he did splendid work. Matthew saw Jesus as the King. So he recorded every event from the viewpoint of Jesus the King. The Apostle John is the one among the disciples who was spiritually closest to the Lord and had the deepest heart. He speaks of Jesus Christ being God on a very high level. From that viewpoint, John carefully observed and recorded the thirty-three years of Jesus Christ's life and ministry.

Luke, the writer of the Gospel of Luke, was a coworker of Paul who recorded what the eyewitnesses had delivered. He is a person of very gentle character. So he knows human weakness very keenly, and he deeply soothes that part. All four Gospels record the resurrection of Jesus. In particular, Luke chapter 24 tells of the resurrection of Jesus centering on the affair of the two disciples who were going down to Emmaus. At the same time, it also shows what Jesus commanded His disciples.

Jesus' burial and the burial customs of Israel

After Jesus died on the Cross, a rich man named Joseph of Arimathea buried Jesus in a rock tomb he had prepared so that he might be buried in it when he died. Here, to say that He was buried does not mean burying in the ground as in our country. The custom of Israel is to place the body in a place like a cave and seal its entrance. The rich hewed out rock to make rock tombs, used them as family tombs, and sealed the entrance after placing the body inside.

Our country keeps close to the soil. When a body is buried in the soil, it decays and returns to the soil again by means of microorganisms. In Israel, they place the body inside a cave and let it decay and return to nature. Because Westerners place the body above the surface of the ground, when it has fully decayed only the bare bones remain. In the East, however, even the bones decay completely. The shape of the graves is also very different. In the West, cement tombs or rock tombs are widely used, while in the East the body is buried in the soil and the grave is covered with turf. Seen from a national standpoint, graves according to the Confucian thought of the East do great harm to the national land. It is said that the public cemeteries of our country occupy a considerable proportion of the national land.

The risen Jesus

On the cross, Jesus said that it was finished, and He died. Then He was buried in a rock tomb and rose again on the third day. The first to see Jesus were several women, including Mary Magdalene and Mary the mother of James. The reason they went to the tomb was to anoint Jesus' body with spices so that it would

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not decay and would not give off the smell of a corpse. They went to the tomb at early dawn before daybreak, at the very time when the light was coming in, the darkness was receding, and brightness was slowly arriving. The great stone that had blocked the front of the rock tomb had been rolled away. When they looked inside, only the cloths that had wrapped Jesus' body remained as they were. As the women were at a loss because the body was not there, two angels appeared beside them, and they were startled. The angels asked why they were seeking the living One among the dead. They said that Jesus had risen as He had said, and that He had gone to the place He had spoken of beforehand.

Mary Magdalene and the other women saints were so startled that they were beside themselves. Both glad and afraid, they ran to the disciples and told them of this. Peter and John ran to the tomb. When Peter, who was impetuous, went into the tomb first, there were only the cloths and the body was not there. They were in a stir, asking why the body was not there. From the third day after Jesus died on the Cross, the rumor began to spread. The disciples murmured among themselves and were afraid. On the other hand, they were also disappointed.

The risen Jesus whom the two disciples going down to Emmaus met

If Jerusalem lies in a mountain valley, the village called Emmaus lies about seven miles, that is, about 11 kilometers, below it. The two men went down that road talking with each other in their disappointment. They talked as they recalled all that had happened in the meantime. Then Jesus appeared, went along with the two disciples, and asked them. He asked what had

happened in Jerusalem and what the two of them were talking about. Then one of them stopped on his way and answered. He asked whether, living in Jerusalem, He did not know the things that had happened there recently.

He spoke like this. The greatest event had taken place: the chief priests and the rulers had delivered Jesus to the Romans to be put to death. Jesus had received the sentence of death, been nailed to the cross, shed His blood, and come to death. People had laid Jesus in a rock tomb, but His body had disappeared. It was said that there were some among the disciples who had met Him in person. He asked whether, when such a great event had taken place, He did not know of it.

Jesus spoke to the two men. He explained to them, step by step, what was written about Jesus Christ in the Psalms and the books of the Law of the Old Testament. Listening to His words, the two walked together with Him for a long while. Evening came and the sun set. Jesus would have gone farther, but the two disciples pleaded with Him not to go on since it was getting dark, but to stay with them. They pressed Him to have supper together, sleep the night, and go the next morning, and so they shared the meal together. At the meal, Jesus broke bread and gave it to the disciples. When He broke the bread and gave it to them, the disciples' eyes were opened and they recognized that He was Jesus.

As the Scripture says, the two disciples' eyes were restrained, so they did not recognize Jesus at first. But when they sat and ate together and Jesus broke the bread and gave it to them, they finally recognized Him. At that very moment, Jesus suddenly vanished from that place. The two disciples were greatly confused. They said, how could we have met Jesus and not recognized Him? They said, did not our hearts burn when He came along and opened to us the words of the Old Testament,

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the words in the Psalms, the Prophets, and the five books of Moses? In particular, they recognized that He was Jesus when He broke the bread and gave it to them. That evening the two disciples left that place and returned to Jerusalem. When they came to where the disciples were gathered, it was said that among the disciples too there were some who had met Jesus in person.

The risen Lord who stood in the midst of the disciples

While the disciples were gathered and were whispering and talking, Jesus appeared in their midst in person. It is said, *"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures" (Luke 24:36–45).*

The two disciples who were going down to Emmaus met Jesus and recognized that He was Jesus when He broke the bread

and gave it to them, but Jesus had already vanished. They were greatly puzzled. They said, did not our hearts burn when He came and opened the words of the Old Testament to us? Then, when they came to the house in Jerusalem where the disciples were gathered, among those disciples too there were some who had met Jesus.

So there were also some who whispered and doubted, and a discussion broke out among them. At that very moment, Jesus Himself stood in their midst and appeared, saying, peace to you. Today some people speak as if the Holy Spirit comes down through some door, but Jesus did not come in through the door; He suddenly appeared in their midst. He appeared in the middle of the room where all eleven disciples were gathered. It is like His appearing suddenly while we are gathered in a room of about this size, talking with one another. The disciples were greatly startled and afraid. Then Jesus spoke. He said, why do doubts arise in your hearts, behold My hands and My feet and know that it is I, handle Me. He said that a spirit does not have flesh and bones, but that He had them, as they saw. Having said this, He showed them His hands and feet. When the disciples, out of sheer joy, still did not believe and marveled, Jesus asked whether there was anything to eat there. When they picked up a piece of broiled fish and gave it to Him, Jesus took it and ate it before them.

Jesus appeared and said, why do you doubt, peace to you. The two disciples had met Jesus on the road and even talked with Him without recognizing Him, and the moment they recognized Him, Jesus vanished. The disciples were so bewildered that they gathered and whispered, asking what on earth this could be. In that situation, as they were talking, saying, did you see Him too, we saw Him too, Jesus appeared in the middle of the room though the door had not even been opened. Jesus showed them

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His hands and feet and said, do not doubt; I have truly risen, so handle Me. He told them to put their hands into the marks of the nails.

In another Gospel there is a word about a disciple named Thomas. That disciple could not at all believe what the other disciples said they had seen with their eyes. He said that he could never believe it. Then Jesus appeared and said, *"Reach your finger here, and look at My hands; and reach your hand here, and put it into My side."* Jesus showed him in person the marks of the nails in His hands and the mark of the spear in His side. After that, Thomas became a man of faith. Here in the Gospel of Luke, Jesus asked whether they had anything to eat. This means that not only His spirit but His body, too, rose again together. When the disciples gave Him a piece of fish, Jesus ate it on the spot. After eating and speaking further, He blessed the disciples. Having said all He was to say that day, Jesus went out as far as Bethany, lifted up His hands and blessed the disciples, and, parting from them, was carried up into heaven. All these things really happened.

Why did Jesus rise again?

Today, looking at the text, we give thanks that Jesus has risen. And we hope that we, too, will become like that. To hope means to long for something. It means to long for it to be so. Then what do you and I long for? This event of Jesus' resurrection is a blessing even greater than the blessing by which Jesus took charge of our sins with the baptism He received from John, was judged for those sins on the Cross and died, and rose from the dead, and thereby gave you and me the remission of sin and made us God's children. That is precisely the blessing of the

resurrection. It means coming back to life. Jesus came back to life. Coming back to life is a tremendous blessing to us.

As we live our lives, there are times when we leave a stain that cannot be erased. At such times people say that if only they were given one more chance, they would really like to live well without such a stain, that they would like to start anew. We who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have already received the remission of sin, have become God's children, and go and live in the kingdom of heaven. We believe this. And yet, Jesus rose again. Today let us focus on the fact that He rose again and take a look. What we long for is precisely a life in which we, too, like Jesus, die and come back to life, receive new life, and begin a new life. Since Jesus has risen, let us focus right here as we greet this Easter and look into it.

You and I have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is truly good to have received the remission of sin. We have become God's children and are going to the kingdom of God. Only, while we live on this earth doing God's work, it is truly hard. Then what is it that we long for? Our souls have already been saved. But our bodies, too, will die once. What we long for is for that body to come back to life and live once more, unfolding its dreams. Jesus rose from the dead and began a new life. He entered the eternal and everlasting world, and He is living even now as King, enjoying riches and glory.

When the Lord was dying, hanging on the cross, the thief hanging on one side said, *"Remember me when You come into Your kingdom."* Then the Lord said, *"You will be with Me in Paradise" (Luke 23:43)*. The word Paradise carries the meaning of enjoying oneself in a delightful garden. It means living while enjoying oneself. Just as the Lord closed His thirty-three years of life on this earth and lives a new life in the eternal world, you

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and I who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit also have a new life in the flesh. If you and I long for that new life, we must believe that Jesus rose again and give thanks.

Why did Jesus rise again? It was so that our bodies, too, might live again in a new life and live forever. Jesus rose from the dead so that this body, though it is corruptible, might put on incorruption and live again forever. I have told you that hope means longing for something. Then what do you and I long for? We are born once on this earth and die once. If after that we come back to life in a good resurrection like the Lord's, what would we then long for before God? If the body that was imperfect dies once and is raised again and receives new life, what would we then long for? At that time we would truly long to live a life like the Lord's.

Our bodies will die once and come back to life. The Lord said that He would let us take part in the first resurrection. If there is something that you and I, who now have flesh, long for, it is to put on not this imperfect body but a new body. What we long for is to pass through walls like Jesus and go wherever we wish to go, to rule even the angels, to enjoy everything, and to live without being under the dominion of evil. I long for that. Greeting this Easter Sunday, my heart is new. I have fully received the salvation of my soul and have also fully received the remission of sin in my heart, and all my future happiness has been guaranteed. Nevertheless, I long for my body, too, to receive new life again. What I long for is a life like the Lord's. I long to put on not an imperfect body but a perfect body and live like that once more. That is why this Easter Sunday is truly deep in meaning.

The Lord has given us the resurrection

The Lord has risen. Do you believe that Jesus rose again? Then why do you think the Lord rose again? It was to give new life to you and me. In order to remove the sins of you and me, Jesus received baptism from John, took charge of all the sins of the world, died hanging on the cross, and rose from the dead. Jesus became the Savior of you and me and removed our sins. And He rose again so that our bodies, too, might die once and be raised again to begin a new life. Jesus is the Lord of the resurrection. He said, *"I am the resurrection and the life" (John 11:25)*.

The Apostle Paul said that if there is no rising again of the dead, our faith is also empty. It means that if there is no coming back to life, it is nothing. Suppose we were saved only spiritually, only in our hearts, only in our thoughts. If there is no such thing as the body dying and coming back to life to live a new life, if there is no such hope, we Christians have no hope at all. For those who have received the remission of sin by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there is this: just as the Lord rose again, even our bodies will receive new life again, come back to life, begin a new life, and live blessedly. That is waiting for us. If there were no such thing, you and I would be nothing more than mere dreamers. It would all be an illusion and all mere theory.

There was no sin in Jesus' soul. But by receiving baptism from John, He bore our sins on His own body. In that body He hung on the cross, was judged for sin, came to death, and rose again. To us, this body is absolute. For we cannot live apart from the body. For as for a life apart from the body, we cannot know what kind of world that is, and it is meaningless to us. This mortal body, this corruptible body, too, will put on incorruption.

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Death no longer prevails. It means that death disappears. The Lord has made death disappear. His saying that He is the resurrection and the life means that the Lord is not only the Master of life but the Master of life who raises the dead again.

Therefore we must long for it to be so. And, greeting the Lord's Easter, we must know and believe the fact that we will become so in the future. Not merely as some feeling of the heart, but greeting this Easter, we must hold the faith that our bodies, too, will come back to life, that they will come back to life and begin a new life. From now on we must hope for this new life. If we do not look forward to the life of living again in the future, we are not living a true Christian life. It is not true faith. Because there is the matter of living again, life on this earth is one process. Even if life on this earth has been somewhat wretched, if in the future even our bodies are raised and we live again, then what we long for is not the first life on this earth but the kind of life that only God enjoys in the eternal and everlasting world. We must long for that life.

The Lord has given us the resurrection. He promised that He would raise our bodies again as well. The Lord first rose again according to that promise. He said that when the time comes, He will raise us. You and I are people who will be raised again. A new life of living again is waiting for us. What would happen if you and I, who have received the remission of sin and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, did not long for that life? Even if we do not long for it, we will come to live such a life. Nevertheless, in the course of our life of faith, we must know that there is such a life and long for it. We must know that there is such a life and believe it. And we must long for it.

Greeting Easter, we must know and believe that our bodies, too, will come back to life and live gloriously. Because it is something not yet fulfilled, we must look forward to it. If we do

not look forward to this, what result would follow? When real hardship comes and death draws near, we would end up kneeling before death. But if we know that the Lord has given us the resurrection, we do not kneel before the first death. Because we believe that we will live again, we face the first death boldly by faith. This Easter is extremely important. This is not talk about starting some new undertaking.

Christians must live with their hope set on the resurrection

I long for it. I long for a new life to be given to me once more. That new life continues forever. If the new life continues, I will live truly gloriously. I long for that. After the Lord rose again, He is living gloriously, forever, even now. In order to give that life to you and me, in order to give us a new life again, the Lord rose from the dead and ascended into heaven. And He said that He would come again. He said that He would come to take us. So I believe. I hope that you, too, will know this. I hope that you will believe this.

We must have something we long for. Now Christians must set their hope on something. On what do we set our hope? On the resurrection. We must long to rise again from the first death. We must look forward to it. We must live in that hope. It is said, *"Now abide faith, hope, love, these three; but the greatest of these is love" (1 Corinthians 13:13)*. Because God loved us, He removed our sins, saved us, and gave us the resurrection. He gave us new life and made us live again. He makes our souls live again, and He makes our bodies live again as well. We must long for that. From now on we must live longing for it. The greatest of these is love, but what is there at the last? Hope.

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What kind of life do you and I long for? With what purpose, and longing for what kind of life, do we live? It is to come back to life from death like the Lord, to enjoy riches and glory like the Lord, and to live a new life forever, that is, a life of righteousness. Now we are imperfect, but we must long for a perfect life at that time that is not imperfect. We must long for it, believe it, and wait for it. Only then is it the true Christian life of faith. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

We must have hope. We must live longing for it. It is said, *"I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us" (Romans 8:18)*. If there were no such hope, we would not be able to live. If through the gospel we preach people only received the remission of sin, and their bodies lived wretchedly and died with no living again and no living happily forever, we would give up preaching the gospel. Even if only our sins disappeared and we did not go to hell but only went to heaven, the meaning of that is deep. We would be more than grateful for that alone. But if there were nothing more to long for and nothing better, we would end up staying at that level. But now a new life is waiting for all people. What is it? It is to rise again and have a new life begin.

Until now we have been shabby, poor, and foolish. But the new life that is coming to us is positive and certain, the exact opposite of the negative things of this world. Now it is perfect. The life we long for is a life that is truly perfect and eternal and everlasting, good and unfading, a life lived perfectly. It is a life lived with complete power. A life in which, if there is something we desire in our hearts, as long as it is not bad but good, whatever it is comes to pass and is achieved—that is precisely the life of the resurrection. When we rise again, we become like the Lord. The Lord has given us the resurrection.

Even if we should come to face death, we do not become abject at that moment. This is because the next life is clearly guaranteed. It is because we believe this. Because we will come back to life and begin a new life, the Lord has made it so that we do not end our first life abjectly. I believe that. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? The resurrection is something extremely beautiful. It is the beginning of a new life. Now we are laboring to save other souls. Our bodies keep growing weaker. But we still have a long way to go. We have a new life once again. A new life that belongs only to those who are born again is waiting for us. That there is this new life is precisely the resurrection.

If we were to live like this, receive the remission of sin, die, and only go to heaven with no new life—if only our souls went and there were no good life in which our bodies rise again, are raised again, and enjoy it—then for the Lord, too, it would have ended with His entering the tomb. The Lord rose again in order to make us live again from death. He rose again in order to show that He is the Lord of the resurrection and the Lord of life, in order to give us that grace, in order to give us that new life.

Before I was born again, before I believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, I could not believe in the resurrection. But now I believe it. I also believe that you and I have a new life again. Do you believe it too? However we have lived since we were born on this earth until now, and however we live in the future, you and I have a new life. We can begin a new life again. I have it, and you have it too. At that time we will put on not this earthly body as it is but a spiritual body. This body is raised again and puts on a spiritual body; it is not that there is no body. Do you understand? It is not that there is only the soul. I truly give thanks for how good the resurrection is. Now it seems I will live because of this. There is preaching the gospel, being of benefit

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to others, and doing the work entrusted to us, but what I long for more than these, personally, is that I can begin a new life again. It seems I will be able to live because of that. I hope that you will engrave this deep in your hearts, meditate on it, believe it, live like that, and meet the Lord. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? I believe too. I will close the word. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The risen Lord, our living hope

< Luke 24:36-53 >

"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.' And He led them out as far as

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Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."

How are you? Easter is drawing near in a little while. Some of you will ask why I am preaching an Easter sermon this early. But in anything, it is good to prepare ahead of others. Rather than weeping sorrowfully and fasting because Lent has come around, it is far more important to believe in what the Lord did when He came to this earth and in what He will accomplish in the future. So I have decided to preach the word from this text today.

The passage we read today is the scene in which the Lord rose again and came in person among the disciples. The Lord spoke to them, bestowed blessings on them, ate food, and made them understand and know the Scriptures. And He explained to them that the Christ would come to this earth, bear the sin of the world and suffer, and rise again from the dead on the third day, and that repentance that leads to the remission of sin would be preached in His name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem.

Then the Lord said that He would send them the Holy Spirit whom the Father had promised. And He blessed the disciples and went up into heaven, and the disciples returned to the temple in Jerusalem and praised God. Today we stand before this word.

Do you believe this word of the Scriptures as the word of truth?

As we look at this word of the Scriptures, there is one thing we must think about first. Do I really believe this word? The Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John, and took charge of all the sins of mankind. Bearing the sin of the world, He went and was nailed to the cross and died, and rose again from the dead. Do I believe that the risen Lord truly rose again from the dead? Do I believe this word?

Not only this word, but do I believe all the words the Lord spoke when He came to this earth, and the short but indispensable words of truth He spoke about what will come to pass for mankind in the future? We must seriously look back on this part. Do we truly believe this word of the Scriptures, or do we merely read it? Do we attend church without faith, or do we attend church believing this word? We must ask ourselves this.

There is an enormous difference between a person who attends church believing the word of the Scriptures and one who attends without believing. I believe all the words that are in this Bible. Because I believe, I also believe that the Lord who went up into heaven will come again in these last days. I also believe that this world will fall into tribulation and natural disasters. It is because it is written in the Scriptures. I also believe all these last things: that the world of the galaxies will be shaken and the stars will be shaken, that earthquakes and famines will occur, and that pestilences and diseases will spread.

I also believe that the Lord came to this earth as a man, borrowing the body of the virgin Mary. I also believe that the Lord came to this earth and fulfilled all righteousness by receiving baptism from John at the age of thirty. I also believe that He came bearing the sin of the world and died in our place,

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nailed to the cross, and I believe that He rose from the dead in order to make us live. I also believe that the Lord went up into heaven. It is because the Lord's words are written, and those words are trustworthy.

To believe this word is precisely to believe in God. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John, was judged for those sins on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again on the third day. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of sin and becomes God's people. Whoever believes this word does not fall into a wrong path or into the trap of his own thoughts.

What we think about is important

Because this word becomes light, through this word we come to know how we must live from now on and what we must live for. We know what life is, and because we know well the things to come, the things of the present, and the things that have passed, we live wisely. Therefore it is extremely important to believe this word of the Scriptures. We must believe this word, think of Jesus Christ, and think of what Jesus Christ has accomplished.

In our life of faith, what we think about is extremely important. Those who believe in Jesus must not live thinking only of this world and the present, thinking only of eating and drinking—food, clothing, and shelter. What makes man different from the beasts is that he can think. Because he can think, he grieves, suffers, and agonizes. What we think about—this is extremely important in our life of faith.

Even if one has received the remission of sin and become God's people, if he thinks every day only of how this world goes

and of food, clothing, and shelter, and thinks only of the visible goals of the flesh, such a person will someday end up caught in the trap of the hardships and worries of life. Speaking of these last days, the Lord told us to take heed lest we be caught in the trap of the cares of this world.

If we think only of the things of this world, we come to agonize and worry about what we will eat and what we will drink. Then what happens when the world becomes difficult? Crushed by those worries, we abandon our faith, and bound by them, we solve nothing; we even lose all we have, and we end up dying without receiving any help before God.

Think of Jesus Christ and believe the word of God

Therefore, for those who believe in Jesus, what they think about is extremely important. If a person who believes in Jesus believes the word of God, thinks of God's work, thinks of Jesus Christ's coming again, and, until that day, thinks of the worldwide preaching of the gospel and the salvation of souls that the Lord has entrusted to us, that person's soul is an awakened soul. That soul is wise and does not suffer want.

Because that person reads all the words of God by faith and eats them with the heart, his spiritual food becomes abundant and he is full. Because he thinks of God's work, he is not caught in the trap of this world, that is, the trap of worries and the hardships of living. Because he knows in advance how this world will flow in the future, he prepares ahead of others and goes forward ahead of others, and so he does not become the servant of others.

A person who thinks of God, believes this word of the Scriptures, and thinks by faith of what Jesus Christ has done and

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of His coming again is a wise person. Such a person lives well in this world too. Because God gives him wisdom, he lives wisely without worrying. But there are people who merely say that they have believed, and who live as if to say that since they will go to heaven when the Lord comes, the rest does not matter. Even on the day of worship, they come to church and always think only of worldly affairs and the goals of their own flesh. Those who think only of the things of the world fall into worry.

When we fall into worry, our hearts are troubled and we can see nothing. When a person is driven into a corner and meets with something bewildering, he cannot come to his senses. Therefore, if we always think ahead, prepare the things of the present one by one, and go forward ahead of others, we no longer fall into such worries and agonies.

Do you know why it happens that those who believe in Jesus fall into anxiety and agony, go bankrupt, and live in hardship? It is because they do not think of the work of Jesus Christ. It is because they do not believe the word of God and do not think of God's work. If we believe the word of God and think of God, we see clearly what will happen in this world, as if reading a newspaper. It also becomes self-evident what work we should do to prosper. But because people do not think of Jesus Christ, do not believe this word even while looking at it, and regard the truth as nothing more than the words of a man, they do not obtain wisdom. This Bible is an immense treasury of wisdom. It is a storehouse of truth and a storehouse of life, a storehouse of salvation and a storehouse of blessing. God has given this to everyone, yet people look at this word and do not believe it.

I want to say this to those who believe in Jesus. Think of Jesus Christ and believe this word. Think of what Jesus Christ has done. Then your heart will be broadened, your spiritual eyes will be opened, a way to live will be opened, and wisdom to

break through every difficulty will arise.

Whoever believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of sin at that very moment

Do you perhaps have sin in your heart? Even if you have sin, it is simply resolved if you look at this word of the Scriptures and believe it. There is no need to weep and wail. In order to remove all our sins, God has given us two packets of medicine, namely, the Old Testament and the New Testament. There is not a single person on this earth whose sins are not removed after taking these two packets of medicine. Nor is there anyone who is not born again. When we take these two packets of medicine, everything is finished.

The gospel that those two packets of medicine point to is clear. Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sins of the world transferred onto His own body. Bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and thereby received all the judgment of sin. And He rose again from the dead on the third day. Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of sin at that very moment. The remission of sin is not received by weeping and striving; it is received when we believe in this work that Jesus has already accomplished.

Man has a soul, and in the heart of that soul there is sin. In order to have this sin remitted, God has given us two packets of medicine, namely, this word of the Scriptures. You cannot imagine how clear this word is. Do you want to receive the Holy Spirit? The way to receive the Holy Spirit is all set out in the Scriptures. God does not tell us to receive Him blindly. Giving

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and receiving the Holy Spirit by telling people to come and go without any reason is something only a medicine peddler would do.

God is the God of truth, the God of life, and the God of knowledge. He makes His will clear through the word, teaches so that we understand by hearing, and lets us know everything through the word. When we believe that word, things are resolved of themselves. That is why God is called the God of the word.

When Jesus Christ left this earth and went up to the right hand of the throne of God, what did He leave us? He had the disciples write these Scriptures, and He gave those Scriptures to us. This is the most precious gift God has left us. He left nothing else; He left only this word. Therefore, look at this word of Jesus Christ and believe it. Believe it and think about it. Since I too am a pastor, I always think about it.

Because I believe that the Lord will come again to this earth, I think about it. But I do not believe such things as that He will come on such-and-such a day of such-and-such a month. Saying that the Lord will come on a set date is what shamans or the demon-possessed say. Jesus Christ comes when He wills to come. If He were to tell us the date and hour in advance and then come, would people still be alive until then? Would God be without wisdom? God is One who is wise.

If He were to come on a set date and hour, would those who will not be raptured leave alone, on the spot, those who will be raptured? They would all try to harm them. Would God work like that? Would He do so, knowing that His children would suffer harm? He does not do so. He comes at the time the Father desires.

When the world is filled with sin, and the gospel has been fully preached to the whole world, and all who will believe have

believed, and there is no longer a single person who cannot believe because he does not know, then the just God will come. God will say something like this: I had My servants and My people teach you everything, but because you did not believe with your hearts, you are cast away, while those who believe enjoy true joy together with Me. Therefore, at that time our Lord will come.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit being preached to the whole world

I think of preaching the gospel to the whole world. These days we have translated our books into Spanish, French, and German, and we are making the covers. Even when I sit in front of the computer with a sister and look for a picture suitable for the cover, there is nothing fitting. Even when we obtain expensive materials and look through hundreds of pictures, among all those pictures there is not one that suits the title of the book. Still, I think and think again.

What will happen when these books go into Europe? The people of Europe do not believe in Jesus. Germany, too, does not believe in Jesus. On the contrary, Buddhism is flourishing. Those people do not know the truth of the Scriptures. It was there that the Reformer Luther arose and cried out, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*.

But those people approached the Scriptures from the start with hearts that were not pure. At that time Europe was crushed under the power of the Pope of Rome. While they were looking for a breakthrough to escape from his hand, Luther wrote and posted the Ninety-five Theses. He posted them on the door of the university, saying that it was wrong to claim that by buying

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indulgences one escapes purgatory and goes to heaven, and that this must not be done.

Seeing that, people thought that a courageous man had appeared. But the Papacy tried to kill Luther. Luther was a priest and a seminary professor. At this, the nobles used this affair as a pretext and put Luther forward, saying, let us break free from the hand of the tiresome Pope of Rome. In those days, even for a man and a woman to marry or divorce, they had to obtain the Pope's permission.

A king of England, when he was not granted permission to divorce, turned his back altogether. In that way the Anglican Church came into being, mixing Christianity and Catholicism half and half. Meanwhile, the Catholic side tried to seize Luther, interrogate him, and kill him, but the nobles of Germany protected Luther and had him take refuge. And they had him translate the Bible into German.

Just at that time, printing technology developed. They printed the Bible translated into their own language and distributed it to the people. After the people read the Bible, they realized how wrong Catholicism was and how far it was from the Scriptures. So they raised the banner of revolt, escaped from the grip of the Pope of Rome, and were liberated.

But because they had believed in Jesus for such a purpose, once they escaped from the Pope's hand they began to look at the Scriptures with eyes of doubt. They asked why there were so many Gospels, such as the Gospel of Matthew, the Gospel of Mark, the Gospel of Luke, and the Gospel of John. They asked why there were four books when one would do, and suspected that surely one person had written it and someone else had copied it. Doing what is called higher criticism in this way, they compared the four Gospels one by one. They argued that this event is in all three Gospels while that event is in only one

Gospel, and then concluded that the Gospel of Mark was the original and the rest were copies.

So they dismissed the other three Gospels. Regarding the five books of Moses, too, they argued over how old Moses lived to be, and doubted whether Moses had really written them, since Deuteronomy records even the things that happened after Moses died. They dissected the Scriptures piece by piece, just as one would cut open a man's belly, pull out the intestines, and remove the organs one by one. Looking at it through the spectacles of doubt in this way, the whole Bible looked like a lie. If you put on red spectacles, everything looks red, and if you put on blue spectacles, everything looks blue. Because they had once been burned by Catholicism, they came to look even at the Scriptures with eyes of distrust. So in Europe they closed the Bible, saying it could not be believed.

This distrust crossed over to America. The white people of America do not readily believe either. Even if they want to believe, those who deliver the word as it is are rare. Since this person preaches one way and that person preaches another way, what can people who hold down jobs and look at the Bible once or twice a week know? They know only what is delivered to them. They know no more than that the black is the letters and the white is the paper. People do not know this truth.

So, in order to preach the gospel to France, Spain, and Germany, the major countries of Europe over there, we translated our books into English. Those books are now being sold in America. Now we have finished the work of translating them again into several languages, and after revision and cover work, we only have to hand them over to the printer. Frankly, I do not even know well what French looks like.

A brother copied the translation, bound it provisionally, and brought it. At first I thought I had heard that it was Spanish. Even

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when I asked the brothers whether they knew what language this was, no one knew. If someone said it was Spanish, they simply took it to be so. But a little later another brother came and told us that it was not Spanish but French.

The major countries of Europe, that is, the most powerful countries, were Germany, France, and Spain. The gospel is going once again into those countries that once held the whole world in their hands. This week a call came from a coworker in America. He said that in one week he had mailed as many as 15 boxes of our books to the people there. He said that when he took the 15 boxes to the post office, the clerk at the counter struggled because the books were so heavy and got irritated. So, feeling embarrassed, he divided them and took some to another post office nearby as well. Since some thirty copies go into one box, it is truly an amazing thing.

Americans and Europeans refuse the books at first. But what happens after a little while? Later they say that they want to preach this holy news. They acknowledge the word and the content of these sermon books and confess that they have never seen such a word before. In this way the gospel is going into the whole world. We must think of this.

The Church must devote its strength to gaining one life more precious than the whole world

Jesus Christ has risen, and someday He will come again to this world. We must think of the Lord's coming. What happens when the Lord comes? When the Lord comes, this world ends. It will be like a bride receiving her bridegroom and setting up a new bridal chamber. From then on, eternal happiness arrives. We must believe it, think of it, and know it. We must believe this

word of the Scriptures. If we do not believe this, what is the point of believing in Jesus?

Yet today many churches, while telling people to believe in Jesus, only tell them every day to pay tithes, to give thanksgiving offerings, to give this or that offering, to serve, and not to sin. But where is there anyone who does not sin? There is no one who does not sin.

The problem is those who do not teach the gospel. The reason the Church came into being is to preach this gospel when sinners come in, and to tell them how Jesus removed their sins. The Church exists, and this pulpit exists like this, in order to preach that work by which He removed all sins.

To put it simply, let us go back to the time of the Old Testament. Inside the Tabernacle there was the ark, and the mercy seat on top of it was the place where God bestowed grace. A person who had sinned laid his hands on the sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it, cut its throat, and drew its blood. When that blood was sprinkled seven times on the mercy seat, God looked at that blood from between the cherubim on either side and said that that person had no sin.

But the churches of today only tell people, as soon as they come to church, to pay money, not to sin, and to live good lives. Yet the one standing at the pulpit and the one sitting down are the same kind of person before God. Even so, there are not a few who receive several million won a month, or even more. There are many who receive extra sums, calling them education expenses or this or that expense, and bring in a considerable income.

Such people ride around in fine cars and put on airs. Wherever they go, they sit in the highest seat, pretend to be holy, and say a few words of prayer, and then people bring out white envelopes and checks. They say, blessed be you, and if people

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do not pay money, they say, cursed be you. A person who truly has any thought should open the Bible with eyes wide open and examine whether the church he attends is even remotely similar to the Scriptures.

What kind of church is it that only tells people to pay money? What does the word church, that is, ekklesia, mean? It means that those who were in bondage and slavery in Egypt were delivered out. It means that He delivered them out and gave them freedom and joy, gave them the remission of sin and gave them blessing.

Yet as soon as people come to church, they are told to pay money. They drag in the word of the Scriptures that says, "Do not appear empty-handed." But the word not to appear before God empty-handed is the word spoken to the people of the Old Testament before Jesus Christ came. Whenever they sinned, they had to bring a sacrificial offering, such as a sheep, a goat, or a dove, every day, lay their hands on that offering to pass their sins on to it, draw its blood, and without fail give it to the priest.

In the old days, people had to receive the remission of sin in that way. But in the age of the New Testament, Jesus Christ came and accomplished our salvation once and for all through His thirty-three years of life. Once and for all He came to this earth; once and for all He received baptism from John and took charge of all the sin of the world; once and for all He bore that sin and died on the Cross; once and for all He rose again; and once and for all He went up into heaven. And once and for all He will come again. He has accomplished it all like this. Whoever believes in this gospel—that Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the full price of those sins on the Cross, and rose from the dead—receives the eternal remission of sin once and for all. And yet they merely tell people to pay money.

I say this to all churchgoers in the whole world, to all who believe in God. Do not come to church and merely pay money. Give offerings, but do so when that church serves the gospel and does what is right. If a church does not do what is right and only piles up a lofty chapel at a cost of billions of won, do not pay money to such a place.

Why do people pay money like that? Would God be short of money? To whom does all that money go? There is a method for making those who do not pay money pay it. They pile up envelopes in front of the pulpit and call out names one by one, saying, so-and-so's thanksgiving offering, so-and-so's tithe, such-and-such business-opening offering. Why do they bring up people's names like that?

The offering the Scriptures speak of is one that a person whose heart moves him gives of his own accord, with a single offering box placed at the back. Then why do churches keep telling people to pay money? While saying that the last days are at hand and that the country is in hardship, why do they keep collecting building-fund offerings? People are going bankrupt and dying, yet chapels are being built that usually cost billions of won, even 10 billion won. If people have their own money and give it, that is at least understandable. But even when they have no money because their businesses have gone bankrupt, they take out loans to build a chapel. Church members stand as mutual guarantors for one another, take out loans and offer it all to the church, and then open installment savings accounts to pay off those loans.

This is exactly the same as when Europe was exploited long ago by the Pope's realm. I feel so sorry for such church members. They are people who are quick at figures in their life in society, so why are they so easily taken in when someone deceives them in the name of Jesus Christ?

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Among those who started pioneer churches at the same time as I did, there are some who within three years finished building a chapel with 300 pyeong of floor space on 200 pyeong of land. Their skill at extracting money is truly remarkable. But I cannot bring myself to do such a thing.

We must think. What must we think about? We must believe the word of God and think of the fact that things will come to pass according to this word. As we live in this world, we must look ahead and do what is fitting. We are doing what is truly fitting toward the whole world. Where is there any place that does such work as printing books, preaching the gospel to the whole world, and giving books away?

When we give a person one book, that person reads the book and is born again. A person who believed in Jesus for twenty years and yet was not born again is born again through that one book. Where is there anything better than this? It is more precious for a person to receive the remission of sin by being given a book that explains this word than for someone to bring 100 million won or 1 billion won. His sins have disappeared just by reading a book. It is truly something to give thanks for. If you are going to do business, you should do this kind of work. We must gain one life more precious than the whole world. If offerings have been given in the church, those offerings must be gathered and used where they are most useful.

The Holy Spirit comes upon the hearts of those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus removed our sins

Jesus Christ rose again. Having risen, He appeared in the midst of the disciples as they were gathered and murmuring. And

He said, peace to you. The disciples were overjoyed, but because it was something all too plain, they rather could not believe it. Then the Lord asked whether they had any food there. When the disciples gave Him a piece of broiled fish, the Lord took it and ate it before them.

A ghost does not have flesh and bones. But the resurrection of Jesus Christ was the body itself being transformed and coming alive. That body has both bones and flesh; it is complete. That is why Thomas believed after putting his hand into the Lord's side. The risen Lord ate food.

Jesus also said this. He said that He would not drink again of the wine of this earth until He drank new of the fruit of the vine. This means that there are grapes in the kingdom of heaven too. Before He died on the Cross, at the table of the Passover Lord's Supper, the Lord broke bread and gave it to them, saying, *"This is My body."* Jesus came to this earth and took charge of the sins of all the people of this world with His own body. Bearing those sins, He was nailed to the cross. And He poured wine and passed it to the disciples, saying that this was His blood shed for them to give them the remission of sin. That is, He said, "This is My blood." And He said that He would not drink the wine of this earth until that day when He drank the new fruit of the vine.

And Jesus really was nailed to the cross and died. Since there is a natural body, there is also a spiritual body. The best things that are on earth are also in that kingdom God has made. They are not visible to the eye, but they clearly exist.

The risen Jesus appeared like this, spoke, and made the disciples understand the Scriptures. And He rose again so that repentance that leads to the remission of sin might be preached in the name of Jesus to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. Why did Jesus come to this earth, receive baptism from John, bear the cross, and rise from the dead? It was to fulfill all the

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promises the Scriptures prophesied, the promises toward us.

Do you know to whom the Holy Spirit comes? He comes to those who believe in the gospel by which Jesus removed our sins. Jesus took charge of the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose from the dead, and thereby removed all our sins. When a person hears this gospel, confirms it through the word, and believes it, the Holy Spirit comes upon that person's heart at that very moment. That is why Jesus said in verse 49, *"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high."*

According to this word, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem. And on the day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit came. Until Jesus Christ had come, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, risen from the dead, and ascended, the Holy Spirit had not entered into people's hearts on this earth and worked.

Even if a person believes in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit does not come upon one who does not know this truth that Jesus has removed all his sins and who still has sin remaining in his heart. But to one who knows that Jesus has removed all his sins, who sees and confirms it and believes this word, Jesus Christ sends the Holy Spirit whom the Father promised. To whom does He send Him? He pours Him into the hearts of those who have received the remission of sin by believing in Jesus.

Therefore, claiming to have received the Holy Spirit and speaking in tongues while having sin in the heart is not the true work of the Holy Spirit. What comes upon a person who has sin in his heart and makes him speak in tongues, see visions, and prophesy is not the Holy Spirit but an evil spirit. Whether a person believes in Jesus or not, if there is sin in his heart, it enters into him and makes him do all kinds of things. Yet those who can discern this by the word and make it clear are rare. So today

the church is full of such things. There was even a case where a person who went to pray on a mountain and claimed to have received the Holy Spirit and burst into tongues came back home, and the spirit inside her called her mother-in-law a devil and told her to harm her. Some people hear a voice telling them to divorce and divorce without hesitation. They say that what commanded them from within was the Holy Spirit, but it is all an evil spirit.

I have spoken about many things today. Now I intend to close by summing up a little the passage we read today. We must know and believe the word of the Scriptures. How much do those who believe in Jesus today know the word of the Scriptures? There are many who know nothing once the Bible is closed. Even pastors cannot preach with only the Bible open before them; they spread out several commentaries and copy this and that to prepare their sermons. But the apostles and the true servants of old had this word in their hearts, and they themselves believed that word. Therefore they could preach as much as they liked with only one Bible, and when they heard a person's circumstances, they could immediately open the word and resolve that problem.

What must we think about? Even after believing in Jesus, it is natural to think about what we will eat and what we will drink. The problem is only thinking of that alone. We must think broadly. We must read this word of Jesus and believe it, and we must think of the fact that everything will come to pass as it is written in this word, and prepare for it.

Think of the word of God, and think of the words Jesus Christ spoke here. Then the breadth of your thinking will widen, you will gain wisdom within it, and you will also receive great help in living. As the economy grows difficult, there is an uproar over people taking their own lives. Why take one's life over that? Property can be here one day and gone the next. One can regard

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it as having been swept away by a flood and simply work again. One can roll up one's sleeves and work. Even if one lived comfortably in the past, one can simply take it to mean that now one should change one's mind and work. To say that one cannot live and would rather die if one cannot live as in the old days is truly a foolish thing.

Even an old song has a line that goes, people came first and then money; did money come first and then people? We must not rely on money alone; when we have no money, we must live like human beings, work when it is time to work, and when we have money, live giving relief where relief should be given. To say that everything is possible if only we have money and nothing is possible without it is to regard money as God and believe in it. Try thinking of God in your daily life. Then would there be any reason to go bankrupt? Having wisdom, you come to prepare in advance.

At this hour I say this to you who believe in Jesus. Live thinking of God, thinking of this gospel, and thinking of the work of the gospel. Think of worldly affairs too, but we must live thinking all the more of God's work. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord who showed the body of the resurrection and sent out witnesses of the remission of sin

< Luke 24:36-53 >

"Now as they said these things, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of them, and said to them, 'Peace to you.' But they were terrified and frightened, and supposed they had seen a spirit. And He said to them, 'Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts? Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have.' When He had said this, He showed them His hands and His feet. But while they still did not believe for joy, and marveled, He said to them, 'Have you any food here?' So they gave Him a piece of a broiled fish and some honeycomb. And He took it and ate in their presence. Then He said to them, 'These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.' And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures. Then He said to them, 'Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all

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nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things. Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.' And He led them out as far as Bethany, and He lifted up His hands and blessed them. Now it came to pass, while He blessed them, that He was parted from them and carried up into heaven. And they worshiped Him, and returned to Jerusalem with great joy, and were continually in the temple praising and blessing God. Amen."

While the two disciples who had returned from Emmaus were telling of the Lord they had met on the road, Jesus Himself stood in the midst of those who were gathered. Until a moment before, the disciples had been sharing the news that the Lord had indeed risen, but when the Lord actually appeared, they were terrified and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit. There was still a distance between speaking of the news of the resurrection and believing in the actual resurrection. The Lord proclaimed peace to the frightened disciples, showed them His hands and feet and let them touch Him, and ate food before them.

After confirming the fact of the resurrection, Jesus opened the disciples' hearts and made them understand the Scriptures. He spoke in turn of the suffering and resurrection of the Christ, of the word of the remission of sin being preached to all nations, of the Holy Spirit the Father had promised, and of the mission of witnesses. Then He blessed the disciples and went up into heaven, and they returned to Jerusalem with great joy and praised God. The final scene of the Gospel of Luke shows how the news of the resurrection that began at the empty tomb leads on to the word of the remission of sin that the Church must deliver to all nations.

The Lord who showed the body of the resurrection
and sent out witnesses of the remission of sin

The risen Lord stood in the midst of the frightened disciples

The disciples were, right there on the spot, listening to the testimony that Simon had seen the Lord and to the account that the two disciples from Emmaus had walked with the Lord. Yet when Jesus Himself stood in their midst and said, *"Peace to you" (Luke 24:36)*, they were terrified and frightened and thought they were seeing a spirit. The Lord showed them His hands and feet, let them touch His body, and ate broiled fish before them.

The peace Jesus spoke of was a peace He could give because the Lord had put an end to the problem of sin and death. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Lord had all the sins of all mankind, including the disciples, transferred onto His own body. After that, taking charge of the sins of the whole world, He carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in place of the disciples and us, shed His blood, and really died. And He rose from the dead. The disciples were carrying their own failure of having abandoned the Lord and fled, and their fear of death, but the risen Lord stood in their midst and spoke peace.

Jesus asked, *"Why are you troubled? And why do doubts arise in your hearts?" (Luke 24:38)*. With this question He brought to light the fear and doubt that had actually arisen in the disciples' hearts. Then He showed them His hands and feet and let them touch Him, and ate broiled fish before them. Today the Church must read this record again and again and teach that Jesus rose again in the very body that was nailed to the cross. To members who suffer from illness or face death as well, we must deliver the promise that God will raise that body again on the last day, and comfort one another.

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

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already believe that Jesus had all sins transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, took charge of those sins and carried them all the way to the cross, was judged in our place and really died, and then rose again. The Church's continuing to teach this gospel and hearing it together is not an attempt to have the saints saved again. As the saints hear the gospel again and again, they confirm the remission of sin they have already received, remind themselves of what they believe, and come to give thanks to the Lord who completed salvation. Even when they meet with hardships, they can continue the work entrusted to them together with the Church, believing in the risen Lord and His promise.

He showed the resurrection of His actual body through His hands and feet and through food

The disciples thought that the One they were seeing was a spirit. Jesus said, *"Behold My hands and My feet, that it is I Myself. Handle Me and see, for a spirit does not have flesh and bones as you see I have" (Luke 24:39)*. The Lord let them confirm by His hands and feet that the very One who was nailed to the cross had risen bodily. The resurrection is not a metaphor meaning that Jesus' teaching lives on in the memory of the disciples; it is the event in which the Lord who had died lived again in an actual body.

When the disciples, though overjoyed, still did not believe and marveled, the Lord asked whether they had anything to eat. When they gave Him a piece of broiled fish, Jesus took it and ate it before them. Luke recorded concretely that the disciples saw the Lord's hands and feet and touched His body, and that Jesus ate food before them. Jesus, who had died on the Cross,

rose again in that body and stood in the midst of the disciples. This resurrection clearly testifies that Jesus is the Lord of life who rules over death and is God Himself in essence.

The resurrection of Jesus shows what will happen in the future to the body of one who has received the remission of sin. The Scriptures testify, *"But now Christ is risen from the dead, and has become the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep" (1 Corinthians 15:20)*. Just as fruit of the same kind follows after the firstfruits, God's children who believe in the risen Jesus will also rise again on the last day. God will raise the body that has died and decayed as a body that will not decay.

Concerning the body that will rise again in the future, the Scriptures say, *"So also is the resurrection of the dead. The body is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption" (1 Corinthians 15:42)*. Now our bodies grow old and weak and finally die, but the body God will raise will not decay again. The scene in which Jesus showed His hands and feet and ate food shows that God's salvation does not end by discarding the body and leaving only the soul. The Lord raises again the body of His children who have received the remission of sin, together with their souls, and makes them live in the eternal kingdom of God.

We who believe in this resurrection know our present bodies as given by God and take care of them. When the body grows weak, we should receive the treatment and care we need, and we should also consult with the Church about whether we can continue the work entrusted to us. Even if the flesh finally dies, God will raise that body again on the last day. While we have strength, we should use our bodies for the gospel and the Church, and when we meet death near at hand, we should remember Jesus, who rose again in an actual body and stood in the midst of the disciples.

Recovering from illness and improving in one's financial

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circumstances are changes a person may experience while living on this earth. The resurrection of the body is God's raising the dead body again on the last day as a body that will not decay. Luke chapter 24 shows that Jesus, who died on the Cross, rose again in that very body. The Church cannot promise that if people believe in Jesus every illness will surely be healed and their wealth will increase. God's children who have received the remission of sin, even if their bodies die, will rise again on the last day and live forever with the Lord. The Church must teach this resurrection and deliver this promise to members whose bodies are weak or who face death.

The promise of the Scriptures was fulfilled through the gospel of the water and the Spirit

After showing the resurrection of His body, Jesus said that all things written concerning Himself in the Law of Moses, the Prophets, and the Psalms had to be fulfilled. The Lord's salvation is what God promised in the Old Testament and actually accomplished through the life of Jesus Christ. When the Lord opened the disciples' hearts and made them understand the Scriptures, they came to know the Cross and the resurrection as one promised salvation. The word *"Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day" (Luke 24:46)* makes clear that the suffering, the death, and the resurrection are all the fulfillment of the Scriptures.

Jesus Christ, who is God Himself in essence, came into the world clothed in a human body like ours. The sinless Lord received baptism at the Jordan River from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and through that baptism He had all the sins of all mankind transferred onto His own body. Taking

charge of the sins transferred to Him, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross, and at Golgotha He was judged for sin in our place, shed His blood, and really died. By rising from the dead on the third day, He overcame the power of sin and death and completely accomplished all the righteousness God had ordained and our salvation.

The hands and feet the Lord showed bore the marks of the cross. That body was the body onto which the sins of mankind were transferred through the baptism He received from John, and the body that paid the price of the transferred sins on the Cross. The fact that He rose in that same body shows that the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not end in words or symbols but actually resolved the problem of sin and death. We who believe in the resurrection of Jesus can clearly confess who took on our sins, where He was judged for them, and who overcame death.

Whoever believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit with the heart receives the remission of all the sins of the world at one time, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and becomes a child of God. God declares righteous those who believe the word that the Son received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sins of all mankind transferred to Him, took charge of those sins to the end and carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in place of all people and really shed His blood and died, and then rose again and completed salvation. God's children hear this gospel every day, remind themselves of the salvation Jesus accomplished, and confirm that they have received the remission of all their sins. When we hear the gospel again and again, we can give thanks to the Lord who accomplished salvation, preach the word of the remission of sin together with the Church, and continue the work the Lord has entrusted to us.

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The word of the remission of sin must be preached to all nations

After explaining the suffering and resurrection of the Christ, Jesus said, "*Repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem" (Luke 24:47)*. Because all people born as descendants of Adam are under sin and death, the word of the remission of sin that the Lord accomplished must be preached to all nations. The testimony that began in Jerusalem had to go beyond the boundaries of region and language to the end of the earth.

For a person who has not yet been saved, to repent is not to recall his sins one by one and pay the price with tears. First, he must abandon the thought he had believed, that he could wash away his sins by his own deeds and religious life. Then he must believe with his heart the word that Jesus had all sins transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, took charge of those sins to the end and carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in place of all people, really shed His blood and died, and rose again. The remission of sin delivered in the Lord's name is not a promise that lightens sin a little; it is the proclamation of the salvation that washes away, once and for all, all the sins of one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. To one who confesses that there is still sin in his heart, the Church must deliver this gospel accurately and lead him to believe that the Lord has washed away all his sins.

Jesus said to the disciples, *"You are witnesses of these things" (Luke 24:48)*. A witness tells what actually happened, as he saw and heard it. The disciples witnessed the Lord's dying on the Cross and His rising again and standing in their midst, and through the Scriptures they learned even the meaning of those

events. Today we were not there in person, but since we have received the remission of sin by believing the same word that the apostles preached and recorded in the Scriptures, we must deliver this salvation to other souls.

The word about preaching to all nations does not mean to make a different gospel for each person. Though languages and ways of life differ, the sins that Jesus had transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John the Baptist included the sins of all people. Taking charge of those sins, the Lord carried them all the way to the cross, was judged at one time, shed His blood and really died, and rose again and completed the salvation that must be delivered to all people. Therefore, whatever country the Church goes to, it should explain in words the local people can understand, but it must deliver unchanged the content of salvation—the transfer of sin, the judgment, and the resurrection. Even though expressions may be refined to suit the culture, if baptism or the judgment of sin is left out to make it comfortable for people to hear, the word of the remission of sin the Lord entrusted to us cannot be delivered in full.

We who have become God's children by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit have already chosen the way of living for the Lord. Therefore it is fitting for us to preach the word of the remission of sin in union with the Church. Some members meet people and preach the word directly, while other members take on the work of translating sermons into other languages or producing books and documents. Still other members take charge of the work needed for the Church to gather and preach the gospel. The 'all nations' the Lord spoke of include both the people near us and the souls in faraway places who have not yet heard this gospel.

After entrusting them with the mission of witnesses, Jesus

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said, *"Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high" (Luke 24:49)*. The disciples had to be endued with power from on high. The Lord commanded them to stay in Jerusalem and wait for the Holy Spirit the Father had promised. In the Book of Acts the Holy Spirit came as promised, and the disciples boldly testified to the resurrection and the remission of sin.

The Holy Spirit comes as God's gift upon the hearts of those who have received the remission of all their sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Scriptures testify, *"In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)*. When we believe the word of truth that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had all sins transferred onto His own body, took charge of those sins and Himself carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, was judged in our place, really shed His blood and died, and rose again, God remits all our sins and seals our hearts with the Holy Spirit. Children who have received the Holy Spirit must believe in this salvation Jesus Christ accomplished and deliver it to others together with the Church.

Relying on the Lord, the disciples stayed in Jerusalem according to His command, and after the Holy Spirit came at the time God had appointed, they began the work of witnesses. We too must consult with the Church, be guided by the word, and prepare for the work entrusted to us. So that the gospel may be delivered accurately and souls may be saved, each of us must take on our own work within the order the Lord has established.

The Church that believes in the ascended Lord carries out its mission with great joy

Jesus led the disciples out as far as Bethany and lifted up His hands and blessed them. While the Lord was blessing them, He was carried up into heaven, and the disciples worshiped Him and then returned to Jerusalem with great joy. The reason those who at first had been afraid and doubtful could rejoice even after the Lord was no longer visible was that they had understood through the Scriptures the meaning of the resurrection and the ascension. The ascended Jesus is the Lord who is at the right hand of God, who intercedes for His people and hears their prayers. The Scriptures testify, *"Who is even at the right hand of God, who also makes intercession for us" (Romans 8:34)*. The Lord is the King who will come again and take His people to the eternal kingdom.

Because the disciples knew and believed the fact that the Lord who had died on the Cross had really risen and ascended, they were continually in the temple praising God. We who have received the remission of sin can praise God in any circumstances, because we believe that all our sins have been removed, that the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, and that the risen Lord will raise our bodies again as well in the future. When we pray, too, we must not put forward our own religious zeal or merit, but come before God relying on the name of Jesus, who intercedes for us at the right hand of God.

The disciples' returning to Jerusalem was the first step in following the Lord's command. They stayed together in Jerusalem and waited for the promised Holy Spirit. Today we too must gather together in the Church, hear the word, and discuss who will preach the word and who will take on the translation, the documents, and the practical work of the Church.

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Since the one Lord has entrusted us with the one gospel of the remission of sin, each member must faithfully take charge of the work entrusted to him in order to deliver this word to all nations.

Dear fellow believers, Jesus, who showed His hands and feet, rose again in an actual body. Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Lord had all the sins of all mankind transferred onto His own body, took charge of those sins to the end and carried them all the way to the cross of Golgotha, and was judged in our place and really shed His blood and died. And He rose again, overcame sin and death, and completed all the righteousness of God and our salvation. The Lord commanded the disciples to preach this word of the remission of sin to all nations. We who have received the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit with our hearts must preach this word together with the Church. Until the Lord who went up into heaven comes again, let us accurately keep and boldly preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that remits all sins. ✉

◇ About the Next Series

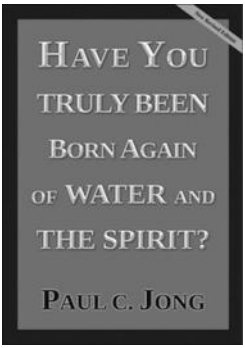
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

We sincerely hope that the books by Pastor Paul C. Jong, which will continue to be published, will serve as spiritual nourishment to strengthen your faith.

News about newly released books, as well as various ways to access them—including eBooks (PDF, EPUB), audiobooks (M4A, MP3), and online reading—can be found at **www.bjnewlife.org.**

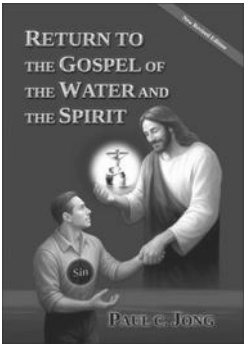
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that a sinner is saved from all his lifelong sins by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood of the Cross. Let's believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and enter the Kingdom of Heaven as the righteous who have no sin.

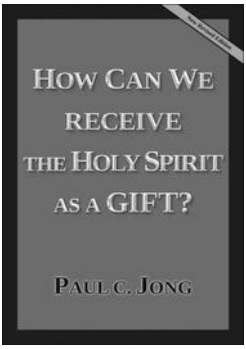
RETURN TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT [New Revised Edition]



Let's return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theology and doctrines themselves can't save us. However, many Christians still follow them, and consequently have not been born again yet. This book clearly tells us what mistakes theology and doctrines have made and how we can believe in Jesus in the most accurate and certain way.

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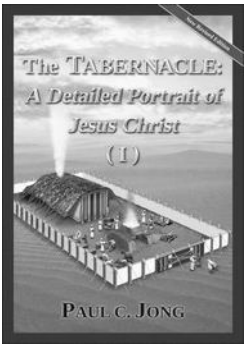
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



In Christianity, the most significantly discussed issue is salvation from sins and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. However, few people have the exact knowledge of these two topics. Nevertheless, in reality people say that they believe in Jesus Christ while they are ignorant of true redemption and the Holy Spirit.

Do you know the true gospel that makes you receive the Holy Spirit? If you want to ask God for the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, then you must first know the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have faith in it. This book will certainly lead all Christians worldwide to receive the Holy Spirit through the washing away of all their sins.

The TABERNACLE : A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (I) [New Revised Edition]



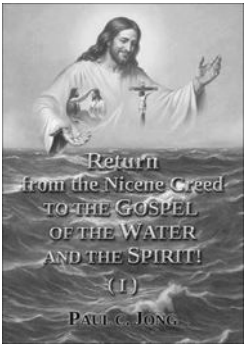
How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

In fact, the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen manifested in the gate of the Tabernacle's court show us the works of Jesus Christ in the New Testament's time that have saved the mankind. In this way, the Old Testament's Word of the Tabernacle and the Word of the New Testament are closely and definitely related to each other, like fine woven linen. But, unfortunately, this truth has been hidden for a long time to every truth seeker in Christianity.

Coming to this earth, Jesus Christ was baptized by John and shed His blood on the Cross. Without understanding and believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, none of us can ever find out the truth revealed in the Tabernacle. We must now learn this truth of the Tabernacle and believe in it. We all need to realize and believe in the truth manifested in the blue, purple, and scarlet thread and the fine woven linen of the gate of the Tabernacle's court.

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.

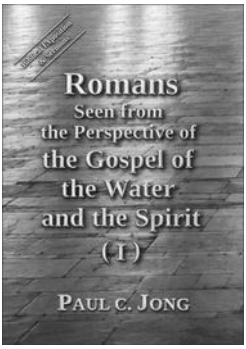
However, in the process of the Nicene Creed's formation, the ministry of Jesus having the sin of the world transferred to Him by being baptized by John was deleted from the creed's contents. As a result, this truth has been passed down in a hidden state within Christianity for about 1,700 years, reaching 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,

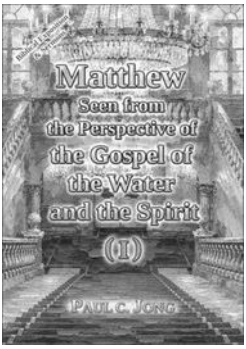
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)



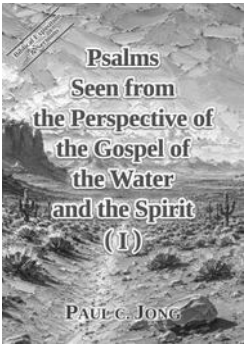
Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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)

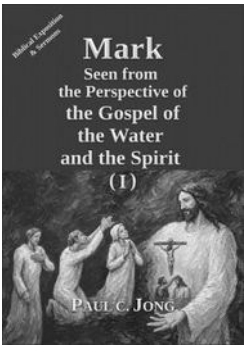


For long ages the Psalms have been the prayer book and the hymnal of the saints. Yet if we read them only as beautiful religious poetry or as an expression of emotion, we easily miss the meaning of these songs of praise. For David's laments and praises ultimately point to Jesus Christ, the Savior who 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.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)



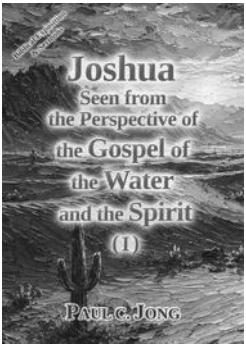
Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

Scan the QR code to view the book's details!

Joshua Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (2-Volume Series)

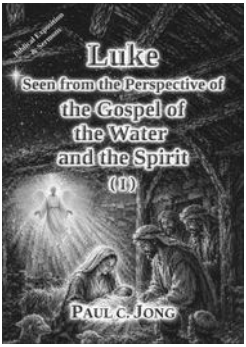


The Book of Joshua is often read as the story of Israel's conquest of Canaan and its victories in war. But the heart of Joshua chapters 1 through 12 is not human courage or strength; it is God's salvation. It shows how God leads sinners across the Jordan into the land of promise and makes them enjoy the remission of sins and true rest.

This book explains Joshua chapters 1 through 12 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. From the death of Moses and the crossing of the Jordan to the fall of Jericho and the defeat of the kings of Canaan, Joshua points to Jesus Christ the Savior. Jesus took all our sins upon Himself through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose from death to complete salvation.

Discover the true victory that is obtained not by human strength but by believing the Word of God. Lay down your own righteousness, rise again from failure, be united with the Church of God, and walk boldly in the rest and the spiritual inheritance God has already given.

Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)

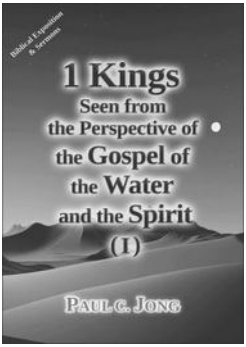


"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

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)

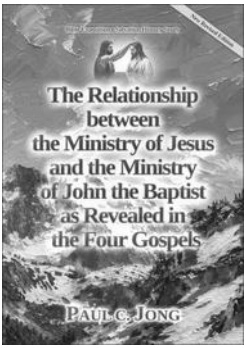


Why did Solomon, who received great wisdom from God, spend more time building his own palace than the Temple? Through David's old age and Adonijah's fall, and Solomon's accession and the building of the Temple, 1 Kings chapters 1–7 show that the glory of man fades, but the faith that fears God endures 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.

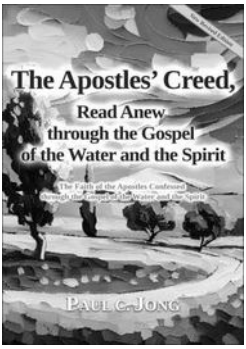
This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through 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]

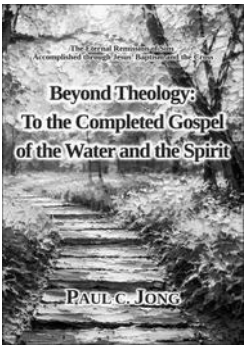


As you recite the Apostles' Creed every week, have you ever asked whether its statements are consistent with the gospel of the water and the Spirit proclaimed in the Bible? Countless Christians recite the Apostles' Creed, yet live without assurance as to whether they themselves have received the remission 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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THE NEW LIFE MISSION
Contact: John Shin, General Secretary
E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he suffered for a long time because his problem of sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this agony, he came to believe that Jesus took upon Himself the sins of the world through His baptism by John the Baptist, and subsequently bore the judgment in our place on the cross.

For the past 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing. The compilation of these manuscripts has given rise to today's 'Biblical Exposition Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit.'

His works, comprising an ongoing 100-volume series, have been translated into more than 110 languages and are read in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available for free at www.bjnewlife.org, while physical books can be purchased on Amazon.

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

The Gospel of Luke, seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

"Why do you seek the living among the dead? He is not here, but is risen!" (Luke 24:5-6).

Jesus, who died on the Cross, did not remain in the tomb. He rose again, just as He had said. The two disciples on their way to Emmaus were downhearted because they looked only at His death on the Cross, but when the risen Lord opened the Scriptures to them, they realized that the suffering and the resurrection of Christ had been accomplished within God's will for our salvation. Faith does not begin by following the circumstances before our eyes or our own feelings; it begins when we know the word of salvation that leads to the remission of sin—the salvation God planned and accomplished—and accept it just as it is.

Jesus' resurrection is the sure hope that eternal life and the resurrection of the body are given also to those who have been made sinless by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Lord said that this gospel that leads to the remission of sin would be preached to all nations, and He appointed us as witnesses of all these things. All of us today who have believed in this gospel are witnesses of salvation. Looking forward to the Lord who is coming again and to the eternal kingdom of God, and preaching to the souls who do not yet know salvation the gospel of the water and the Spirit that was completed by Jesus' baptism, the Cross, and His resurrection—this is the life entrusted to those who have been saved.

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