Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Acts of the Apostles

Volume 1

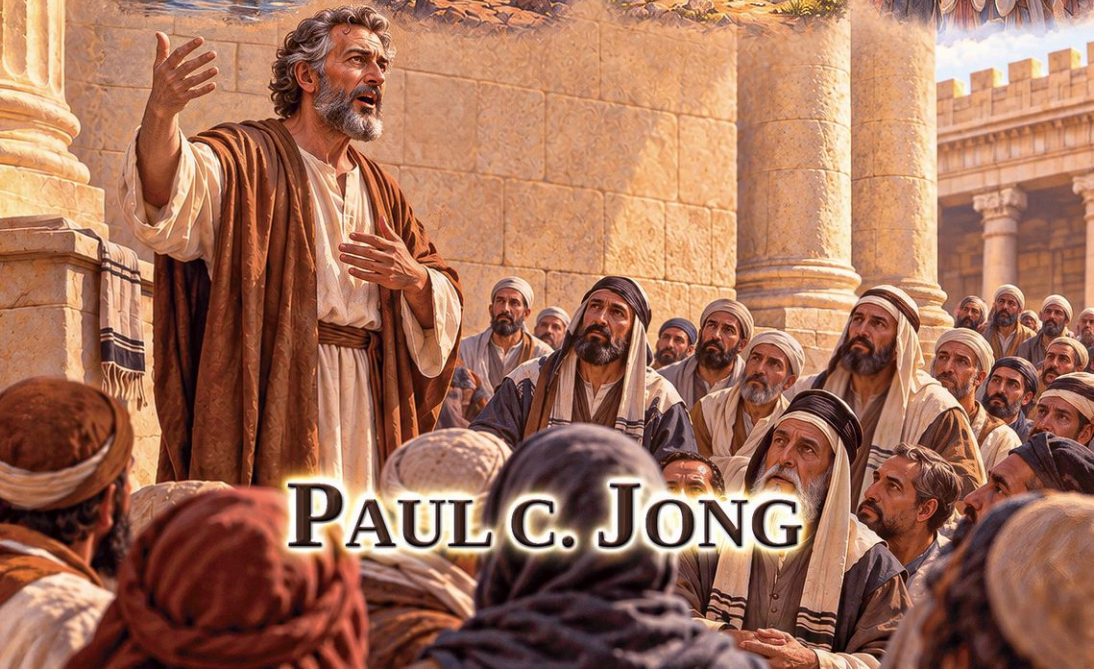
Chapters 1–11



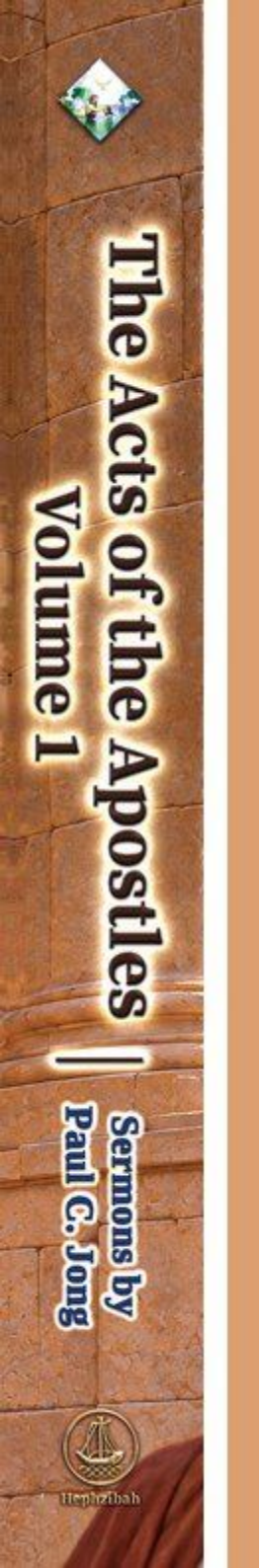








PAUL C. JONG



“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)

Upon what kind of heart does the Holy Spirit come? Because the Holy Spirit, who is holy, does not dwell in a heart where sin remains, Jesus first received baptism from John and had the sins of our whole lifetime, together with the sin of the world, passed on to Him once and for all. Because of that sin He shed His blood and was judged on the Cross, and by rising again He removed the sin from our hearts; therefore, the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is not tongues or experiences but the remission of sins received by believing in this salvation. May you believe this promise that He gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the heart that has received the remission of sins, and become children of God with whom the Holy Spirit abides.

This is a book that everyone must seek out

and read now,

before the Antichrist appears,

as this world is heading toward destruction.

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

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Sermons by Paul C. Jong

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit

The Acts of the Apostles

Volume 1

Chapters 1–11

PAUL C. JONG



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

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The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Acts of the Apostles Volume 1

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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.

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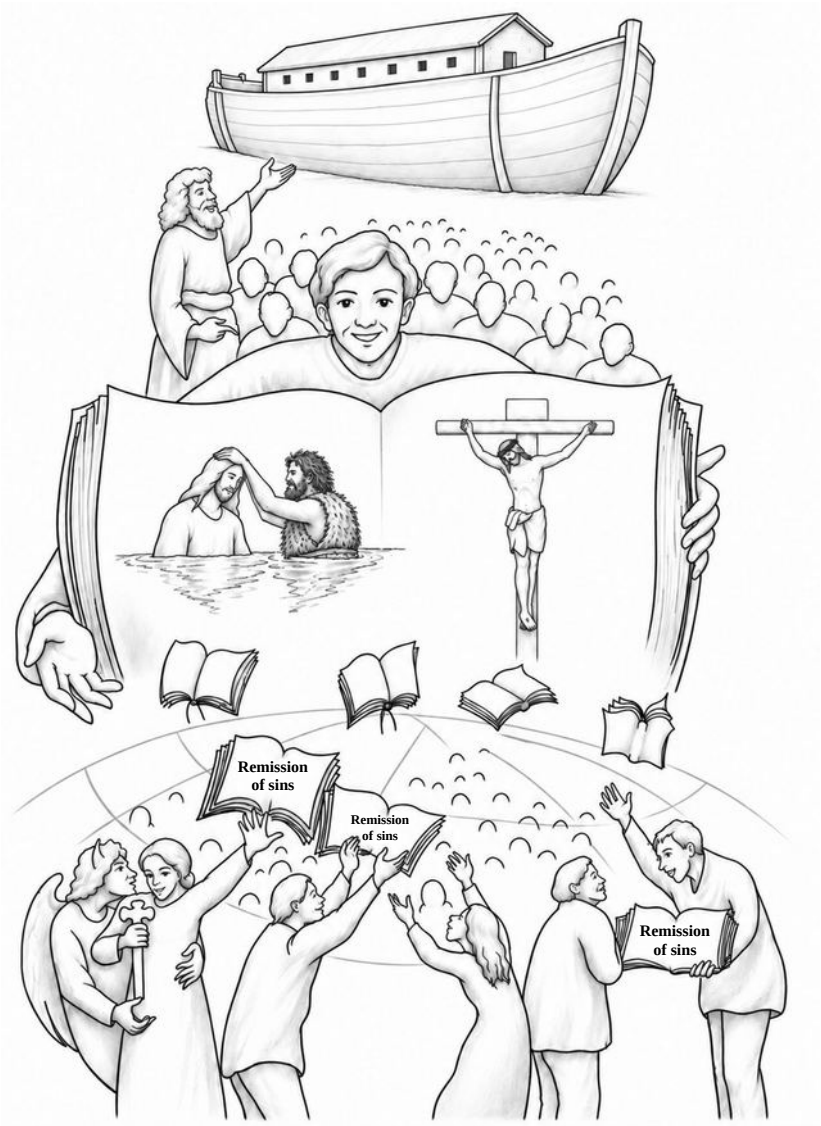

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Preface

He appoints those who have received the remission of sins as witnesses

Who can become a witness of Jesus? Is it those who speak well before people and work harder than others who become witnesses? The Book of Acts conveys to us the word that the Lord gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who have received the remission of sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and appoints them as witnesses of Jesus. It is those who believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished and have received that grace who have a word to preach.

Before He was taken up into heaven, Jesus said to His disciples, *"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)*. Since He did not tell them to become witnesses but said that they would be witnesses, it was not that the disciples set out to become witnesses by preparing the ability themselves, but that the Lord who had saved them sent the Holy Spirit and made them witnesses. Therefore, before considering how great the apostles' deeds were, we must know whom they believed in and what they preached.

Even when an apostle was appointed to take the place of Judas, the one who would testify of the resurrection was chosen from among those who had been with them from the baptism of John to the day when Jesus was taken up. This is because, in preaching the salvation of Jesus, the baptism He received from John cannot be left out. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus

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had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and the sins we committed in the past, the sins we commit now, and even the sins we will commit until we die are all included in that sin of the world. The Lord bore that sin and shed His blood and died on the Cross, and so received in our place the judgment for sin that we were to receive, and He rose again from death and saved us from sin and death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we believe in is the word of the salvation the Lord has accomplished in this way.

It is not that I remove my sins little by little by my own labor; rather, I receive the remission of sins by believing in my heart that Jesus has remitted all my sins. The resurrection that the apostles testified of is also the news that the Lord, who received the judgment for sin in our place, rose again, and so it becomes the hope of eternal life for us who believe in that salvation. If you say that you believe in Jesus and yet consider that your sins still remain, you must not leave your faults out of the scope of the sin that the Lord bore, but must receive again, according to the word, the salvation that the apostles preached. What a witness is to preach is not his own excellence but the salvation of Jesus Christ, who has given life to sinners.

The gift of the Holy Spirit that He gives freely

Then Peter said to them, "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)*. The Holy Spirit comes upon the heart that has received the remission of sins. If anyone thinks that he has received the remission of sins but must pay yet another price to receive the Holy Spirit, he does not properly believe the promise that the

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Lord gives the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit dwells in the one who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and testifies that he has become a child of God without sin through the Lord's salvation.

On the Day of Pentecost, the fact that the people who had come from every nation heard the wonderful works of God in their own languages was also a work He did so that this salvation would be preached. The Holy Spirit caused what Jesus had done to be preached in a language the hearers could understand. Therefore, we must not take tongues or marvelous experiences as the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. The evidence that the Holy Spirit has come upon our hearts is the remission of sins we received by believing in the salvation of Jesus, and when I know through the word that all my sins have been remitted, the salvation the Lord has given does not waver even if my feelings change.

But Simon the sorcerer, seeing the things that were done through the apostles, tried to obtain the same power by paying money. He tried to get into his own hands the power to make people receive the Holy Spirit. The heart that believes the word of salvation and receives the gift is different from the heart that wants to display power to others. If we do not know the Lord's will in saving us and seek only visible power, we may speak of the Holy Spirit and yet miss the very remission of sins that Jesus accomplished. Those who have received the remission of sins pray relying on the promise that the Holy Spirit is with them and preach the salvation they have received to other souls, and so the joy of having received the gift becomes the strength to serve the Lord.

Preach the Savior even in the place where you have been scattered

What the apostles who had received the Holy Spirit gave to the world was not silver and gold. To the lame man who was begging at the gate of the temple, Peter said, *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6)*. What the church can give to the world is the name of Jesus Christ, who gives the remission of sins, and removing sin from the heart of a sinner is a greater miracle than raising up the lame man. When people, disliking the preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus, threatened them not to speak in that name, Peter and John answered, *"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20)*. Because they knew the fact that they had been saved and knew the living Savior, they could not abandon that word. The church, too, when it heard the news of that threat, came before God together and asked for His help so that they could preach the word boldly.

Believing in the Lord does not mean that every road becomes smooth. Stephen, in the face of the people who were stoning him, entrusted his soul to the risen Lord, and when persecution spread to the church, the saints left the places where they lived and were scattered. Yet the remission of sins they had received was not taken away from them. Because the Holy Spirit who was in them made them hold fast to the word of salvation, those who were scattered preached the gospel wherever they went, and even though persecution scattered the saints, it could not do away with the salvation of Jesus.

The scene in which Philip went to the eunuch who was reading the writing of Isaiah and preached Jesus to him also shows the same meaning. He made the Savior known to a man

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who, though he was reading the Scriptures, did not know whom that word pointed to. Those who follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit must not think only about where they are going, but must be able to explain from the word, to the people they meet, the Savior who bore our sins.

The Lord turned even Saul, who had been persecuting the church, around and made him testify of Jesus. It was not his past or his self-assurance that saved him; it was the very Lord whom he had been opposing who saved him. We who read this account, too, must not draw back because of our own shortcomings; let us know clearly the content of the salvation that has given us life, and preach the gospel relying on the help of the Holy Spirit. Then we gain new strength even in difficult places.

One family of witnesses who have received the same salvation

That word of salvation was needed even by Cornelius, who had been living devoutly. He was a man who feared God, prayed, and gave to charity, but he had to send for Peter and hear the word by which he would be saved. Neither his experience of meeting an angel nor the good deeds he had done removed his sins. To Peter, who regarded it as unlawful to keep company with Gentiles, God said in a vision, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*, and while Peter was preaching Jesus in that house, the Holy Spirit came upon those who were hearing the word. The Gentiles, too, believed in the same Lord and received the remission of sins and the gift of the Holy Spirit.

Explaining this matter to the brethren in Jerusalem, Peter said, *"God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed*

on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 11:17). Since the Lord bore all the sin of the world, people of every nation need the same gospel of the remission of sins, and He gives the same Holy Spirit to those who believe in that salvation. The heart that kept others at a distance on account of their origin, and the heart that still regards oneself, whom the Lord has cleansed, as unclean, must both turn around before the same gift.

When Barnabas came to Antioch, he saw the grace of God and was glad, and he encouraged them to continue with the Lord with a steadfast heart, and taught the word together with Saul. Because even those who have received the remission of sins must keep learning the word of salvation and relying on the Lord, the church hears the word together and helps one another's faith. The same grace appears also in what the disciples did when they heard the news of the famine and decided to help the brethren in Judea according to their ability. The reason that the hardship of brethren far away was not someone else's affair was that they had been saved by the one Lord and had become one family. It is not that we obtain the remission of sins through this sharing and serving; rather, the salvation we have already received makes us look after the needs of our brethren.

Who can become a witness of Jesus? The witness is the one who has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that the Lord has remitted all my sins. Since the Lord who saved us has given us the Holy Spirit so that we may preach that salvation, we do not rely on ourselves but rely on the help of the Holy Spirit who is in us. The Lord, who appointed the apostles and preached salvation also through the scattered saints, has given us today, too, a word to preach. I hope that we who read this book will also receive into our hearts the salvation that Jesus accomplished for us, and,

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together with the brethren who have received the same grace, testify of Jesus Christ, who has delivered us from sin. ✉

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CHAPTER

1

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

When the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we become witnesses

< Acts 1:1–8 >

“The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’ Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, ‘Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?’ And He said to them, ‘It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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.’”

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The Book of Acts that continues even today

The word of Acts 1:1–8 is a word that shows us the things that happened after Jesus Christ came to this earth, bore our sins, died on the Cross, and then rose again. This period is the age that deals with the acts of the apostles after the Lord's work of redemption, and we must know this clearly.

An 'apostle' means one who is sent by God. Then who are those who have been sent by God? They are the very people who have received the remission of sins, and in particular the servants of God. The work that these servants of God carry out together with the Holy Spirit is what has been recorded through the book known as the Book of Acts.

Therefore, the Churches of God that exist on this earth today, and all the work that the servants of God are carrying out together with the Holy Spirit within those Churches, can be said to be the continuation of the Book of Acts. In other words, we today are also living in the continuing work of the Book of Acts.

Now let us look at the Book of Acts in more detail. If we look at the word of Acts 1:1–2, it is written as follows.

"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen" (Acts 1:1–2).

This word is also connected with Luke chapter 1. Luke chapter 1 begins with the expression *"most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3)*. Through this we can know that the author who wrote the Book of Acts is none other than Luke. In other words, both the Gospel of Luke and the Book of Acts were written by the same author, Luke.

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Luke, who wrote the Book of Acts, says, *"The former account I made" (Acts 1:1),* and this is an expression that refers to the Gospel of Luke.

The word of Acts 1:1–2 clearly shows that the Gospel of Luke is the record of all the work from the time Jesus came to this earth, had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and bore our sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from death and saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, until the day He ascended into heaven. And the Book of Acts is the book that goes on to record the things that happened after that.

The Book of Acts generally begins from the event of Jesus' ascension. If we look at verse 3 that follows, it reads as follows.

"To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3).

In this way, Luke now intends to describe the scene in which the risen Jesus Christ appeared to His disciples and preached to them the word concerning the kingdom of God. Even after His resurrection, Jesus appeared to His disciples many times over a period of 40 days, clearly testified that He was alive, and preached to them the word concerning the kingdom of God.

And Luke, the author of this Book of Acts, intends to record in earnest what Jesus did after His resurrection, what mission He entrusted to His disciples, and to whom He committed the great mission of the work of the Holy Spirit and the expansion of the kingdom of God.

That very mission continues even to this day through the servants of God and the Church.

Believe the many proofs of the resurrection

Our Lord was born on this earth, bore our sins, died on the Cross, and then rose again on the third day. And after He rose again, He did not go up into heaven right away, but stayed on this earth for 40 days, appeared to His disciples many times, and spoke about the kingdom of God.

After overcoming death and rising again, Jesus did not just say, "I have risen again; know that this is so," and simply go away. He never did it in such a deceptive way.

So that the people of that time, that is, the disciples and a great many others, could actually see and experience the resurrection of Jesus, Jesus Himself showed Himself many times. The risen Jesus appeared to Peter, and He also appeared to Mary Magdalene. He appeared in the room where the disciples were gathered trembling in fear, and He also appeared to the disciples who were fishing by the Sea of Tiberias. He also showed Himself in person before many people and clearly testified that He was alive.

In this way, for 40 days after His resurrection, Jesus Christ actually showed by many proofs that He was alive, and we must believe these proofs. This is not merely a legend or a myth, but a historical fact and a clear truth.

However, Satan the devil could not make any rebuttal in the face of this obvious proof of the resurrection. Because it was such a certain fact, Satan instead moved in the direction of deceiving people. He had the chief priests give money to the soldiers and have them spread the false rumor that "the disciples came by night and stole away the body of Jesus," and he used every means to throw people's minds into confusion.

It is the same today. Even now, Satan is making people deny the resurrection of Jesus, and he is constantly deceiving people

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in order to cover up that truth. But we must know the truth, and we must clearly believe that the resurrection of Jesus Christ is based on real proof and historical fact.

Do not leave the Church of God

After His resurrection, Jesus Himself testified to His disciples of the various things of the kingdom of God. And in the place where He was assembled together with the apostles, He preached an important word.

"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me'" (Acts 1:4).

This word was not a simple exhortation, but a command of God. The *"Promise of the Father"* that Jesus spoke of means none other than the promise that He would send the Holy Spirit. The Lord had already said to His disciples:

"It is to your advantage that I go away; for if I do not go away, the Helper will not come to you; but if I depart, I will send Him to you" (John 16:7).

In other words, He was telling them not to leave Jerusalem but to wait until God's promise to send the Holy Spirit after Jesus' ascension was fulfilled.

Here, the Lord's command, "Do not depart from Jerusalem," is not a word telling them simply to keep to a geographical location. For the people of Israel at that time, Jerusalem was the center of faith and worship, and it was their spiritual focal point. In the same way, for us who live in the age of the New Testament, "the Church of God" is our spiritual center and focal point.

Therefore, the word “Do not depart from Jerusalem” can be taken to mean “Do not leave the Church of God.” This is because that Church is the very place upon which the work and power of the Holy Spirit that God promised, and the word of God, come.

Just as Jesus Christ was present upon the mercy seat, even now God is present and working in the midst of the Church of God. Therefore, inside the Church and outside the Church are different. The Church of God is not a mere place of gathering, but a holy place where God Himself is present, speaks, and works through the Holy Spirit.

Therefore, we must never take the Church of God lightly or leave it. This is because it is through the Church that the will of God is proclaimed, the power of the Holy Spirit comes, and the promised work of God is accomplished.

The word “Do not depart from Jerusalem” is not a word that was spoken only to the apostles of that age. This word is the voice of God that He gives to us born-again saints today as well. Just as God spoke to the apostles, He clearly speaks to us who have been born again as well. It is that we must never leave Jerusalem.

Why is that so? It is because if we leave Jerusalem, no work of God takes place at all. The reason we are now experiencing the work of God is that God has established His Church on this earth and is working through that Church. God always accomplishes His will through the Church.

We have seen that, as we are united together and supply the word, actual work is accomplished. That is precisely the work of the Church. The Church is not merely a building or an outward form, but a united place that has Jesus Christ as its Head, with the servants of God under Him, and where each member carries out his or her role.

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The Church of God is the place where the born-again become one in the Holy Spirit, share the word, and believe and spread it according to the word. Such a gathering is the very Church of God, and it is through this very Church that God works.

Therefore, Dear fellow believers, we must not leave the Church of God no matter what happens. Just like the Lord's word not to depart from Jerusalem, we must never turn our backs on the Church or stay apart by ourselves. This is because, on our own, we can never fully carry out the work of God. We must know this fact clearly.

In order to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit to every corner of the world, God established a church in each region. Local churches such as the church at Philippi are examples of this. God raised up His servants in each church and accomplished His work through those churches.

Then where does the work of God take place? It takes place precisely through the Church. The work of God is accomplished not outside the Church, but inside the Church. This is a very important fact. When Jesus said, "Do not depart from Jerusalem," it was a word telling us not to leave the Church of God. We must deeply engrave in our hearts this truth that the work of God is always manifested through the Church.

In my case, too, at first nothing went properly when I was alone. But what happened? I first received the remission of sins and began to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and as a result a church began to be formed. As the born-again people came to gather, two and then three of them, God began to work.

When the born-again people gather and are united with a servant of God, and that servant of God is united in heart with God, Jesus Christ becomes our Head and we become His members, and the work of God is accomplished in our midst. That is how the work of God actually began within this Church.

Jesus clearly told them *"not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me'" (Acts 1:4).*

The promised Holy Spirit and the time the Father has set

The Lord said,

"John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5).

And when the disciples had come together, they asked Jesus,

"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6).

And Jesus answered.

"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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 1:7–8).

This word is clearly connected with the Lord's command to wait for what the Father had promised. John the Baptist also testified, saying, *"I indeed baptized you with water, but He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit" (Mark 1:8).*

In fact, from the time of the Old Testament the work of the Holy Spirit appeared from time to time through the servants of God, but the descent of the Holy Spirit in earnest took place after the resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ, that is, on the Day of Pentecost. From that time on, the Holy Spirit began to come upon this earth in earnest.

And now, that same Holy Spirit has come upon us who have received the remission of sins and been born again—upon me

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and upon you as well. The promise of God has been fulfilled, and the power of the Holy Spirit is working even now through the Church.

The disciples of Jesus Christ who were on this earth also had great interest in the restoration of the nation of Israel at that time. Why were they so fixated on the restoration of Israel? It was because, to them, "the rebuilding of the nation of Israel" was regarded as an important event related to the kingdom of God.

And in fact, the nation of Israel regained its independence in 1948 and was rebuilt as a nation. Now, just like the season when green leaves sprout on the fig tree and flowers bloom, we are living in an age in which the signs of the last days prophesied in the Bible are appearing.

Then a question arises. We ask, "When is this time?" and "When is the time when the kingdom of God will be completely restored?"

Many people regard the restoration of Israel as a sign of the last days, and some interpret it to mean that when this nation is restored, the end of the world is drawing near. In fact, such an interpretation has a point.

Then when will the end come upon this earth?

When the end of the earth, the last day of the world, will come—that we cannot know. The disciples of Jesus also had great interest in such a question from that time on. The question *"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)* also came out of such interest.

But the Lord clearly said to them,

"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority" (Acts 1:7).

In other words, the timing of all these things belongs to the absolute sovereignty of God, and so we cannot know it, nor is there any need for us to try to know it.

Then what should we do?

The Lord went on to say,

"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).

Who is a true witness of Jesus Christ?

Who is a true witness of Jesus Christ? It is the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come.

Only the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come can become a witness of Jesus Christ.

The person who has received the remission of sins and upon whose heart the Holy Spirit has come—that person is the very witness of God, and the one who can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is a very clear fact.

A person upon whose heart the Holy Spirit has not come cannot become a true witness, no matter how zealously he may be active. Testimony given without the Holy Spirit has no strength, and the power of the truth is not manifested.

Dear fellow believers, has the Holy Spirit come upon your hearts?

The person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come knows that fact clearly.

But the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has not come only thinks that He has come, while in reality he fails in his faith every day and repeats a futile life of faith.

Therefore, we must clearly examine whether the Holy Spirit has come upon our hearts and whether we have truly received the remission of sins, and we must live in the Lord as witnesses of the Holy Spirit.

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What is the difference between the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come and the one upon whom He has not, between the person who has received the remission of sins and the one who has not? The clearest evidence is precisely whether the Holy Spirit has come upon that heart or not.

Upon the heart of the person who has clearly received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit has come. He believes in Jesus Christ, and he can confirm with the word the fact that Jesus has removed all his sins. This is because in his heart there is the word that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, received the judgment for that sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, rose again from death, and thereby remitted all our sins.

On the other hand, the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has not come is, simply put, a person who does not know the truth. In his heart there is no life of God, and there is no assurance of the remission of sins either.

The Lord said,

"You shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you" (Acts 1:8).

Then where does that power come to us from?

It is given precisely by receiving the Holy Spirit.

This power does not come from human strength. It does not come from man's wisdom or ability, but only from the power of the Spirit of God. True strength and work, and the power of the remission of sins, lie in the power of the Holy Spirit.

Then when does the Holy Spirit come upon us? How does He come? And when the Holy Spirit comes, what power is manifested?

No matter how well a person upon whom the Holy Spirit has not come may preach, that is not true power. This is because a person without the Holy Spirit is, in the end, a sinner.

No matter how much he may speak the name of Jesus and preach about sin, if you actually ask him, “Do you have sin?” he says, “Yes, I do.”

Then he is clearly a sinner. And if the people he has taught also have sin, they too cannot but be sinners.

They are people who can speak of the fact that Jesus took away sin merely as head knowledge, but who have not actually confirmed that remission of sins as their own.

But when a person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come preaches the word, it is different. Everyone who hears the word he preaches receives power, and that power is the very power that makes them sinless.

When people hear the word preached by a person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come, the work takes place in which the hearers receive the remission of sins within that word, are born again, and receive the Holy Spirit. This is truly an amazing thing.

Someone may say, “That is really strange,” but in fact it is not strange at all; it is only natural. It is just that, because there are many people today who have not received the Holy Spirit, it seems strange in their eyes.

But the truth is clear. Only the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come is a true witness, and through the power of the Holy Spirit he can preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit that gives the remission of sins, and those who hear that gospel can also receive the remission of sins. This is the work of God.

How can there be such a difference when the same word is preached? If anything, there are many cases where people who have not received the Holy Spirit speak more coherently and

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logically. But all those who hear the word from such people remain sinners. Even if 100,000 people are gathered at that meeting, all 100,000 of them are still sinners who have sin in their hearts.

On the other hand, what about the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come?

Whether he preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to one person, to ten people, to a hundred people, or to 100,000 people, because he preaches it accurately and causes them to believe accurately, the hearers also hear it accurately, and if they receive the word into their hearts and believe it accurately, they receive the remission of sins.

This is precisely the amazing power of the Holy Spirit being with us when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and it is the essential difference from the word without the Holy Spirit.

Then who is a servant of God? Who is the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come? Who are the true people of God?

The standard for judging this is simple.

We can tell by looking at whether he has sin or not, and whether the Holy Spirit has come upon his heart or not. This is the standard by which God sees, and the core of spiritual discernment.

However, there is one point we must address here.

Just because the Holy Spirit has come upon someone does not necessarily mean that it is accompanied by some sensation or special experience.

Some people say that when they received the Holy Spirit they felt so good that they seemed to be floating on air, while others accept Him quietly by faith without any sensation.

Such differences are only differences in personality. Some people are calm, and some people are so moved that they shed

tears. But the presence of the Holy Spirit is not a matter of differences in emotion, but a fact of faith.

It is the Holy Spirit who makes us witnesses

The Lord said,

"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).

Here, the word *"you shall be witnesses"* does not simply mean that we should become witnesses through our own efforts.

This word is a promise that God Himself will use the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come.

In other words, it means that God will use that person as His instrument and make him a witness of Jesus Christ.

Who does that work? The Holy Spirit does.

It is not by our ability or will, but by the work of the Holy Spirit that He establishes and uses us as witnesses.

Therefore, we must not strive to become witnesses on our own, but we must be people who become witnesses through the coming of the Holy Spirit.

Only the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come is a true witness, and through him the gospel of the water and the Spirit that remits sins is spread with power.

Our becoming witnesses of Jesus Christ is not something that comes about by our striving on our own, determined to try to become witnesses. Rather, no matter how hard we try not to do it, we simply cannot help doing it, and we end up doing it just as the Holy Spirit directs us. It is like something that, even if we try to hold it down by force, we end up doing naturally because of

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the work of the Holy Spirit—that is precisely what becoming a witness is.

The fact that Jesus took away all our sins, and that we therefore come to say that we have no sin, is also something we come to say because the Holy Spirit causes us to say so.

It does not come about because I make up my mind and say by my own will, "From now on I will become a witness," but because the Holy Spirit has made me so, it naturally turns out that way.

In the Bible, too, He did not command, "You be witnesses," but said, *"You shall be witnesses."*

This word means that we do not become witnesses on our own, but that the Holy Spirit makes us become so.

That is why everything is accomplished of its own accord. When the Holy Spirit comes upon a person, that person naturally comes to speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus has accomplished, and naturally comes to say that he has no sin.

This is not something forced to fit together, or something worked out logically by mobilizing scholarship. When the Holy Spirit works, that confession naturally comes out of our mouths.

Brother, isn't that so?

Brother, do you preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit by straining and struggling with all your might? Or do you naturally come to speak of the fact that Jesus took away sin?

"It comes naturally."

That is right. It comes naturally. We simply come to speak of what Jesus has already done completely; it is not something we piece together or forcibly explain and work out.

This is precisely the work that the Holy Spirit does.

Were the disciples of Jesus all learned men? No.

A man like Peter was a fisherman, and he was not a man who had learned letters or acquired scholarship. Yet when the Holy

Spirit came upon him, he began to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit before many people and to speak boldly.

People said,

"We thought that man had no learning, so how is it that he speaks so coherently? How strange! How very strange!"

It was enough to astonish people. Why is that so? It is because the Holy Spirit gave him power.

The Lord said,

"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 means becoming not merely a witness who speaks well, but a witness of Jesus Christ, a witness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, a witness of salvation, and a witness of the truth.

The Lord has made us so. It is not something we have made by our own efforts; it is the Lord who has established us as witnesses.

Dear fellow believers, our God has made us witnesses. And He causes us to carry out the mission of those witnesses. Therefore, when you meet someone, do not try to play the role of a witness by force. Just stand before them. When you are face to face with them, the Lord who is in you naturally causes you to speak. Even when I myself do not want to speak, the Lord comes to speak.

If the Holy Spirit is in us, we naturally become witnesses. Whoever we meet, that is what happens. Whether we meet a king, a scholar, or someone with a doctorate, no matter who that person is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit naturally flows out. This is the clear evidence that the Holy Spirit has come upon us.

When you meet people, you too may feel shy and hesitant at first, but as you stay there quietly, don't the words naturally

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come out at some moment? Even without trying hard, as long as your heart is open, the Holy Spirit causes you to speak. You are simply speaking of what Jesus has already accomplished. When you gently begin by saying, “Do you believe in Jesus? Do you know that Jesus has removed all our sins?” from then on the word goes back and forth from Genesis to Revelation, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit flows out.

Then some people, unable to bear what they hear, ask, “Who on earth are you, that you can say such things? Do you hold some kind of doctorate?” But we know. It is not because a person is clever; it is because God is the One who is wiser, and because He is in me, that I come to speak in this way. When God is in me, how could I not preach that word? I have merely opened my mouth, but the Holy Spirit speaks, and so I naturally become a witness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, what is important is this—that even if we do not strive to become witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit naturally makes us witnesses. And when that happens, souls also naturally come to receive salvation.

Therefore, there is only one thing you have to do. You only have to be in that place. Wherever you are, whether you are playing on the lawn or mingling with people, just by being there together with them, the Holy Spirit opens your mouth and causes you to speak. The Holy Spirit who is in you surely leads someone. Who leads them? It is the Holy Spirit who leads them.

The Holy Spirit makes us witnesses. There is no need to worry, saying, “I must become a witness; I really must become one.” Such worry is something only a person without the Holy Spirit does. But if the Holy Spirit is in you, you naturally become a witness. While you are here, you resolve, “I must become a witness,” but once you actually go out into the field, the words

come out on their own just by being next to someone. That is precisely the life of a person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come, and that is what it means to be made a witness.

The calling to be witnesses to all mankind

The Bible says as follows.

"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).

Here, 'Jerusalem' means the home ground of religion. 'Judea' means those who pride themselves on having been chosen by God and have a sense of superiority. 'Samaria' refers to the Gentiles and the despised peoples. These three symbolize the whole world, all mankind.

Therefore, the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come becomes a witness of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, whoever he is, whatever his nationality, and whomever he meets. This is precisely the work the Holy Spirit does and the work God accomplishes.

We have already been called as witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We have come to realize the gospel that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin with the blood He shed on the Cross, rose again from death, and remitted all our sins, and God has chosen us as those who are to preach that gospel. Dear fellow believers, how amazing it is to have been called as a witness of the gospel! It is none other than you and I who have received that calling.

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Do you believe this fact? Brother, do you believe it too? Yes. We are the people who have been called as witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Then what we have to do now is simple. If we have been called, wherever God tells us to go, we only have to go there and simply stay there quietly. Then we naturally come to speak, and we naturally become witnesses.

For example, when an evangelist was sent to a certain place, even though he did not do anything special there, as he simply stayed there, souls kept coming to him. When people come, he naturally comes to speak of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and as he speaks, before he knows it the gospel has been preached, and at some moment that soul receives the remission of sins. This is exactly how it is.

We do not need to think in complicated ways. We only have to obey. We only have to set our hearts and have faith. Then God works. Even if the world tries to stop us, the work of God surely takes place.

It is truly an amazing thing. The fact that God has called us as witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit is, in itself, a tremendous grace and blessing.

All these things are not something we do on our own. The Church sends people out, and just as Jesus Christ sent out His disciples, the servants of Jesus send out other servants of God. And the Church is one. This is because the Church is the body of Jesus Christ.

Therefore, we are united with one another and work together, go forward with the same faith, suffer persecution together, and live together. This is who the people of God are, and this is the path the Church of God walks.

Keep the place God has appointed for you

We must not leave the Church. We must not leave this Church of God but keep it. When we go through hardships and have a hard time, we only have to bow down and pray. Then God gives this Church the word it needs, guides it, pours out power and blessing, and works together with us.

But wavering back and forth, wondering whether it would be better to go over there or to move here, is behavior that comes not from faith but from unbelief. It is trying to move by following people, without trusting God.

What is truly important is this—that in the place where you believe God has appointed for you, you set your heart and run to the end by faith. It is keeping that place without wavering.

Therefore, we must concentrate on the mission God has given us in the place appointed for us, and go forward faithfully to the end without wavering. In that, the guidance and work of God will surely be with us.

We must not forget that what is important is not bringing people in, but preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit in a way that is fitting to the will of God.

What is it that pleases God?

We must know that clearly.

And if we follow the things that please God, God will surely give us blessings and bestow His grace on us.

The Lord does all these things

The things we are doing now may look feeble, small, and like nothing special.

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But even though it has not been long since we started, many things have been accomplished. When people hear this kind of story, they think it makes no sense at all.

But this is precisely the work of faith.

By human thinking it makes no sense, but by faith it is entirely possible.

All this is not because we are great. It is because we have gone forward step by step by faith, following the things that please God. Therefore, we must continue to go forward, as we are doing now, in the direction that pleases God. Then God will continue to be with us with amazing grace in the days to come as well.

We must become witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the end of the earth. But becoming a witness is not something we become by our own striving; it is the work the Lord does. The same is true of all the things we are doing now. This work is not done by the pastors, nor is it done by the evangelists or the workers. Then who on earth does it? It is Jesus Christ who does it.

Jesus Christ is in us and is working together with us through us. That a brother has been born again is also something that God, that is, Jesus Christ, has done. And after that, the growing within the Church and the bestowing of grace are all things that Jesus Christ does.

The Lord said that we “shall be” witnesses. If He says we “shall be,” does it come to pass or not? It comes to pass. That is precisely faith. We inherit the will of God and take hold of that power through faith. We are truly thankful. That grace is simply amazing.

Wherever we go, we can live as witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even if you go to another country, you will come to preach the gospel. It is all right even if the language

of that country is unfamiliar to you. If you keep pressing on, and pressing on again, you will eventually meet someone with whom you can communicate, and when you preach the gospel to that person, he receives the remission of sins, and in the end we come to stand as those who preach the gospel.

We can go into any place in the whole world. This is not merely a theoretical statement, but something that will actually come to pass.

"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8).

Dear fellow believers, all of us have already become witnesses of the Lord. So do not be afraid. Just go forward boldly and meet people. In the very place where we meet people, they will naturally come to realize that Jesus Christ is our Savior.

In everything we do, the power of God is with us. Jesus Christ is with us, and the Holy Spirit works together with us. We must receive this fact with thanksgiving. And engrave this truth in your hearts, and above all, do not leave the Church. Know clearly this fact that the Holy Spirit has come upon us, and accept by faith God's will, that He has established us as witnesses.

Now we must obey by faith and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit by faith. I earnestly hope that by doing so we will become those who please our Lord, and workers who are fitting to the will of the Lord. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Let us live the remaining time as witnesses of the Lord

< Acts 1:1–8 >

"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.' Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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.'"

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Today we have looked together at the word of Acts chapter 1, verses 1 through 8.

Luke, who was a disciple of Jesus, was originally a physician, but after he became a disciple of the Lord, he was a man who faithfully recorded the things that Jesus did. He delivered this record to a man named Theophilus in the form of a letter. If we look at Luke chapter 1, the expression *"most excellent Theophilus" (Luke 1:3)* appears, but exact information about what kind of person Theophilus was does not appear in detail in the Bible.

However, seeing that Luke wrote a letter to him and testified of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we can surmise that Theophilus was a person who was used as an important channel in the spread of the gospel. Just as every epistle has a sender and a recipient, the sender of this letter was Luke and the recipient was Theophilus.

Verse 2 reads *"until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen."*

Also, if we look at verses 3 through 5, it is recorded as follows:

"To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'"

In this way, Luke records in detail that after Jesus rose again, He appeared in person to His disciples for forty days and spoke

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of the things of the kingdom of God, as well as the important words spoken during that period.

In particular, in Matthew chapter 28, verses 19 and 20 as well, Jesus commanded His disciples, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you."*

And in the word of Acts chapter 1, verses 6 through 8, it is said as follows:

"Therefore, when they had come together, they asked Him, saying, 'Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?' And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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.'"

In this way, to the disciples who asked about times and seasons, Jesus, instead of answering that, emphasized the coming of the Holy Spirit and the mission of being witnesses that results from it. Luke faithfully records these words of Jesus one by one, and testifies of the work of the Holy Spirit and of how the gospel of the water and the Spirit began to be spread.

If we look at the word of Acts chapter 1, it records the work that the Holy Spirit did through the apostles after the Lord rose again.

First, let us look at verse 3.

"To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God."

This word means that after the Lord suffered, He rose again, appeared directly to His disciples for forty days, showed them

many infallible proofs, and spoke of the things of the kingdom of God. The Lord overcame death and rose again, appeared in person before His disciples, and afterward was taken up into heaven while many saints were watching.

A person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come becomes a witness of the Lord

Now I would like to share the word centering on Acts chapter 1, verse 8.

"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."

The disciples of Jesus came to receive the Holy Spirit just as the risen Lord had promised. The Lord came to this earth, bore all our sins once and for all, died on the Cross, and rose again in three days. And after rising again, He appeared to His disciples and said, *"Receive the Holy Spirit" (John 20:22).*

At that time, the disciples were full of great hope and expectation. To such disciples, the Lord once again speaks clearly.

"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).

As this word says, a person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come receives power and becomes a witness of the Lord who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the end of the earth.

What, then, is a "witness" here? It is precisely a person who testifies of a certain fact exactly as he has directly seen and heard it.

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The Lord was born on this earth and, by receiving baptism from John at the age of thirty, had our sins transferred to Him once and for all. After that, He died on the Cross and, by rising again, became our Savior. We know and believe this truth, and through the work of the Holy Spirit we become witnesses who testify of that fact.

The Lord said precisely this to His disciples.

"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 word is not a word spoken only to the disciples, but a word given equally to us today as well. We too, in the Holy Spirit, must live the life of true witnesses who preach to the end of the earth the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus fulfilled.

I believe that the Church of God must without fail carry out the mission of this age.

What is the Church of God? It is a community of people gathered together who have accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. They have received the Holy Spirit as a gift in their hearts, and because of this they come to live the life of witnesses.

Until now, we have lived this life of witnesses and have worked for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But I believe that from now on we must preach this more powerfully and to more people.

Carry out the mission of witnesses in a world that is collapsing

This world is now becoming more and more unstable. Because of climate change and the environmental crisis, the whole earth is suffering. It is said that some island nations are in

danger of having more than half of their land submerged under seawater. In Antarctica the glaciers are melting, and the whole world is suffering from global warming. This is not mere speculation, but something that meteorologists have already been warning about for a long time. But now that warning is no longer mere information; it has become a reality to the point that we can feel it on our own skin.

In fact, such abnormal climate phenomena are occurring frequently all over the world. Heavy snow falls in warm regions and people are trapped for hours, and tornadoes blow, sending trailers flying and bringing houses down; such things are also happening frequently. Such news, which used to be heard only rarely, has now become common news. And in the future, these phenomena will occur more frequently and more severely because of global warming. This is evidence that the climate itself is changing rapidly, and it shows that in the end the world is slowly collapsing because of extreme weather.

Seeing all this reality, we must face squarely the fact that the place where we live cannot be an exception either. And all the more at a time like this, the Church of God must be more awake and must fully carry out the mission of witnesses who spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Our Lord said:

"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).

As this word says, we are now carrying out our mission as witnesses of the Lord in this age. Until now, too, we have carried out the role of witnesses a great deal. But the world is being ruined more and more, and the more this happens, shouldn't we strive all the harder to carry out the mission of witnesses?

Have those people ever, even once, come into contact with

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit?

Our Lord removed all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit and made us children of God. And He commanded us to become witnesses who testify of that fact to the world.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit has been spread to many countries, but we are led to look back on whether we have sufficiently carried out the role of witnesses so that all those people could clearly know this gospel. So an even more earnest prayer arises in our hearts: "Lord, help us to be able to fully carry out this work of witnesses."

I believe that the Lord has surely given us the mission of witnesses, and that He will surely enable us to accomplish it.

The countless souls dying without knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit—if they have not heard the gospel, that is also our responsibility. Because the Lord has entrusted this work to us, we must go forward praying every day so that we can fully carry out this mission.

The work we have carried out until now is by no means small, but even so, we must not settle down complacently, saying, "We have done enough." Even at this very moment, the whole world is collapsing in confusion and crisis. This is precisely the time when we must carry out the mission of true witnesses.

I believe that the Lord will enable us to carry out to the end the mission He has entrusted to us, and will enable us to testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit to all nations.

In this age, we must carry out the mission of witnesses in various ways. So, making use of those ways, we have done much work until now to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

However, recently countless people lost their lives because of a tsunami. How many of them, I wonder, had heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit and come into contact with the Lord's

salvation? It is simply heartbreaking that we cannot even know that.

When we think about how many regions there still are where the gospel of the water and the Spirit has not been spread, this is indeed the great task that we must take on.

The Lord clearly commanded us to serve as witnesses. Therefore, we must carry out this mission without fail.

If there are no witnesses, who will hear and believe?

When the Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John the Baptist, He bore all our sins once and for all. And bearing the sin of the world, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again.

He is the true Savior who has saved us. The Lord is the Son of God, and He came to this earth clothed in human flesh, removed all our sins, and saved us.

We must testify of precisely this fact to the world.

We must become witnesses who clearly and surely testify of this perfect work of salvation that the Lord has done. If we turn away from the role of witnesses or stand by idly, countless people who die without hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit will inevitably continue to appear.

Therefore, we can never take this mission lightly.

We who live in this age must without fail become true witnesses who testify of the Lord's perfect salvation.

Dear fellow believers, when a person comes to stand trial, the most important thing in that trial is the "witness." If a witness proves a fact that he saw directly at the scene, that trial can be won. No matter how much one says, if there is actually no

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evidence and no witness, the case ends up being dismissed. In the end, the standard by which the offender and the victim are clearly distinguished is precisely evidence and witnesses.

Likewise, when you and I stand firmly as witnesses who testify of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given, the things the Lord came to this earth and did are completely fulfilled.

The Lord came to this earth and bore the sin of all mankind once and for all by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, thereby completely removing our sins. When we testify of this fact to the world, the Lord's work is actually being brought to completion on this earth.

But what would happen if you and I did not stand as witnesses of this gospel of the water and the Spirit? Although the Lord has clearly accomplished a perfect work, a person who does not know that fact cannot believe.

If someone says, "You told me to believe, but no one preached it to me and there was no witness, so I did not know," then the work the Lord did becomes a vain work for that person.

The Lord has already come to this earth and saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and He has called us as witnesses to preach that truth of salvation to the world.

Therefore, only when you and I become witnesses who surely testify to the world of what the Lord has done can that work of salvation be fully accomplished in this age as well.

The Lord saved us with His own love and sacrifice. After accomplishing that work Himself, He said to us, *"You shall be witnesses to Me" (Acts 1:8)*. And He also promised that He would come again.

The Lord asks us as follows.

"Are you not witnesses? Do you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Have you received the remission of sins? Is it certain? Is it real? Is it true? Is it a fact?"

The Lord is not demanding anything else of us. He is telling us just one thing: to live the life of witnesses.

Jesus, who is not a created being but God the Creator

In this world, there are also some people who call themselves "witnesses." But most regrettably, they claim that although Jesus is the Son of God, He is merely a created being. But that is not the truth.

Jesus is the Son of God the Father. That is, He is God.

A living being gives birth to life of the same nature as itself. A dog gives birth to a dog, and a human gives birth to a human. Just as a human does not give birth to a beast, the Son of God is God by nature.

Jesus is not a created being; rather, all things were created through Him.

In the Gospel of John, it says, *"He was in the world, and the world was made through Him, and the world did not know Him. He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him" (John 1:10–11).*

Also, the Book of Philippians testifies, *"Who, being in the form of God, did not consider it robbery to be equal with God, but made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men" (Philippians 2:6–7).*

We must boldly testify of this truth to the world, just as we have heard it and just as we have come to realize it.

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Jesus is God, and He Himself came to this earth clothed in a human body, bore our sins once and for all, died on the Cross, and rose again.

We who believe this fact must now become true witnesses who plainly testify of that truth of salvation to the world.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:1–3).

In this word, who is "the One who spoke"? It is none other than Jesus Christ.

When God created the universe, God the Father, Jesus the Son, and God the Holy Spirit—the triune God—worked together. Among them, the One who created the heavens and the earth through the Word is none other than Jesus, that is, the Logos (the Word).

That is why Jesus is called "the God of the Word," that is, the Logos. God created the world by the Word, and that Word itself is Jesus Christ.

Then who is He?

That very Jesus, He who is God the Creator, came to this earth in the flesh to save mankind from sin. He was born on this earth through the body of Mary, and by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, He bore our sins once and for all. And He died on the Cross and rose again in three days, thereby saving all of us from sin and death.

In this way, Jesus is God, who created the heavens and the earth by the Word, and at the same time He is the Redeemer who Himself came in the flesh to resolve the sin of mankind.

What matters is what we testify of

A long time ago, those people who call themselves witnesses once came to visit me.

So I said, “Go ahead and teach me everything you can teach me.” And so I decided to study with them for a while.

At first they talked a lot about worldly matters, and as I listened, it all sounded right. While we were talking like that, one day the subject in their textbook changed and a unit came up titled “Jesus, Who Is He?” But that unit was a part that one could normally reach only after studying for more than a year.

So I said:

“Today I want to learn starting from this part, which I am most curious about. Who Jesus is—I want to start from here.”

They said that Jesus is a created being. Their claim was that although He is the Son of God, He is not God but a human. So I asked:

“Sir, do you have children?”

“Yes, I do.”

“Then let me ask you one thing. If you, sir, have begotten children, are those children humans or beasts?”

Then, seeming a little angry, he answered, “Humans, of course!”

So I said:

“Just as you, being a human, begot humans, if Jesus is the Son of God, would He be God, or a created being?”

At that moment, that teacher suddenly became angry and said:

“I have never seen a pastor like this before!”

Those people also say that they live as “witnesses.” They say that they must go out onto the streets to do evangelistic work at least three times a week without fail. So I said again:

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"I truly respect you. To think that you serve as witnesses so diligently!"

But what matters is what one testifies of. We must live as true witnesses who testify of the truth that Jesus is not a created being, but that He is God, that He came to this earth as the Son of God, and that He is the One who saved us from sin.

But going around saying that Jesus is not God is, in fact, a work of tearing down people's faith. Jesus told us to be witnesses. He said that in whatever way, we must stand as witnesses of Jesus.

The Lord says:

"Did I come to this earth and bear the sins of people by receiving baptism from John at the age of thirty, or not? Be witnesses of this."

"Be witnesses of the fact that I bore the sin of the world, was nailed to the Cross, shed My blood and died, and received the judgment for your sins in your place."

"Be witnesses of the fact that I died and rose again, that I am alive even now, and that I have become your Savior."

That is right. What the Lord demands of you and me is precisely that we stand as witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ fulfilled.

The mission of witnesses is our responsibility

We know all too well that this world is being ruined. So we have striven with all our strength to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. But let us ask ourselves: How much have we really stood as witnesses of the Lord?

Honestly, we lacked the strength, so we could not do it all. To exaggerate a little, we have worked truly to the point of

breaking our bones, with a heart ready to give our all. In our own way, we have done our best. Of course, in the Lord's sight it may look insufficient and small, but from our standpoint, haven't we done as much as we could?

It is not that we had great ability and yet did not do it; rather, haven't we striven to do as much as we could within the ability given to us? Isn't that so?

In the midst of all those difficulties, we did the Lord's work. We lived the life of witnesses.

The Lord says to us:

"I have saved you from sin, made you children of God, and given you everlasting life. Testify to the world of this fact, that I have removed the sins of all people and made them the people of God!"

That is right. The Lord wants us to live as witnesses who testify of that fact.

Even now we are continuing, but there is still much work to be done. There still remains the mission for us to preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to more people and to testify of the Lord's salvation in more places.

We should think deeply about this point together.

A tsunami struck, and in an instant countless people lost their lives. In the face of such a disaster, we are led to think: How much, really, are we carrying out the mission of witnesses?

The Lord told us to be witnesses. Now it is even difficult to go and visit people in person. Then how can we carry out the mission of witnesses?

For one person to interact deeply with another, a simple meeting is not enough. People say that their characters must match, their cultures must match, and that for trust to build up, they must live together for at least twenty years.

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But God has given us wisdom and opened the way so that we can carry out the mission of witnesses in a way suited to this age.

How amazing this guidance of God is!

If we were to visit six billion people one by one, when could we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to them, and when could we win their hearts so that they would accept the gospel?

Dear fellow believers, how long would it take to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the people around you and lead them to receive the remission of sins? Frankly speaking, it might not work even if you devoted your whole life to it. Don't you know how stubborn people are?

Even now, deep in my heart, I make this resolution:

"I will carry out the mission of a witness. How should I stand as a witness? Lord, help me. Give me the ability to carry out the mission of a witness."

If the Lord helps, it is surely possible.

We can stand as witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit before six billion people. We have done so until now, and we will continue to do so in the future. Even in a short time, if the Lord is with us, we can testify to the whole world.

In the end, the point is this:

"Carrying out the mission of witnesses is our responsibility."

Whether or not to believe in that gospel of the water and the Spirit is up to each person. But for us, standing as witnesses of the gospel is our mission and our responsibility.

Stand in the place of witnesses to the end by the power of the Holy Spirit

If the Holy Spirit is not in our hearts, we can never do the work of witnesses. Without the Holy Spirit, who would do such work? It cannot be done. But because the Holy Spirit is present, we are able to carry it out.

The Lord said, *"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 are carrying out that mission of witnesses. Tenaciously, with all our strength, we must stand in the place of witnesses. And in the future, even more people will come to stand in the place of witnesses. I believe that God will do so. I believe and am convinced that the Lord will establish us as witnesses. God will make all our ways prosperous.

Dear fellow believers, in the future we will actually see with our own eyes scenes we used to see only in movies. The day will come when we will see the earth split open, houses collapse, and people crushed to death beneath them.

But we believe. We believe that the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach bears fruit thirtyfold, sixtyfold, and a hundredfold. So the gospel will spread exponentially.

On the other hand, some countries have firmly closed their hearts to the gospel.

Their faith does not simply remain at the level of religious acts, but permeates their entire culture and life.

But nevertheless, we must become witnesses of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. No matter how stubborn and dark the world may be, it is because God has called us to the place of witnesses. We must carry out the role of witnesses more and

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more. I earnestly hope that God will bless us. Let us preach the gospel to more people and raise up more witnesses.

I will close the word here. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

He gave the Holy Spirit as a gift to the righteous and made them serve the gospel

< Acts 1:1–5 >

"The former account I made, O Theophilus, of all that Jesus began both to do and teach, until the day in which He was taken up, after He through the Holy Spirit had given commandments to the apostles whom He had chosen, to whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God. And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.'"

An apostle, one who is sent by God

The Book of Acts is a record of the acts of the apostles. The Book of Acts is a record of how the apostles became apostles and what work they did. If we look here, all the things that the disciples of Jesus did appear. That the disciples of Jesus became apostles means that God sent the disciples of Jesus to this earth.

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That is what the word apostle means. One who is sent by God is an apostle. If so, we too are apostles. We too are people who have been sent by God in this way and are serving the gospel on this earth. The person who recorded these acts of the apostles is Luke. That same Luke who wrote the Gospel of Luke spoke this way as an introduction in order to tell how God sends the apostles and does God's work.

Luke records in this way how the apostles became apostles and how God accomplishes God's work; he told how the disciples of Jesus, having been sent as apostles, do the work of apostles, that is, God's work, on this earth—how they do the work and with what faith they do it. It says, *"To whom He also presented Himself alive after His suffering by many infallible proofs, being seen by them during forty days and speaking of the things pertaining to the kingdom of God" (Acts 1:3)*.

The reason Jesus suffered

Luke wrote of Jesus that it was *"after His suffering" (Acts 1:3)*, and how accurately he knew about that! Jesus never committed sin, and He is One who has no sin. It is only that He had to suffer the suffering of the Cross because He Himself bore all the sin of mankind in this world; it is not that He committed any sin against this world. He did not commit any sin out of His own weakness; rather, in order to bear and remove the sin of you and me, that is, the sin of mankind, He Himself received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, and that is why He was hung on the Cross. And He died on the Cross and rose again, and for some forty days He showed Himself to His disciples and to many other people as well. It says that for some forty days, while accomplishing His own work in

that way, He spoke of the things of the kingdom of God. What God's work is and how to carry out God's work—such things are what He spoke of.

So Jesus gathered His disciples and made His last request of them. *"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now'" (Acts 1:4–5)*. Here He said, *"Wait for the Promise of the Father" (Acts 1:4)*. Jesus spoke of God's work, and He wanted to appoint His disciples as apostles and send them into this world to do God's work and accomplish it; and what He did was to tell them, "Do not depart from Jerusalem but stay here. Then, although John baptized with water, I will baptize you with the Holy Spirit. If you stay in Jerusalem without departing, you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit, and so you will carry out the work of God for which I have sent you into this world." That is what He said.

God's work is done by the Holy Spirit

God's work is done by the Holy Spirit entering into a person's heart and working. I, too, long ago believed in Jesus and claimed to preach the gospel in my own way, but it was all in vain. The real work I did—and the work I am still doing even now—is doing God's work because the Holy Spirit came upon my heart, through this Holy Spirit, through the gifts and power of the Holy Spirit. Otherwise, one cannot do God's work. Without being born again—without believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, receiving the remission of sins, being born again, and having the Holy Spirit in one's heart—one

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cannot do God's work. Why is that? Doesn't a person's heart change from morning to evening? Because a person's heart changes in this way, unless the Holy Spirit comes upon the heart, God cannot do His work.

So when I think about it, I too came to do God's work from the time I met the Lord through the word, and like these apostles, wherever I went I preached the gospel, I preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and I also met you and preached this gospel of the water and the Spirit. So, before His ascension after His resurrection, Jesus gathered His disciples and, while speaking to them for the last time of the things of the kingdom of God, told them why they had to stay in Jerusalem—that if they stayed in Jerusalem they would receive the Holy Spirit, and that when they received the Holy Spirit they would make disciples of all nations and preach this gospel to all people. As the word says, for some forty days Jesus showed the nail marks in His hands and testified of everything. Since He testified for some forty days, how certain it must be! And Jesus went up as His disciples watched.

And just as Jesus had told His disciples, after the Holy Spirit came upon their hearts, God's work began to be accomplished. So wherever they went, they preached this gospel of the water and the Spirit that we preach. Then I know that among you and me there may be some who think, "I believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but I am not sure whether the Holy Spirit has come upon me." Dear fellow believers, a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes that through that faith the Lord took away all the sins of his heart and received all the judgment for them—the Holy Spirit has come upon that person's heart. The Holy Spirit is not received separately. Theologians and many other people think that the Holy Spirit is received separately, but that is in vain.

The Holy Spirit is not received separately

So they think that they receive the Holy Spirit if they do things like mountain prayers, forty-day fasting prayers, and prayers of repentance; but just as the prophets of Baal cried out to Baal, no matter how much one calls on the name of God, offers prayers of repentance, and prays without eating for forty days, the Holy Spirit does not come upon a person who has not received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. For a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit has come upon his heart, and it says that the Holy Spirit seals that heart which has no sin. It is exactly as the word *"in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise" (Ephesians 1:13)* says. So the Holy Spirit has come, and that Holy Spirit raises you and me within us according to the word of God.

He raises us in this way, but right after we are first born again, we are so young spiritually that we do not even know that the Holy Spirit has come upon us, and because we have so many thoughts of the flesh, we sometimes follow them. However, as we live a life of faith in the church and serve the Lord, the things of the flesh are slowly removed one by one, and when we hear the word of God, the Holy Spirit seals it for us, saying, "Yes, this is the word," and gives us the conviction that this is right; and as we grow in that way, we come to do God's work. So it is not that we become God's workers right after we are born again; rather, after much of the flesh has been removed, the Holy Spirit takes greater control of our hearts and makes us realize the word of God in our hearts so that we hold on to it more, and in this way He makes us do God's work.

Therefore, we must know that Jesus spoke this word and then departed. John the Baptist gave people the baptism of water, but

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Jesus said, *"You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5)*, and went up as His disciples watched. That Jesus died and rose again and showed the nail marks in His hands is also an amazing thing. If Jesus appeared right here and now, showed the nail marks in His hands, and said that He had died and risen again, wouldn't you be amazed? That too is an amazing thing, but the point is that after Jesus spoke to His disciples, He went up into heaven while all the disciples were watching. If you saw Him going up like that while He was standing, would you be amazed or not?

At that time, the shock of having seen with their own eyes Jesus rising again and ascending was so great for the apostles that whenever they met people, while preaching that Jesus came to this earth, bore our sins, died on the Cross, and rose again, they testified by highlighting that resurrection all the more. They highlighted all the more that if one believes in Jesus, one will die and rise again, obtain everlasting life, and go to the kingdom of heaven. If we read the Book of Acts, it says that people persecuted the apostles while *"being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2)*. They were amazed even to see Jesus, who had died and risen again, come to them and interact with them in that very form, but the point is that they were even more amazed, to the point of their mouths falling open, as they watched Jesus being lifted up into the air.

The Bible says that God the Father, Jesus the Son of God, and the Holy Spirit—these three—are to us the same one God, and this is what we learn. In order for God to have God's work done, God the Father and His Son planned it, and Jesus came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross and died, rose again from death, and saved us. And after that, in order to make

us do God's work, what He poured into our hearts was the Holy Spirit. So people who have the Holy Spirit, when they read the word of God, understand what it is saying. They realize what it says and preach it. Of course, not everyone is like that. God gave the gifts of the Holy Spirit, that is, gifts—to some as apostles, to some as pastors, to some as servants, to some as preachers of the gospel; in this way He gave gifts and gave abilities.

After I met the Lord through the word and received the remission of sins, my heart became very calm and wide open. It is not that I felt it with my senses at that time, but it could not have been more calm. It was the realization, "My sins are gone." From then on, when I read the Bible, I could understand what it was saying. In the old days, because I did not know this word, I bought expensive commentaries and put them up on the wall. But after I met the Lord and the Holy Spirit came upon my heart, when I read straight through this Bible, I could understand it from this angle and from that angle. I could understand the heart of the author of the Scripture. Luke is now recording this Scripture, and I can understand why he recorded this. So I am telling you about it. Then, because the Holy Spirit is in your hearts too, when I tell you this, your hearts resonate with it. When a person who has the Holy Spirit preaches to people who have the Holy Spirit, they communicate with one another through the Holy Spirit. That is because the Holy Spirit communes. The word says that you must not serve Belial and must not serve idols, and if you serve the Lord, He says, *"I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people" (2 Corinthians 6:16)*. Likewise, our Lord told His disciples that He would pour out the Holy Spirit on them and that through that Holy Spirit He would make them do God's work. Truly, exactly as this word says, a little later that actually happens.

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The Holy Spirit, who came on the Day of Pentecost as promised

It says that while the disciples of Jesus were gathered in the upper room praying, the Holy Spirit came upon them like fire. Then how is that different from our receiving the Holy Spirit by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit? From the Old Testament era until that time, the era of the Book of Acts was the first time that the Holy Spirit came upon all the gathered people at once and people spoke in tongues and so on. It was the first time on this earth. In the old days, what He did was this: the Holy Spirit came upon a prophet of God, such as the prophet Daniel or the prophet Ezekiel, spoke to him, dwelt in his heart and made him speak, and taught him that Jesus, the Son of God, would come to this earth and remove the sin of mankind in this way; thus He worked on individuals one by one.

But in this New Testament era, since the time had now come, in order for Jesus to do the harvest, the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost—the feast of Pentecost that He had appointed from long ago—in order to keep the prophecy of that word. The fiftieth day after Jesus rose again is Pentecost. The Holy Spirit came at that time. Pentecost is the day when, as promised, the Holy Spirit officially came upon the disciples who already believed in Jesus. Then, as for the Holy Spirit coming upon us, He does not come in that way; rather, the Holy Spirit comes upon us when we believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So if we read straight through the Book of Acts, such parts appear in great detail. Let us all read the word together. *"Then Peter said to them, '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. For the promise*

is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call'" (Acts 2:38–39).

"For the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"

Our repenting is not something done with words. When we say, "We have believed wrongly; we are going down the wrong path," and after meeting the real thing we turn our direction toward it—that is called repentance. Turning one's direction from the wrong direction toward the right direction after coming to know it exactly by receiving someone's instruction—that is called repentance. It means that when we repent in that way, are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and know and believe why Jesus received baptism from John, had our sins transferred to Him, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, thereby removing our sins, we receive the remission of sins, and when we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. We receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. And so, after receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift, we do God's work.

It is only because you do not know, but I cannot tell you how many people say that believing in Jesus is one thing, being born again is another, regeneration is another, receiving the Holy Spirit is another, and receiving the remission of sins is yet another—that all these are received separately. That is not so. We believe in Jesus Christ as our Lord, as God, and as our Savior, and by knowing that He removed all our sins through the work He did—that is, through faith in the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross—and by believing it in our hearts, we receive the remission of sins, and the moment we receive it, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. God gives Him as

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a gift. The reason we must have the Holy Spirit is that we are children of God. So if one does not have the Holy Spirit, one is not a child of God. So it is people who have the Holy Spirit who do God's work. God sent them to this earth as apostles, that is, as those sent by God, and made them preach the gospel. And in this age as well, through you and me, in whose hearts the Holy Spirit dwells, He has made us preach and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit on this earth.

Because we are the Church of God, we hear such things as very ordinary, but such things as receiving the Holy Spirit, or the Trinity—that the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all the same one God of ours—are difficult matters that are discussed only around the time one graduates from seminary. Yet even when they hear it, they do not understand. Even the one explaining it does not understand. There are countless books within Christianity, but even if one reads through all those books, one does not understand. Even if one asks the person who wrote them, he does not know. Because those people also wrote by quoting this book and that book, they themselves do not know either. But because we have the Holy Spirit, we speak of this easily. You also understand it easily, and a person who accepts the word of God in this way comes to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, can understand easily, and can also do God's work easily. But a person who does not accept the word of God does not know what the word of God is saying, no matter how much he studies. The white part is just paper and the black part is just letters. Long ago, I was like that too.

The promise of the Old Testament was fulfilled in the New Testament

What I want to tell you is that God, in order to have the gospel preached on this earth through His disciples, had given the Holy Spirit as a gift into their hearts. Then another question arises. People think, "Then what about their gathering and praying? It says the Holy Spirit came when they were praying, so doesn't the Holy Spirit come when one prays?" As for the Bible, the Old Testament is the promise in which God said He would do this, and the New Testament records that He fulfilled that promise. It means that He fulfilled it according to that word He had promised. In Genesis, in the Old Testament era, God said to the serpent that He would make the Seed of the woman an enemy to it, saying, *"He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel" (Genesis 3:15)*. It means that Jesus would come as the Seed of the woman and strike and crush the head of the serpent. It means that He would do away with the power of the serpent. What this story means is that He would remove the sin on this earth. No matter how many devils there are, if there is no sin in a person's heart, they cannot attack. But if there is sin in a person's heart, the devil can come and attack. So among those who have received the remission of sins, there is no one who is possessed by demons. If one believes in the word of God and yet sides with the devil and does absurd things, one's heart may become sick; but as for a person who has received the remission of sins by believing in the word of the Lord, the devil cannot come and do anything to him. That is because there is no sin in his heart. But a person who says he believes only with words and does not actually believe in his heart has sin in his heart. As for a person who has sin, the devil can come into that heart and work.

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He gave the Holy Spirit as a gift and made us serve the gospel

So when speaking of such a word, we must speak well, and we must also know it so as not to be deceived. What is certain today is that Jesus gave His disciples the Holy Spirit and made them do God's work. Today as well, Jesus has caused you and me to receive the remission of sins in our hearts and has given us the Holy Spirit as a gift, making us serve the gospel of God. That is why we are doing God's work. Because God made us do it—giving us ability and giving us the Holy Spirit as a gift—we have come to do God's work. It is not we who do this; it is God who works through us. This is what Jesus was saying when He said, *"You did not choose Me, but I chose you and appointed you" (John 15:16)*.

Dear fellow believers, do you understand? It is the same with me. It is not that I do some work because I am a good person; rather, because the Holy Spirit is in my heart, I do the work that pleases God. It is so with you, and it is so with me. I hope you know that. God has sent you and me as apostles. Those sent by God onto this earth—we have been sent by God and do the work of serving the gospel. We are preaching that God has loved people in this way, has removed their sins in this way, and has given them salvation in this way. You and I are the apostles of God. I give true thanks. Though I was of no use at all and could do nothing, and though you were the same, God loved us, gave us the remission of sins, made us His workers, and has made us do God's work today. I give true thanks. I am truly thankful that we can do God's work while living in such a difficult age. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have received the remission of sins

< Acts 1:4–5 >

“And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.’”

How the Holy Spirit comes upon us

After Jesus rose again, He commanded His disciples *“not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, ‘which,’ He said, ‘you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now’” (Acts 1:4–5)*. This word was fulfilled exactly as it is in Acts chapter 2. On the Day of Pentecost, *“There appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance” (Acts 2:3–4)*. The disciples were Hebrews, but they spoke of the gospel in the various languages of other

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nations—in Egyptian, in Greek, and in the languages of the many surrounding nations. They said that Jesus had come to this earth and saved us with the water and the blood. People were amazed at how men who had never even been educated could speak foreign languages so well. Today, however, people make sounds inside the church that no one can understand and call it speaking in tongues. That is not the tongues the Bible speaks of but the work of demons. Demons enter people's hearts under the pretext of Jesus and make them pray fanatically and speak in tongues, and there are many people who live their lives of faith that way.

Today I would like to speak about how the Holy Spirit comes upon us. First, let us ask a few questions about the Holy Spirit. First, Acts chapter 2 says that the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost; was this a fullness of the Holy Spirit that came additionally upon people who had already received the Holy Spirit, or was it the first time the Holy Spirit descended in the New Testament age? Second, must those who believe in Jesus today receive the Holy Spirit separately? I ask each of you to put these questions to yourselves. Some people say that believing in Jesus and being saved is the basic thing, and that one must separately receive the Holy Spirit as shown in Acts chapter 2; let us consider whether this is right. Those who make this claim are people who do not know the truth revealed in the Bible. Those who say that one receives the Holy Spirit separately a long while after believing in Jesus are sinners who, though they believe in Jesus as their Savior, have not received the remission of sins in their hearts. They are people who have believed in Jesus in vain.

The two things John the Baptist did

Let us look at the word to see how the Holy Spirit comes upon us. The Spirit of God descended on this earth after Jesus rose again. After His resurrection, Jesus testified for forty days and then went up to the Father's kingdom, and before He went up, He said to His disciples, *"You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5)*. So the Holy Spirit is given by Jesus Christ.

John the Baptist did two things. One was that he baptized people and made them repent. He rebuked those in the world who did not believe in Jesus and served foreign gods, and turned them back. He cried out, "God made you, so how can you serve as God the created things that God has made? Repent!" The other was that he passed all the sin of mankind on to Jesus Christ. Because we could be saved only if all the sins of this world passed on to Jesus Christ and Jesus was crucified bearing the sin of the world, John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus Christ. So all my sins and your sins, and even the sins of those who have not yet been born, all passed on to Jesus. That is why Jesus said that John baptized with water, but they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from then.

Baptism has the meanings of being washed, being buried, and being passed on. Baptism is exactly the same as the laying on of hands in the Old Testament. When a person possessed by a demon lays hands on another person's head, the demon passes on. The reason John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus was to pass all the sin of mankind on to Jesus Christ. We must know this. *"You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5)*. Why is that? It is because our Lord came to this earth, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, and said, *"It is finished!" (John*

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19:30), as He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. He was saying, "I have completed the work of saving you; I have borne all your sins and received all the judgment for your sins, so if you believe in Me, you will be saved."

Our Lord rose again and testified to His disciples for forty days. He testified to many people. Then He went up to heaven before the eyes of many people. That is why Jesus Christ is real. Every religion has its founders, and in the tombs of the founders there are dead bodies and bones. But in the tomb of Jesus Christ there was nothing. That is because Jesus Christ rose again, testified for forty days, and went up before the eyes of people. That is why Jesus said, *"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Revelation 22:13)*. Jesus Christ is the Creator of the universe and rules over all the time and history of the universe. History is called 'history' in English, and it can be read as 'His story,' that is, the history of Jesus Christ. It means that it is a history in which Jesus Christ creates us, saves us, and brings it to an end when He wishes to end it. Since Jesus Christ created us and saved us, and will make a new heaven and a new earth, take us there, and do away with this earth, we can say that this earth is like a mother's womb that gives birth to the children of God.

So a person is not born once only to be born, grow old, get sick, die, and disappear. A person is born once in order to believe in Jesus, receive the remission of sins before Jesus Christ, be created anew as a child of God, enter the kingdom of God, and live forever. That is why Jesus Christ told His disciples that He would baptize them with the Holy Spirit, saying, *"You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5)*.

The gift given to those who have received the remission of sins

Our Lord rose again and ascended. Jesus was no longer there, but the disciples were gathered together. While a hundred and twenty people were gathered, the Holy Spirit suddenly came down like a rushing mighty wind, like tongues of fire. This did not come upon them because they prayed. The Holy Spirit does not come because one prays or because one offers prayers of repentance; rather, He came when the hundred and twenty were gathered because it was God's promise. Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit. Why is that? When Jesus was with His disciples on this earth, Jesus Himself taught the disciples and gave them power. But now Jesus has risen again, ascended, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. Therefore the disciples, with whom Jesus was no longer present, had to have the Holy Spirit of God in their hearts. That is why Jesus sent the Holy Spirit at that time, after He had risen again and ascended. So the disciples of Jesus came to have the Holy Spirit. It was by the Holy Spirit—because the Holy Spirit gave their hearts understanding and gave them power just as if Jesus were present—that they were able to preach the gospel to the great Roman Empire at that time. And even as they were dragged away and put to death, they could praise the Lord and say, "He bore even your sins." That strength came by the strength of the Holy Spirit. That is why we must know God in this way: we must believe that God the Father of Jesus Christ, Jesus Christ our Creator and Savior, and the Holy Spirit—these three are the same God to us.

God gave the Holy Spirit to the disciples; then to whom is the Holy Spirit given? He is given to those who have received the remission of sins. Who were the hundred and twenty gathered here? They were people who had followed Jesus

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around and heard His word while He was on this earth. They were people who had heard all the words of Jesus—that He received baptism from John and bore all their sins, died on the Cross for them, rose again from death and appeared to them, and that He would send the Holy Spirit so they would be baptized with the Holy Spirit. Therefore these people were people who believed in Jesus as their Savior. They were people who believed that all their sins had passed on to Jesus when He received baptism from John, and saints who believed that Jesus had saved them by being crucified.

In the sanctuary of our church there are two doors; on one it is written "the door of the sheep," and on the other, "the door of the saints." People may wonder about it. The door of the sheep is the door through which those who still have sin in their hearts come in, and the door of the saints is the door through which those who have come into the church, had demons driven out, and had their hearts made clean—that is, the saints—come in. However, one does not become a saint just because a demon has gone out. A person who has in his heart the faith that Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved him with the water and the blood is a person without sin and a saint. That is why the Holy Spirit comes upon that heart. The Holy Spirit came upon those who believed in Jesus Christ as their Savior and received the remission of all their sins by the faith that believes Jesus Christ bore all the sins of their whole lives, the sins of all the people in the whole world, and even all the sins of the people of later ages, and bore them all at the Jordan River. So to believe in Jesus and then receive the Holy Spirit separately later is to believe wrongly. Of course, in the age of the apostles the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples who had already believed in Jesus on the Day of Pentecost according to the promise, but it has not been so since then. Both Jesus' coming to accomplish salvation and the Holy

Spirit's coming are things that have already passed. We believe now, but Jesus already removed all sins long ago and sent the Holy Spirit to believers long ago. Because that has continued until now, we receive the Holy Spirit the moment we believe in Jesus.

A person who believes in Jesus must either be simple, so that when God speaks like this he believes the word just as it is, or be very smart, so that he listens to the word, examines whether it is logical, and believes it if it is. A person who believes in Jesus must truly have a pure heart, and if he is going to reason with his head, he must reason very cleverly. Only then can he receive the remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit is a gift. What is a gift? Suppose someone gave a pair of glasses as a gift to a person with poor eyesight. If that person, being so grateful, said that he had only a little money on him but asked the giver to take even that, would it be a gift? No. A gift is something received one hundred percent free. Because the Holy Spirit is what God gives as a gift to those who have received the remission of sins, He comes upon them automatically. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the person who believes that all the sins of his whole life were passed on to Jesus when Jesus received baptism from John, and that Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world, and received the punishment on the Cross, and thus saved him completely from sin. That is why one simply receives it.

The Holy Spirit does not come upon us as a hot sensation. That is the work of demons. When a shaman performs a ritual, they say the shaman feels a tingling in the body as the spirit descends, but the Spirit who is holy does not come that way. He comes when we believe the word. Because the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are the same God, God the Father planned to save us through Jesus Christ and, according to that plan, sent His

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Son to us, had Jesus receive baptism from John and die on the Cross to save us, and the Holy Spirit stands as the guarantor for those who believe in this way. He testifies, "That is right; your faith is right." So the triune God has saved us completely. The Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe this word. This word of the Bible speaks entirely about Jesus Christ. When we believe in our hearts this word—that the Old Testament said this about Jesus Christ and the New Testament said this, and that He has thus saved us—the Holy Spirit stamps His seal, saying, "That is right; you pass; the faith you believe with is right."

What comes upon a heart with sin is a demon

I would like to speak about people who believe in Jesus and yet receive demons. If one does not receive the remission of sins when believing in Jesus, one does not receive the Holy Spirit. Then later, while trying to receive the Holy Spirit separately, one receives a demon. One goes to a place like a prayer house to receive the Holy Spirit and ends up encountering a demon. There is sin in his own heart, but Jesus removed sin with the water and the blood. He did not remove sin with the blood of the Cross alone. Would it have been enough for Jesus Christ simply to die on the Cross without bearing our sins? The word truth means something very fair. It is not one-sided. Before He died on the Cross, Jesus Christ received baptism at the Jordan River from that John the Baptist of whom it was said, *"Among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11),* and so had all our sins transferred to Him. That is why Jesus Christ was able to die on the Cross. We must receive the remission of sin in our hearts by believing the word of that salvation that made us sinless, that gospel. Only then does

the Holy Spirit come upon us automatically, but the problem is that this is not done and there is sin in the heart. When Jesus received baptism from John, did He not take away even the sins we commit today? Because people do not know that truth and have no knowledge, they go to a fasting room at a prayer house and pray.

If you look at the people who fast and pray at prayer houses, they think of the Lord nailed to the Cross and say, "The Lord died on the Cross for me, so what does being hungry matter?" and, enduring their hunger, they pray, "Lord, give me the Holy Spirit." But however much the Holy Spirit may want to come upon such a person, how can He come when there is sin in that person's heart? How can the Spirit who is holy come upon the heart of a person who has sin? Only a demon comes. A demon makes the heart of a person who has sin its house and comes upon it, while the Holy Spirit makes His house in the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins by believing the gospel of the water and the blood of Jesus Christ, and dwells there. So the demon appears in a vision. When a person goes without food, he sees illusions. In a dream Jesus appears bleeding and says, "I suffered like this for you; what can you give for Me? I want to enter your heart; will you receive Me?" and when the person says, "Please come in," in the dream Jesus slips right into his heart. Then his heart feels refreshed as if he had eaten a peppermint candy, he feels good, and he keeps breaking into hollow laughter. Among demons there are demons that make one feel good, angel-like demons, lewd demons, raving demons—all kinds of demons. When such a demon enters, the person feels good, laughter overflows from deep in his heart, he is beside himself with love for people, and he helps and devotes himself in that way.

Demons come upon people who pray fanatically. There are

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people who kneel and cry out loudly, “Lord, I believe.” They clap their hands with all their might, shout, “Lord, Lord,” and say, “Father, give us the Holy Spirit.” When a person shouts beyond his strength and writhes about, he loses his right mind. Then what comes upon him? Sometimes a tingling fire comes, sometimes Jesus appears, and sometimes something enters the body as a sensation. That is precisely a demon. Jesus never works apart from the word. God, too, never works apart from the word. The Holy Spirit, too, never works apart from the word. That is why the Bible is called the canon, that is, the measuring rod. It is the measuring rod of God’s salvation, the measuring rod of justice, the measuring rod of truth, and the measuring rod for receiving the Holy Spirit. If we measure every life by the word of the Bible, we can tell whether it is fake or genuine. So when people pray fanatically to receive the Holy Spirit, that is when a demon comes upon them. A person who was sitting quietly suddenly bursts out in tongues and his body begins to shake. People see that and say the Holy Spirit has come. But it is a demon that has come. When a shaman gets up during a ritual and does a sword dance, the spirit descends and the bells shake, and that is exactly this shaking. When people who believe in Jesus pray fanatically, a demon comes down and the shaking comes. Though they are kneeling, their bodies rise up, they foam at the mouth and fall backward, which means a demon has entered. But those who do not know say the Holy Spirit has come.

A quack doctor says that a person is getting better even as he is dying. If you listen to that doctor, you will soon die. And after the person dies, the doctor says, “We did our best, but another illness flared up and he died.” A person in the church who cannot discern that his own church members are possessed by demons is just like that. People have believed in Jesus for ten years and still have sin in their hearts, and they say that they will go to the

kingdom of heaven even with sin. They say that God regards them as righteous. They see Jesus as a person just like themselves. But Jesus is not such a One.

People go to meetings that claim to give the Holy Spirit and become possessed by demons. How are such meetings conducted? They beat drums, play drum sets, and cry, "Give it to us." A meeting that does not read the word and preach by expounding the word is an opportunity for demons to work. That is why there are so many people who were perfectly fine and then became possessed by demons while attending church. Why do people believe in Jesus and become possessed by demons? Enabling people to receive the remission of sins is the very core. It is after this has been done that the Holy Spirit comes and that gifts are also spoken of. A child must first be born before you can teach him to walk; it makes no sense to talk about spoon-feeding a child who has not even been born, or to say he must be good at sports. We must know and believe that the Holy Spirit is not received by asking for Him in prayer. Then how does the Holy Spirit come upon us? There is no need to say more. We must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The laying on of hands in the Old Testament and the baptism Jesus received from John

Leviticus says, *"If anyone of the common people sins unintentionally by doing something against any of the commandments of the LORD in anything which ought not to be done, and is guilty, or if his sin which he has committed comes to his knowledge" (Leviticus 4:27–28)*. What did it say he should do then? It said that he should bring a goat without blemish and *"lay his hand on the head of the sin offering, and kill the sin*

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offering at the place of the burnt offering" (Leviticus 4:29). It said that he should take the blood and give it to the priest. All people are equal before God and all the same. It is after we believe in Jesus that we come to know, through the law, that we have sinned and what sin is. When a person came to realize, "I have broken the law of God; I have broken the law of conscience," he brought a sacrificial offering without blemish, laid his hands on it to pass his sins on to it, took the blood of that animal, and gave it to the priest. The priest put the blood on the horns at the four corners of the altar of burnt offering, took off the fat, placed it on the altar of burnt offering, burned it with fire, and offered it before God. The remaining blood he poured out at the base of the altar. By having sacrifices offered in this way, God granted the remission of sins to those who carried out the law of sacrifice and believed in their hearts. And He also had a year's worth of sins passed on to a goat through Aaron the high priest. One goat was offered as a sacrifice before God, and on the other, hands were laid before the eyes of the people to pass sins on to it. As it is written, *"Aaron shall lay both his hands on the head of the live goat, confess over it all the iniquities of the children of Israel, and all their transgressions, concerning all their sins, putting them on the head of the goat" (Leviticus 16:21)*, He let them know that the sins of all the people had been passed on. God saved us through the law of sacrifice that remits the sins of us human beings in this way. The sacrifices of the Old Testament are thus a promise that He would send the Savior.

In the New Testament, Jesus came to this earth as a man through the body of a woman. God, the Creator, came to this earth clothed in a human body. Why did He come? He came to save mankind from sin. How did He remove the sin of mankind? He received baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him.

Jesus' receiving baptism from John is exactly the same as the laying on of hands in the Old Testament. As the word says, *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him" (Matthew 3:13)*, He had all the sin of the world transferred to Him through that baptism, and bearing the sin of the world, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*, as He died on the Cross. In that way He saved us. And He rose again. So our Lord has saved us. He gave the remission of sins to those who believe that the Lord has saved us, and as for how He testified of it, He testified in three ways.

"There are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood"

Let us look at the word of 1 John. *"Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God? (This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth. For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one –ASV)" (1 John 5:5–8)*. This word tells how the Son of God removed our sins. It says, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood" (1 John 5:6)*. In removing our sins, did Jesus remove them with the blood of the Cross alone? Jesus received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred to Him. Through the baptism He received from John and His death on the Cross, He removed all my sins and yours. And it says, *"For there are three who bear witness, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and the three agree in one" (1 John 5:8)*. The first evidence that God has

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saved us is the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit refers to God. The reason the Holy Spirit is mentioned here is that God the Father and Jesus Christ saved us with the water and the blood, and the Holy Spirit is the One who helps; so the Holy Spirit testifies that Jesus saved us from sin by receiving baptism from John and dying on the Cross. That is why it speaks of the Spirit, the water, and the blood.

How did Jesus, coming to this earth, bear the sins that you and I will commit until we die, the sins your descendants will commit, and the sins of all people until the day this earth someday comes to an end? He bore them through the baptism He received from John. That is why it is the water and the blood. The water by which Jesus had sins passed on to Him through His baptism, and the blood He shed on the Cross—with this water and blood He saved you and me. Do you believe that He saved you and me with the water and the blood? Who testifies to those who believe this? The Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe in their hearts the salvation of the water and the blood and testifies. Dear fellow believers, is there sin in your hearts, or not? Who enables us to say that we have no sin? It is the Holy Spirit who enables us. So how does the Holy Spirit come? He comes upon those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why in the Gospel of John Jesus said, *"Unless one is born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God" (John 3:3)* and *"unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. That we must be born again of water and the Spirit means that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross to remove our sins, and that He gives the Holy Spirit into the heart of the one who believes this, and through that Holy Spirit He testifies to believers, "You have been saved," so this person is a saved person. It also means that we come to know that we have been

saved because the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts, "You are a saved person." You come to have the evidence in your hearts.

Let us continue to look at the word. *"If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater; for this is the witness of God which He has testified of His Son. He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son" (1 John 5:9–10)*. A person who is born again receives testimony before people. He receives the testimony, "That person is a servant of God; that person is born again; that person is one of God's people." It shows. Next, the evidence that God has saved us is clear. Because Jesus saved us, we can know through Jesus that we have been saved. *"He who believes in the Son of God has the witness in himself; he who does not believe God has made Him a liar, because he has not believed the testimony that God has given of His Son" (1 John 5:10)*. This witness is precisely that our Lord saved us with the water and the blood. Jesus received baptism from John and died on the Cross, removing all our sins, and just as He promised to give the Holy Spirit as a gift to the one who believes this, the Holy Spirit has come upon our hearts. So by the Holy Spirit we can say that we have no sin. Dear fellow believers, do you have the witness in your hearts? Did Jesus come to this earth and remove my sins and yours? Did He bear our sins? So the Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe the word and preach the word, and they have something to say to the people in the world. That is why the Holy Spirit does not work apart from the word.

Today's Spirit-centered people place the Holy Spirit above Jesus and set Him above God. It is not so. It is the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit. These three are the same God to us. That is because these three consulted together and saved us.

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Though the division of roles was separate, they equally accomplished our salvation. That is why we believe. That is why the Holy Spirit exalts Jesus. The Spirit of God comes upon the hearts of those who believe that the Lord—who is the Son of God and the Creator, who came to this earth to save us, received baptism from John and bore our sins, received the punishment for sin on the Cross, rose again from death, and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God—is none other than your Savior.

Why we need the Holy Spirit

The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the salvation of Jesus Christ, who came by water and blood. Dear fellow believers, has the Holy Spirit come upon you? Dear fellow believers, do you have sin, or not? The Holy Spirit never works except through Jesus. I want you to know the fact that He never works except through the salvation Jesus has given us. Then why do we need the Holy Spirit? First, we need Him because He makes us children of God. However much one believes in Jesus, if one has not received the remission of sins in one's heart, there is no Holy Spirit in one's heart; but when one believes the word that He saved us with the water and the blood, there is no sin in one's heart. Then the Holy Spirit comes upon that heart. Then God says, "You are My child."

A person is made up of two parts. He is made up of flesh and spirit. He can also be divided into three. He can be divided into spirit, body, and soul—that is, into spirit, inner heart and thoughts, and body. But if the Holy Spirit, the Spirit of God, is not in a person's body, in his heart, God calls this person a forsaken one, a person bound for hell, a child of the devil. In order for the Spirit of God to come into us, God first sent His

Son to this earth to first cleanse away our sins completely with the water and the blood, and then, having us believe this, He sent the Holy Spirit so that the Spirit of God would come into our hearts and make us children of God. That is why we need the Holy Spirit. However much a person believes in Jesus, if there is sin in his heart, that person is not one of God's people. We need the Holy Spirit because the Holy Spirit is the evidence of having become a child of God and the evidence of having been saved.

Second, we need the Holy Spirit because He teaches us and guides us into the truth. If the Holy Spirit is not in our hearts, however much we read the Bible, we do not understand it. However many seminaries one attends, one does not understand it. Even a person who has earned several doctorates in theology does not know the Bible. He may know the books of doctrine, but if you open the Bible and ask him what it means, he does not know. What Bible scholars know least is the Bible. That is why they say there are many difficult passages in the Bible. They write them down that way, calling them passages that cannot be interpreted. The water, the blood, and the Spirit in 1 John chapter 5—this is one of those difficult passages. Only a person who has the Holy Spirit can interpret it. When one receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit automatically comes upon one's heart, and when one reads the Bible by that Holy Spirit, one comes to understand it. Why is that? Because the Bible was written as the Holy Spirit moved the hearts of people to record the word of God, for the person upon whom the Holy Spirit has come, the Holy Spirit becomes the teacher within and interprets this word that was written by the Holy Spirit. That is why we need the Holy Spirit.

Third, we need the Holy Spirit because without Him we cannot have fellowship with God. Why must we receive the

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remission of sins in our hearts and why must we receive the Holy Spirit? It is in order to have fellowship with God. I said that receiving the Holy Spirit is a gift. When one receives the remission of sins, He simply comes; it is not that one receives the remission of sins and then receives the Holy Spirit separately. They are not two separate things that come apart from each other. Fourth, without the Holy Spirit one cannot be raptured. It means that God will not take us up on the last day. To put it simply, one cannot go to the kingdom of heaven. Fifth, without the Holy Spirit one cannot obtain everlasting life. It means that one cannot obtain eternal life. Only when the Holy Spirit is in a person's body can he live forever with the Lord in the Lord's kingdom. Without the Holy Spirit he cannot live. He goes to hell.

Why do we need to believe in Jesus? Why do we need Jesus? We need Him because Jesus is the One who gives salvation to you and me. We absolutely need Him. Also, because without the salvation the Lord has given there is no Holy Spirit, and without the Holy Spirit the heart can have no center, Jesus is the One whom all mankind must without fail receive into their hearts. He is the One we must believe in. However excellent a person may be, if he has no knowledge of Jesus Christ and does not believe in Jesus Christ as his Savior, if he does not believe in Jesus who saved us with the water and the blood, that person is someone who does not recognize before God the One who made him. Even animals recognize their master, but a person who does not believe in Jesus in his heart and has not received the remission of sins does not recognize God the Father who made him. Jesus is the One absolutely necessary to the lives of you and me. Because Jesus removed our sins and we believe in Him, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts. Apart from Jesus it can never happen.

We need Jesus because Jesus Christ is the God of the whole universe, the Savior of sinners, and the One who sent the Holy Spirit to those who believe. Do you know how much you and I need Jesus? Yet to people who believe in Jesus today, Jesus is not really needed. When asked who is needed, they say the Holy Spirit is needed. Dear fellow believers, I want you to know how important Jesus is, since even the Holy Spirit never comes upon anyone who does not believe in Jesus. And even if one has received the Holy Spirit, one must have faith in the center of one's heart that believes the word. The Holy Spirit did not come in the flesh. Of course, it is true that He came in Jesus Christ, but people say to the Holy Spirit, who cannot be seen with the eyes and who does not appear as Jesus Christ did, "Good morning, Holy Spirit," in the morning and "Good evening" in the evening, and they say that the Holy Spirit comes into them whenever they call Him. It makes no sense at all.

Nothing in the universe can exist except through Jesus. Can even a single flower exist without Jesus? Can we be born without Jesus? It is the same with the earth, the heavens, and the Milky Way. *"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3)*. The One who spoke in this way is none other than Jesus Christ, the King of kings who saved you and me, the Lord of creation. The word Jesus means 'Savior,' and the word Christ means 'King,' so Jesus is the God of creation who saved us. We need Jesus because He is the Judge of all human beings in the whole universe. If one does not believe in Jesus, one goes to hell. However much one casts out demons, speaks in tongues, and makes a commotion, if one does not believe in Jesus, one goes to hell. That is because Jesus is the Judge. Also, we need Jesus Christ because if Jesus Christ is not in one's heart, one perishes. If one does not believe in Jesus, one perishes. Without Jesus, where do we go after living out our lives? We perish. We go into

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that fire of hell of which it is said, *"Where 'Their worm does not die And the fire is not quenched'" (Mark 9:48)*. That is why Jesus is the God absolutely necessary to human beings. He is the Savior.

We need Jesus because He gives us eternal life, and we absolutely need Him because Jesus Christ lives forever together with God the Father and the Holy Spirit and is with us. And Jesus Christ is at the gate of entry into the kingdom of heaven, so no one can enter except through Jesus. So the most important One in the whole universe, in the world of salvation, is Jesus Christ. The Father and the Holy Spirit are there, but Jesus Christ is the most important. It is not right to exalt the Holy Spirit above Jesus. This is the greatest problem of Christianity today. People pour their strength into exalting the Holy Spirit above Jesus. There are people who say that it does not matter how one believes in Jesus as long as one receives the Holy Spirit, and that is absolutely not right. Jesus Christ sent the Holy Spirit. When we believe in the gospel of the water and the blood, we receive the Holy Spirit without fail.

Believe with Jesus Christ at the center

Exalting Jesus Christ, believing in Him, praising Him, preaching Jesus Christ, and preaching the true salvation by which Jesus Christ saved us with the water and the blood is the right faith. This word of the Bible is entirely the word about Jesus Christ, and it is right to live our lives of faith centered on this word. It is right for our lives of faith to be centered on Jesus Christ. We must live our lives of faith with Jesus Christ at the center. People sometimes lift up the Holy Spirit and sometimes bring Jesus Christ down, but in Jesus both the Holy Spirit and

the Father are present. In Jesus is the love of the Father, in Jesus Christ is the Holy Spirit, when we believe in Jesus we receive the Holy Spirit, and Jesus Christ is our Savior—so everything is there. Therefore we must believe in Jesus Christ as our Savior and believe in our hearts that Jesus Christ received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross. We must believe and receive the remission of sins. Once we have believed and confirmed that there is no sin in our hearts, once we have received the word into our hearts, that is the end of it. To receive the word into one's heart is to acknowledge the word. Believing in one's heart, "I truly had sin and could only go to hell, but the Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John," is the reality. Thinking about it only in one's head is an illusion. We believe in our hearts. We are saved by believing in our hearts. I hope that you, too, will believe this way. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Believe the promise and pray with one accord

< Acts 1:12–14 >

"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."

Believe not the scene before your eyes but the word He left behind

The disciples who saw Jesus' ascension did not remain at the Mount of Olives but returned to Jerusalem. Those who had the hope of seeing again the Jesus who had gone up to heaven prayed with one accord on earth. If we follow that gathering, we can know what the faith that waits for the Lord's promise is. The zeal that tries to obtain the Holy Spirit by one's own strength and the prayer that relies on the Lord who made the promise must be distinguished.

Let us read verse 12. "*Then they returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet, which is near Jerusalem, a Sabbath*

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day's journey" (Acts 1:12). The place where they saw Jesus go up was the mount called Olivet, and the disciples returned from there to Jerusalem, which was near. The Bible tells us of that nearness by calling it a Sabbath day's journey.

The disciples returned to Jerusalem because of the command Jesus had given beforehand. He had commanded them *"not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me'" (Acts 1:4)*. Although Jesus, who had gone up to heaven, was no longer visible at their side, this word that Jesus had spoken remained with the disciples. The path they were to believe and follow was within that promise.

Do not think of the amazing sight seen at the Mount of Olives and the waiting in Jerusalem as separate things. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins. And He actually rose again from death, was actually taken up, and promised the Holy Spirit to His disciples. To believe in the Jesus who went up is also to believe the word He left behind on earth. After seeing the ascension, the disciples returned to the place He had spoken of and stayed there together.

We, too, need not think that we can believe in the Lord only if there is a scene visible to our eyes. That is because the salvation Jesus accomplished and the promise He gave are the ground of our faith. Seeing how the disciples returned and stayed together, we, too, learn the reason to join our hearts with those who believe the same word in the Church of God, rather than scattering, each clinging only to his own thoughts. It is because we can wait together for what Jesus will do.

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The basis on which the apostles, gathered under the same promise, stood together

Verse 13 records where the disciples who had returned to Jerusalem gathered. *"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" (Acts 1:13).* They went up into the upper room where they were staying, and their steps back from the Mount of Olives led directly to the gathering in that upper room. The apostles whom Jesus had chosen stayed in the same place and waited together for the promise the Lord had spoken of.

The Bible writes down eleven names in order, from Peter to Judas the son of James. The Judas at the end is a different person from Judas Iscariot, who delivered Jesus up. When we read the recorded names, we can know that those who waited for the promise were not a vague crowd but actual disciples. They had been weak people who scattered and hid on the night Jesus was arrested, but now they had seen the risen Lord, received the promise, and gathered in one place.

After telling us that all eleven apostles were there, the Bible goes on to their praying together with others. The apostles had duties entrusted to them by Jesus, but they were people who had to rely on the promised Holy Spirit. People each with their own name gathered under the same promise and were of one accord, and the ground on which they stood together was not a way of salvation they had newly decided on among themselves, but what Jesus had taught and accomplished.

Jesus received baptism from John at the age of thirty and so had all the sins of the world, even the sins each one of us commits throughout our whole lives, passed on to Him once and

for all. So He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment for those sins in our place, and rose again on the third day after His death and became our Savior. Because the very Jesus who saved the disciples promised that He would send the Holy Spirit, there was a clear ground for their waiting.

In the words "gathering together," too, we must not miss what it is that we believe together. The Savior on whom those of one accord relied is Jesus, and the remission of sins He accomplished is not different for each person. We, too, enjoy the same salvation by faith that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When, instead of asserting our own righteousness against one another, we believe together in the salvation already received, we can rely on the Lord and pray together.

The Holy Spirit came not as the price of prayer but according to the promise

Verse 14 further reveals those who were with the apostles. *"These all continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers" (Acts 1:14)*. The women, Mary the mother of Jesus, and the brothers of Jesus also joined this gathering. It was not that only the eleven apostles were keeping the place that remained; these people, too, were waiting for the same promise together with them and turning their hearts toward God.

Mary was the mother of Jesus in the flesh, but here she is recorded as one who prayed together with the apostles. The brothers of Jesus, too, were not set apart from the gathering by their family relationship alone, but were of one accord with the others. All of them are in the gathering that waited for His promise after Jesus departed. In this word we should see not

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grounds for boasting of blood ties or office, but the sight of people relying on the Lord together.

That they *"continued with one accord in prayer and supplication, with the women and Mary the mother of Jesus, and with His brothers" (Acts 1:14)* means that they did not stop at being in the same place, but with one heart devoted their strength solely to prayer. They stayed together that way and kept up their prayer toward God until what had been promised was fulfilled.

This prayer must not be read as the price paid to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit came not because the people prayed a great deal, but because Jesus had promised. Jesus said, *"John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now" (Acts 1:5)*, and this is not a command to receive but a promise that they would receive. If we place the ground for the giving of the Holy Spirit in our prayer, we turn the gift God gives into a merit that man earns. While holding to the fact that the disciples prayed, we must clearly know who sent the Holy Spirit and why He sent Him.

The remission of sins, too, is not something produced by the labor of prayer, but something received by believing in one's heart the salvation Jesus has already accomplished. Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to receive that judgment in our place, and rose again from death, thereby completing the remission of sins. Because the Holy Spirit dwells as a gift in that heart which has received the remission of sins, a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit need not think that he is accepted by God only when he obtains a stronger experience. That is because the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is not some experience but the absence of sin in the heart. A person who believes in the grace already bestowed prays relying on the God who gave that grace.

Although we do not turn their devotion to prayer into a merit, we must not make light of their prayer either. A heart that believes the Lord's promise causes us to rely on the Lord, and grace received together enables us to pray together. Since there is no reason to hide our weakness and consider ourselves sufficient, the prayer of a believer is to stand on the salvation God has given and rely on Him. The Jerusalem that Jesus told them not to depart from is, for us today, the Church of God. When the saints who have received the remission of sins through the same gospel of the water and the Spirit do not leave the church and pray with one accord, they can wait together for what God has promised and preach the gospel.

Those who returned from the Mount of Olives gathered in the upper room, and the apostles, the women, and the family of Jesus were of one accord. Just because Jesus had departed, they did not each make a new path of faith of their own, but prayed together under the word He had promised. Let us, too, believe in the grace of the remission of sins and the Lord's promise and be of one accord. I hope that you will not try to earn grace through prayer, but pray relying together on the God who bestowed grace. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The baptism of John, which became the standard for appointing an apostle

< Acts 1:12–26 >

"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. And in those days Peter stood up in the midst of the disciples (altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty), and said, 'Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry.' (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) 'For it is written in the Book of Psalms: "Let his dwelling place be

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desolate, And let no one live in it"; and, "Let another take his office." Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection.' And they proposed two: Joseph called Barsabas, who was surnamed Justus, and Matthias. And they prayed and said, 'You, O Lord, who know the hearts of all, show which of these two You have chosen to take part in this ministry and apostleship from which Judas by transgression fell, that he might go to his own place.' And they cast their lots, and the lot fell on Matthias. And he was numbered with the eleven apostles."

The standard for filling the one seat of an apostle that had become vacant

Jesus rose again and went up to heaven while the disciples were watching, while many people were watching. The disciples returned to Jerusalem from the mount called Olivet and prayed. Judas was not there, and Mary and the younger brothers of Jesus also continued in prayer with one accord, and it says, *"Altogether the number of names was about a hundred and twenty" (Acts 1:15)*. From among the large crowd that had gathered, Peter stands up and preaches.

Peter speaks as follows. *"Men and brethren, this Scripture had to be fulfilled, which the Holy Spirit spoke before by the mouth of David concerning Judas, who became a guide to those who arrested Jesus; for he was numbered with us and obtained a part in this ministry. (Now this man purchased a field with the wages of iniquity; and falling headlong, he burst open in the*

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middle and all his entrails gushed out. And it became known to all those dwelling in Jerusalem; so that field is called in their own language, Akel Dama, that is, Field of Blood.) For it is written in the Book of Psalms: 'Let his dwelling place be desolate, And let no one live in it'; and, 'Let another take his office'" (Acts 1:16–20).

The Apostle Peter says that Judas lived that way and died, just as it was written in the Scriptures, and that since there had been twelve apostles and one of them had dropped out, he appoints a man, saying, *"Let another take his office,"* and the one chosen here is Matthias. Since one seat among the twelve disciples of Jesus had become vacant, they fill it with one more person. Peter then goes on to exhort the audience.

"Therefore, of these men who have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22). So they proposed two men, and the one chosen by casting lots was Matthias. This is the content of the passage we have read today. We should know the content and then look at the word. One of the men who had always accompanied them, from the baptism of John to the day He was taken up from among them, all the time the Lord Jesus went in and out among them, had to be appointed, and so they obtained Matthias.

Dear fellow believers, in the time of the early church there were twelve apostles, but a vacancy arose. One man had disappeared. So, in choosing an apostle to fill that seat, a standard is presented. One had to be chosen from among those who had followed Jesus when He was on this earth, had seen Him with their eyes, and had touched Him, and there had to be a standard for this. What standard? It said, *"Of these men who*

have accompanied us all the time that the Lord Jesus went in and out among us, beginning from the baptism of John to that day when He was taken up from us, one of these must become a witness with us of His resurrection" (Acts 1:21–22). To become an apostle, one had to be appointed from among those who had always accompanied Him from the baptism of John to the day the Lord was taken up.

The word apostle means one who is sent by God. Jesus chose twelve men. And He sent the twelve into the world to spread the gospel. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore the sin of mankind, and after three years He died on the Cross, rose again on the third day after His death, and went up to heaven before the eyes of His disciples; they sought to choose as apostles those who had lived with Jesus, had seen this Jesus with their eyes, knew Him through the word, and knew the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit—this became the standard.

"From the baptism of John," the first work of His public ministry

It says *"from the baptism of John" (Acts 1:22)*. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, the sin of mankind was passed on to the body of Jesus. For the apostles, this is the orthodox faith.

In choosing one apostle for the seat that had become vacant, as he sets the standard, he says it is from the baptism of John. Jesus' receiving baptism from John—that is the first work of saving mankind. Then what about the things up to the age of twenty-nine? Those were His private life, His personal life. When we read the Gospel of Luke, there is an incident in which Jesus went to the temple following His parents and, on the way

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back, did not come along with His parents but stayed in the temple talking and debating with the scholars of the Scriptures. That was when He was twelve years old.

Then, there is no record in the Bible from the age of twelve to the age of thirty. Jesus was born on this earth through Mary, and an angel prophesies, *"She will bring forth a Son, and you shall call His name JESUS, for He will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. He is born according to the word of the Old Testament.

But from the baptism of John, from the moment Jesus received baptism from John, He publicly performed the work of saving mankind from sin. Jesus received baptism in order to remove the sin of mankind. By receiving baptism from John, He came to bear the sin of mankind on His own body. Then for three years He lived together with His disciples and showed them, and in the end He died on the Cross, rose again from the dead, and appeared to His disciples; after that He testified for some forty days, then went up before the eyes of His disciples and many people, and said that He would come again.

So, to become an apostle, one must have the faith that believes this: why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, why He was crucified, why He had to die, and why He rose again after dying, why He went up, and why He said He would come again.

The standard is from the baptism of John. That Jesus received baptism from John and bore the sin of the world becomes the standard. So, to become a disciple of Jesus, and especially to become an apostle, one must believe that Jesus received baptism, and one must be a person who believes that Jesus is the Son of God, that by dying on the Cross He received the judgment for our sins in our place and paid the price of our sins, and that He rose again on the third day after His death.

And Jesus called His disciples and was with them for three years. So they had seen Him with their eyes, had touched Him, and had heard Him with their ears; a person who had heard, knew, and believed what He did and said, in particular a person who believed that He received baptism from John and became the Lamb of God who bore the sin of mankind, a person who had that faith, a person who had testified of that faith—that person was chosen as an apostle. A believer was chosen as an apostle. This is extremely important.

We believe in that Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross, shed His blood and died, rose again on the third day, became our Savior, and will come again in the future. The apostles were like that.

If the baptism is taken away, only judgment remains on the Cross

Long ago, in the sixteenth century, people such as the Reformers Martin Luther, Calvin, Zwingli, and John Knox arose. The fact that they brought about the Reformation means, literally, that they did not reform the faith but reformed the religion. They brought about the Reformation saying that this religion of Catholicism was far too wrong, that it had to be reformed, and that a new religion had to be made, but Martin Luther and Calvin were both people who had come out of Catholicism.

But while people were zealously pursuing the Reformation, there was a group of people who, unlike them, believed in Jesus. Martin Luther permitted infant baptism, and when baptism is given to a young child, the child formally becomes a baptized member of that church. But the people called the Anabaptists

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rebuked this, asking what use it was to give baptism to a young child who knows neither sin nor anything else. So Martin Luther, too, was indirectly rebuked, and the same was true of Calvin, who stood at the forefront of the reform and had many followers.

Since Luther was a man who had come out of Catholicism, he still held many of its doctrines as they were, and Calvin was similar. Then would the Reformers have been qualified to be apostles? To become an apostle, only a person who had met Jesus, touched Him, and seen Him with his eyes, and who believed and saw that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and bore our sins, was crucified and shed His blood, rose again from the dead on the third day, and stayed with them for forty days and then went up—only such a person could become an apostle.

Calvin wrote a book called Institutes of the Christian Religion. It took him more than twenty years to write this book. In it appears something slightly different from Luther, namely his view of the Lord's Supper, that is, of transubstantiation. In Catholicism, the priest holds up the wafer and says, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29)* and, since He said in the Gospel of John, *"Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life" (John 6:54)*, they say that if one eats this bread after the prayer of blessing has been said over it, it is changed into the body of Jesus and one obtains eternal life. That is transubstantiation. On that point, Calvin said that this is not so, that eating this wafer does not mean eating the body of Jesus, and that it is a symbol. But Martin Luther was close to what Catholicism says.

These people do not know why Jesus received baptism. Jesus was born on this earth through Mary, and when He turned thirty, He received on His own flesh the baptism given by John the Baptist and so bore the sin of mankind on His own body. And

He was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from the dead, and so He made us live.

So the body of Jesus and the blood of Jesus, the flesh of Jesus, become the food of our life. While we live on this earth, when we are spiritually hungry, what must we think of and look to for it to become our food? It is the flesh of Jesus. When we believe the word that Jesus received baptism on His body, bore the sin of us human beings, and removed our sins, when we believe that Jesus bore our sins on His flesh, when we know that our sins were passed on to the head of Jesus, this becomes the food of the spirit in our hearts, so that we do not feel hunger, and we obtain peace in our hearts and obtain eternal life.

But because they did not know this truth, such things became matters of dispute. Among the Protestant believers of that time, there were the Anabaptists. There was a group that said as follows: Did you receive baptism knowing the meaning of receiving it? If you do not know, then since Jesus bore your sins in this way when He received baptism, you must receive baptism again with the faith that believes that fact; if you receive baptism in order to enter the church and obtain the right to vote, that is in vain and you only become a religious person. They were hated by Catholicism, by the Calvinist churches, and by the Lutherans, and were driven into a corner, and many of them were martyred.

People do not talk about this story if they can avoid it. If one digs into it in detail, these people were truly born-again people, witnesses of Jesus, and disciples of Jesus; but because people were gathering toward the Anabaptists when they themselves had brought about the Reformation, they persecuted and killed them.

So today the Lutherans and the Calvinists make up the majority, and the Baptists are the ones who arose very late. But only the names are different; when one goes inside and looks

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into their faith, they are all similar and formalistic. The Anabaptists, however, though a long time has passed, must surely still exist. Those people believe exactly as we do. Searching and searching for where they went, it is said that some of their descendants, even now, have bought a lot of land in one region of the United States and run farms, gathering there to worship only among themselves and having no contact with the world. Then what is the gospel that those people preach? Nobody knows. For they gather among themselves and keep it only among themselves, and do not send it outside.

To become a disciple of Jesus, one had to start from the baptism of John; those who knew exactly and believed exactly in their hearts that Jesus bore the sin of mankind through the baptism He received from John, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death and became our Savior, and who had seen with their eyes—such people were chosen as apostles. That is what we are now.

Dear fellow believers, what I want to tell you is that the public ministry of Jesus Christ began from the time He received baptism from John the Baptist. He publicly began the work of saving mankind from sin. That Jesus bore our sins by receiving baptism from John the Baptist and died on the Cross and saved us—this became the standard, and this is extremely important.

Where did the apostles set their standard? From the baptism of John—starting from Jesus' receiving baptism, they believed in the work of Jesus and so were saved and could become the disciples of Jesus. For us now, too, if we take away the baptism Jesus received from John when He went to the Jordan River, only the Cross remains.

Then we cannot eat the flesh of Jesus. It was because Jesus received baptism on His flesh that He could have my sins and your sins transferred to Him and wash away my sins and your

sins cleanly; once the baptism Jesus received from John is taken away, only the Cross remains, and on the Cross only judgment remains. We had to receive judgment, but Jesus received the judgment for us—only that remains.

So they become religious people. It is said that Emperor Constantine of Rome was originally a man who served the sun god. But when he became emperor, he found the Roman people too corrupt, and so, to make them new, he had to accept Christianity; and in doing so, it can be said that he took away the baptism of Jesus and set up only the Cross.

So today, Protestant Christianity and Catholicism are enormous in number. Yet one cannot meet a true Christian. When we meet people in this world who believe in Jesus, they do not appear to be people who are the light of the world and the salt of the world.

Among those who believe in Jesus, there are so many today who say that when they sin, they wash away their sins by offering prayers of repentance; yet when people look, even among those who claim to believe in Jesus there are those who deceive, steal, and do evil. There are many who believe in other religions, but people thought that those who believe in Jesus in particular are the light of the world, the salt of the world, people who truly follow Jesus; yet when they look, there are also far too many who are dishonest and hard to associate with.

So today, now that we have entered the twenty-first century, when someone is said to be a believer in Jesus, people turn their heads away. People who deceive others while putting Jesus out in front—the people of the world see such things. Then why have they not been changed even after believing in Jesus for a long time? Why have those who believe in Jesus in this world not been changed? Why can they not live for others, why are they not honest, why are they not pure, and why do they not hear

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people of the world say that they truly look like God's people?

It is because the sins in their hearts have not been washed away, because the Holy Spirit is not in their hearts. That is why, even today in the twenty-first century, those who believe in Jesus are trusted less than those who believe in other religions. Why is that? It is because the Holy Spirit is not in their hearts. It is because there is sin in their hearts. It is because they have not received the remission of sins.

On what kind of person does the Holy Spirit come

Regardless of whether the Anabaptists exist or not, God said that He would pour out the early rain and the latter rain on us, and Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John at the age of thirty, died on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us; and we have become those who believe this amazing fact through the word, who also believe the fact that our sins were passed on to Him, who also believe that He received the judgment in our place, and who believe the fact that He rose again on the third day after His death in order to give us new life.

And we preach this gospel. Those who believe in Jesus as their Savior yet believe only in the Cross, without the baptism Jesus received from John, cannot help but always have sin in their hearts, and these people are far from salvation.

In the last days, when the Antichrist appears and we are martyred, those who do not have this faith can betray Jesus. Why is the baptism Jesus received important? It is because through the baptism He received from John, He had our sins transferred to Him. It is because He had all my sins and your sins transferred to Him. My sins and your sins were passed on to Jesus. That is why this is extremely important.

Without this faith, when the Antichrist appears at the end, claiming that he is God, demanding to be served, and threatening that whoever does not receive his mark will be unable to buy or sell and will be killed, those whose names are not written in the Book of Life, out of fear, all received the mark of the Antichrist in the last days and submitted to him—so it is written in the Book of Revelation. That is why this is extremely important.

Where is the standard of faith by which you and I become God's people? That Jesus received the baptism given by John, bore our sins, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death and became our Savior—the standard is that the one who believes that word, the one who believes in the water and the blood, becomes one of God's people, and when one believes, one obtains the qualification. Otherwise, one has no qualification.

On what kind of person does the Holy Spirit come? The person who believes, just as it is written in the Bible, that the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist was in order to have our sins transferred to Him is the one whose sins have been washed away; the Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe in Jesus, who died and rose again; and those people are the ones who have obtained new life and obtained eternal life. That is what we can say.

Dear fellow believers, this is the standard by which people believe in Jesus and become saints, and it is also the standard for becoming an apostle, and also the standard by which one can be martyred. It is the standard by which one is written in the Book of Life so as to enter the kingdom of heaven, and it is also the standard by which one can live together with Jesus Christ in the kingdom of heaven. It is the faith that is the standard. Today, in the twenty-first century, people say they believe in Jesus, but they must believe according to the word; believing apart from

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the word is of no use at all. If one follows Jesus zealously while there is sin in one's heart, if one is martyred and even sells one's property and offers it all, does one become one of God's people? Does one become a servant of God? Can one go to the kingdom of heaven? Is one's name written in the Book of Life? It has nothing to do with it.

If a believer in Jesus does not even acknowledge the baptism Jesus received, does the sin in that person's heart disappear just because he believes in Him, saying, "You are truly a good man. You gave up Your body for all mankind and shed Your blood on the Cross. There is no one like You. You are a great man"? It does not.

As for the standard for entering the kingdom of heaven as well, one can become one of God's people only by having the faith that starts from here—that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John—and believes all the way to the blood and death of the Cross, and to the resurrection. When the Antichrist appears, too, the Holy Spirit in our hearts stands against him, and we are martyred not because we want to be, but because we rebuke the Antichrist and are killed by him. For we cannot possibly tolerate him. So we must know the standard of faith for becoming an apostle, we must know the standard of faith by which one can become a saint, and we must know the standard of having the faith by which one can be martyred when the Antichrist appears.

The Bible says that whoever receives the mark of the beast goes into the lake burning with fire and brimstone. At that time, when the Antichrist appears and demands of us things that are utterly unreasonable, our outer man may tremble with fear, but as for our inner man, the one who believes in the baptism Jesus received and in the Cross has the Holy Spirit in his heart, and the

Holy Spirit rebukes the Antichrist. He rebukes the Antichrist and his subordinates.

Even if we want to run away, we cannot run away. It is because the Holy Spirit is there. Those who have received the remission of sins acknowledge this gospel because the Holy Spirit is in their hearts. Those without the Holy Spirit cannot help but say that it is enough to believe only in the Cross.

But a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells, even while being stubborn, when told the written word, says that it is so and complies. The word is the standard of all things. If the Bible says it this way, we must believe it this way; believing while setting the word aside is of no use. Then, even if one protests to Jesus, saying, *"Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many mighty works? –ASV" (Matthew 7:22),* one is cast away as He says, *"I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!" (Matthew 7:23).*

Why is that? It is because they deceived even before Jesus. Jesus received baptism from John and bore our sins, was nailed to the Cross and shed His blood, died and rose again, and became our Savior; but those who believe only in the Cross say to Jesus, "I believe in You. I even sold all my property and offered it in order to prophesy for You, and I went to another country for You and did Your work there, and was caught and beheaded. With this much, I am surely qualified to go to the kingdom of heaven." Then Jesus says, "I never knew you, you who practice lawlessness; do you have sin or not?" "I do. Even though I have sin, I go to the kingdom of heaven because I believe in Jesus." That is your doctrine; a believer has no sin in his heart. Why is that? It is because Jesus had my sins and your sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, because our sins were passed on to the body of Jesus, and so we have no sin.

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The flesh of Jesus that we eat every day, the food of life

In this word that says to appoint one of those who had always accompanied them *"from the baptism of John" (Acts 1:22)* to the day the Lord was taken up and to make him a witness of the resurrection, we have seen that to those who believe, from the baptism of John, in the death of Jesus on the Cross and in His resurrection, He gave the qualification to become children of God, gave the qualification to become an apostle, gave the qualification to serve the Lord, and gave the qualification to obtain eternal life.

I truly hope you will know that this is the standard. I hope you will believe it. When you and I, living in this world, are lacking and do wrong unintentionally, when do your hearts and mine become clean? When we once again think of and confirm the fact that the Lord received baptism from John at the Jordan River for you and me, that word, and once again chew it over thoroughly in our hearts, peace comes upon our hearts and our hearts become clean, and we become people who, though lacking, can follow Him again with a new heart.

Though we are lacking every day, we eat the flesh of Jesus every day. The word He spoke, *"My flesh is food indeed, and My blood is drink indeed" (John 6:55),* is a word that says: Did I not have your sins transferred to Me through My baptism and receive the judgment by being nailed to the Cross? When we believe that Jesus received the judgment that I was to receive, our hearts are refreshed.

That Jesus, in order to bear our sins, received the baptism given by John and had our sins transferred to Him—this becomes the food of our hearts. Our hearts become clean, we

obtain peace in our hearts, and we are washed as clean as white snow.

So Jesus' receiving baptism on His body becomes the food of life for our hearts, and Jesus' dying on the Cross becomes the drink of life, because it was His receiving the judgment for our sins. Jesus said so in the Gospel of John.

Dear fellow believers, the person who knows and believes the word as it is receives the remission of sins, can become an apostle, becomes a saint and a worker, and becomes one who can go to the kingdom of heaven; but the person who does not believe according to the word is cast away. That person can obtain no peace in his heart and can receive no acknowledgment before Jesus, and because he does not believe that Jesus has saved him, Jesus does not say to him that he is one of His people. And the one who likes such a person is the devil. It is my hope that we know this and live our lives of faith by faith.

Not just anyone becomes an apostle. Those who believe, starting from the fact that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism of John, in Jesus' dying on the Cross and rising again from death receive the remission of sins, work as servants of God and serve, and when they go before the Lord after living that way, they enter the kingdom of heaven because the Holy Spirit dwells in their hearts through that faith; and when the Antichrist appears, we would run away out of fear, but the Holy Spirit causes us to stand against him so that we are even martyred, giving glory to God most magnificently—and everything comes about through God. We must become those who know this and live giving thanks to God by faith. ✉

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CHAPTER

2

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The Holy Spirit is in the hearts of the righteous who have received the remission of sins

< Acts 2:1–24 >

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, 'Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we

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hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.' So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?' Others mocking said, 'They are full of new wine.' But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved." Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it.'"

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The Holy Spirit, who came in fullness on the Day of Pentecost

I would like to speak about this passage, in which the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, and also about this Holy Spirit.

"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1–4). That is what it says. It says that the Holy Spirit came in great fullness on the Day of Pentecost. When we look at the Bible, from Matthew through Mark, Luke, and John, there is no event in which the Holy Spirit comes as on the Day of Pentecost and many people are filled with Him. From the Book of Acts onward, very amazing works of the Holy Spirit take place. Until then, it was only that Jesus Christ worked alone and gave power to some of His disciples so that they performed works of power to a small extent, and in some respects the weaknesses of the disciples are revealed.

But the Day of Pentecost in the Book of Acts is somewhat different. We need to understand the Day of Pentecost. What Pentecost means is this: the fiftieth day counted from the day Jesus Christ rose again is called Pentecost. In other words, it is called Pentecost because fifty days had passed since Jesus rose again from death.

On this day, the disciples of Jesus and those who believed in Jesus were gathered together in one place, and there came a sound like a rushing mighty wind, and then the people suddenly

began to speak in tongues and to prophesy, and a great commotion arose.

So they spoke in tongues and a disturbance arose, but the main point is that this happened as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, and that the Holy Spirit came in fullness. The Holy Spirit came in fullness! The Holy Spirit is the main figure. The day called Pentecost is not what is important in itself; what is most important here is the Holy Spirit. The point is that the Holy Spirit came here.

When we look at the work of Jesus' disciples, when we look at all the works of God's servants, we see that they all did their work by the Holy Spirit. In the Old Testament, Moses, the prophet Ezekiel, the prophet Isaiah, the prophet Jeremiah, Joshua—every one of God's servants without exception did their work clothed with the power of the Holy Spirit.

Now, it says that this Holy Spirit came in fullness on the Day of Pentecost, but when we look at the Bible before that, although Jesus did speak about the Holy Spirit from time to time, there are no events in which the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples and they spoke in tongues as the Spirit gave them utterance, performed works of power, and worked mightily.

Then why did the Holy Spirit come on the Day of Pentecost? This is the promise of God. The word found in the Book of Joel says, *"In the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17)*. In other words, this prophecy, which God spoke through the prophet Joel, that He would pour out the Holy Spirit on those who believe in Jesus Christ and are saved, was fulfilled on the Day of Pentecost.

And by being filled with the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, they became the true church. The Church of God came to work mightily and to build the kingdom of God.

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Then was it not the church before that? In fact, it was the church before that as well. The disciples of Jesus Christ are the church. In the Old Testament, too, the people of Israel were saved through God's servants and were the Church of God. Then, as for when the Church of God became complete in the New Testament age, it was by the Holy Spirit coming mightily on the Day of Pentecost.

He sent the Holy Spirit because He had completed salvation and ascended

Then how did this come about? You may have such thoughts. Theologians, too, have written really thick books because of this, but they are still confused. It is because they do not know the baptism Jesus received from John. Even though they write books, they say that one person said this and another said that, and then they end without any conclusion. They end it that way because they do not know.

The Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost. At this time the whole church became complete, and from this time on the gospel came to work mightily, but we come to have a question: "Then what about before that? Did the Holy Spirit not come before Pentecost?" We come to have the question, "Then did the disciples of Jesus not receive the Holy Spirit?"

Dear fellow believers, the fact is that until Jesus Christ was born on this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, the Holy Spirit did not come down on people. The Holy Spirit remained in Jesus Christ, and since Jesus Himself is God, He governed His disciples, and the Holy Spirit who was with Jesus Christ governed them and gave them

understanding; that is all, and it is not that the Holy Spirit actually came upon them in fullness as on the Day of Pentecost.

How can we know this? Since this must not be merely my own words, let us look at the word. Let us look at the word in the Gospel of John. *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive; for the Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:37–39)*. That is what it says. It says that because Jesus was not yet glorified, the Holy Spirit was not yet with them.

While on this earth, Jesus Christ often said, "I am going up, but I will send the Helper, the Holy Spirit." And here in the word of the Gospel of John it says, *"The Holy Spirit was not yet given, because Jesus was not yet glorified" (John 7:39)*. The real reason the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ were so weak was that, although they did believe—knowing through the teaching of the Holy Spirit who Jesus was and believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior—the Holy Spirit did not actually dwell and work in their hearts, and so they stumbled and even ran away. After the Day of Pentecost, the twelve disciples of Jesus were far better than we are, but before Pentecost they were hardly any better than you and I today. They quarreled over positions, fought over who was greater and who would sit on the right and who on the left, and many very shabby scenes of Jesus' disciples appear.

This was because Jesus Christ had promised that only when He actually came to this earth, had all our sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and ascended—only after He had ascended—would

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He send down this Holy Spirit. So the reason the Holy Spirit worked mightily and came on the Day of Pentecost is that Jesus Christ completed all our salvation and ascended. Now it is not that Jesus Christ is on this earth; the age of the Holy Spirit has come. The Lord came to this earth and caused us to be born again completely by the water and the blood so that we received the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit had this written down, and this written word and the Holy Spirit who has come to this earth are the ones who work. That is why this New Testament age is called the age of the Holy Spirit.

So, as the Holy Spirit came down in fullness on the Day of Pentecost according to God's promise, at that time all the disciples and the many people who had believed in Jesus through the disciples were truly filled with the Holy Spirit. It was at that time that they received this.

In the Gospel of John, John the Baptist testified as follows: *"And John bore witness, saying, 'I saw the Spirit descending from heaven like a dove, and He remained upon Him. I did not know Him, but He who sent me to baptize with water said to me, "Upon whom you see the Spirit descending, and remaining on Him, this is He who baptizes with the Holy Spirit." And I have seen and testified that this is the Son of God'" (John 1:32–34).* So I am not saying that the Apostle John, who recorded this word, or the other disciples had absolutely no Holy Spirit at all. Because Jesus Christ was with those disciples, the Holy Spirit who was in Jesus Christ worked in them in the same way. However, apart from the twelve disciples of Jesus Christ, at that time, right after Jesus Christ died on the Cross, the other disciples were powerless, and even if by chance they heard the gospel, heard the fact that Jesus is the Savior, and believed, "Jesus Christ is the Messiah," the Holy Spirit was not inside them. One might say that the disciples of Jesus had the Holy

Spirit because the Holy Spirit worked in them, but those many people did not taste the power of the Holy Spirit before Pentecost came. The Holy Spirit had not come into their hearts.

That is why the Book of Acts is called the Acts of the Holy Spirit, and here the Apostle John, too, came to know fully who Jesus Christ was by being inspired by the Holy Spirit. In the Gospel of John, too, Jesus said as follows to Nicodemus, one of the Pharisees: *"Jesus answered, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God. That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit'" (John 3:5–6)*. In this way He mentions the Holy Spirit.

There is also this word: *"However, when He, the Spirit of truth, has come, He will guide you into all truth; for He will not speak on His own authority, but whatever He hears He will speak; and He will tell you things to come" (John 16:13)*. It says that when the Spirit of truth has come, He will guide us into all truth. So we can see how important the Holy Spirit is. In the Book of Acts, as we know well, He said, *"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)*.

He said that when the Holy Spirit has come upon us, we receive power and become the Lord's witnesses to the end of the earth. Then, Dear fellow believers, do we born-again people have the Holy Spirit or not? Do you have the Holy Spirit or not? We must know this.

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The remission of sins is receiving the Holy Spirit

What I am going to say from now on is extremely important. Dear fellow believers, you have known and believed in Jesus Christ. Jesus is the Son of God, the Creator, and God; He is the Savior, the God of salvation, who came to this earth to save us; and He is our Lord, who was born on this earth, had all our sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us. You believed in that Jesus Christ, and by believing in Jesus Christ, by believing in the gospel by which Jesus Christ caused us to be born again of water and the Spirit, you have been saved.

So whenever you pray, you look to the Lord, and because the Bible says that the Father of Jesus Christ is your Father, you believe it. You believe and pray. You pray, saying, "God the Father," or "Lord."

You pray like that, but what you actually need to know is this: Have you received the Holy Spirit or not? Is the Holy Spirit in your heart or not? The Holy Spirit is received as a gift. It says, *"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)*, and *"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)*. This means that one who truly repents rightly and believes, "Jesus Christ is my Savior; I am truly one who cannot help but sin and cannot help but go to hell, and yet Jesus has saved such a person as me through the gospel of the water and the Spirit," is one who has no sin, and one who has no sin receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. It means that God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to us who have no sin. Therefore, at the same time as we know and believe in that Jesus Christ, who came by water and the

Spirit and saved us, we receive the remission of sins, and at the same time as we become sinless, we receive the Holy Spirit. The remission of sins is receiving the Holy Spirit.

Then, having received the Holy Spirit, what you and I need to know is whether the Holy Spirit is inside us or not. Dear fellow believers, what happens when we believe in Jesus Christ, who came by water and the Spirit, is that we become children of God, and the evidence that we are children of God is that we have received the Holy Spirit as a gift. That is why the Holy Spirit is in your hearts and mine. The Holy Spirit is in your hearts and mine. That is why our Lord said, *"I will not leave you orphans; I will come to you" (John 14:18)*; *"It is to your advantage that I go away" (John 16:7)*; and *"I am with you always, even to the end of the age" (Matthew 28:20)*.

As for what that word means, that He would always be with us to the end of the age, it means this: our Lord saved us, and we believed in our Lord. At the same time as we believed in that Lord, we were saved, and at the same time as we were saved, we received as a gift the Holy Spirit, whom the Lord sent to us by speaking to the Father. Therefore we have not been abandoned like orphans but have become children of God, and you and I have become God's people. Therefore you and I have received the Holy Spirit as a gift before God the Father and have become those who have the Holy Spirit. Those who have the Holy Spirit!

We have received the Holy Spirit as a gift. We have received the Holy Spirit as a gift! If we look at the word in the Gospel of John that we read a little while ago, it says, *"On the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried out, saying, 'If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water.' But this He spoke concerning the Spirit, whom those believing in Him would receive" (John 7:37–39)*.

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"He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:38). This speaks of the Holy Spirit whom those who believe in Jesus would receive. Dear fellow believers, how do rivers of living water flow? Our Lord said, *"If anyone thirsts, let him come to Me and drink. He who believes in Me, as the Scripture has said, out of his heart will flow rivers of living water" (John 7:37–38)*.

Dear fellow believers, by believing in our Lord, we have received the remission of sins. Dear fellow believers, how can there be rivers of living water in us, and how can there be peace, refreshment of heart, and such joy and fullness in our hearts? It is through the Holy Spirit, whom those who have received the remission of sins receive as a gift before God—because we have received the Holy Spirit as a gift—that rivers of living water flow.

Dear fellow believers, you and I have the Holy Spirit. You who have received the remission of sins have the Holy Spirit. God has not abandoned you. It is not that He granted you the remission of sins and then tossed you aside on this earth and was done with you. The Holy Spirit is in the hearts of you and me who have received the remission of sins. Because we have the Holy Spirit, we come to pray through the Holy Spirit, and through the Holy Spirit, He said, *"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)*. Because we have the Holy Spirit, we do God's work; because we have the Holy Spirit, God is with us; because we have the Holy Spirit, we receive blessings, and God walks together with us.

I hope you will believe the fact that you and I have the Holy Spirit, the fact that we have received the Holy Spirit as a gift. Dear fellow believers, it is not that we merely received the remission of sins and that was simply the end of it. It did not end

as a transaction, the way buying something ends once money changes hands. After we were saved, we became children of God. We became people without sin. We became righteous. It did not end there; the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of God—God Himself, the Spirit who is holy—came into our hearts. That is why our relationship with God can never end.

So, Dear fellow believers, when we pass beyond the Book of Acts and move on to the Epistles of Paul, it says, *"Praying always with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:18)* and *"do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God" (Ephesians 4:30)*; it says that those who do not have the Holy Spirit are those who have been cast away; and it says, *"The Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26)*. This means that to those who have received the remission of sins, to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, God the Father has given the Holy Spirit as a gift.

In the early church, the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, but how did all the people living in the New Testament age after Pentecost receive the Holy Spirit? How did they receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit? Dear fellow believers, they received the Holy Spirit by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. This means that our Lord remitted all our sins completely and washed away our sins clean with the water and the Spirit, and then immediately gave us the Holy Spirit as a gift. That is why the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. The Holy Spirit is in the heart of one who has received the remission of sins.

Therefore, one who has received the remission of sins is not alone. One who has received the remission of sins is not far away from God. He is together with God, and he has received the Holy Spirit as a gift so that the Holy Spirit is in his heart. Therefore

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we can pray before God as much as we want. We can call Him God the Father as much as we want; at the same time as we know and believe the fact that the Holy Spirit is in your hearts, we can become very intimate with God through faith, we can work together with God as much as we want, and because we have the Holy Spirit, we have the qualification to make requests of God the Father. It is because we are children of God. We are not children by doctrine; because we actually have the Holy Spirit, we are actually children of God, and we are actually filled with the Holy Spirit. That is actually how it is.

The evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is the remission of sins

The Holy Spirit is in the hearts of you who have received the remission of sins. I hope you will know the fact that you have the Holy Spirit, have boldness in your hearts through the Holy Spirit, pray before God by faith, preach the gospel, and ask for whatever you need. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe the fact that God is with you always.

Dear fellow believers, if the Holy Spirit were not in your hearts and mine, how hard it would be whenever we tried to call on God once again! How could we call on a God who is far away? Because He would be so far away, it would be so hard to invite Him once again, and then, even when He seemed to have come near, once we finished praying, He would seem to be a God who had gone far away again.

But our God did not do that; He gave the Holy Spirit as a gift into your hearts and mine. In this passage it says, "*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, have you received the Holy Spirit as a gift? One who has received the remission of sins is one who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift. One who has received the remission of sins has received the Holy Spirit as a gift. The Holy Spirit is in your hearts.

Dear fellow believers, one who has received the remission of sins has the Holy Spirit. It is not because you are outstanding that you have the Holy Spirit, nor is it because you have lived a good life that you have the Holy Spirit; it is because you believe in the gospel that God the Father gave Him just as He promised to give Him as a gift, and so you received the Holy Spirit. Just as He promised through the prophet Joel to pour out the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost, God the Father, exactly as He promised to give the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who have received the remission of sins, has caused the Holy Spirit to come into your hearts and mine even though it is not the Day of Pentecost.

We have the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is in my heart. The Holy Spirit is in your hearts. The Holy Spirit has power. Without the Holy Spirit, with what ability could we do God's work?

Dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit is in your hearts and mine. You and I have received the Holy Spirit as a gift. We have the Holy Spirit. I hope you will believe the fact that you have received Him as a gift. Dear fellow believers, you must believe. Even if the Holy Spirit is inside you, if you do not believe it, it is the same as not having Him. "I only received the remission of sins; what Holy Spirit do I have? They say that when the Holy Spirit comes, people speak in tongues, see visions, and prophesy, so what is going on with this?"

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Dear fellow believers, let us make one thing clear and then talk about the next matter. Do you have the Holy Spirit? Have you received the Holy Spirit as a gift before God? What is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit as a gift? It is that you have received the remission of sins. You have received the Holy Spirit as a gift because you believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins. If you truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, if only you believe that Jesus has precisely removed your sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and has saved you, then at the moment you believe, your sins are gone, and the Holy Spirit, who is holy, comes into that sinless heart.

The evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is that one has received the remission of sins. One who has received the remission of sins has received the Holy Spirit as a gift. This is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit.

The Spirit who is holy comes only into hearts without sin

The Holy Spirit does not come because someone goes to a mountain, shouts unintelligible sounds, and pulls up pine trees. Nor does He come because people today cry out to the Lord until their throats burst. A certain person went to a mountain to pray, and something came into her chest claiming to be Jesus, and when she accepted it, it slid right into her chest, she said. But after praying on the mountain and coming down, when her mother-in-law said something to her, she picked up a club and beat her mother-in-law. That daughter-in-law says hallelujah, claiming to have been filled with the Holy Spirit, and speaks in

strange tongues, but whenever her mother-in-law says even a little something, she picks up a club. That is not the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit does not come upon one who has not received the remission of sins. The Spirit who is holy cannot come into a heart that has sin. The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who is holy. How could the Spirit who is holy come into a place where there is sin? How could a clean person go into a filthy cesspit? Likewise, the Holy Spirit comes as a gift only to those who have received the remission of sins.

Dear fellow believers, people do not know how the Holy Spirit is received. Because they hear that the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, they think that they receive the Holy Spirit only by gathering to pray all night, or by going to a mountain or a prayer house and, even on rainy days, crying "Lord!" while grabbing and shaking pine trees. But the Holy Spirit is not someone who, intimidated by shouting, comes down saying, "All right, I will come in." Even if someone says, "Lord, if You do not come to me, I will die. I will get drenched in the rain, collapse from exhaustion, and die," and insists that he will die, would the Holy Spirit, being so tender-hearted, say, "You are dirty, but it cannot be helped. Because I love you, I will come inside you to save you," and go inside that person? He does not go in.

The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who is holy. The Holy Spirit, the Spirit who is holy, earnestly desires to come into our hearts, and if we look at the beginning of Genesis, it says, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters" (Genesis 1:1–2)*. The Spirit of God—this Spirit refers to the Holy Spirit, the Spirit who is holy, whom you have received. The Spirit who is holy was hovering over the earth. He wanted

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to come into this earth. This earth is the heart of man. The Holy Spirit wanted to come into the heart of man, but the reason He could not come in, it says, was that this earth was in chaos, and so He could not come in. But that chaos receded through that light, of which it says, *"Then God said, 'Let there be light'; and there was light" (Genesis 1:3)*. After the chaos receded, the triune God could dwell together inside that earth.

Dear fellow believers, you and I have the Holy Spirit. Dear fellow believers, sometimes we feel utterly intimidated. Sometimes God seems far away. We seem to have no power. We do believe, but we seem to have nothing; we did receive the remission of sins, clearly received it, and when we stand before unbelievers we are as bold as lions, yet when we are simply alone, we seem to be somehow alone. It seems that God is not with us and we are just alone; when we face hardship, it seems we face it alone, and when we work, it seems we work alone. But I hope you will believe the fact that the Holy Spirit is actually in your hearts. Because the Holy Spirit is with you, as you believe the fact that the Holy Spirit is in your hearts, the Holy Spirit inside you awakens and works together with you. He gives you power. He gives blessings and works.

Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe the fact that you have the Holy Spirit.

Dear fellow believers, these days people claim to speak in tongues; while the word is being preached, they shout that it is hot, saying that the Holy Spirit has come like fire; they suddenly fall backward, saying they have fallen into a trance, foam at the mouth, lie there for three or four hours, and later get up and say, "I was in a trance a while ago, and God took me to the Garden of Eden. There was so much fruit there, and when I tasted it, it was so delicious. And He took me to heaven and showed me my house…" They tell such stories.

The Holy Spirit is in the hearts of the righteous
who have received the remission of sins

Dear fellow believers, we must ask the person giving such a testimony, “Is there sin in your heart or not?” Works that take place through a person who has sin are not the work of the Holy Spirit but the work of the devil and the work of demons. If you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, demons cannot work in you. They can threaten you from the outside like a roaring lion, but if you believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit—if you believe the fact that “the Lord has removed all my sins; when Jesus received baptism from John, all my sins were passed on to Him,” and keep making the confession of faith, saying that you believe—then the Holy Spirit has been given to your hearts as a gift. Because the holy God who made the universe is inside you through that Holy Spirit, Satan the devil only approaches from the outside and then retreats.

Therefore, when you are threatened by Satan the devil, or when you go through hardships while living in this world, confirm by believing the fact that the Holy Spirit is inside you, and pray through the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit who is in your hearts causes you to pray earnestly before God.

The tongues of the early church and prayer today

Dear fellow believers, then why did they speak in tongues in the early church? Why is speaking in tongues now said to be wrong? Dear fellow believers, in the early church, tongues were necessary. The disciples spoke in the languages of each nation as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, and the people who had come from every nation under heaven each understood in the language of the place where they were born. The Holy Spirit did this.

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Tongues were the work of the Holy Spirit in order to make them speak the languages of various regions, that is, the languages of each nation. Dear fellow believers, we are now gathered here among people who speak the same language, so what need is there to speak in tongues? Moreover, it says, *"In the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Corinthians 14:19)*. This is the testimony of the Apostle Paul.

Dear fellow believers, there are also many times when we pray in fullness before God through the Holy Spirit. But that does not mean we pray by making strange sounds; rather, the Holy Spirit truly teaches us in our hearts what is wrong, the Holy Spirit leads our hearts, when we do certain things the Holy Spirit rejoices, and when we do certain things in a certain way the Holy Spirit groans, and we feel these things. And the Holy Spirit causes us to pray. He causes us to pray for what is truly necessary. He causes us to pray first for the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

Believe the fact that you have the Holy Spirit, and live by the Holy Spirit

The point is that we have the Holy Spirit. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe the fact that you have the Holy Spirit. Dear fellow believers, I hope you will believe the fact that you have received the Holy Spirit as a gift. Dear fellow believers, anyone without exception who has received the remission of sins, who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, who believes that there is no sin in his heart—the Holy Spirit is in the heart of such a person. Because the Holy Spirit comes at the very

moment one believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in his heart, one can say that he has no sin. And one can call God "Abba, Father."

Those who have received the remission of sins and those who have not both believe in Jesus alike, but there is one way to distinguish them. It is whether or not the Holy Spirit is inside them. Then to whom is the Holy Spirit given? The Holy Spirit is given only to those who have received the remission of sins. The fact is that the Holy Spirit is given to those who have no sin, those whose hearts have become white as snow. That is why the true and the false are distinguished at once.

The word of God is not vague. If we dig into it deeply, I cannot tell you how detailed and how precise it is. It is not that one is saved just by believing in Jesus unconditionally. Dear fellow believers, we are saved if we believe in Jesus, aren't we? But what did that Jesus do for us? We must know that and believe.

Dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, and He came in fullness. He has also come in fullness upon you and me. Dear fellow believers, how do we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit? We receive it when we believe the fact that the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. Then how else do we receive the fullness? When we do God's work, when we do the things the Holy Spirit delights in—at such times we receive the fullness of the Holy Spirit. Your hearts become filled with the Holy Spirit. If you do not do the things the Holy Spirit delights in, the Holy Spirit groans and grieves inside you. When the Holy Spirit grieves and groans, you come to groan and grieve. Dear fellow believers, however, when you do the things that delight the Holy Spirit who is inside you—when you work for the gospel, follow by faith, bring about works, and work together with the Holy Spirit by believing the word of God—the Holy Spirit gives

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you strength from within, and do you not feel the Holy Spirit giving you strength when you preach the gospel? When you do the things the Holy Spirit delights in, the Holy Spirit gives you wisdom and understanding. You delight in serving the Lord, and when you lack something, the Holy Spirit causes you to pray: "God the Father, I have nothing. Please give to me." He causes you to pray without any hesitation. He makes you bold. And He causes you to believe. The Holy Spirit gives you the faith to believe that He will surely give you what you have prayed for.

Dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit is a personal being. When you acknowledge, recognize, and believe the fact that you have the Holy Spirit, the Holy Spirit rejoices, works together with you, and converses with you.

Dear fellow believers, the way the Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe in Jesus in this present age is different from the time of the early church. In the early church He came on the Day of Pentecost, but now, when you believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins through this word, the Holy Spirit comes into your hearts as a gift. The Holy Spirit has come into the hearts of every one of us.

Then why are those upon whom the Holy Spirit has come in such a sorry state? It is because they do not know the fact that the Holy Spirit is inside them and live in this world by their own strength. If one believes the fact that the Holy Spirit is inside him, things change. One preaches the gospel through the Holy Spirit, prays through the Holy Spirit, gives thanks through the Holy Spirit, serves through the Holy Spirit, and works by the strength the Holy Spirit gives. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

You cannot live a life of faith by your own strength. You cannot live in the world by your own strength. It is through that Holy Spirit whom you received as a gift inside you that you pray

before God the Father, pray before our Lord, receive help, work mightily and powerfully, and receive blessings.

Dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit did not come only on the Day of Pentecost. In the early church He came on the Day of Pentecost, but I hope you will know the fact that from then on He has come as a gift to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. You must believe this for certain. And you must know that the Holy Spirit cannot come into the heart of one who has not received the remission of sins. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The wonderful works of God preached in the language of every nation are the remission of sins

< Acts 2:5–13 >

“And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.’ So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine.’”

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God's intention in making the gospel known in the language the hearers knew

The people gathered at Pentecost heard what the disciples were saying in the languages of their own nations. But the amazing thing does not end with the fact that the languages of many nations appeared; it lies in the fact that what was preached in those languages was the wonderful works of God. If we look into what the Holy Spirit caused the disciples to preach, we can understand the meaning of tongues within the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished.

Let us read verses 5 and 6. *"And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language" (Acts 2:5–6)*. The people who were staying in Jerusalem were devout Jews who had come from every nation under heaven. Since people who had lived scattered in various nations were gathered in the same city, the languages they were accustomed to using also differed from one another. The Bible relates what happened amid that difference.

When the sound occurred, a great multitude came together, and each one heard the disciples speaking in his own language. Here, the tongues are the languages of the nations and regions where each person had lived. The disciples actually spoke in the languages of each nation as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance, and the people gathered understood those words in the languages of their own nations. They were not making sounds that the hearers could not understand.

Do not miss the fact that each person heard in his own language. The Holy Spirit caused the content of the word to be preached to the people through the mouths of the disciples. He

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did not leave them unable to know the news of salvation because their languages were different; rather, He made them hear it in the language they knew. If we see this event only as a special ability of those speaking, we miss God's intention to make the gospel of the water and the Spirit known to the hearers.

These people were devout Jews, but they had to hear of the salvation Jesus accomplished. This is because having a heart that wants to serve God and knowing and believing how Jesus Christ remitted sins are two different things. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, rose again from death, and remitted our sins. The Holy Spirit made these very people know this work of God. Through the event in which He made them understand the content of the word, we can see that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is news that must be heard and believed with the heart.

Do not put forward tongues as the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit

In verse 7, the multitude marveled, saying that those who were speaking were all Galileans. Since Galileans were people who had had no opportunity to learn the languages of many nations, their amazement leads to the question in verse 8. *"And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born?" (Acts 2:8)*. Because they heard in the language of the place where they had been born and raised, they marveled, thinking together about the fact that the disciples were Galileans and about what they were hearing right before them.

The basis of the work the Holy Spirit does cannot be found in the disciples' background or learning. The disciples were

filled with the Holy Spirit and merely spoke as the Holy Spirit gave them utterance so that they would preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Since it was the Holy Spirit who made them speak in languages that those from every nation could understand, this event does not become grounds for the disciples to boast of themselves; it is the work of the Holy Spirit, who used the disciples to make God's work known to the people.

To hear in the language of one's birthplace means that what was preached was in words that person could understand. Therefore, if we regard these tongues as the same thing as speech whose meaning cannot be understood, we cannot explain why the multitude in this passage marveled. The people did not marvel because they had no idea at all what was being said; they marveled because they understood in their own languages what the Galileans were saying.

The tongues of Pentecost were a work the Holy Spirit gave so that the gospel of the water and the Spirit would be preached to the people of every nation. Therefore, we must not put forward tongues as the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit, nor judge that only those who speak in tongues have received the Holy Spirit. The evidence of having received the Holy Spirit is not tongues but the remission of sins. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in a heart that has received the remission of sins by believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished, we must not base our assurance of having received the Holy Spirit on whether or not we speak in tongues, but must believe with our hearts the word of the remission of sins that was preached through the disciples that day.

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The languages were different, but the salvation preached was one

Verses 9 and 10 list in order the places where the hearers had lived. Parthians, Medes, and Elamites appear, along with Mesopotamia, Judea, Cappadocia, Pontus, and Asia, followed by Phrygia, Pamphylia, Egypt, the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, and visitors from Rome. Jews and proselytes are also recorded. In that age, many nations and regions lay close together and each region had its own language, and people who had come from different places were actually listening together.

Verse 11 also mentions Cretans and Arabs. *"Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11)*. Since these people, following the people of the many regions recorded before them, heard the same work of God, we can see that what was preached in the language of every nation was one salvation. The languages spoken were different, but the wonderful works of God that the Holy Spirit caused them to testify of were the same.

The wonderful works of God are the work of sending His Son Jesus Christ and saving sinners. Jesus had all the sins of the whole world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and the sins that each of us commits throughout our lifetime are all included in that sin of the world. So Jesus received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and became our Savior. What the disciples preached in the language of every nation was not words pointing out the sins of others or boasting of their own abilities, but this salvation.

Think of the salvation testified of in the language of every nation. God did not remove the sins of the people of just one

nation; He made Jesus bear the sin of all mankind, and He caused this salvation to be preached in the languages of many nations so that people would hear and believe it. Where one has come from cannot be the basis of the remission of sins; what is needed is faith that believes in that salvation which Jesus accomplished.

One who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit believes that Jesus has remitted his own sins as well, and the Holy Spirit dwells in his heart and confirms his salvation. Therefore, even as we look at the tongues of Pentecost, we must not seek only special phenomena while sin remains in our hearts; we must know and believe that the wonderful works preached that day are the salvation that has been accomplished for us as well.

What we should examine amid those who marveled and those who mocked

People's reactions were not the same. Let us read verse 12. *"So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?'" (Acts 2:12)*. These people, while amazed, were perplexed as to what was happening and asked one another. Since amazement at hearing tongues alone could not give them sufficient knowledge of the content of salvation, they needed to know what the wonderful works of God they had heard in their own languages were.

In verse 13 another reaction also appears. *"Others mocking said, 'They are full of new wine'" (Acts 2:13)*. Some people mocked, saying that the disciples were drunk, as if drinking new wine could make the languages of other nations come out. The passage calls them "others," distinguishing them from those who were perplexed and asking. Because they regarded the work of

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God being preached through the disciples as a phenomenon of drunkenness, they did not accept the meaning of the salvation preached before them. It was also because of this mockery that Peter soon stood up and answered that it was only the third hour, so they were not drunk.

Even when the Holy Spirit causes the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be preached to people, not everyone hears it with the same heart. But the content of that word does not change because of mockery. What we should examine in our hearts is the truth of how God remitted our sins through Jesus Christ, so do not put people's amazement or ridicule ahead of the basis of that truth.

People who had come from many nations heard the wonderful works of God in their own languages, and the purpose for which the Holy Spirit caused them to be preached in tongues also lay in that salvation. Then and now, the work of the Holy Spirit is to testify of the wonderful works God has done. Let us, too, not dwell only on the marvelous sight of that day, but receive in our hearts the remission of sins contained in those words. When we believe that the salvation of Jesus, who removed the sin of the world, is our very own salvation, we have rightly heard the wonderful works of God preached in the language of every nation. ✉

The wonderful works of God preached in the language
of every nation are the remission of sins

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

God has made Jesus both Lord and Christ

< Acts 2:1–36 >

“When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance. And there were dwelling in Jerusalem Jews, devout men, from every nation under heaven. And when this sound occurred, the multitude came together, and were confused, because everyone heard them speak in his own language. Then they were all amazed and marveled, saying to one another, ‘Look, are not all these who speak Galileans? And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.’ So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, ‘Whatever could this mean?’ Others mocking said, ‘They are full of new wine.’ But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, ‘Men of Judea

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and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved." Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him: "I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence." Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that

God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: "The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'" Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.'"

The statement that God has made Him both Lord and Christ

Toward the end, the word says, *"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36)*. That God has made Him both Lord and Christ means that He has made Him our Savior, made Him our King, and made Him our Prophet and our High Priest. It means that Jesus Christ has truly become our Savior, become our King, become our Prophet, and become our High Priest.

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The Holy Spirit who came at Pentecost and the languages of each nation

This word begins as follows: *"When the Day of Pentecost had fully come, they were all with one accord in one place. And suddenly there came a sound from heaven, as of a rushing mighty wind, and it filled the whole house where they were sitting. Then there appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them. And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:1–4)*. It says that this happened on the Day of Pentecost, the fiftieth day from the day the Lord rose again. Those who believed in Jesus as their Savior had all gathered together, and they were both fearful and praying earnestly, when the Holy Spirit came upon them powerfully, and the people began to speak not in their own regional language or the language of their own country but in the languages of the various surrounding nations. In those days, nations were clustered closely together, and every region had its own dialect as well. In the word, Parthians and Medes and Elamites, and people from Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene appear, and it says that the people began to speak in the regional languages of each of these surrounding nations.

Even when people talk carelessly and say things that make no sense, sometimes something does get conveyed, but the Bible speaks clearly. On the Day of Pentecost, Jesus' disciples and many saints who believed in Jesus were gathered together praying, when the Holy Spirit came upon them mightily, and the people spoke in the regional languages of the surrounding nations. This is called speaking in tongues. For example, it

means that they came to speak the languages of other countries that they had never learned and where they had never lived. The reason this happened is that at that time many people of the world were gathering in Rome. They came to Rome to do business, or they were brought there captive as slaves, and so on. So this special work took place on the Day of Pentecost in order to have the gospel preached. But when the people heard this, they reviled and mocked them, saying that those people had been drinking in broad daylight and were drunk. Then the word says as follows: *"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel'" (Acts 2:14–16).*

"I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh"

When we read the Book of Joel, we find this word: *"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days. And I will show wonders in the heavens and in the earth: Blood and fire and pillars of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved. For in Mount Zion and in Jerusalem there shall be deliverance, As the LORD has said, Among the remnant whom the LORD calls" (Joel 2:28–32).* The one who wrote the

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Book of Acts is Luke, who wrote the Gospel of Luke. After the Lord came to this earth and saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the work of tongues took place on the Day of Pentecost, and while a large congregation was praying, Peter stood up with the eleven apostles. Peter raised his voice and, addressing the Jews and all who lived in Jerusalem, said that he wanted to let them know what had now taken place, and he said that those who believed in Jesus Christ had not come to speak in tongues because they were drunk. Since he said it was the third hour, that is, about nine o'clock in the morning, he meant this: How could they have been drinking at such an hour of the morning? It was not that; rather, the prophecy had been fulfilled according to this word written in the Book of Joel.

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy" (Acts 2:17–18). It said that in such a situation He would show wonders in heaven and signs in the earth, namely, blood and fire and smoke. The end would come to this world, the sun would be turned into darkness and the moon into blood, and in these last days those who call on the Lord would be saved—this is the word of salvation that was spoken in this way. What this word means is this: Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again from death, and so He saved us. And He rose again and ascended into heaven. After He had gone up, Jesus' disciples and the believers were gathered together in fear. The nation of Israel was a colony of Rome, and what is more, since they had seized Jesus and killed Him, the soldiers were, needless to say, going around with murderous intent, searching

to seize and kill those who believed in Jesus and His disciples. How frightened they must have been! So they were gathered together praying earnestly to God, and at this time the Holy Spirit came upon them and they came to speak in the languages of other nations. So while the people of Israel were saying that these people were mad, that they were drunk, Peter was citing the word of the Book of Joel and saying that this had been prophesied.

"And it shall come to pass afterward That I will pour out My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions. And also on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days" (Joel 2:28–29). So it said. As for what "afterward" means, the Book of Joel speaks of the time when the nation of Israel served idols and forsook God, and because of this the wrath of God came upon them. So when they had fallen into unspeakable destitution and were suffering affliction, God said that He would save the people of Israel, that He would pour out His Spirit on all people, and that the young men would see visions, the old men would dream dreams, and the children would tell of things to come.

The weeping and wailing of the people of Israel was beyond words. Their sorrow was indescribable. They had lost their nation; enemy troops invaded and took away their parents, took away their children, and took away their wives, and if anyone disobeyed while being taken away, they killed him right before the eyes of his family. It did not end with taking people away; they confiscated all their property and seized all their crops as well. As if that were not enough, they stripped the bark off the many fig trees in the land of Israel. When the bark is stripped off, the tree dies and can no longer bear fruit even when the next spring comes. They killed and carried off people, but they also

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destroyed the grain and plundered all the possessions they had, so how severe their suffering must have been! Yet the reason God made them suffer so severely was to tell them to repent, to turn back. Even so, they did not turn back. So God said that He would save these hard-hearted people. And as for what He would do in saving them, He said that He would pour out His Spirit on them.

Those who have received the Holy Spirit prophesy, see visions, and dream dreams

Dear fellow believers, when the Lord comes to this earth, how does He come? He comes by the Holy Spirit. He comes by the Spirit, puts on human flesh, comes to this earth, and saves us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit. What happened on the Day of Pentecost is being spoken of here by citing the word of the Book of Joel, and this means that God sent Jesus Christ to remove all our sins, gave the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believe in that Jesus Christ, and that such phenomena appear in those who have received the Holy Spirit. As for what happens to those who have received the Holy Spirit, it says, *"Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy" (Joel 2:28)*. It means that they speak of things that will happen in the future. Do you and I, who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, speak of things that will happen in the future? Yes, we do. Because we know the word of the Book of Revelation and know all that the Lord has said, we foresee what things will happen in the future. As for people of the world, only people like meteorologists talk about such things; they cannot speak such words. But the children of God speak of what will become of this world, how it

will perish, and what kind of world will come again. We speak because the Holy Spirit has come upon us. At Pentecost, they spoke in tongues because the Holy Spirit had come upon them, and other phenomena also took place because the Holy Spirit had come upon them.

It says, *"Your old men shall dream dreams, Your young men shall see visions."* Dreams and visions may be similar, but what about the old men? Those who have received the remission of sins come to have hope. They wait for the kingdom of heaven and wait for the Lord to come. We, whose souls have already received the remission of sins, wait for the Lord to come to this earth, destroy this world, take us away, give us everlasting life in the Millennial Kingdom, and change our bodies into bodies that do not wither, bodies that do not decay, bodies that do not get sick, so that we may live well. It says that the young men shall see visions, and that vision may be the vision that God gives. In fact, as we preach the gospel, we are preaching this gospel with a vision. So it means that those who have received the remission of sins, those who have received the Holy Spirit, speak of such things, work with such a vision, and come to have hope. As for when this is, it says that these things happen before the great and awesome day of the LORD comes. And a little later, the moon turns the color of blood and the sun is turned into darkness. It means that these things take place after the Holy Spirit has come.

Now, there are a few things we need to point out here. Today there are people who speak in tongues, claiming that they have been filled with the Holy Spirit and have been anointed, but that is not true tongues. That is what happens when a demon comes upon someone. If you listen to such tongues, they are cursing God. That is the work of Satan the devil. They also say there is such a thing as the gift of clairvoyance, seeing through the inside

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of other people, but such a thing as seeing all of when and what sins others have committed is a very evil thing, and it is the work of the devil. Today they say that if you pray, the Holy Spirit comes, and that if tongues come, it is evidence of having received the Holy Spirit, but that is a lie.

What is being said here concerning this present age is this: Jesus Christ came to this earth, saved us, rose again from death, and went up to the kingdom of heaven; the disciples saw all of this; and the Lord said that He would come again. So when the Day of Pentecost came, the Holy Spirit came upon them and such things as speaking in tongues took place, and this means precisely that salvation had come. The people of Israel, whose sins were rampant, had continually been rebuked, killed, and cursed; they had been cursed like this because they could not keep the law, but the Lord Himself came as the Savior.

He came as the Savior and rose again from death

The Lord rebuked mankind so much, telling them to keep the law and to return before God, but since they could not return just as they were, God Himself came as the Savior, as Jesus Christ, saved us through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and poured the Holy Spirit into our hearts, and through that Holy Spirit He made us know who our own Father is and who our own Savior is, and so He made us return before God. This is speaking of salvation. Just as God had said that He would send the Savior before destruction came upon this world, He sent the Savior and saved us, and He gave us the Holy Spirit as a gift, and it is through that Holy Spirit that Jesus' disciples are now doing these things. So the apostles say this word: *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by*

miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it" (Acts 2:22–24).

Jesus came to this earth, bore the sin of mankind, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so He saved us; and as for who were the very first to believe in Him who came as the Savior, they were the Jews, Jesus' disciples. Jesus' disciples believed, and now they testify of the resurrection—that He died and rose again—and show signs and miracles. It is now being said in this way that God the Father sent Jesus Christ and saved us. It means that God the Father sent His Son and saved mankind from sin. It means that He was sent as the Savior and completed that salvation. But the people of Israel, who served many idols, and all the people of this world, who were pursuing sin, did not know Jesus. That this Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, suffered, and saved us is something that was delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God. It means that God the Father delivered Him up to us, had our sins borne by that Jesus Christ through the baptism He received from John, had Him hung on the Cross in our place and brought to death, and so saved us. Yet although Jesus Christ bore our sins and died on the Cross, God loosed the pains of death so that He would not be bound by them and raised Him up; that is, He brought Him back to life. In other words, this is speaking of the resurrection.

It means that the Lord not only bore our sins and died on the Cross, but also that when He had come to death, He was loosed from the pains of death and brought back to life. It means that He rose again and became our eternal Savior.

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The resurrection and the right hand of God that David foresaw

So here the word David spoke in the Psalms is being cited, and David is a prophet. As for what David said as a prophet while seeing visions and hearing the word of God, it is as follows: *"For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'" (Acts 2:25–35).*

This is now being spoken to the people of Israel. Although we may not understand it well when we hear it now, David was a king, but he was also a prophet. He was a man who prophesied, heard the word of God, and had communion with God. As for what this prophet said, it is this: *"The LORD said to my Lord"*—

that is, God the Father spoke to Jesus Christ, who is David's Lord—saying, *"Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."* It means that David's own Savior of whom he was speaking—not God the Father, but his own Savior, Jesus Christ—came to this earth, bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death; He did not just remain in that death but rose again. As for what God the Father did after raising His Son, He seated Him at His right hand and told Him to sit at His right hand until He made His enemies His footstool. The prophecy was that He would sit at the right hand of God the Father until the day when the Lord would save all those who are to be saved through Jesus Christ and judge His enemies, until the day when the Lord finally comes again.

While telling in this way that Jesus Christ rose again, it says, *"'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ'" (Acts 2:36)*. What this means is that God has made Him our Savior—that Jesus Christ rose again from death and became our Savior. In order to save sinners who served idols because of sin and were destroyed because of sin, who could not live according to God's law and could not live according to God's will—people who deserved to be utterly destroyed—Jesus Christ came to this earth as the Savior, Himself saved you, and Himself became your Savior, and so He became Lord and Christ. Jesus rose again from death and became our Savior, became our King, became the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, and became the Prophet who preaches the truth to us. This is what is being said here. If the four Gospels tell of Jesus Christ being born on this earth by the Holy Spirit, bearing our sins through the baptism He received from John, dying on the Cross, and rising again from death—that is, that Jesus came to save the people of Israel from

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sin and did save them—then the Book of Acts speaks in continuation of that resurrection.

The people of Israel committed so many sins that they could not possibly return before God, but the Lord Himself came to save them and saved them, and through His resurrection He completed that salvation. So it means that He became their God, became their Savior, became their High Priest, became their Prophet, and Himself became their King. If I apply this to you and me today, the fact that Jesus came to this earth, saved us, and rose again from death means that He rose again in order to become the perfect Savior of you and me, and that He is now alive and seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father. Jesus has become the God of you and me and has become our Savior. It means that He has become the Savior who perfectly saves us—we who have weak bodies and hearts, who fall into sin and cannot live according to God's will—and has become our King and our shepherd.

The resurrection is the completion of our salvation

Jesus' resurrection has this meaning. If He had come to this earth and saved us, but had died Himself and not risen again, it would mean that He could not have become our perfect Savior. Because He rose again, because He is alive even now, and because He is seated even now at the right hand of the throne of God, we have now received the remission of sins by believing in that Lord, have received the Holy Spirit and become the children of God, and He Himself has become our shepherd and our God, is with us, and is keeping us. That is why He told us to preach this gospel to all nations. If the Lord had not risen again, you and I could never be saved from sin. *"For David did not*

ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool"'" (Acts 2:34–35). This word also appears in the Book of Hebrews: *"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)*. It means that He bore all our sins once and for all, received the judgment once and for all, rose again from death, saved us perfectly, and is now seated at the right hand of God the Father.

Jesus has become our Savior, and if God the Father, who is Jesus' Father, is our God the Father, then it means that Jesus, too, as God who is equal to Him, becomes one God to us. It means that God, who is equal to Him, has Himself become our Savior. Now, until His enemies are made His footstool—that is, until He judges completely—He remains seated at the right hand of God, giving those in this world who are to be saved the freedom of choice and having the gospel preached to them. He has had it preached that the Lord came to this earth and saved us, mankind, from all sins, and He has given the freedom of choice. He lets those who will believe believe and those who will not believe not believe, and when, in the Lord's sight, almost all those who will believe have come to believe, He will judge at the last. As for what a footstool is, it is a rest that one places under the soles of his feet while sitting in a chair. In the old days, people in high positions sat in chairs and put their feet up on that rest. It means trampling underfoot. It means that the Lord remains seated at the right hand of God the Father until the time He judges, and then comes to this earth as the Judge and judges. Until He judges, the Lord leaves people alone, whether they are evil or whatever they do, and when God the Father sees that the time to judge has come,

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then He judges. It says that the Lord sanctified those who believe by offering His body once and for all in this way. This is how the Lord has saved us.

All mankind, the people of Israel, and you and I as well—if our Lord had not come to this earth, received baptism from John, been hung on the Cross, risen again from death, and been seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father, becoming our eternal Savior—were sinners who would have had to remain imprisoned in sin forever, be killed, and be cursed, who would have had to suffer in this present world and, in the world to come, rise again to the resurrection of condemnation and suffer forever. But our Lord, upholding the will of God the Father, came to this earth and saved you and me. That is why the Lord has become our Lord and our Savior. He has become the Savior and our Master, and He has become our God and our King. The Lord's resurrection brings such meaning, such reality, to you and me. This is what the Book of Acts is now saying. In other words, it is speaking in continuation of the age of the Old Testament. In the age of the Old Testament, from Solomon onward, among the people of Israel, whether in the north or the south, whether kings or people, all served idols, and there was no one who could live according to God's will. Only God's servants knew His will and lived by it; the people all failed to live that way. So they all suffered destruction, and even though they were oppressed, cursed, and trampled like that, there was no one who could return before God on his own. That is why the Savior Himself came. Jesus Christ came to this earth and bore all the sin of the people of Israel, and, besides the people of Israel, all the sin of all mankind, by receiving baptism from John. That is how He saved us. Therefore, those who believe in Him have received the remission of sins and have become the children of God, and because they became the children of God, because they received

the remission of sins, God poured the Holy Spirit into their hearts.

Dear fellow believers, when we receive the remission of sins, we come to acknowledge the gospel of that remission of sins. At the very moment we acknowledge, "I truly deserved to go to hell, but the Lord has saved me like this," if God did not seal our hearts with the Holy Spirit, we could never be saved. That is why He pours out the Holy Spirit. This is because it says, *"Those who are in the flesh cannot please God" (Romans 8:8)*. Apart from the Holy Spirit, we can never please God. It is saying, in continuation of the Old Testament, that God has saved us like this. That is why we prophesy how this whole world will change in the future and see visions. We see visions of how this world will be destroyed. And I come to see the vision that the Lord will do away with the first heaven and the first earth, and that our Lord, who created the universe, will make a new heaven and a new earth, take us there, and let us enjoy everlasting life and live well forever. We also speak of that. It said that the old men dream dreams. We come to have the hope that we are entering the kingdom of God.

Dear fellow believers, in this word, in that word which appears in the Book of Joel, the Lord promised that He would pour out His Spirit because the people of Israel could not possibly be saved and the Gentiles, too, could not forsake their idols and return before God on their own, and this promise means that He would send the Savior. It means that He would send the Savior, Jesus Christ, to save us from sin and pour the Holy Spirit into our hearts. So it means that He made us the children of God, made us live in the kingdom of heaven, and made us live on this earth as servants of God, playing the role of prophets. This is what it is saying. Talking about tongues that

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make no sense and speaking of the gift of clairvoyance and whatnot is all groundless talk.

Dear fellow believers, what does it mean that Jesus rose again? It means that He has perfectly saved you and me. It means that He has become our perfect Savior. It means that He has cleanly removed our sins, poured the Holy Spirit into our hearts as a gift, and made us the children of God. The Lord did not rise again to tell us to repent of lying, to make us do such things. At Easter, people shout hallelujah that Jesus rose again, but it is because the Lord rose again that you and I have been perfectly saved. That is why we have received the Holy Spirit as a gift, and it is because the Lord rose again that He poured out the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost. As for what the Lord did after He rose again, He told them to receive the Holy Spirit. It means that the Lord bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, was hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, so that when we come to believe in Jesus Christ and receive the remission of sins by believing, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. So the word the Lord spoke when He met His disciples after He rose again and breathed on them is this: *"Receive the Holy Spirit. If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them; if you retain the sins of any, they are retained" (John 20:22–23)*. It means that He has given us the office of preachers who can preach this gospel. The prophets of old and we are just the same. In the old days, David, too, was a servant of God and a prophet, and the Holy Spirit worked in his heart.

Discern the work of demons from the work of the Holy Spirit

Today the Holy Spirit works in the hearts of you and me as well. The Lord's resurrection means that He has perfectly become the Savior of you and me. The Lord rose again and is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God. He was told to sit at God's right hand until His enemies were made His footstool. After God the Father saved us through His Son, He raised His Son and seated Him at the right hand of His throne, and He gave the Holy Spirit into the hearts of all those who believe in what His Son did in coming to this earth and saving us, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and had them preach this gospel to the whole world. But today many people do not know the Bible, and they say that if one speaks in tongues, it is evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. If someone speaks in tongues while there is sin in his heart, what is that? It is the work of a demon. Dear fellow believers, if someone suddenly falls backward while believing in Jesus, or if someone who does not even believe in Jesus is absorbed in something and starts talking in a changed voice, people call that being possessed. They say that he has caught a demon, that an evil spirit has entered into him.

Dear fellow believers, do you know what happens when people, claiming to believe in Jesus, come to church to hold all-night prayer, fast, go three days or a week without eating, and weep and wail, crying out, "Lord"? A demon comes upon their hearts and makes them hear strange sounds, makes them say strange things, makes them feel good at times, makes their bodies float, and causes all kinds of commotion. Some people, while worshiping, bounce up and down in the air while kneeling. If you were told to do that, would it be right? Even a shaman,

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when possessed by a demon, dances on the sharpened blades of a straw cutter, and yet the shaman's legs are not cut. Because the shaman is possessed by a demon, that demon makes the body light, makes it float, and makes it display supernatural powers, and that is how this happens. When one is possessed by a demon, works of signs and miracles take place.

Basically, people do not know this, and so they say that it is the work of the Holy Spirit, but that is what happens when one does not know the Holy Spirit. When clergymen who believe in Jesus come to the end of a worship service, they tell people to lay their hands on the parts of their bodies that hurt, and praying in the name of the Lord, they say, "In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Satan, be gone; demon of sickness, depart," and keep on saying, "I believe, I believe," and it really seems as if people are healed, and sometimes they are healed. But that lasts only for a while. That is how a demon deceives. Satan the devil works in any form whatsoever on people who have sin. Sometimes he appears like an angel and speaks, speaks in dreams, sounds like the voice of the Lord, and makes people feel good in their hearts. Satan the devil sometimes gives people fervent experiences and makes them break bad habits they could not break, but he cannot remove the sin in their hearts. On the contrary, he makes sure that they never come to know the gospel of the water and the Spirit, never hear it, and go against it.

Satan the devil can do anything whatsoever. The one thing he cannot do anything about is this—hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receiving the remission of sins—but as for the rest, he can even make all the desires of your heart come true. Yet although they seem to come true, in fact it is only so for a while, and the effect does not last forever. It never lasts. The Lord's resurrection is the completion of the salvation of you and me. He rose again in order to become the Savior of you and

me. Not only did He remove our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but He is now alive again and seated at the right hand of the throne of God; so it means that those who believe in that Jesus Christ, who removed all our sins, receive the remission of sins just as the Lord removed our sins, and just as the Lord rose again from death, our souls have already come alive and our bodies, too, will rise again. Just as the Lord's dead body did not decay but came out of the tomb and rose again, and His body was suddenly changed and He went up to the right hand of God the Father, so the bodies of you and me will also suddenly come out of the grave, be changed, and go up. The Lord's resurrection is the completion of salvation. The Lord's resurrection is the completion of our salvation.

So the Lord has become our Lord and our Savior, our Deliverer, our God, and the Christ, and He has become our King, shepherd, High Priest, and Prophet. Knowing this is extremely important. When Easter comes, many churchgoers gather and hold Easter services, saying that they should live good lives and repent of the bad things they have done. Did the Lord really rise again to make them do that? Religious people have nothing to do with the Lord's resurrection. Even if sinners rise again, they rise to be judged. That is why it says, *"Come forth—those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation" (John 5:29)*. To which do you and I belong? We belong to the resurrection of life. The Lord rose again and is alive, and having become our perfect Savior, He will perfectly change you and me anew, raise our bodies too, and make us live forever. It means that just as God the Father took Jesus Christ, seated Him at the right hand of His throne, and made Him reign as King forever, He will do the same for us as well. We will come to enjoy all that Jesus Christ enjoys. This is the purpose God the Father Himself had in mind for us

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in Jesus Christ. So I give thanks. Truly, there is so much to be thankful for. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Jesus, of whom Peter testifies to the Jews

< Acts 2:14–42 >

"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: 'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved.' Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you

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have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'' Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '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. For the promise is to you and to

your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.' And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

The Holy Spirit who came upon them at Pentecost and the tongues heard in the language of each nation

If we look at the word in the first part of Acts chapter 2, on the Day of Pentecost the Holy Spirit descended, and the disciples gathered there *"began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4)*. One hundred and twenty of Jesus' disciples and saints had gathered together and were praying, and on the Day of Pentecost they were filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. Pentecost is the fiftieth day counting from the day Jesus died on the Cross and rose again. On that day the Holy Spirit came upon them. Seeing the one hundred and twenty who had gathered together speaking strange words as the Holy Spirit caused them to speak, people looked at Jesus' disciples and said that they were drunk.

When the Holy Spirit came upon them at Pentecost and Jesus' disciples spoke, the word says of the people, *"'And how is it that we hear, each in our own language in which we were born? Parthians and Medes and Elamites, those dwelling in Mesopotamia, Judea and Cappadocia, Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt and the parts of Libya adjoining*

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Cyrene, visitors from Rome, both Jews and proselytes, Cretans and Arabs—we hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God.' So they were all amazed and perplexed, saying to one another, 'Whatever could this mean?' Others mocking said, 'They are full of new wine'" (Acts 2:8–13). The one hundred and twenty disciples of Jesus, filled with the Holy Spirit, spoke, and the people who had come from more than ten nations each heard it in the language of their own region.

At the time when Rome ruled the world and governed the nation of Israel, fifty days after Jesus died on the Cross and rose again, the Holy Spirit came upon them in fullness, and Jesus' disciples spoke in the tongues of each region. A tongue is the language of a region. Just as each region has its own dialect and each nation has its own language, they spoke in tongues, and when the people who had come from many nations listened, they heard it in their own nation's language, in their own region's language. Those who came from Mesopotamia heard it in the language of Mesopotamia, those who came from Cappadocia heard it in the language of Cappadocia, and those living in Pontus and Asia, Phrygia and Pamphylia, Egypt, and the parts of Libya adjoining Cyrene all heard it in the language of their own region. In other words, the Holy Spirit came down in fullness and the one hundred and twenty came to speak, and the people who had come from more than ten nations and regions each understood it in the language of their own nation and region. But seeing this, people mocked them, saying that they were drunk and making a racket.

"This is what was spoken by the prophet Joel"

Then it says, *"But Peter, standing up with the eleven, raised his voice and said to them, 'Men of Judea and all who dwell in Jerusalem, let this be known to you, and heed my words. For these are not drunk, as you suppose, since it is only the third hour of the day. But this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel'" (Acts 2:14–16)*. It says that the prophet Joel of the Old Testament had said these words. It is the word found in the Book of Joel. *"'And it shall come to pass in the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh; Your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, Your young men shall see visions, Your old men shall dream dreams. And on My menservants and on My maidservants I will pour out My Spirit in those days; And they shall prophesy. I will show wonders in heaven above And signs in the earth beneath: Blood and fire and vapor of smoke. The sun shall be turned into darkness, And the moon into blood, Before the coming of the great and awesome day of the LORD. And it shall come to pass That whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved'" (Acts 2:17–21)*.

"In the last days, says God, That I will pour out of My Spirit on all flesh"—this means that He said He would pour out the Holy Spirit. It means that the prophet Joel of the Old Testament prophesied that such a thing would happen when the last days came. So Peter is preaching the word, saying that what the one hundred and twenty are now speaking is neither the speech of drunken men nor speech according to their own thoughts, but that this prophecy is now being fulfilled and that is why these people are speaking like this.

Saying that the young men would see visions and the old men would dream dreams, that God would pour out His Spirit on His menservants and maidservants and they would prophesy, and

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that He would show wonders in heaven and signs in the earth, namely blood and fire and smoke, the word spoke of the disasters that would come at the end, and at the very end it said, *"Whoever calls on the name of the LORD Shall be saved" (Acts 2:21)*. It means that when the Antichrist appears and seizes and kills people, to those who believe the word of the Lord, who believe in the baptism the Lord received from John and in the Cross, and who believe that He is our Savior, the Lord will likewise pour out the Holy Spirit and enable them to overcome their adversaries. In this way, it means, He saves them.

Here, now, the Holy Spirit had come upon them and Jesus' disciples spoke in tongues, and Peter is saying that this is the word spoken by the prophet Joel now being fulfilled. The prophet Joel prophesied that such things would happen: that people would receive the Holy Spirit, that the old men would dream dreams and the young men would see visions, that the Holy Spirit would be poured out on menservants and maidservants, that people would prophesy, and that at the end there would be signs in heaven so that the sun, the moon, and the stars would lose their light and miraculous things would take place, while on the earth the Antichrist would appear and destruction would come—this is what he prophesied.

How should we view the Holy Spirit's coming at Pentecost in the time of the early church? Before Jesus ascended into heaven, He gathered together with His disciples and spoke as follows. *"And being assembled together with them, He commanded them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the Promise of the Father, 'which,' He said, 'you have heard from Me; for John truly baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now'" (Acts 1:4–5)*. The Holy Spirit came just as this word said: that they would receive the Holy Spirit not many days from then, and that

they should not depart from Jerusalem but wait for what the Father had promised.

After Jesus said this, He ascended into heaven before the eyes of His disciples. Then the disciples returned to Jerusalem, and one hundred and twenty of them gathered together and prayed. They prayed for the promised Holy Spirit to be poured out. And then the Holy Spirit came upon them. The word says that all these things came about not because they prayed, nor by human will, but because there was already a word in which God's servants had prophesied that this would happen, and so God fulfilled that word of prophecy.

The tongues the Bible speaks of and the tongues of today

Even today, people speak in tongues. But if we look at the word here in the Book of Acts, when they spoke in tongues, those who heard them heard it in their own nation's language. But when people speak in tongues these days, can anyone understand them? Neither the speaker nor the hearer understands. The tongues the Bible speaks of were this: in the time of the early church, even though they wanted to preach the gospel to the people of other nations, there was no way to preach it, and yet each of them came to understand it in their own nation's language. But the tongues of these days cannot be understood.

Then have these tongues come from God, or have they come from demons? Dear fellow believers, speech, when written down, becomes sentences, and when we read a text, we read moving back and forth between lines and clauses, and reading from one point to another makes up one phrase. That is how we read a book, and the fact that when those speaking in tongues

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spoke, other people understood it in their own nation's language means that their speech was not repetitive. But in the tongues people speak these days, once they have pulled out a word, they say only that word from beginning to end. They keep saying the same words over and over, repetitively. Dear fellow believers, have you ever listened to the prayers of those who speak in tongues? If you listen, they say what they have already said again and again, continuously. Those are not tongues given by God.

The tongues spoken by those who believe in Jesus today are a continual repetition of the same words, so that is not it. And the reason Jesus made people speak in tongues was so that they would preach the gospel. Long ago, when people were building the Tower of Babel, God came down and scattered the one language. So even when they spoke to one another, they could no longer understand one another. That is why people today each use different languages, and if we speak in our own language, people of other nations cannot understand us. Even so, we must not just keep on speaking in our own language. Today, God has us preach the gospel in the language of each nation rather than in tongues.

The tongues the Bible speaks of and the tongues of those who claim to speak in tongues in modern times are different. The tongues the Bible speaks of were this work that took place when, just as the prophet Joel had prophesied, the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost after Jesus rose again and ascended into heaven. I can tell you that this was something fulfilled just as it was prophesied in the Bible.

Then should we speak in tongues in the church these days? One may speak in tongues, but the Apostle Paul said, *"In the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue"*

(1 Corinthians 14:19). This means that the Apostle Paul, too, was a man who could speak in tongues, but he did not do so in the church. First, because it would be a hindrance to others, and also, because the Apostle Paul could speak the language of that nation, he preached the gospel to those people in the language of that nation.

Then are tongues necessary in this age? Perhaps when the Antichrist appears, God may give you and me tongues so that the Antichrist cannot understand what we say. But before then, we must speak our own language and the language of each nation, and if we cannot do that, we must appoint interpreters to speak and have translators translate. That is the normal way. This is because Jesus is a personal being. Jesus is a personal being. A personal being means a person whose knowing, feeling, and acting are right—that is, a person who acts when it is time to act, feels rightly when it is time to feel rightly, and knows, feels, and acts rightly. Jesus is God, yet He is a personal being. Even when He converses with us, He looks at our level and often speaks words that are suited to us. What the prophet Joel said was fulfilled.

The resurrection of Jesus Christ that David prophesied

Now, moving on to the next part, Peter testifies. "*Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death,*

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because it was not possible that He should be held by it" (Acts 2:22–24). This is how Peter testifies. Because those speaking in tongues are speaking in tongues believing in Jesus, he is now telling them who Jesus is. And he is saying that what Jesus did when He came to this earth was the fulfillment of the prophecy of the prophet David.

Dear fellow believers, this is probably the first time you have heard that David was a prophet, isn't it? David was the king of the nation of Israel. And he was a prophet. There were many prophets in the time of King Saul, and David was also a prophet. A prophet is a person who receives the word of revelation from God and preaches it to people just as it is, and a prophet could also become a king or a priest. But because David was not a Levite, he never did the work of a priest.

Let us read the word. *"For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For*

David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool.'' Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:25–36). This means that David had prophesied this, beginning from Psalm 16. This is a quotation from the Old Testament. David prophesied that even if Jesus Christ were put to death, He was not one who would see corruption or be shut up in Hades and perish, and this means that the Lord had revealed Himself to the prophet David.

"The LORD said to my Lord"

"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, 'Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool''" (Acts 2:34–35). This is what David wrote down after receiving the word of God. The reason I am explaining it this way is that the Jews know only Yahweh God. The Old Testament records that Yahweh God appeared and spoke to the people of Israel, and that He sent His Son just as He had said He would send Him. This word, *"The LORD said to my Lord,"* means that this is what God the Father said to His Son Jesus Christ; that is what it is saying. God the Father seated at His right hand His Son Jesus Christ, who came to this earth, received baptism from John, died on the Cross, rose again from death, and ascended into the kingdom of heaven, and He said, *"Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" (Acts 2:34–35)*. For David, there are both God the Father and Jesus Christ.

God the Father said to His Son Jesus Christ, "There are still many people to be saved, and there are still many people who

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oppose You and do not acknowledge You; sit beside Me until these people are made Your footstool at the final judgment of God, and when the time comes, I will set You up as the Judge and put Your enemies under Your feet so that You may punish them." David received this word from God as a word of revelation, saw a vision, and is speaking of it. You may understand this because you have received the Holy Spirit, but even so, it is by no means easy. Nevertheless, the reason Peter, quoting the word of the Old Testament, speaks of why the Holy Spirit came, what the Holy Spirit did when He came, and who it was that caused the Holy Spirit to come—that it was Jesus Christ—is that the Jews were not believing in Jesus as their Creator and their Savior. So he is testifying to the unbelieving Jews that what they see—that is, Jesus' disciples speaking in tongues, preaching the gospel, and prophesying—is being brought about by Jesus just as was prophesied in the Old Testament.

It says that they were speaking in tongues at the third hour, and the third hour is about nine o'clock in the morning. Don't we, too, curse at someone who drinks and acts drunk in broad daylight? In the same way, people looked at Jesus' disciples and said that they had been drinking in broad daylight and were behaving like that, but Peter is saying that this was not so. He is testifying that Jesus came to this earth, bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John, was crucified and died, rose again from death, saved us, and ascended into heaven; that He poured out the Holy Spirit in fullness on His disciples so that the disciples are speaking in tongues and prophesying; and that Jesus Christ, though He is the Son of God, is still our God, our Savior, and our Judge. This is what he is preaching to the Jews.

Jesus, whom the Jews crucified, both Lord and Christ

"'Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ.' Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call'" (Acts 2:36–39). This means that God made Jesus, whom you crucified and killed, your God and your Christ; He made Him your King, your Prophet, and your High Priest. This Jesus was your King and your Creator, your Prophet, and the Priest who removes your sins; Yahweh God, in whom you believe, is not the only one who is your God, but God the Father sent His own Son to this earth and saved you from sin, and He was born on this earth, received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, saved you, and has now ascended and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, waiting only for the day of the final judgment; when He judges, He will come down; and yet, *"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36)*. That is what it is saying.

Just as you believe in Yahweh God, Jesus too is your God and your Christ; He is your Prophet, your King, and your High Priest; and He was made so for your sake—this is what Peter is saying. Yet you seized that Jesus and crucified and killed Him, so how great your sin is! Peter, having been filled with the Holy Spirit at Pentecost and having heard the people's slander, is preaching this sermon.

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Peter quoted the Old Testament. The Jews do believe the word of the Old Testament. Because the Jews did not believe in Jesus as God and did not believe the word of the New Testament either, he quoted the word of the Old Testament and said that the prophet Joel had said this, that the prophet David had said this, and that today that word had been fulfilled just as it was. And he said that it was you who crucified and killed Jesus, but that Jesus, just as was prophesied, was not bound by death but rose again and is seated at the right hand of God, and that God the Father told Him to sit beside the Father until His enemies were made His footstool, until they were put under His feet, and then to judge.

He said that God had made this Jesus both Lord and Christ, that He had made Him your God, made Him your Savior, and made Him your King, and then it says of the people, *"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?'" (Acts 2:37)*. They had seized Jesus, whom God had sent to this earth to save them from sin, and had crucified and killed Him, but He had not remained in death but had risen again from death and ascended into heaven; so when they asked what they should do about the sin they had committed, *"Peter said to them, 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)*.

Those who turn back and believe in the baptism of Jesus receive the Holy Spirit as a gift

Here, once again, Peter brings up the baptism Jesus received. That He had to die on the Cross was because He first had to

receive baptism. Only when Jesus received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred to Him would His dying on the Cross, rising again from death, and becoming our Savior be effective; if He had not had our sins, the sins of the Jews, transferred to Him through His baptism, what use would that Jesus who died on the Cross be? That is what this means.

So Peter said, "Repent," and the word repent means to turn back. Have you not gone down the wrong path? Have you not believed only in Yahweh God of the Old Testament? Have you not known only that God as God? That God sent His own Son to this earth and had Him bear all your sins and do the work of saving mankind from sin, yet you seized and killed that Jesus; you have become those who persecute and oppose Jesus, who is the Son of God and the Savior; therefore, turn back from what is wrong and *"let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins" (Acts 2:38)*—that is what he was saying. It means that the Lord received baptism from John for my sins, bore the sin of mankind, bore even the sins of the Jews, was crucified and died, rose again from death, and ascended into heaven. It means that if you, who have been going down the wrong path, turn back, receive baptism, and receive the remission of sins, you will receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. As for our receiving baptism: Jesus received baptism from John in this way and bore our sins; going down into the water speaks of His being crucified and dying in our place, and coming up out of the water speaks of Jesus' resurrection; so if we know and believe this, we receive the remission of sins.

The word says that whoever receives the remission of sins *"shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit."* The Holy Spirit is the Spirit who is holy, and He is the Spirit of God. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—these three are equally God to us; God the Father made the plan, the Son accomplished what He had

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planned, and the One who helps with the work His Son did when He came to this earth, causes us to believe it, and makes it known to us is the Holy Spirit.

"You shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call. And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:38–41). Peter now preached this sermon where a great crowd of Jews had gathered, and as a result they acknowledged their sins and believed it all: that Jesus is their God, that He is their Savior, that He received baptism from John for them, that He died on the Cross, and that He received the judgment for their sins. So they received baptism, and the number of those who received baptism was as many as three thousand. This is the greatest work in the history of the early church. So, as Peter testified to the Jews that Jesus is God, that He is the Savior, that He is the King of love, that He is the High Priest, and that He is the true Prophet, the Jews too came to believe in this way.

This means that we, too, have believed in this way. Dear fellow believers, we believe that Jesus Christ is the Creator who made all things, and that He is the Savior who came to this earth, received baptism from John in order to bear our sins, died on the Cross, and rose again, and so saved us from sin. Whoever believes in this way receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. If you believe in your heart in Jesus as your Savior, the Holy Spirit, because you have believed, enters your heart and takes His seat there regardless of you. But we have no feeling of it. Yet when we listen to sermons and when we look at the word, the Holy Spirit guides us and encourages

our hearts. When we pray for what is right, He gives us strength, and when we pray for what is improper, He rebukes us.

"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen" (Matthew 28:20). Although Jesus removed all our sins and is seated at the right hand of the Father in the kingdom of heaven, the Holy Spirit takes His seat in our hearts in Jesus' place and is with us to the end of the age; and if our adversary comes at the end and tries to kill us, the Holy Spirit makes us speak the words to be said on our behalf and makes us fight boldly, and if we come to be martyred, He gives us strength so that we may be martyred boldly and not in cowardice. That is precisely what speaks of the triune God who is with us to the end of the age. So, as we read this word: people indiscriminately say that the Holy Spirit came at Pentecost, and even now, when someone utters sounds that cannot be understood, they say that person has received the Holy Spirit; but then, if those are words spoken by truly having received the Holy Spirit, there must be no sin in their hearts. If a person who has sin in his heart speaks in tongues claiming to have received the Holy Spirit, an evil spirit has entered that person's heart and he is speaking the words of the devil. We must know this clearly.

He saves the Jews too, according to the prophecy of the Old Testament

The Jews of old repented and turned back, received baptism, received the remission of sins, and received the Holy Spirit as a gift; so why do the Jews of today still not acknowledge Jesus as God, as our Savior? When the word is preached by quoting the word David prophesied and the word Joel prophesied, the Jews have nothing more to say. Since we already believe in Jesus,

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when we first believed in Jesus we began from the fact that Jesus is the Creator who made the universe, and we were saved by knowing and believing that Jesus, as our Savior, came through the body of Mary just as was prophesied, received baptism from John at the age of thirty for us, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. But the Jews are not like this. They do not acknowledge Jesus Himself at all. Yet it is written in the Bible that twelve thousand from each tribe will be saved. According to this word, the people of Israel wait for the Messiah in the last days. They say, "O Messiah, protect us," but that Messiah was Jesus, and they are waiting for a different Messiah. So in the last days, the people of Israel will hear this word and repent as a whole. And they will believe in Jesus as a whole. And they will be martyred just like us. That is why God has set apart one hundred and forty-four thousand. God keeps His promise.

When we hear this word and think it over in our hearts, we can see that God saved the Jews back then and wants to save them even now, and we can also see how important the prophesied word of the Old Testament is. The words of the New Testament are the fulfillment of the word of the Old Testament. Then, when we say that we have received the remission of sins, that the Antichrist will appear throughout the whole world in the future, that we will be martyred, that Jesus Christ will come again and rapture us, and that He will take us to the eternal kingdom of heaven—what we are saying in this way is prophecy. What has not yet been fulfilled is prophecy, and what has been fulfilled is the fulfillment of prophecy. The reality has come to pass. That is how we should understand it. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

We must know the purpose of Jesus' resurrection

< Acts 2:22–42 >

"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—Him, being delivered by the determined purpose and foreknowledge of God, you have taken by lawless hands, have crucified, and put to death; whom God raised up, having loosed the pains of death, because it was not possible that He should be held by it. For David says concerning Him: 'I foresaw the LORD always before my face, For He is at my right hand, that I may not be shaken. Therefore my heart rejoiced, and my tongue was glad; Moreover my flesh also will rest in hope. For You will not leave my soul in Hades, Nor will You allow Your Holy One to see corruption. You have made known to me the ways of life; You will make me full of joy in Your presence.' Men and brethren, let me speak freely to you of the patriarch David, that he is both dead and buried, and his tomb is with us to this day. Therefore, being a prophet, and knowing that God had sworn with an oath to him that of the fruit of his body, according to the flesh, He would raise up the Christ to sit on his throne, he, foreseeing this, spoke concerning the resurrection of the Christ, that His soul was not left in Hades, nor did His flesh see corruption. This Jesus God has raised up, of which we are all witnesses. Therefore being exalted to the right hand of

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God, and having received from the Father the promise of the Holy Spirit, He poured out this which you now see and hear. For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."' Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ. Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.' And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."

The Prince of life, whom God raised up again

Now I would like to speak about the resurrection of Jesus. The word of God that we have read is the content of the sermon Peter preached to the Jews, the people of Israel.

Peter first spoke as follows: *"Men of Israel, hear these words: Jesus of Nazareth, a Man attested by God to you by miracles, wonders, and signs which God did through Him in your midst, as you yourselves also know—" (Acts 2:22).*

In other words, when that Jesus was on this earth, He raised the dead, walked on the water, and gave bread to the hungry people in the wilderness—a great multitude of more than five thousand counting the men alone—and fed them; so the One who performed such miracles is Jesus Christ, and that Jesus is none other than the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. But, he says, you Jews borrowed the hands of the Gentile Romans and crucified Him and put Him to death, yet God the Father raised that Jesus Christ up again. Why? It is because Jesus was not a frail being that could be held by death, that is, He was not a created being, just as it is written, *"Because it was not possible that He should be held by it" (Acts 2:24)*. In reality, Jesus Christ is the Creator and the Prince of life. Who is the Master of all life? It is Jesus Christ. The Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, these three, are God, and these three brought the universe and all things into being and gave life. So Peter, as he preaches, says that David, even though he was a man who lived about a thousand years before Jesus Christ came to this earth, knew, because he was a prophet, that Jesus Christ would die and rise again, and prophesied it; and so Peter speaks this word. And he preaches that this Jesus Christ has now poured out this which you see and hear.

God's purpose is to give us resurrection and new life

I would like to testify a little more about the resurrection. Let us read the word. *"For David did not ascend into the heavens, but he says himself: 'The LORD said to my Lord, "Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool."'" (Acts 2:34–35)*. Jesus ascended to the kingdom of heaven, but David did not

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ascend. Nevertheless, David, moved by the Spirit of God, said this. That "the LORD said to my Lord" means that God the Father said to Jesus, the Savior, *"Sit at My right hand, Till I make Your enemies Your footstool" (Acts 2:34–35)*. Jesus was not held by the corruption of the flesh or by death; God the Father raised His Son, and He rose again and went up to the right hand of the throne of God. Jesus came to this earth and did the work of removing all the sins of all people; He received baptism from John, was crucified and died on the Cross, rose again from death, testified for forty days, and then went up to the right hand of God the Father. This is called the ascension. And David prophesied this about a thousand years beforehand. The risen Jesus is seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father, and He remains seated there until all His enemies are made His footstool, that is, until the end of this world, and then He will come again to this earth. Then He will save those who know and believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, give them new life again and raise them from the dead just like the Lord, and let them enjoy the riches, glory, and everlasting life that God the Father gives. So as for what the purpose of the Triune God toward us mankind was, the purpose for which He made man, God's purpose was to give us resurrection and new life so that we would live together with God.

That Jesus rose again from death speaks of God's will toward us mankind. As for what God's will is, the purpose of creation—making the universe and all things, and making man in the image of God and letting him live on this earth—was to give us resurrection and new life, to raise us again from death and let us live with God; that is why He did so. That is God's purpose. That you and I, all of us mankind, live again like this—that is where God set His purpose. As for those who died because of sin and have come to life again by believing in the righteousness of Jesus

Christ—at that time God will also resurrect our bodies, raise us again with spiritual bodies, and let us live forever with the Lord. This is God's purpose, and as we celebrate Easter, we must become those who clearly know at least this one purpose of God toward us before we move on.

What is the purpose for which we believe in Jesus, know and believe that Jesus is our Savior, and live a life of faith while serving in a supporting role for this gospel? It says, *"It is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*; this means that although we are born once and die once, we will be raised again by God just as Jesus Christ rose again, and by believing that Jesus Christ gives us new life, we will live forever with the Lord in the kingdom of God. If there were no rising again for us, our believing in Jesus would be in vain. The purpose of our life of faith is to take part in the Lord's first resurrection, the resurrection of everlasting life, and to live with the Lord; if that does not happen, our whole life of faith is in vain. We have been saved from sin, live a life of faith, believe in Jesus, offer praise and worship, pray, and serve—what is the end of all this? It is that we believe in Jesus in order to know and believe in the Lord's righteousness, receive the remission of sins and gain new life, and become those who live again with the Lord rather than those who are dead. As for what the highest purpose is, it is not to die and rot away and go to hell; rather, just as the Lord came to this earth, had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, was crucified, rose again from death and saved us, and, having risen again, is seated at the right hand of the throne of God and lives in the kingdom of God the Father, we believe in Jesus in order to live like that too.

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"God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ"

This is the purpose for which you and I believe in Jesus. So Peter, preaching to the Jews, his own people, says as follows: *"Therefore let all the house of Israel know assuredly that God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ" (Acts 2:36)*. He is telling them to know this for certain. The high priests and the Jewish leaders, who claimed to believe in God, arrested Jesus and handed Him over to the Roman soldiers, telling them to crucify Him; and when Pilate tried to release Him, saying that this man seemed to have no guilt, they shouted that he should rather release Barabbas and crucify Jesus, and so they had Him crucified. Yet it says that God has made this Jesus both Lord and Christ. The word 'Lord' literally means that He is our Master. He is originally our Creator and the Prince of life. And that God made Him Christ means that Jesus came to this earth, removed all our sins, and enabled you and me to receive the remission of sins and new life. Hearing this sermon, the people of Israel beat their breasts, asking what they should do. They were asking what they should do about this sin, since they had killed the Prince of life. But although they killed Jesus, Jesus was not held by death but rose again and went up and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God. So Peter seized this moment as an opportunity and gave his final message. This is the core of Peter's sermon. Everything up to this point was all an introduction; he had been speaking all along in order to say this word.

Let us look at the word. *"Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, 'Men and brethren, what shall we do?' Then Peter said to them, '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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.' And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:37–41). While the people beat their breasts, asking what they should do, Peter says what he now wants to say. *"Then Peter said to them, '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)*. That is what he said.

Here, Dear fellow believers, does one receive the remission of sins by being baptized? Of course, the word baptism and the remission of sins that Jesus has given us are clearly related. But if you and I are baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, do we receive the remission of sins? And then do we receive the Holy Spirit? That is not the case. If we read this word in the order of the original text, it reads like this: Peter said, "Repent; and because your sins have been remitted, let each of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ; and then you shall receive the Holy Spirit as a gift." Here baptism is emphasized, and as for what that baptism is, it is the baptism that Jesus received from John the Baptist when He came to this earth to save mankind, and through this baptism He had the sins of you and me and of all mankind transferred to Him. This is what the word is saying. It is so because the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist and thereby had all of it transferred to Him: the sin of us mankind, your sins, the sins of your ancestors, the sins of your descendants, the sins you will commit as you go on living and the sins you have already committed, all the sins you commit knowingly and unknowingly, and even all the sins you have hidden away.

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He fulfilled all righteousness through the baptism He received from John

Then let us look up the word about the baptism Jesus received and talk about it. *"Then Jesus came from Galilee to John at the Jordan to be baptized by him. And John tried to prevent Him, saying, 'I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?' But Jesus answered and said to him, 'Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.' Then he allowed Him. When He had been baptized, Jesus came up immediately from the water; and behold, the heavens were opened to Him, and He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him. And suddenly a voice came from heaven, saying, 'This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased'" (Matthew 3:13–17).*

The scene in which Jesus receives baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River is recorded most concretely and in the greatest detail, out of all the Old and New Testaments, in this passage of the Gospel of Matthew. Jesus came from Galilee to the Jordan River. At that time, John the Baptist was baptizing people at the Jordan River. So Jesus went to John the Baptist, who was giving baptism, bowed His head, and told him to baptize Him. John the Baptist declined, saying, *"I need to be baptized by You, and are You coming to me?" (Matthew 3:14)*. This was because Jesus is the Son of God the Father and the Savior of mankind, the Lamb of God who came to bear the sin of mankind, that is, the sacrificial offering, and also the One who has the authority to remit the sins of people, whereas John the Baptist was a created being and a man. That is why, in John the Baptist's eyes, it was not fitting for Jesus to receive baptism from him. But Jesus said, *"Permit it to be so now, for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Then

John allowed it, and Jesus received baptism. Here, to fulfill all righteousness means that it is right to accomplish all that is right. That Jesus went to John the Baptist, bowed His head, had two hands laid on Him, received baptism, and went into the water and came out, was a most essential matter in accomplishing all that is right, something indispensable and absolutely necessary. So Jesus commands John the Baptist: "Permit it now. By your baptizing Me, pass all the sins of all people on to Me; and I, having all the sins of all people transferred to Me through you, will be crucified and rise again from death, become the Savior of all mankind, and make all people sinless—this is the blessing I give you because I love you, and it is the most righteous thing I can do."

He commanded like that, saying, "Because I have come to this earth as the Savior of mankind, if I do not have your sins transferred to Me through baptism, you will always have sin and go to hell; so because I have come to bear your sins, I must receive baptism." So He received baptism from John the Baptist. So when Jesus received baptism and came up out of the water, the gate of heaven opened, and God the Father said, *"This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased" (Matthew 3:17)*. Who is the One who has just received baptism and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him? It means He is none other than the Son of God the Father. And He called Him the One in whom He is well pleased. It says, *"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)*. Why did God send His Son to this earth? He sent Him because He loves all people. He sent His only begotten Son to us in order to let all people obtain everlasting life, to give them the blessing of gaining new life, a life that can live forever. So Jesus received

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baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him.

The Lamb of God, who went to the Cross bearing the sin of the world

After Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him, the Gospel of John has this word: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29).*

Dear fellow believers, John the Baptist is now testifying of Jesus. He is telling the people to look at that Jesus, saying that He is the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. It is because he himself baptized Jesus. The word baptism has the meanings of being washed, being passed on, and being buried. So Jesus received baptism in order to wash away our sins, and in order to wash away our sins, Jesus had to receive baptism from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind, and have our sins transferred to Him. That is why, after Jesus received baptism, John the Baptist testified, *"Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29).* The sins that you and I commit in this world are the sin of the world. When did Jesus have the sins of you and me transferred to Him? He had the sins of you and me transferred to Him when He received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Then when did Jesus come to this world? He came to this world about two thousand years ago and received baptism from John the Baptist when He was thirty years old. So the sins of you and me were passed on to the body of Jesus Christ about two thousand years ago. When Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist

and had all the sins of this world transferred to Him, you and I had not yet been born, nor were we in the bodies of our parents. Even before we were born, Jesus came to this earth as the Savior of mankind, received baptism from John the Baptist once and for all, had the sins of all people transferred to Him, and became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world.

Where did that Lamb go? He went to the Cross. Why did He go to the Cross? Because He had all the sins of you and me transferred to Him through baptism, He went to the Cross in order to be crucified and receive the judgment for the sins of you and me in our place. And as He died hanging on the Cross, He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*. Why did He say so? He said so because He had completely accomplished the work of removing our sins and had become our Savior. So, returning to this word again: if we did not know that Jesus is our Savior, if we had sin, if we kept worshiping idols and seeking other things even while knowing who God is, if we committed many of the sins that God tells us not to commit and will keep committing them in the future, then we must turn back. This is not swearing that we will never commit those sins again. It means that we must return to that Jesus who saved you and me and made us sinless, and believe that this Jesus had the sins of you and me transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, sacrificed His own body on the Cross, died and rose again, and thereby became the true Savior of you and me and gave us true remission of sins.

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Believe rightly in the Lord, who removed sin once and for all

This is true repentance. Committing sins every day and praying, "Lord, please remit this sin," every time we sin—that is the religion of the world. Whether big sins or small sins, we commit many sins, but the Lord removed even all those sins. For our part, if we have committed even one small sin, we must confess and admit before the Lord that we did wrong, but begging the Lord to remit that sin every time we sin is the faith of the religions of the world. The Lord did not remove the sins of you and me in such a stingy way. He came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist at the age of thirty and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, was crucified and died on the Cross once and for all, rose again, and became the Savior of those who believe, forever. Therefore, when we believe in Jesus, we must not believe in a stingy way. What would happen if all the people in the world asked for the remission of each sin they commit every day, each time they commit it, and the Lord had to say each time, "All right, all right"? In the old days parents sometimes had more than ten children; if seven of those children went out and did wrong and came back every day saying, "I did this wrong, I did that wrong," and the parents had to say each time, "It's all right," they would have no time to hoe the fields all day long. Parents embrace all the faults of their children as a whole. As long as the children do not do things that would send them to hell and do not do things that destroy other people, parents accept them all; and even if they have done such wrong, parents accept their own children all the same.

As it says, *"God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son" (John 3:16),* Jesus came to this earth to remove

all our sins, received baptism from John the Baptist and had all our sins transferred to Him once and for all, was crucified and died once and for all, died and rose again once and for all, went up and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God the Father, and has become our eternal Savior. Therefore, you and I must know and believe, "Ah, when the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist at that time, He had my sins transferred to Him—and the sins of my children, the sins of my parents, the sins of my ancestors, the sins of the people yet to be born, the sins of all people ever since this mankind came into being—He had them all transferred to Him." When we believe in Jesus, there are many cases where we do not know the word and believe in a stingy way. That is why, even after believing in Jesus, we become sinners every day.

Even after believing in Jesus, people say, "Lord, I am a sinner. Please remit this sin," and so they are sinners before believing in Jesus and sinners after believing, and they live as sinners every day. The Bible says, *"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, in everything give thanks" (1 Thessalonians 5:16–18)*, yet people come to church every day and only weep, saying, "Lord, I have done wrong," unable even to rejoice, and waste all their time. If it were you, would you do that to your own children? Does the love with which you love your children get overturned overnight? Fundamental love never changes. In the same way, we must know the word of God well. The word that says to repent, and, because your sins have been remitted, for each of you to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ, and that you will then receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, contains several things. It says to repent, to receive the remission of sins, to be baptized because of having received the remission of sins, and that you will then receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Let us look at this in reverse. How do we receive the Holy Spirit? When

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we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit. When the sins in the hearts of you and me are gone, the Holy Spirit comes upon us. The Holy Spirit does not come upon us just because we say, "Come, Holy Spirit." Is the Holy Spirit your possession? The Holy Spirit is God; if there is sin in your heart, does the Holy Spirit come upon you? He does not. When we first receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon us. Then why do we receive baptism after believing in Jesus? Real baptism is received in water that comes up to about the waist, like the river water of the Jordan, just as Jesus received it. Why is river water needed? When one receives baptism, one receives it by having hands laid on him, like this. Why does one receive the laying on of hands? It is in order to pass sins on. John the Baptist laid his hands on Jesus and baptized Him in order to pass sins on to Him, and this is the form in which baptism is received. One passes sins on and goes into the water and comes up again; going into the water signifies death, and coming up signifies resurrection.

When we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift

What is baptism? It refers to Jesus having our sins transferred to Him. In the Old Testament, when a sinner or the high priest laid his hands on the sacrificial offering, the sins were passed on to it. After laying on hands, they cut its throat and collected the blood, cut it into pieces, took out all the unclean parts and burned them, and placed the kidneys and the fat, which God accepts, on the grate, lit a fire beneath it, and burned them before God. In the same way, as for why we receive baptism after believing in Jesus, it is because it said to repent and to receive the remission

of sins. Then how do we receive the remission of sins? The Lord came to this earth and received baptism from John the Baptist, and thereby settled the sins of you and me once and for all. And bearing our sins, He went to the Cross and was crucified and died. And He said, *"It is finished!" (John 19:30)*.

What were the last words the Lord spoke as He was dying? They were that it is finished—that He had completely finished the work of removing your sins. And after He died on the Cross, He rose again and is seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and on the day when the history of this earth ends—when those who believe in Jesus have become abundantly many, so that in God the Father's sight this earth is no longer needed and a new world, the kingdom of heaven, is needed—He will come again to this earth, take the believers with Him to the kingdom of God, and live there forever. He did all that in order to do this. That is why we must repent properly. Pleading that we did wrong is not repentance. That is merely religious repentance, and true repentance before God is to admit, "No matter how hard I try, I cannot help but sin, and even when I make up my mind, I cannot help but sin. From the time I am born until I die, I am a lump of sin, a person who does nothing but sin until I go."

That is why one asks, "Lord, please save me. How did You save me? Did You come to this earth and receive baptism from John the Baptist and have all my sins transferred to You? And did You take away the sin of the world—did You take in advance and bear, through baptism, all the sins I commit in this world, go to the Cross and get crucified and die, and rise again from death, and save me? Why did You make me sinless like this? Did You have all my sins transferred to You through baptism? So have all my sins been passed on?" All the sins of you and me were passed on when the Lord received baptism from John the Baptist. For us who are like this, Jesus bore all the

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sins of you and me and died on the Cross. The death of our Jesus is the death of you and me. Because He died bearing the sins of you and me, the resurrection by which Jesus rose again is the coming to life of you and me. When we believe in Jesus, we must believe this surely; only then do we receive the remission of sins and receive life as a gift. The Holy Spirit is a gift, a gift given to those who have received the remission of sins. That is why, when we believe in Jesus, we must believe rightly.

Dear fellow believers, look at what Peter preached. He says to repent and to be baptized because of having received the remission of sins. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist and had all sins, the sin of the world, transferred to Him; because of that sin He was crucified and received all the judgment; and He died and rose again and became our Savior. We receive the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of that Jesus, that is, the righteous love by which God, loving us, had our sins transferred to Him once and for all and received the judgment for them once and for all. Therefore, we believe in the baptism that Jesus received from John the Baptist when He came to this earth, and we receive baptism.

Who is John the Baptist? He is the representative of mankind. It was the will of God the Father to establish a representative and pass the sin of mankind on to Jesus. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the representative of mankind; He went bearing the sin of the world and was crucified; and He died and rose again and became our eternal Savior. Therefore, you and I receive the remission of sins by believing in the righteousness of that Jesus Christ, that rightness, that love, and the fact that He has removed our sins. When this happens, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. When we receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts and says,

"You are My child," and He dwells in those hearts at all times; and whenever we are lacking and weak and commit sin, the Holy Spirit keeps testifying, comforting, and assuring in the hearts of you and me, saying, "Jesus had that sin of yours transferred to Him too when He received baptism from John the Baptist, and He was crucified and received the judgment for that sin. I have saved you." Through this, you and I surely obtain the certificate that we have become God's children. God has saved you and me, and you and I also come to know, through knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, "Ah, I have become a child of God."

Live breaking the bread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

Now let us look at the last word. *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42).*

Dear fellow believers, it says that after receiving the remission of sins, they *"continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers."* Not just anyone teaches this gospel of the water and the Spirit, this truth. There are many pastors today, but as it says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32),* one must know the truth in order to teach it. Not just anyone preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If pastors themselves do not know it, they cannot teach it to their church members, and a person who can only open the Bible and commentaries and read the letters can never preach.

Can one preach just by writing it down? One preaches what one believes in one's heart. What I want to say is that one can hear the gospel and also believe it through a person who knows

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the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Faith is conveyed. Therefore, we must have fellowship with such people. And we must keep breaking the bread of this gospel of the water and the Spirit with such people. The spiritual bread is believing the fact that our sins were passed on to Jesus' body through the baptism He received from John, the fact that Jesus, with that body, received the judgment for our sins by being crucified, and that He died and rose again and became the eternal Master, God, and Savior of you and me. And finally, we must live a life of serving in a supporting role for the gospel while devoting ourselves to prayer. ✉

Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The gospel that the Apostle Peter preached

< Acts 2:37–47 >

“Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, ‘Men and brethren, what shall we do?’ Then Peter said to them, ‘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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.’ And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, ‘Be saved from this perverse generation.’ Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them. And they continued steadfastly in the apostles’ doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers. Then fear came upon every soul, and many wonders and signs were done through the apostles. Now all who believed were together, and had all things in common, and sold their possessions and goods, and divided them among all, as anyone had need. So continuing daily with one accord in the temple, and breaking bread from house to house, they ate their food with gladness and simplicity of heart, praising God and having favor with all

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the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved."

Peter's sermon, confirmed with many other words

Let us share the word about the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Apostle Peter testified of. The Apostle Peter cited the faith of David in the Old Testament and testified to the Jews that Jesus had become our Lord and Christ. Here comes the word that the Jews who heard this repented and believed this gospel.

If we look at verses 38–39, it says, *"Then Peter said to them, '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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call.'"*

To the Jews who had heard Peter's sermon and asked what they should do, Peter 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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38–39).*

But as I have looked into it, every denomination says that if one receives baptism in the name of Jesus, one receives the remission of sins, and what they mean by receiving the remission of sins is that original sin is remitted and the sins one commits daily are washed away by offering prayers of repentance. Catholicism holds that one's daily sins are remitted by going to confession, and Protestant Christianity holds that if one believes in Jesus and receives baptism, original sin is remitted and actual sins are remitted by offering prayers of repentance.

Why have these people fixed this as if it were a doctrine and believed it, ignoring the baptism Jesus received from John, and become worldly religious people without receiving the remission of sins in their hearts? I came to think about such things. It is truly regrettable. It is all written in the Bible. It says, *"Then Peter said to them, '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)*, and yet these people say that if one receives baptism in the name of Jesus on the condition of believing in Jesus, one receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit; they are only going by the letter. This word is not wrong.

These people do not now know the Bible in detail. While preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, Peter spoke as follows in verse 40: *"And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.'"*

Dear fellow believers, when the Apostle Peter preached the word, that is, when he preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, after saying this in verses 38–39, verse 40 says again that *"with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying."* This means that he confirmed it by citing the grounds in the Scriptures and explained it to them in detail. That he confirmed it with many other words means that he testified of it.

It is because these words were spoken that the Jews believed in the name of Jesus Christ, received the remission of sins, and received the Holy Spirit as a gift. It means that they heard this word, believed, and received the Holy Spirit. The Apostle Peter preached it that way, and the Jews believed it that way.

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The baptism He received from John and the baptism we receive

As you know well, it is written as follows in Matthew 3:13–17: *"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.'"*

It means that Jesus told John to baptize Him and said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. It means that Jesus came to this earth, and when He turned thirty, He went to John, who was giving baptism at the Jordan River, and wanted to receive baptism.

"You baptize Me." "How could I baptize You, Lord? Should I not be the one to receive baptism?" "Do as I tell you. It is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness in this way, by your baptizing Me and My receiving baptism from you. It is fitting to fulfill the righteousness of God."

So John the Baptist had no choice but to baptize Jesus, and Jesus received baptism from John. It means that at this time all the righteousness of God was fulfilled. The word *"it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)* means that Jesus Christ, who came to remove the sin of mankind, received baptism from John the Baptist, who had been appointed as the representative of mankind, and had the sin of mankind passed on to Him and transferred to Him. Then, because He had the sin

passed on to Him, He went to the Cross, was crucified and died, rose again, and saved us.

So it means that Jesus received baptism from John, went down into the water, and came up out of the water. This word explains the gospel of the water and the Spirit in its entirety. Peter confirmed this with many other words. Do I not also give additional explanations after preaching this gospel? For example, do I not bring in this text and talk about it, and explain it with this word and that word? That is why the Jews believed and received baptism.

Dear fellow believers, the reason we receive baptism is not that our sins disappear by our receiving baptism. When Jesus received baptism from John, He bore our sins in this way. That is why it means that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him, was crucified and died, rose again, and became our Savior.

But in Protestant Christianity and Catholicism today, people have thought that one receives the remission of sins if one receives baptism in the name of Jesus, because Acts 2:38 says, *"Then Peter said to them, '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.'"* However, this is because, before Peter spoke this word, there had been the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist on this earth, and so there had been the event of His having the sin of the world passed on to Him. And it is because there had been the event of His being hung on the Cross, receiving the judgment for our sins, dying, and rising again. That is why Peter preached the word to the Jews, saying, *"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."*

At that time, many people understood it. "The Savior Jesus came, received baptism from John the Baptist, bore the sin of

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mankind, was crucified, shed His blood and died, rose again, and saved us! So He is alive now and has become our Savior! That I believe. I believe that Jesus is our Savior, that He bore our sins. I believe that He shed His blood and died, rose again, is alive now, and has become our Savior."

"When the time comes, He will come again. And He will take us with Him." It means that they said, "I believe." And it means that they received baptism because they believed. So it is not that I received the remission of sins because I received baptism; rather, because I believe that when Jesus received baptism from John, He had my sins passed on to Him, I received baptism by faith and confirmed my faith. I proclaimed before the congregation that I believe this way.

Proclaiming in this way that I, too, am a believer—that is the reason for receiving baptism. When we gather for baptism, we ask as follows: "Do you believe that Jesus received baptism from John and that your sins were passed on to Jesus?" "Yes, I believe." "And do you believe that He was crucified for you, shed His blood and died, and rose again?" "Yes, I believe." "Do you believe that Jesus has become your Savior?" "Yes, I believe."

At that moment, saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit," we place our hand on the head and immerse the person in the water. This is baptism. So in this way we confess what we believe: that Jesus received baptism from John, had my sins passed on to Him and washed away my sins, and was hung on the Cross in my place, shed His blood and died, rose again, and became my Savior.

The Christ whom Peter believed in and preached

This is the faith of Christianity. It means that the Apostle Peter preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit in this way and confirmed it with many other words. In my view, the Apostle Peter is like the foremost leader of the early church. He is truly great. The Apostle Peter followed the Lord, and through the Holy Spirit he knew that the Lord was the Christ. And he confessed with the faith that said, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. So he received Jesus' special favor, and Jesus said to Peter that He would build His Church on the rock, that is, on his faith, and that the gates of Hades would not prevail against him, and that He would give him the keys of the kingdom of heaven. It means that Jesus gave the keys of the kingdom of heaven to Peter.

What Peter believed is this: *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God."* "Jesus, You are not only our Savior but also the Christ. You are the King of kings and the Creator, and You became the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, and not with the blood of animals but by coming down to this earth in human flesh, You bore our sins with the baptism You received from John the Baptist, were hung on the Cross in our place, shed Your blood and died, rose again, and became our Savior." That is what he believes. Even though Jesus had not taught him this in detail, Peter made the confession of faith before Jesus.

When Peter confessed, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God,"* Jesus said, "Peter, this is not something you knew on your own; it is what the Father has taught you. It is what the Holy Spirit has taught you." That is the word He spoke.

And Jesus praised his faith and said, "I will build My Church on your faith. And I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven." Dear fellow believers, it means that Jesus is the King

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of kings who created the heavens and the earth, and the Creator of all things in the universe. It means that He is the Most High. Next, He is the Christ. Jesus is the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven. He took on the office of priest. It means that He offered His own body, received the baptism John gave, had our sins passed on to Him, was hung on the Cross and died, rose again, and, by offering Himself as the sacrificial offering, saved us from sin.

And it means that He is the Prophet. It means that He taught us this fact. So it is a confession that says, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God the Father. You are the Son of God the Father, the Creator, and our Savior, and You are our Prophet. The One who taught us this truth is You." So Jesus, too, marveled.

"The Father has taught My disciple everything!" That is why Peter is the foremost among Jesus' disciples. Peter was a fisherman. He had never properly attended school. He may have learned a little, but the schools of old were not like the schools we attend today.

In Jewish villages there were teachers called rabbis. These men taught the word of God and also taught letters, and though Peter learned from these men, he did not learn much. But when we look through the word at Peter preaching, we can see that this man Peter, Jesus' disciple, was a great man. So Peter, while preaching in this way, confirmed what he had preached with many other words, and testified, "Jesus Christ received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again, and He has saved you."

Peter told them that He had not saved only them; rather, as he said, *"For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call"*

(Acts 2:39), it applies in the same way to all who will believe in Jesus in the future. This is a great thing.

Let us look at verses 40–41 together. *"And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them."*

The word Peter preached tells us how we receive the remission of sins. It is to believe that when Jesus received baptism from John, He had our sins passed on to Him, was crucified, rose again from death, and became our Savior. It means that He is the Master of creation who created all things in the universe and the Master of our lives, and that He became our Savior who had our sins passed on to Him with the baptism He Himself received from John and paid the price for sin.

If we believe this, we receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. When we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit. So from now on, whenever all mankind believes in Jesus, they receive the remission of sins by believing in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross. It applies equally to everyone. Whoever believes this way receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit. And it is written as follows: *"And with many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation.' Then those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:40–41)*.

It means that they received baptism because they believed. You and I, too, received baptism because we believe. It is not that I receive the remission of sins by receiving baptism; rather, because I believe that Jesus received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross and died, and rose again, and so paid the price

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of our sins and became our Savior, I confess, as a sign of believing, that I, too, believe this way.

That is, that I am one who believes in the baptism Jesus received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection. I receive baptism in order to confess my faith before the congregation and to be acknowledged. But it means that people think of this only literally.

The baptism He received was not to show humility

It means that people do not know the reason why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in Matthew chapter 3. Those people say that Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist in order to show humility. Does Jesus show humility in such a way? Jesus is not a hypocrite.

Jesus said to John, "You baptize Me," and said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. All righteousness means that it is the right thing.

In other words, this is what He was saying: "I came to this earth to receive baptism from John the Baptist and so wash away your sins, to bear your sins and be crucified, to receive the punishment for sin and die, and to rise again and become your God. That is why I received baptism, and that is why I am to be hung on the Cross. After dying and rising again, I will sit at the right hand of God in heaven, and then I will come again. I have become your Savior."

Even though Jesus is speaking so frankly and plainly, theologians keep attaching absurd claims to it. It is quite astonishing. The early church was maintained for 300 years, and then the Roman Emperor Constantine had the Nicene Creed

drawn up for his own political purposes, and the emperor proclaimed it.

"This is the gospel that the apostles believed, that the early church believed. From now on you must believe this way, and you must not say anything different." The emperor proclaimed this and ordered that this command be kept. Because it was the command of the Roman emperor, no one could refuse.

Moreover, the Christians living at that time were people who ate the food the emperor gave and lived on the money the emperor gave. If anyone spoke out against it, saying, "This is wrong," it meant death. The emperor pursued a carrot-and-stick policy. "If you listen to me well, I will give you the carrot, and if you do not listen to me, I will apply the stick." He actually pursued such a policy. So if they said, "Yes," and followed, he gave them a house and a job and did not persecute their religion, so how good that was!

At first they probably thought this might be paradise on earth. But the emperor said that he would punish anyone who did not believe according to the Nicene Creed he had established and who added to it or took away from it. "Even so, I cannot do that. Jesus went to the Cross because He bore our sins with the baptism He received from John. If He had not borne our sins, could He have gone to the Cross?" the Christians of the early church asked.

Why He received baptism from John

I asked too. When I was attending the theological seminary, I respectfully asked in class, "Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist; do you know the reason why He wanted to receive

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baptism from John the Baptist? If you know, I ask you to please tell me."

I knew roughly, but I wanted to know concretely why Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, in other words, why Jesus had to receive the baptism John the Baptist gave. Even as I asked this question in this way and that and looked at the biblical text, I could not understand it well. Because I could not answer if anyone asked me this question, I sought an answer from the one who was teaching.

But the answer that came back was this: Does the dictionary not say 'baptizo'? The reason Jesus received baptism from John is that it means to be washed and to be buried, so is that not the answer? Since I, too, had looked at the dictionary, I asked him to answer not merely according to what is in the dictionary but according to what I had asked.

I said, "In Matthew chapter 3, Jesus sought to receive baptism from John the Baptist, and John the Baptist declined. But Jesus said that thus we fulfill all righteousness, and He received baptism from John the Baptist. Might there not be a meaning here that we do not know?" Then the answer that came back was that he could only say what is in the dictionary and had nothing more to say, and that if he were to say a little more, would it not be that He received baptism out of humility? But there is no word in the Bible that says He received baptism out of humility.

Jesus said that He fulfills all righteousness. 'Houtos dikaiosyne,' that is, He said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. Why would Jesus have gone to John the Baptist, offered His head, and asked for baptism?

We must look at the word of the Bible, not at answers such as that He received baptism out of humility, or that it means being buried or being washed. We must see what the text says.

To learn something, we must ask the question properly and hear the answer that fits the question. Only then will we not forget it for all eternity.

But no one could answer.

I agonized over this text for nearly ten years. And I searched countless books. Commentaries, sermon collections, every book said to be famous—I looked through them all. In the commentaries, this part is marked as a difficult passage, that is, meaning that it is hard to interpret, and they all pass over it. Yet this must surely have a meaning. I read the Bible straight through from the Old Testament to the New Testament, and then read it straight through again, or read only the New Testament from beginning to end—I read it many times in this way. Then it came time to read this text again.

But that day, it was as if a fluorescent light had come on in my heart. John the Baptist? Looking at the Bible, John the Baptist was the son of a priest. Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist? Thus we fulfill all righteousness. The fluorescent light came on. Aha! In the Book of Malachi He had said that He would send Elijah; then in Matthew 11:14 Jesus said that this man was the Elijah who was to come; and then in Matthew 11:11 He said that the greatest among those born of women was John the Baptist—aha, He had appointed him as the representative of mankind!

So John the Baptist baptized Jesus and thereby passed the sin of mankind on to Him! The high priest lays his hands on the sacrificial offering. He does the work of passing on sins. He does the work of passing on the sins of the people. This is it! Jesus received baptism from John and so fulfilled all righteousness. He had all sins passed on to Him. And He went down into the water. Going down into the water speaks of death, and coming up out of the water speaks of the resurrection.

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Jesus received baptism from John and had the sin of mankind transferred onto His body, and while bearing the sin of the world He was crucified and died, rose again, and became our Savior! That is why He said that He fulfills all righteousness! I had been reading the Bible for thirty minutes, and then I could not say a word.

In my heart I said, "So that is how it is!" So Jesus took away my sins! He took away the sins I committed, too, and the sins from my mother's womb until the day I die; not only mine but the sin of mankind from Adam onward, all the sins of this world—He took them away and fulfilled all righteousness! There it ended.

My heart had always been stormy and lashed by many waves because of my sins, but that day it was as if there were a very wide lake, and the lake was calm, and someone threw a tiny pebble into the lake and ripples spread out. The ripples began to spread very gently. And then peace came to my heart. Aha, so that was it! That is how I was born again. I received the remission of sins. Through the word. And for thirty minutes I could not say a word.

Without the baptism He received from John, Jesus could not go to the Cross and die. So I prayed before the Lord. Lord! With the baptism You received from John, You bore my sins, died on the Cross, rose again, and became my Savior. I believe in You, Lord. I will preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world.

But You know too, Lord—that there is not a single person in this world who preaches this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Theologians, doctors, pastors—all people now are speaking only of the blood of the Cross. But because there is the baptism the Lord received from John, there is also the blood of the Cross,

and death, and resurrection, and the Lord has become our perfect Savior.

Just as the sins of the people were passed on by the laying on of hands when the atonement sacrifice was offered in the Old Testament, You truly fulfilled it according to the word of prophecy! That is how I met the Lord. And I prayed. Whether people accept it or not, I will preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit to the whole world. From then on my heart overflowed with peace and was filled with the Holy Spirit. From then on the word of God began to pour out from my heart.

I had to preach this to anyone. When I took hold of people and preached it to them, they received the remission of sins. After talking with me just a little, the sin in their hearts disappeared and their faces shone like the sun. But those people were not people who knew and believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit as I did. They were people who believed by doctrine. They were people who believed according to the doctrine of Protestant Christianity that if one believes in Jesus and receives baptism, original sin is remitted and actual sins are remitted by offering prayers of repentance. So much time passed as I preached this gospel again and again.

Because there is the baptism, there is the Cross

The Roman emperor had the Nicene Creed drawn up in A.D. 325, and from then on the faith that the Christians of the early church believed was wiped off the face of this earth. Protestant believers and Catholic believers today, those who believe in God, have lived deceived for 1,700 years. Even so, will you say that Jesus did not receive baptism from John and take away our sins? Tell me. The whole Bible, Old and New Testaments, says so.

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Why did you do away with the fact that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John, and removed sin—washed away sin? Is this not obstructing the work of God? Turn back. If you do not turn back, you will taste the fire of hell.

The Cross exists because there is the baptism Jesus received from John. Where is there a result without a cause? Jesus is the God of righteousness, yet when people make up a doctrine and tell others to believe it unconditionally, there is sin whether one believes or not, so is that not a fraud?

I will preach this so that all the people in the whole world can know it. Some may say, "Then how do you intend to withstand the persecution?" but that is a matter for that time, and even if it costs me my life, I will make known what must be made known. And if what I say is wrong, all you have to do is not believe it, is that not so?

If what I say is right, believe it. There is only this one reason. I am not asking you for money, nor am I demanding anything.

The Lord met me. That Lord received baptism from John for me, bore my sins, went to the Cross and died, rose again, and became my Savior. Just as He saved me, He has also saved you. Did the Lord not save Peter in this way too, and did Jesus not save Jesus' disciples in this way too?

It is because there was the word of God that light came into being in the world. The universe came into being, and we came into being, and because Jesus exists, heaven and hell exist too.

The Holy Spirit who comes quietly

Dear fellow believers, let us leave the deeper story for later; the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Apostle Peter preached is truly amazing. Even now, if we believe that Jesus

bore the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John, and believe that He was hung on the Cross and died and rose again and that He has become our Savior, we receive the remission of sins in our hearts and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit is not a fiery One. He is a very quiet One, like a dove. The Lord is not One who works in the midst of fire; He works very quietly through the truth. Jesus' work of salvation is not noisy.

The truth is not noisy. The truth is conveyed quietly, by itself alone.

We receive the remission of sins by faith. We receive the Holy Spirit by faith. Modern theologians today say that one received the Holy Spirit when one believed in Jesus, and that one receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit by offering prayers of repentance or by praying. That is religion.

It means that the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are received quietly. Then one may ask what it was when the Holy Spirit came upon them on the Day of Pentecost. That was God keeping the word of the promise of the Old Testament to the disciples. And now, we are not people who have Jesus with us as the disciples did when Jesus was on this earth. Now, just as the Apostle Peter preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit to the Jews, we today, 2,000 years later, believe this fact that Jesus came to this earth, received baptism from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross and died, rose again, and became our Savior.

Jesus' disciples received the Holy Spirit in that way, but it means that people of later generations each receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift when they believe in the Lord, who received baptism from John, bore our sins, was hung on the Cross and died, rose again, and became our Savior. So God

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fulfilled the word of the promise of the Old Testament to Jesus' disciples, and because Jesus had ascended, the fact that the word Jesus had promised was fulfilled in that way at Pentecost was limited to Jesus' disciples.

It means that we now have come to receive the remission of sins in our hearts and at the same time receive the Holy Spirit by hearing the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus' disciples, that is, the apostles, preached. *"For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39).*

This is the word spoken to us. This word says that all people who will be born in later generations, too, will receive the remission of sins and at the same time receive the Holy Spirit as a gift if they believe in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross.

Confirm it with the word of the Bible

Dear fellow believers, the word of God is without error even in one jot or one tittle. The reason people are confused about this is that they think that since the Holy Spirit came upon them on the Day of Pentecost, the Holy Spirit comes upon anyone unconditionally if only they believe in Jesus. That is not so.

How do we receive the remission of sins? We receive the remission of sins by believing in the work of Jesus. The Apostle Peter confirmed it with many other words, bringing in and explaining everything, even Jesus' receiving baptism from John. That is why those who heard could believe that Jesus is surely our Savior.

Both you and I—if there were no word of God, if the word written in the Bible were not presented as evidence—could we

receive the remission of sins by believing only my words? We could not. That is superstitious faith. Preaching according to my own thoughts is not the word of God. We preach the word of God. We have become those who have received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

Dear fellow believers, when one has been deceived for 1,700 years, that very deception becomes the truth. It is because they have been deceived for as long as 1,700 years. Dear fellow believers, I can say it precisely: that they deceived people for 1,700 years. How did they deceive? I can present all the historical grounds and explain everything—when, where, what, and how they did it.

Then one may ask, "Are you challenging them?" I am not challenging; I am testifying of the truth. I am saying, let us reform our hearts and believe, and go to the kingdom of heaven that the Lord desires. Whether to go on being deceived or to believe is up to each person. Dear fellow believers, when someone tells you something good, you should listen with gratitude and confirm with the word of the Bible whether it is indeed so or not.

Some may also say that I am preaching something that others do not preach. But is that not how it is written in the word? If this is wrong, tell me what is wrong in the Hebrew or in the Greek. I, too, will refute it. And bring any scholar you like. I will talk with them. Let us close with prayer and praise. ✉

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CHAPTER

3

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The church must give the world complete spiritual salvation

< Acts 3:1–10 >

“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

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Peter and John, who went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour

The early church set fixed times and prayed three times a day. These were the three times of the third hour, the sixth hour, and the ninth hour, which in today's time would be about nine in the morning, twelve noon, and three in the afternoon. In the days of the early church, too, there was the temple. The people of Israel gathered at the temple, offered sacrifices to God, and worshiped God. For the people of Israel, the temple was the center of their hearts. As the word says, *"Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1)*, these two men, Peter and John, were also going up to the temple to pray at the ninth hour.

At that time, in that place, it says, *"A certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple" (Acts 3:2)*. At a small gate among the entrances into the temple there was a lame man. People had deliberately placed this lame man at the entrance of the temple. This was so that this lame man could beg from the people going into the temple. It was because people who believe in God respond well to begging.

Like the other people, Peter and John were also heading toward the temple in order to go into the temple and pray. As Peter and John were about to go into the temple, this lame man begged, saying, "Please give me a penny." God is a God of mercy. A person who believes in God must show mercy. The lame man knew the word of God better.

"Please give me a penny. If you go into the temple without giving me a penny, you are not a person who believes in God. If you go into that temple and pray without helping a lame man

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like me, would God listen to you?" It was with that meaning that he said, "Please give me a penny." Peter and John—in fact, these were men who had no money. The two of them looked at the lame man. The two looked at him at the same time, with the same look in their eyes. And their hearts were in accord.

"What I do have I give you"

Peter said, *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6)*. Peter and John had no money, but they truly had something precious within them. It was Jesus Christ, who was in their hearts. Rather than the question of whether it was right to give a penny to this lame man who said, "Please give me a penny," or whether it was right to command this lame man in the name of Jesus Christ, raise him up, and make him walk about as a completely sound man, the point is that Jesus Christ was actually within them. This Jesus Christ is the One who had all the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, who shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin in full, and who rose again from death. Even though they had no silver and gold, this One was in their hearts, and so Peter and John had something to give.

When the man who was begging said, "Please give me a penny," Peter and John said to him, *"Look at us" (Acts 3:4)*, and he looked at Peter and John. He looked at them with the thought of what he would get and what they would give. Though Peter had no silver and gold, saying, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6)*, he took him by his right hand and lifted him up. When Peter commanded in the name of Jesus Christ and lifted him up, it says of that lame man that

"immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:7–8). Then it says that *"all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him" (Acts 3:9–10).*

They were greatly amazed, wondering how this man who had been lame, who had lived as a lame man for over forty years from birth, had risen up, and how he was leaping and walking like that and praising God. If we read on further, the people looked intently at Peter and John and regarded it as though this had been done by their own power and godliness. But Peter and John declined it. They said not to think it so strange that this had happened, and that it was not they who had made this happen, but that Jesus Christ had done it.

What the world wants from the church

We have thus looked over the whole outline of the passage. What do people want from the Church of God? People have the thought that they might get something through the Church of God. They hope for something and also demand something. But what can the Church of God really give? If it can give nothing, the Church of God would be nothing in this world. The Church of God is not to get something from the world; the Church of God is to give. In these difficult times, when the people of the world say to the church, "Please give me a penny," does the church have a penny to give? When the world says to the church, "Please give me a penny," if the church has nothing to give, the church is nothing to the world.

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Yet people demand something from the Church of God. They think that if they come to the church, they can get something. They think they can get God's blessing. They also think they can get material things. They think that for them, too, nothing is impossible, and that everything is possible. That is because it is the Church of God. It is because in the church there is the name of Jesus Christ and the name of God. Right now the people of the world want something from the Church of God. The more difficult the world becomes, the more the people in the world demand something from the Church of God. It is because, in the end, the only place to lean on in this world is the Church of God.

But what can the churches of today in this world give to the people of the world? Can they give money? Or what else can they give? If there is something they can give, let them try giving it. If they have nothing to give, people will be disappointed with the church and will all leave. The church will end up closing its doors. It is because it has nothing to boast of. It is because people come to church only when there is something to gain. A church where there is nothing to gain will be left empty. The question is what people actually get through the church when they go through tribulation in the world. Right now countless people attend church.

All this time, while attending church, they have brought and offered many things. Believing that it would bring them blessings, they even borrowed other people's money to pay their tithes in advance. Believing that they would receive the remission of sins if they believed, they also offered many prayers of repentance, saying that they believed in Jesus. For the most part, they have offered more to the church than they have gotten from it. They have offered their time, service, effort, material possessions, and everything else besides.

There may also have been people who went in and out of the church as if they regarded the church as their own home. Perhaps they regarded the church as even more important than their own homes and brought and offered everything they had to the church. Some people sell their houses and offer the money to the church. Some people have given up their whole youth and offered it to the church. The question is what they can get from such a church now, in these difficult times. When they are really in difficulty, what can they get through the church? Right now the church members of the whole world are facing a crisis. The question is, they have believed in God, and now that they are in difficulty, what help is there that they receive?

Many people who attend church will be disappointed. They will feel much disappointment through the church. It is because when they go through tribulation in the world, the church has done nothing for them. They think that if it has done nothing for their flesh, it ought at least to have done something for them spiritually. Of course, that is because the church, too, is one group in society where people gather. But people come to the church wanting spiritual things more than any material things.

What the church can give is the name of Jesus Christ

The Church of God, and also every church in this world, must give people something spiritual. It must be able to give. If it cannot give, that is a problem. If it cannot give, if it believes only in the outer shell, then it is a hireling. Rather than giving help, it is a church that has nothing to give. Countless churches in this world today are such churches. They are giving nothing to all the people of the world. They cannot give God's blessing.

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They cannot give material things. They have not given true faith. They have not given spiritual salvation either. So they are becoming useless churches.

But there really is the Church of God in this world. The Church of God, and also the servants of the Church of God, have something they can give to everyone who begs for something in the world. The servants of God have no silver and gold, but they can give Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ can become everything to us human beings. Jesus Christ can give material things, too. Jesus Christ can also remit all the sins in our hearts. Jesus Christ can save us from sin, from judgment, from destruction, and from the curse. Jesus Christ can give us blessings. The point is that Jesus Christ can give every blessing.

Through whom, and through where, does He give them? The point is that He gives God's blessings through the Church of God, the servants of the Church of God, and all the saints. The work of God is manifested through the servants of God. God's blessing is also manifested through the Church of God. The work God does, He does through His own servants and His own Church. When people come to the church and say, "Please give me a penny," they do not get money, but rather than a penny of money that disappears completely after a single meal, God is the God who gives the eternal remission of sins, the salvation by which one can go to the kingdom of heaven forever. It is because, rather than receiving a penny of money, if the lame man receives strength in his feet and ankles and rises up and leaps and walks, he can earn money by himself, he can praise God by himself, and he can receive many more blessings.

To all the people of this world who say, "Please give me a penny," God gives all the fundamental blessings, which are more valuable than a penny of money. That is because if one receives this salvation, this remission of sins, which God gives, one

receives everything. If one receives the salvation God gives, one becomes one of God's people. All one's sins are remitted. One becomes a completely righteous person. One becomes a holy, righteous person before God. When one becomes a holy saint before God, one of God's people—that is, when one receives the remission of sins that God has given in the name of Jesus Christ—then God gives all the things that are needed and that follow after it, money and all these things. God gives the best blessings of heaven through the Church of God and through the servants of God. He gives them in the name of Jesus Christ.

In the name of Jesus Christ there is a precious blessing. Jesus came to this earth and received baptism from John, and so had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him. Jesus had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him and received the judgment on the Cross for us. Jesus has saved us. To believe in God is to have all one's sins remitted through Jesus Christ. If we want to receive blessings from God, if we want to get something, we must receive the remission of sins before God. That remission of sins is received by believing that Jesus Christ came to this earth and received baptism from John and so had all our sins transferred to Him. And we must believe that He bore the sin of the world and received the judgment in our place, and that He took away all our sins and was judged for them for us. This is the salvation God has given. This is the very faith that Peter gave to the beggar, the faith that said, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6)*. We are saved by believing in this work, that Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross for us. A person who has been saved by believing in Jesus Christ as his own Savior, in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and in the blood of the Cross, does not perish. If people want to receive true blessings, they must first receive this remission of sins that Jesus gives.

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Spiritual cripples must first receive the remission of sins

Those who do not receive this and beg toward the church, saying, “Please give me a penny,” will go back empty-handed. Those who until now have believed in Jesus without receiving the remission of sins, and who have only tried to get something while believing in Jesus, will all perish. Except for the born-again people in the whole world, all those who have not been born again will not rely on Jesus Christ and believe in Jesus Christ, but will believe in the Antichrist. In their hearts they will not truly want it to turn out that way. But if they do not meet the true servants of God and the true Church, they will end up serving the Antichrist as God. Therefore, those who have first received the remission of sins must rescue the people in this world who are begging, “Please give me a penny.”

This begging cripple is a spiritual cripple; a person who believes in Jesus but still has sin is a spiritual cripple. His whole body is perfectly fine, but he just cannot get up because there is no strength in his ankles. He believes in Jesus well, but there is sin in his heart. Such a spiritual cripple must believe in the name of Jesus Christ and in the remission of sins given to him through His water and blood. In this world there are truly many spiritual cripples. Even among those who say they believe in Jesus, there are truly many spiritual cripples. They believe in Jesus well, but they have sin, and that is their flaw. They believe in Jesus well, but they are not God’s people. That is why they are always begging in the world. They are always begging toward the people who go into the church. They ask them, “Pray for me,” and they beg God for help as well. Though they are sinners, they ask Him to help them and to bless them. But God cannot help them. The very first thing God gives to a sinner is the remission

of sins. What God gives is not money. It is complete spiritual salvation. That is why spiritual cripples must first receive the remission of sins.

Is the remission of sins received only through the Cross of Jesus Christ? Do you have no sin because you believe only in the blood of the Cross? People believe only in the blood of the Cross, and they believe everything else well, too; they offer prayers of repentance well, attend worship services faithfully, sing praises well, know the word well, memorize the word well, and do everything well—and yet there is sin in their hearts. What good is it to do everything well? When there is sin in your heart, what good is it no matter how much other people acknowledge you? What good is it to be a famous pastor, what good is it to be a famous revivalist, what good is it to be an elder, and what good is it to be a deacon? If there is sin in your heart, you are a person who has nothing to do with God. So the point is that it is precisely such people who are spiritual cripples. What Peter gave to such a spiritual cripple was precisely that faith that said, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6)*. When you meet a servant of God, the very first thing you receive is the remission of the sins of your heart. Spiritual cripples must meet the servants of God. They must seek them. Whoever truly wants to receive the remission of sins before God and to escape from being spiritually crippled must seek a servant of God. It says, *"Ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you" (Matthew 7:7)*. If you just stay as you are without even seeking, you can only remain a cripple forever. Our Lord meets those who truly want to meet Him. Only those who know that they are spiritual cripples will recognize a servant of God. And they will come to meet a servant of God, and they will come to meet the Church of God. They will come to meet righteous people who, like them,

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were spiritual cripples and were completely healed. And they will come to experience a world different from the world they have experienced until now. This is what this word is saying. The word is not saying not to give money. It says to give spiritual salvation rather than money. The Church of God must seek out these spiritual cripples and heal them. The Church of God must truly become the salt of the earth and the light of the world. It must become a church that people truly need.

We are Peter and John

In this whole world there are many material things. In this whole world there are many material things, but there is no salvation of God. True salvation is in the Church of God. The church must truly give people spiritual salvation. It is a fixed law that a person is born once and then dies. A person is born, lives to about seventy, and dies. Therefore, before we die, we must quickly meet the Lord and receive the remission of sins. The Church of God must quickly give people spiritual salvation before they die. It must truly fulfill the role of a useful church. Right now this world is holding out its hand to the Church of God. It is asking for a penny, saying, "Please give me a penny," and asking for help. It is pleading to be saved, to be given the remission of sins. It is asking for help if there is anything that would help. When they ask us for help, like Peter, though we have no silver and gold, we must give them the remission of sins, saying, *"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6).* We must give them the eternal remission of sins. We must feed them the flesh and blood of Jesus. God says this to the Church of God. He says, "In these last days, like Peter, give My name, Jesus Christ of Nazareth, to all the people of the

world." That is because the name of Jesus Christ means the Savior. If you believe in the name of Jesus Christ, you are saved. That is because Jesus is the One who will *"save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21)*. It is because Jesus had all the sins of all the spiritual cripples of this world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, received the judgment on the Cross for us, and saved us. Because Jesus, who died like that, rose again from death on the third day and is alive even now, whoever believes in that name receives the remission of sins and receives strength in his feet and ankles and rises up.

We must open our spiritual eyes, think about what we must do from now on, and do the work. I look at things spiritually. I see many people begging us for help. But materially we have nothing to help them with. Materially, they and we alike will be equally poor. But we can give the gospel of Jesus Christ. Even if we cannot give anything else, we can give Jesus Christ, who is within us. That is because Jesus Christ is in the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins. Why could we not give what we have? No matter how lacking we are, we can give the name of Jesus Christ. Because the name of Jesus Christ is salvation, Jesus is always with us. All we have to do is give. We can give. When we give, the work of God takes place.

God has given a precious church to me and to you. You and I—this church—can give the name of Jesus Christ to this world. We are those who have the qualification. God will work through us. He will preach that name to the whole world and cause their feet and ankles to receive strength, so that they rise up, walk, leap, and praise God. They will praise God with all their hearts and praise Him so that the whole world may know that salvation the Lord has given. God established this church so that it would preach the name of Jesus Christ to the world. I give thanks that

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God has given a precious church and precious salvation to me and to you.

I give thanks that in this age of the end of the world, you and I have first received the remission of sins and are in the Church of God and have become members of the church. I can only give thanks. I give thanks that He has given us the name of Jesus Christ. I give thanks that He has made us the disciples of Jesus Christ. What we must say all our lives is, "Rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth," and we must preach this gospel. He has given us such a gospel and such a qualification. We are Peter, we are John, and we are the twelve disciples of Jesus.

Believe at the very time you hear the word

Dear fellow believers, do you believe that this is the word God has given to the Church of God, to me and to you? We work because we believe. It is faith that rises up, not the flesh that rises up. If we believe in our hearts, faith rises up. Therefore, when we hear the word, we must simply believe it in our hearts. It is because this word is the truth, as the whole of the word is. The servants of God preach the word on behalf of God.

When we hear the word of God, we must not set it aside, saying that we will eat it later when we get hungry. We must eat it quickly. When the people of Israel escaped from Egypt, they hurriedly ate the baked bread and escaped carrying the rest of the dough on their shoulders. It is because, just as the bread or food of this world spoils if it is not eaten right away once it has been cooked, so it is with the word of God.

We must believe the word at the very time we hear it. If we believe the word, it is stored in our hearts. It is more convenient

and lighter to carry the word in our hearts than to carry it around in our hands. To put the word of God into our hearts is to believe it. If we simply believe this word, it enters our hearts. If we not only know the word of God but know it in our hearts and go ahead and believe it, it is believed in our hearts even without memorizing it. When we believe, the work of God takes place. When we believe the word of God, blessings come about.

So I do not want you to end merely with knowing, saying, "Ah, so that is how it is," during the time you listen to the sermon. I hope that you will believe. I hope that you will believe at this very moment. I hope that you will believe that God has made me and you into Peter and John, that all the people of the world will receive help from us, and that God accomplishes this work through the Church of God.

Today you have heard this word about how Peter and John raised up the lame man in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. I hope that you will believe that God saves all the people of this world through you and me. Dear fellow believers, whenever you hear the word, believe it at that very time. And when you go outside the chapel, do not try to memorize this, but believe it in your hearts and go out. There is so much to do out in the world; when would you ever go around memorizing which chapter and which verse that word is in? If you believe this, it becomes your own. That is why I am telling you to believe. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

There is salvation in the name of Jesus

< Acts 3:1–10 >

“Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother’s womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, ‘Look at us.’ So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, ‘Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.’ And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him.”

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A condition that the help he received every day could not change

In front of the Beautiful Gate of the temple there was a man whom other people carried there every day. He held out his hand to those going into the temple, but because he could not rise up and walk by himself, he could not get away from the front of that gate. The event in which this man was raised up shows what kind of salvation there is in the name of Jesus. Before we think about what more we should equip ourselves with in order to come to God, we must know who Jesus, who saves us, is.

Let us read verse 1. *"Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour" (Acts 3:1)*. Peter and John were going up to the temple at the appointed hour of prayer. Verse 2 states that the man they met on that way was a man who had been unable to walk from birth. The purpose for which people carried him and laid him at the Beautiful Gate was to have him beg from those going into the temple. He could come as far as the front of the gate with the help of other people, but that help could not give strength to his feet and ankles.

The word 'daily' in verse 2 reveals his life, in which help was needed again and again. There were people who brought him and there was a place for him to beg, but his condition of being unable to walk continued. But the apostles he met on this day come to preach the name of Jesus, who raises him up, instead of money that would have let that life go on as it was.

Through this scene we must examine our own spiritual condition. We were those who had sin from the time we were born, and who could not remove that sin by our own strength and stand before God. Because our condition does not change through our resolutions and efforts to wash away our sins, we need a Savior who will deliver us from sin. That Savior, Jesus,

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had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of those sins, rose again from death, and delivered us from sin. We must not confuse the fact that we have come near the temple with the fact that we have received the remission of sins, but must listen to this salvation that Jesus gives.

Jesus solves the problem of sin before our difficulties

In verse 3 the man sees Peter and John and asks for alms. Since the two apostles were also people going into the temple, he expected to receive something, as usual. But Peter did not just pass by; together with John he fixed his eyes on him and made him lift his eyes toward them. See what word the apostles now preach in front of a man who is hoping for help.

Let us read verses 4 and 5. *"Fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, 'Look at us.' So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them" (Acts 3:4–5)*. The reason he gave them his attention was the expectation that he would get something, but what the apostles had was different from the silver and gold he was expecting. This difference is revealed in the very next verse. More important than what he expected is whom the apostles standing in front of him believed in and what they could give.

We, too, sometimes seek God while hoping only that the difficulty before our eyes will be solved. Jesus, who knows our difficulties, solves the problem of sin for us before that, because what a person needs first of all is the remission of sins. Therefore, when we hear the word, we must not look only for the parts that

fit our own expectations, but must accept into our hearts what Jesus has accomplished. Just as the apostles told the man in front of the Beautiful Gate what he needed, so we, too, come to know clearly the remission of sins that we need through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Believe the fact of salvation contained in that name

Let us read verse 6. "*Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk'" (Acts 3:6)*. After the words that he has no silver and gold, Peter says that he gives what he has. Peter had faith in Jesus Christ of Nazareth, and with that faith he preached the name of Jesus. Jesus Christ of Nazareth is the Son of God, who actually came to this earth and saved us. In the name the apostle preached is contained the work of Him who delivered us from sin and judgment.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including the sins that you and I commit throughout our whole lives, passed on to Him. So by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He received the judgment for those sins in our place, and He rose again from death and became our Savior. The One the apostles relied on is Jesus Christ, who accomplished the remission of sins in this way, and we, too, believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and stand before God as those who have no sin.

To believe in the name of Jesus is to believe the fact of salvation contained in that name. We must not place the basis of salvation in the sound of saying the name over and over or in the hand of the apostle. Because Jesus, who bore all the sins of the

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world and paid the price of those sins, is alive, the apostle could confidently preach, telling him to walk in His name.

Peter did not tell the man to produce strength by himself, but commanded him to walk in the name of Jesus. When, together with that word, he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, his feet and ankles, which had had no strength, immediately received strength. Let us read verses 7 and 8. *"He took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:7–8)*. Because he first received strength, he was able to rise up and walk, and as a result he praised God. He did not obtain healing as a reward for praising or for going into the temple; rather, because Jesus raised him up, he went in together with the apostles.

We must clearly understand this order in the faith of the remission of sins as well. It is because we believe that Jesus has removed our sins that we receive strength in our hearts and serve God; it is not that we receive the remission of sins as a reward for serving well. If you have been losing the assurance of salvation while looking only at the shortcomings of your own deeds, believe in what Jesus, who has completely saved us, has done. His salvation does not leave us remaining crushed under sin, but makes us live giving thanks to God.

What must we come to know when we see an amazing work

When he walked and praised God, all the people saw him. Let us read verses 9 and 10. *"All the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging*

alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him" (Acts 3:9–10). Because the people knew that he was the very man who used to sit begging at the Beautiful Gate, they considered what had happened to him all the more amazing. The reason the appearance they saw every day and the appearance they now saw before their eyes had changed is that he had received strength in the name of Jesus Christ.

But the amazement of those who watched and the praise of the man who was healed must be distinguished: the people merely marveled at what had happened, while the man who was healed walked, praising God. We must not stop at the fact that there is an amazing work, but must come to know Jesus, who did that work. It was a great thing that a man who could not walk rose up, but for a sinner to receive the remission of sins and stand before God as one who has no sin is a greater thing than that. If we believe in the One who saved us from sin, we come to rely on the remission of sins He has accomplished rather than on our own shortcomings, and our thanksgiving also comes out of that salvation.

The man who had been sitting in front of the Beautiful Gate now walked in together with the apostles. What changed him was not the silver and gold he had received and gathered, but the grace given in the name of Jesus. Let us, too, go beyond the heart that used to seek the help of people, and rely on Jesus Christ, who has completely washed away our sins. We must stand before God with a heart that believes that the basis of salvation is in Jesus, and live praising God, who has given us salvation, as that man did. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Turn and receive the salvation He has promised

< Acts 3:11–26 >

"Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: 'Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 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. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 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, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has

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spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.'"

Who gave this man perfect soundness

When the man who was healed held on to Peter and John, the amazed people ran together to the porch called Solomon's. Because the people looked intently at the apostles when they saw that the man who could not walk had risen up, Peter makes clear through whom that work had come about. Peter does not exalt himself at this opportunity, but testifies of Jesus Christ. We, too, who hear this word, must turn our eyes from where they have rested on people, and rightly know the Savior whom God has sent.

In verse 12 Peter asks why they look so intently at him, as though by his own power or godliness he had made that man walk. The fact that the apostles went up to pray must not be read as a merit by which they had built up their own ability. Verse 13 makes clear that the One who did that work is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and tells that God glorified His

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Servant Jesus. The One called Servant here is the Son, who obeyed God's will and accomplished our salvation.

But the people listening had delivered Jesus up to Pilate and denied Him in his presence. Verse 14 says that they asked for a murderer to be granted to them instead of the Holy One and the Just, and verse 15 rebukes them, saying that they killed the Prince of life. But God raised Jesus from the dead, and the apostles became witnesses of that resurrection. Since Jesus, who had been rejected, had now made this man strong, the people had to know who it was that they had rejected.

Let us read verse 16. *"His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:16)*. The faith that gave the man perfect soundness is the faith which comes through Jesus. The source of that strength is not in the godliness of the apostles, but in Jesus, who rose again from death. Jesus does not stop at healing a body that could not walk; He is the One who delivers a person bound by sin from sin and makes him whole. It is because through the baptism He received from John He had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of those sins, and rose again from death, and so accomplished that salvation. We, too, must turn from exalting people or relying on our own zeal, and accept that salvation is in the living Jesus.

To believe in the remission of sins that has been accomplished is repentance

In verse 17 Peter says that he knows that the people and their rulers did it in ignorance. Even after exposing their sin, he calls

them brethren and preaches the word so that they may now know the Savior and come back. In verse 18 he makes clear that God foretold through the prophets the things that the Christ would suffer, and fulfilled them just as He had said. The word is that Jesus did not fail to accomplish salvation because of people's rejection, but received the suffering that had been prophesied and saved sinners.

The suffering of the Christ, which the prophets foretold, did not begin on the Cross. Because Jesus, by receiving baptism from John, had all the sins of the world, even the lifelong sins of you and me, passed on to Him once and for all, He shed His blood and died on the Cross and received in our place the judgment that we should have received. And He rose again from death and completed our salvation. On the basis of this salvation that has been accomplished, Peter preaches to those listening, telling them to acknowledge their wrong and come back to Jesus.

Let us read verse 19. *"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)*. The word 'therefore' takes up the fulfillment by God that was made clear before. Repentance is not to keep remaining under sin while confessing one's wrongs; it is to turn from what one wrongly knew and believed and to believe in Jesus, who has removed our sins, as the Savior. It says *"your sins may be blotted out"* because God has already removed our sins. It is not a demand that we produce a new salvation; it is a word telling us to believe and accept the remission of sins that Jesus has accomplished.

The reason it says *"times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord"* is that it is not we on our side who soothe our hearts by claiming that we have no sin, but the Lord on His side who tells us that He has removed our sins. Peace comes to our hearts because we know the fact that all our sins have been

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washed away through believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit comes upon the heart that has received the remission of sins and makes that salvation known, not by some feeling, but by the fact that there is no sin in the heart. Therefore, we must not place the standard of repentance in the amount of our tears or the number of times we have confessed, but must examine whether we have believed in Jesus, who accomplished salvation, and have had our sins removed.

The promise that Jesus, who is in heaven, will come again

Peter, who preached *"your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*, goes on to speak of the Christ coming again. Let us read verses 20 and 21. *"That He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20–21)*. We must listen together to the promise that He will send Him and to the word that heaven must receive Him. After rising again from death, Jesus went up to heaven, and He will come again at the time of the restoration of all things, of which God has spoken. The Christ who is now in heaven and the Christ who will be sent in the future are the same Jesus.

The restoration of all things is a promise that God has spoken through the mouth of the prophets. We who have received the remission of sins do not judge God's salvation by the circumstances before our eyes, but wait for the day when that promise will be fulfilled. The power of salvation has not disappeared because Jesus ascended; rather, until that day when He restores all things, anyone can believe in Jesus and receive

the remission of sins, so there is no reason to look again now for another savior who will remove our sins. Because Jesus, who saved us, is alive and will come again, in the faith that has come back to Him there is also hope for the future.

Do not cling to your own thoughts about salvation

Jesus, who will come again, is that Prophet of whom Moses spoke beforehand. Let us read verses 22 and 23. *"Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people'" (Acts 3:22–23).* Moses preached that God would raise up a Prophet like himself and that they must hear Him in all things. Jesus is the true Prophet, who teaches us the way of salvation, and He is the Savior, who Himself bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price for them, and rose again from death. Since all the words He spoke are the word that He has saved us in this way, to hear those words is not to cling to one's own thoughts about salvation but to believe in what He has done.

The destruction in verse 23 is a warning to those who will not hear the word of that Prophet. It must not be changed into the meaning that salvation is decided by whether one has obeyed the words of some human leader. A person is destroyed not because he has many sins, but because he rejects Jesus, who has bestowed salvation, and does not believe His word; so it is a solemn word telling us to accept His word. Verse 24 goes on to tell that all the prophets who have spoken since Samuel also pointed to these days. The testimony of the apostles is not a new

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story separated from the promises of the prophets, but the news that those promises have been fulfilled in Jesus.

The seed through whom all the families will be blessed is Jesus Christ

Let us read verses 25 and 26. *"You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:25–26)*. Peter calls those listening sons of the covenant and reminds them of the promise given to Abraham. The seed through whom all the families will be blessed is Jesus Christ, who came as the descendant of Abraham. The blessing of this promise is not in boasting of one's own lineage, but in being saved from sin through the Son whom God has sent.

The Servant whom God raised up is that Servant Jesus spoken of in verse 13, and the purpose for which He sent Him first was to bless that people and to turn every one of them away from their iniquities. Those who call themselves sons of the covenant yet do not believe in the Savior whom God has sent must turn from that iniquity. Do not wait to receive that blessing after you have become good by yourselves, but turn your hearts to Jesus, who has washed away our sins. When we believe in the remission of sins He gives, we also turn back from the way in which we were going against God's will.

The people gathered at Solomon's Porch looked intently at the apostles, but Peter preached to them to receive the salvation that God had promised. What we need, too, is not amazement

directed at people, but a turning to believe in Jesus Christ. Cast off the heart that rejected Him, and receive the remission of sins that He has already accomplished. The blessing promised to Abraham is the blessing of salvation that has been given to us, too, through Jesus. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Believe and receive the Holy Spirit

< Acts 3:1–26 >

"Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple; who, seeing Peter and John about to go into the temple, asked for alms. And fixing his eyes on him, with John, Peter said, 'Look at us.' So he gave them his attention, expecting to receive something from them. Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God. And all the people saw him walking and praising God. Then they knew that it was he who sat begging alms at the Beautiful Gate of the temple; and they were filled with wonder and amazement at what had happened to him. Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon's, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: 'Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?

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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. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 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, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.'"

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"In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk"

In the days of the early church long ago, the apostles prayed three times a day. So it seems that they set the hours like this and prayed. "*Now Peter and John went up together to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour. And a certain man lame from his mother's womb was carried, whom they laid daily at the gate of the temple which is called Beautiful, to ask alms from those who entered the temple" (Acts 3:1–2)*. When Peter and John went up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour, there was a beggar at the entrance of the temple. The beggar looked up at Peter and John and begged, and Peter, with John, fixed his eyes on him and said, *"Look at us" (Acts 3:4)*. While the beggar was looking at the two of them, Peter said as follows. *"Then Peter said, 'Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk.' And he took him by the right hand and lifted him up, and immediately his feet and ankle bones received strength. So he, leaping up, stood and walked and entered the temple with them—walking, leaping, and praising God" (Acts 3:6–8)*. Seeing this, the people were so astonished that something truly great had happened that they gathered at Solomon's Porch. Having gathered, they greatly rejoiced and marveled, saying that some very special people had appeared, asking whether they might not be the prophets who had appeared in the Old Testament, and whispering that they had now met in this age those who performed such power. Then Peter and John lead this people to Jesus Christ. The beggar who had been begging was healed in the name of Jesus Christ, received strength in his feet and ankle bones, leaped up and walked, and praised God. The word that follows comes out of this event.

This was a single event, and because of it, something happened: people began to exalt the two men, Peter and John, exalting them as special servants of God, as special men. So these two men declined this and said as follows: "Why do you look so intently at us like this? Do you think this happened because each of us served God well in godliness, or by our own power? It is not so. The raising up of this lame beggar is that the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus. Jesus did this. Though we have no gold and silver, when we said, *'What I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk,'* he relied on Jesus and walked by faith. But you delivered Jesus up to Pilate and agitated to have Him killed, and you also denied Jesus Christ in his presence, and instead released a murderer and killed the Prince of life. But God raised Him from the dead, and we are witnesses of this." In this way they testified that salvation is received today through Jesus, and that this Jesus has completely healed the spiritually dull, the sinners who are still bound by sin, serving sin, and lying under the shadow of the curse, just as this lame man leaped up and walked. And they said, "What you did, you did out of ignorance. What has happened is that everything was fulfilled exactly as God had prophesied in the days of the Old Testament through the mouth of the prophets."

Peter, saying that God had foretold that the Christ would suffer and had also fulfilled it all just so, spoke this word that you and I know well. *"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, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before" (Acts 3:19–20)*. It means that he said the Lord would send Jesus to them, that therefore they should repent and be converted and receive the remission of their sins, and that if they did so, times of refreshing

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would come from the presence of the Lord. Although this event now is the event of raising up the lame man, it means that this lame man rose up because Peter said that although he had nothing, he was giving him what he had, telling him to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ.

Because of this event, Peter and John testify of the gospel to the Jews. It means that they 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,"* and that the Lord would also send to them the Christ, Jesus, whom He had appointed for them. This Jesus is the Savior who was prophesied, of whom God had spoken long ago through the mouth of His holy prophets, and it was said that, until God restores all things, He is the One *"whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21)*. It means that until this universe perishes and vanishes, until the first heaven and the first earth pass away and there is a new heaven and a new earth, Jesus Christ is the Savior of all mankind. That is why they told the Jews to repent and be converted and receive the remission of sins, and that if they did so, times of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord.

What must we do to receive the Holy Spirit? To receive the Holy Spirit, people must rise up from a lame life of faith by believing in the righteousness of Jesus Christ. The apostles Peter and John said to the Jews, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*, and that then times of refreshing would come to their hearts through our Lord. It means that they must receive the remission of sins. It is saying that neither the Jews of old nor those who believe in Jesus today have had the perfect faith that believes Jesus to be the true Savior,

the perfect Savior, the One who makes them whole and perfect. That is why those who believe in Jesus must receive the remission of sins, and upon those who have received the remission of sins the Holy Spirit comes and makes their hearts refreshed, makes their hearts without sin, and makes their hearts at peace; but for this to happen, they must repent. How must they repent? It means that they must accept Jesus, who has made perfect what was imperfect like this.

A Prophet like Moses, of whom Moses spoke

So what did the apostles say, quoting the words of Moses? *"For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days" (Acts 3:22–24).* This is what they said. Then let us look up Deuteronomy once. For if we speak without opening the Bible, this, too, can become just one of man's stories. *"The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your midst, from your brethren. Him you shall hear" (Deuteronomy 18:15). "I will raise up for them a Prophet like you from among their brethren, and will put My words in His mouth, and He shall speak to them all that I command Him. And it shall be that whoever will not hear My words, which He speaks in My name, I will require it of him" (Deuteronomy 18:18–19).* Here, after this, it goes on at length about the true prophet. There comes the word that if a prophet speaks and what he has spoken does not come to pass, he is a

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false prophet, and that we should not be afraid of such a one. But here it says that He would raise up one Prophet like Moses. He said, *"Him you shall hear" (Deuteronomy 18:15)*. It said that *"every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23)*, and what time did all the prophets who spoke, beginning from the prophet Samuel until Jesus came, speak of, and whom did they point to? They pointed to the time until Jesus would come, and when Jesus actually came, they were pointing to Him.

So, in the case of the prophet Isaiah, he said, *"Who has believed our report?" (Isaiah 53:1)* and *"Surely He has borne our griefs And carried our sorrows" (Isaiah 53:4)*, saying that we despised Him, and he spoke of how the Savior Jesus would come to this earth and save us mankind from sin, saving us perfectly from destruction and from imperfection. And what God had also said to Abraham was told as follows. *"Saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:25–26)*. God said to Abraham that *"in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed,"* and it said that God raised up His Servant to bless them; here it keeps calling Him a Servant. It speaks of raising up a Prophet like Moses, and it says that He raised up His Servant to bless them. Why did it here keep calling Jesus Christ, the Son of God who came as a man, a Prophet and a Servant? It means that although Jesus is the Son of God the Father and the Creator who created all things in this universe, in order to save you and me, all mankind, He upheld the will of God the Father and came to this earth like a servant and served as a servant. It means that He worked like a servant who upholds the Father's will, like such a servant. That is why it speaks in this way.

God also said to Abraham that *"in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed,"* and that Abraham received the blessing by believing the word of God—and then what? Who comes through the genealogy of Abraham? Jesus Christ is born on this earth through the body of Mary. The Savior of mankind, God, is born on this earth clothed in human flesh. So, when He was thirty years old, He bore your sins and mine by receiving baptism from John. Then He was hung on the Cross and rose again from death, completing all the work of removing our sins, completing the work of becoming our Savior, and completing the work of saving us perfectly. That is how He gave blessings to those who believe. He gave them the blessing of becoming children of God. That is why, as Moses said in Deuteronomy, it says that God *"will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you" (Acts 3:22)*. It said that they would hear all His words, whatever He says.

Hear all the words that the Prophet spoke

It said that this lame man rose up because he received strength in his feet and ankle bones. So this beggar was not a beggar whose body was sound; he had a disability in his body. Paralysis had come to his lower body, so that his nerves could not reach out and he could not get strength to rise up. Had he been able to rise up, he would have earned money himself and made a living, but paralysis had come to his lower body. That is why, dragging his lower body, he begged from those who were called the people of God, who went up to the temple to pray. But when Peter commanded that man, saying that they had no gold and silver but *"what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus*

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Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6), he received strength in his feet and ankle bones and rose up and walked by believing in the name of Jesus Christ. Therefore, what this word is telling us is that it said that a Prophet like Moses would come to this earth and that everyone would hear all His words. It means that whoever does not hear the words of that Prophet will be destroyed, and whoever hears the words of that Prophet will be blessed.

We must hear all the words that He spoke when He came to this earth. And we must believe them. He spoke many words to us, and in reality He showed us many things with this body of His. What that was is His life of 33 years. Through His 33 years of life, He saved you and me from sin. He came to this earth clothed in human flesh as the Savior and received baptism from John the Baptist. Then He bore the sin of the world, suffered much humiliation, and in the end underwent the ordeal of being nailed to the Cross. And He rose again from death and became our true Savior. We must hear the fact that our Lord has saved us so perfectly like this, and we must rise up by faith. We believe in Jesus, but our faith is imperfect. Because our own deeds are lacking and we have sin, we cannot pray to God and cannot have fellowship with God. But it means that by hearing that work, that word—what Jesus Christ did when He came to this earth to remove your sins and mine—and by believing all that He did, we must receive the remission of sins and rise up and walk. It means that we must then praise God and give glory to God, and receive all the blessings that God has given.

The word of the whole of Acts chapter 3 is that word. It means that if we want to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift, if we want our hearts to be refreshed, we must first repent and receive the remission of sins. For this, we must hear all the words that He spoke when He came to this earth, and not only hear them

but also accept them into our hearts. What does it mean to accept them into our hearts? It means that only when we believe and accept in our hearts that all the things He suffered and did in order to bear your sins and mine, to remove them, and to receive the judgment for them were things He did for you and me, things He did to remove your sins and mine, can we receive salvation. That is why, if you and I want to receive the remission of sins, we must accept into our hearts and believe what He did when He came to this earth. Only then can we obtain refreshing in our hearts.

When you and I believe in Jesus, we receive the remission of sins, and when we receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts. That is why the apostles said that they must first repent, that they must repent of having believed wrongly, and that they must hear all the words He spoke. What did He say to us? Did He say that He only died on the Cross for us? We must also hear that it says He first bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and we must also accept that, bearing all our sins, He was nailed to the Cross in our place and received our death and our curse in our place. We must accept the fact that He is truly our Savior, and we must accept into our hearts that although He is the Son of God the Father, in order to save you and me from sin He came to this earth as the Savior, and in order to remove your sins and mine He received baptism from John like that, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our Savior. This is believing in Jesus. This is the way one can receive the Holy Spirit. This is exactly what receiving the remission of sins is.

That is precisely what the Jews, those among the Gentiles today who believe in Jesus, and those who do not yet know Jesus must repent of. It is that the Son of God, upholding the will of God the Father, came to this earth as the Savior of mankind, and

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in order to remove all the sin of all mankind, He Himself received baptism from John the Baptist, was hung on the Cross, bore our sins, received the judgment for all our sins, rose again from death, and became our true Savior. It means that we must accept that. It is not that we believe some things and do not accept others; it means that we must truly accept into our hearts all the words He spoke to us, all the things He did to remove our sins, every one of them. For He said to accept all the words that He spoke. It said that whoever does not hear that word will be destroyed.

To you and me Jesus is the Prophet, and also the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, and also the true King of you and me. It means that, upholding the will of God the Father, He came to this earth as the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven clothed in human flesh, and, not with the blood of animals but by receiving baptism from John on His own body, He bore once and for all the sin of mankind, the sin of all mankind, your sins. So, as the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven, He became the sacrificial offering. Also, by bearing your sins and mine, He is the High Priest. As the Prophet, He spoke words to us, and through the prophets of the Old Testament He told us that He would come to this earth, receive baptism from John, bear the sin of mankind, be hung on the Cross, rise again from death, and save us; but in this age, through you and me who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, He has taught everyone why man was made, why he was born, how he was made, in whom he must believe to receive the remission of sins, and what happens when he receives the remission of sins.

And Jesus Christ is the King of kings. He is the Creator. You and I are created beings, and He is the King. As our King, He is the King who, as the One who *"will save His people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21),* became a man for a little while, bore all

the sins of His people, and by sacrificing His own body saved His people from sin. So He is truly our King, truly our shepherd, truly our Savior, and truly the true High Priest. Therefore we must believe what He has done.

Rise up by faith from lame faith

We must accept all the words He spoke. It means that we must believe them. Today, even if people come to church, even if they are members within the church, even if they live as servants of God and as workers, if they do not accept the word of God, they have no strength. They are like the lame man. In their thinking it is obvious, but they cannot rise up. Just as, when the nerves of the feet and ankles have weakened, one should put strength in them when told to rise and strength should arise in the ankles so that one springs up, yet one cannot rise if the nerve cords are severed—so, although in theory they know it full well, although they know full well that Jesus is our Savior and has saved us by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, in reality they have no spiritual strength of faith in leading their lives of faith. So, even when they receive the guidance of the church, they cannot follow well. The guidance is given like this, that the righteous must live like this and with this purpose, but they cannot follow those who go ahead, and cannot follow the other members. Why is that? It is because they have not accepted into their hearts all the words He spoke. It said to accept all the words He spoke, and that whoever does not accept His words will be destroyed.

It was said that He would raise up a Prophet like Moses, and today the servants of God, playing the role of prophets, are teaching you how Jesus removed your sins and mine. So when

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we hear that word, we must hear it with faith. We must listen in order to accept the word by faith. It means that faith arises only when we listen to the word not in order to know it, but in order to accept it, with the attitude of faith that accepts it, saying Amen, that opens the door of the heart with a single-minded heart and accepts it. Only then does one receive salvation. Only then does one truly repent and become converted and receive the remission of sins.

If you have believed in Jesus until now but still have not received the remission of sins in your heart and have not been made without sin, if you still have sin, it is because you have not accepted the word of God by faith. If you accept the word of God by faith, you have no sin. The Lord came to this earth and, in order to bear our sins Himself, to fulfill all the righteousness of God, and to remove our sins, received baptism from John. Because He received that baptism from John in order to remove our sins, He was then able to bear the sin of the world, go to the Cross, and be nailed to it. He did so in order to make you and me without sin. Therefore you and I must accept it. We must accept the word itself into our hearts by faith. When we do so, the conclusion comes out that your sins were passed on, and that Jesus, who bore your sins, was nailed to the Cross in your place and suffered your death and mine, your curse and mine, in our place.

We must truly accept the word into our hearts. When we hear the word of God, we must listen in order to believe, in order to accept. Sitting in our seats, we think, “He will probably tell the same story again; I just have to get through this hour,” and “It will work out in the future; life will be all right if I live like this; if I live dreaming like this, the course of my life will open up like that in the future; it is just because I am young now; someday it will come true as I dream,” but it absolutely will not

turn out that way. We must accept the word of God to receive blessings. He said to Abraham that in his seed all the families would be blessed. We must accept the work in which Jesus Christ, who was born through the family of Abraham, came to this earth and bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and we must accept that He received the judgment for our sins on the Cross. Only then will your future and mine prosper. We must truly repent. Repentance is to accept that He came to this earth to remove our sins and bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, and to accept that He was hung on the Cross and received the judgment for our sins.

Can you accept it? Knowing and accepting with the heart are different. When we truly accept with the heart, the Holy Spirit sets His seal on that heart. Then the heart becomes refreshed. It becomes, "Ah, I have truly become a person without sin." The head, the heart, and the soul have become clean. Theoretically, in the head, emotionally, in reality, and in the soul, one becomes clean. So it becomes the perfect remission of sins. It said that He would send them a Prophet like Moses, so hear and accept all His words. We must accept what the Lord did when He came to this earth. When we accept the work by which He came to this earth and saved you and me by the gospel of the water and the Spirit, you and I, just as one gains new strength in the legs, gain new strength and gain faith in our hearts, become people without sin and become children of God, also obtain everlasting life, become workers of God, and, by living as He pleases and as He gives us power, come to receive and enjoy all the blessings that God gives.

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Not by personal godliness but through Jesus

This word today is exactly that. It is speaking of the part about receiving the remission of sins, and it is also saying that if we want to receive the Holy Spirit, we receive the Holy Spirit only by accepting the word of God. As the apostle Peter said, it is not that Peter and John prayed faithfully at the hour of prayer, lived good lives, practiced much asceticism, and prayed much so that they obtained power, and that when they told him with that power to be healed, he was healed. It means that the lame man was not healed through personal godliness and power, nor was it done through man; it came about through Jesus, who upheld the will of God the Father and came to this earth as the Savior, whom you handed over, demanding that He be crucified and killed. It happened through Jesus, through the righteousness of Jesus. Jesus bore your sins and mine, received the judgment for your sins and mine, and made you and me people without sin. That is why you and I have become children of God. If we accept this into our hearts, we become people without sin and children of God, and when, like Peter and John, we say that we have no silver and gold but give what we have—rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ—people in reality gain spiritual strength like that, receive the remission of sins, rise up and walk, and lead a true life of faith. It means that this is what it is telling us.

To say that such things come about through our individual ability or strength is a lie. Even in all the works we do, it is because Jesus Christ works together with us—because Jesus works together with you, and Jesus works in me as well—that this power is manifested and fruit is borne as we speak; it is not because you and I are great, because we have ability, or because you and I are godly and serve God well. It is not so. It is

absolutely not the case that a person gains the power to heal diseases because he has prayed much.

The Lord performs such miracles too when He needs to, but you would not think, would you, that our spreading the gospel is not a miracle? That is a greater miracle. That you and I live for the gospel of the water and the Spirit even in the midst of living in this world like this is a greater miracle than a lame man rising up, greater than one rising from the dead. If a person wants to receive the Holy Spirit, if he wants to be without sin, he must receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and when he receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon his heart. So if we want to receive the Holy Spirit, we must believe what that Jesus Christ did. And if we want to believe that, we must first throw away what we have known wrongly and believed wrongly. That is exactly what repentance is. What the word repentance means is this: I was going down a road thinking it was the right one, but as I went along I realized that this was not the road, and I turned back—that is repentance. As one goes along, one says, "Ah, this is not it," and turns right around. That is repentance.

Our sins that were passed on to Him on the day He received baptism from John

We came to know and believe in Jesus as the Savior in order to become without sin by believing in Jesus, to become children of God, and to receive the blessings God has given; but if we are still sinners after believing in Jesus for 10 years, still sinners after believing for 20 years, still sinners after believing for 30, 50, or 100 years, if we are still sinners even after believing for 1,000 years, then we have believed wrongly. We have believed

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without knowing what it is. We have not believed all the words. We have known one thing but not the other. We have left something out. Such people must repent. It said to repent and be converted and receive the remission of sins; so when do our sins disappear? The Lord came to this earth and bore your sins and mine by receiving baptism from John for you and me. That is exactly what His bearing our sins is, and by believing it, our sins are passed on to the body of Jesus Christ. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, when John the Baptist gave baptism to Jesus, our sins were passed on to Jesus Christ. They were passed on through John the Baptist, the representative of mankind. Since it says that *"among those born of women there has not risen one greater than John the Baptist" (Matthew 11:11)*, he is called the representative of mankind. To put it briefly, John the Baptist passed on all sins by giving baptism to Jesus. At that time your sins and mine were also passed on. They were passed on at that time. We must accept this fact.

Having had our sins passed on to Him through that baptism, Jesus went about for three years training and teaching His disciples, and He said that He would now be hated by the scribes and the priests, be nailed to the Cross and die, and rise again on the third day after His death to save them, and that He thus had to fulfill the Father's will. When Peter said, *"Be it far from thee, Lord" (Matthew 16:22, ASV)*, He rebuked him, and the Lord, just as He had said, was arrested while praying in the Garden of Gethsemane. Judas, a disciple of Jesus, came and kissed Jesus. It was a sign arranged in advance. Because he had said, *"Whomever I kiss, He is the One; seize Him" (Matthew 26:48)*, the soldiers seized Jesus and took Him away. As for the charge, it was because He had said He was the King of the Jews. At that time Rome ruled over Israel, so Caesar, the Roman emperor, was king. But since it was said that there was a king in Israel—

although Jesus had indeed said that He was a King, He had said that He was not a king of this earth but the King of those who believe in God—they charged Him with that crime and handed Him over for trial, and they released Barabbas and had Jesus, who had no sin, nailed to the Cross. This came about because God the Father, according to His own will, passed sins on to His own Son through John the Baptist, made His Son have sin, and had Him nailed to the Cross and sacrificed, in order to make you and me without sin. You and I must truly accept into our hearts that the Lord saved us in this way.

At such a time we become children of God, at such a time we become without sin, and at such a time we come to receive the Holy Spirit. At such a time our life of faith becomes whole, and having become children of God completely, from then on faith grows more and more by hearing the word, and even if one does not strive to follow, faith is piled up step by step by hearing the word of God, and by that word moving and working within oneself, one becomes a person who follows the truth. Just as it says that the lame man received strength in his feet and ankle bones, rose up, walked and leaped, and lived praising God, so you and I become like that. Our true life of faith begins from the time when, by accepting in faith that God came to us and became our Savior, bore our sins, and also received the judgment for our sins, we become children of God and people without sin. Like this lame man, we must become people who meet the disciples of Jesus, and, clothed with the strength of Jesus Christ, rise up by faith.

What is the name Jesus? It means Savior. Who is the Savior of you and me? When you are perishing, when you are sorrowful because of sin, when you have done wrong, when you are cursed, when you have become a slave of the devil, when you are suffering, who is the one who will save you? It is Jesus. Apart

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from Jesus there is no one who can save us as the Savior of mankind. Rather, when we have gone wrong, it is the devil, people, and all the evil spirits that trample us down all the more, but God is our Savior. He created us and, in order to let us live forever as children of God, when we had fallen into sin—even before we were born, before we were born through our parents without even knowing Jesus Christ—He knew that we would be born as sinners, commit sin, live under the curse, and perish, and He had compassion on us, came to find us, bore our sins by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment for our sins by being nailed to the Cross, rose again from death, and saved you and me. Therefore you and I must receive the remission of sins by faith, by believing that He became our Savior. We must receive the blessings God gives. It means that we must live the rest of our lives by faith, receiving the blessings God gives, and when this earth and this universe vanish, God makes a new universe again, and we must live reigning as kings in that eternal kingdom of God. That work all remains for you and me, for all mankind. That is precisely the work by which God re-creates us. That is the work by which He causes us to be born again.

The Holy Spirit comes upon a heart without sin

Dear beloved saints, we can know Jesus merely intellectually and believe in Him that way. I would like you to think about whether yours is not a lame life of faith. While saying, "I want to follow the Lord's will. Living like this is the right thing," your body keeps failing to follow—does it not perhaps happen that way?

Accept the righteousness of Jesus Christ just as it is—that He became our Savior, that He became our perfect Savior, that He

received baptism from John, was hung on the Cross, rose again from death, and became our perfect Savior. I ask you to accept into your hearts the fact just as it is, neither taking away nor adding, exactly as it is. Then He will become your Savior, come upon your hearts as the Holy Spirit, hold you fast, and guide you as children of God. He will take responsibility for your future with the word of God.

I ask you to entrust your lives, your very selves, to the Lord. And I ask you to believe. To entrust is to believe. If you cannot believe, you cannot entrust. Everyone in the whole world who is within Christianity must receive the Holy Spirit. They must receive the remission of sins. They must accept all that He did and the words that He spoke. That alone is the way to live, that alone is the way to receive the remission of sins, and that alone is the way to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not One who comes because people cry out loudly, "Lord, Lord." The Holy Spirit is not One who enters the heart of a person who has sin just because he says, "Lord, come. Enter my heart. Holy Spirit, I receive You."

When we accept into our hearts just as it is what our Lord has done for us, then because sin has disappeared from our hearts, because our sins were passed on to Jesus and Jesus paid in full the judgment for our sins, and because He became our Savior, the Holy Spirit came upon our hearts, saying, "Yes, you are God's people." So He has come in and dwells there. So we do not become sinners. Even though we are lacking, that Holy Spirit is in our hearts. It means that He is not One who comes in and then goes out, saying, "I refuse." The three—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—are all the same God to us. God the Father created all things in this universe and planned and predestined our salvation in His Son. We were all alike created beings, but God planned and predestined to make us children of God, to

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remove our sins in His Son and make us children of God. He prepared this in advance, and when the time came He sent Him, passed our sins on to Him and had Him bear them, and had Him receive all the judgment, so that He became our Savior. Therefore, in this age, He has had this gospel preached through the servants of God. He has made those who believe become children of God. So Jesus came to this earth, bore your sins and mine, received all the judgment for sin, rose again from death, and became the Savior of you and me, and Jesus, having risen again from death, has gone up and is at the right hand of the throne of God. He is seated at the right hand of the Father.

Now, as for through whom He works in this age: the servants of God and the people of God who believe in God's gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the Holy Spirit, work. God the Father planned our salvation; the Son came to this earth and accomplished our salvation by obeying like a servant what the Father had planned, rose again from death, and went up; and now the Holy Spirit, the word of God, and the servants of God work in this age, so that those who believe this word just as it is receive the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit comes upon their hearts and testifies to us that we have been saved and have no sin. So the word says that He is the One *"whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:21)*. The risen Jesus Christ is in heaven until God restores all things, and it means that Jesus Christ's having become our Savior remains in effect until the new heaven and the new earth come. Jesus has saved you and me. Has He saved us, or has He not? If He has saved you and me, then when we accept into our hearts what that Jesus Christ did, we become children of God. We become without sin. Do you have sin, or not? Do you accept it? Then you become without sin. The Holy

Spirit sets His seal on the heart. Saying, "Yes, you believe just as God has done. Your faith is right," the Holy Spirit, though there is no sensation, sets His seal and comes upon that heart without sin, and it means that He guides us until the day the Lord comes, and that when we hear the word of God, the Holy Spirit makes us realize, "That is right."

At times, when thoughts of the flesh, evil thoughts, suddenly arise and your thoughts are about to do evil, the Holy Spirit speaks to you from within, saying, "Is that right of you? You are not right, are you? Because you are not right, I am uncomfortable." That is why the Holy Spirit is our shepherd. The Lord is our shepherd. *"The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want" (Psalm 23:1)*. That Lord dwells in our hearts as the Holy Spirit and comes upon us according to the will of God the Father. It says that *"the Spirit Himself makes intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered" (Romans 8:26)*, and that *"the Spirit searches all things, yes, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10)*. So in this age God the Father and Jesus Christ, though not visible to the eye now, come as the Holy Spirit into the heart of the one who believes the fact that God the Father and Jesus Christ have saved you and me, made us without sin, and blessed us, and the word of God, the servants of God, and the Holy Spirit guide us, teach us that will, and lead us rightly.

Therefore we must believe. We must accept it into our hearts. *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God" (Romans 10:17)*. It means that faith comes about by accepting when we hear the word of God, when we accept that word in order to believe it, and that it must not be only to know it. Though we hear the same word of God, if we have the attitude of heart that wants to accept it by faith, it touches us by faith, and later faith arises and the word we heard turns into faith, so that we live a life of the power of faith. But what is known only

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intellectually is not manifested as power. We must become people who accept the word of God by faith when we hear it. At such a time we receive the remission of sins and become children of God, and the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts and we become people who receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

Just as the lame man rose up, walked and leaped, and praised God, so we become such people. By the faith that believes the word of God, we come to receive and enjoy all these blessings, and we come to receive and enjoy them forever. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

The salvation of Jesus prepared beforehand through the prophets

< Acts 3:11–26 >

“Now as the lame man who was healed held on to Peter and John, all the people ran together to them in the porch which is called Solomon’s, greatly amazed. So when Peter saw it, he responded to the people: ‘Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk? 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. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 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

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presence of the Lord, and that He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. For Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days. You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities.'"

"Why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?"

Because Peter and John, by faith in the Lord, had healed the lame man in the name of Jesus Christ, a tremendously great event took place, and the people looked at Peter and John in a strange way. They looked at John and Peter that way, wondering whether they might be angels who had come from heaven. The people of Israel often did such things. So they gathered together, whispering among themselves and trying to exalt the two of them, and this was something that could lead to serious trouble.

So the two apostles earnestly stopped them. They said, "*Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this*

man walk?" (Acts 3:12). They said that it was absolutely not so and that there was no need to look at them, and said, *"The God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, the God of our fathers, glorified His Servant Jesus" (Acts 3:13)*. It means that Jesus Christ had done it. He was called that Servant of God. He was described as a servant who did the work in obedience to God's will, but in fact He is the Son of God. Although He was the Son, when He was on this earth He worked as a servant—He carried out the work of saving us from sin as a servant—and that is why it was put this way.

The apostles Peter and John preach the gospel, saying that Jesus Christ did this. They said, *"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. And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all. 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" (Acts 3:13–18)*.

The One who healed the lame man is Jesus. You delivered that Jesus up to Pilate, and even though Pilate had decided to let Him go, you denied Him; rather, you let a murderer go and killed the One who is the Prince of life. But God raised Him from the dead. So we have become witnesses of this. Jesus Christ is alive; He is God who made the universe; to God the Father He is the Son, and to us He has become the Savior. That is why Peter said of the lame man, *"And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith*

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which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:16).

At any rate, after Peter and John performed this miracle, they did not put forward their own greatness but made Jesus Christ known, saying that the name of Jesus Christ had done this, and through this opportunity they pointed out the wrongdoing of the people of Israel and rebuked them as well, yet they said that they knew the people had done so because they did not know, and that therefore they should turn even now and believe in Jesus Christ. They exalted Jesus Christ, boasted of Him, and preached the gospel.

In Catholicism, people are exalted enormously as saints. Someone was gazing at the cross of Jesus, meditating on it and thinking of Jesus in his heart, when a thorn on the head of Jesus broke off and pierced his forehead so that blood kept flowing from his forehead—so they call it a very holy wound and exalt such a person enormously as a saint. If someone has nail marks on his hands, they say that he loved Jesus so much that he came to have nail marks like those of Jesus and was wounded in his body, and they regard him very highly.

So, just as Peter and John said, "*Men of Israel, why do you marvel at this? Or why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" (Acts 3:12)*, they asked whether the people thought this had happened by their own power and godliness, whether they thought that they had believed in God well and so had the power and authority of godliness and had thus raised up the lame man and become special people—and they said it was not so, and that is truly right. Some denominations in the world regard such things as an individual's power and an individual's ability.

When people hear of Saint Francis of Assisi, they think of him as a master of the life of poverty. There are a great many

saints in Catholicism, and among them Francis is very highly recognized. Because Jesus said not to have two or more garments, it is said that when he met a beggar on the road and had nothing to give, he would take off even his undergarment and give it all away and come back naked himself. So people call Francis Saint Francis. They say that he is a holy man, a godly, holy person who has power. In this way they exalt individuals greatly, but the disciples of Jesus did not do so.

The suffering of Christ foretold by the prophets

The apostles said to the people of Israel that they had killed the Prince of life, yet that they knew the people had done so without knowing, and that their rulers also had done so without knowing; but that Jesus Christ had not died because He lacked power, and they said, *"Those things which God foretold by the mouth of all His prophets, that the Christ would suffer, He has thus fulfilled" (Acts 3:18)*. So the prophets had prophesied; God had made known to the prophets that the Christ would suffer, and all the prophets had spoken of this; and He is none other than Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ came to this earth and thus fulfilled it—this is the gospel they testified of.

Although you delivered Jesus Christ up to be seized and killed, Jesus Christ, in order to fulfill all the things the prophets had spoken, was born by borrowing the body of Mary, received baptism from John and had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him and bore the sin of the world, and so was sentenced to death in Pilate's court, gave up His own body on the Cross, shed His blood and died, and rose again from death, thereby accomplishing our salvation—this was the gospel they testified of.

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Repent and be converted, and receive the remission of your sins

Peter and John 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)*. Here they are speaking about true repentance. Although you delivered Jesus Christ up to die because you did not know, Jesus Christ fulfilled all the prophecies of the prophets. Therefore, although you did so, do not merely say that you did wrong, but repent and be converted and receive the remission of your sins. They told them to turn and believe in Christ as the Savior, and to receive the remission of sins by believing, because Jesus Christ, like the sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament, had the sin of this world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John and removed all our sins by offering Himself to God as the sacrificial offering on the Cross. They said that if they did so, the day of refreshing would come from the presence of the Lord.

I cannot tell you how clearly repentance is spoken of here. As we live our lives, we sin anyway until the day we die; so we must not commit the foolish sin of believing that we receive the remission of sins by offering prayers of repentance, but if we have not known Jesus Christ rightly, we must come to know Him rightly. We must know that Jesus Christ is the Savior and the Son of God the Father, and that in order to remove our sins He came to this earth, received baptism from John and had the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us, and we must be saved through faith. It means that we should not merely repent and turn and say that we did wrong, but turn and know and believe in Jesus Christ, who came with the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as our own Savior, and so receive the remission

of sins. To believe in Jesus Christ is to receive the remission of sins. This is what they said: *"That your sins may be blotted out, so that times of refreshing may come from the presence of the Lord" (Acts 3:19)*.

If we know and believe that Jesus Christ came to this earth and saved us with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we receive the blessing of being refreshed. They said that if we believe that our Lord came to this earth, received baptism from John and had our sins transferred to Him, died on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us, the day of refreshing comes from the presence of the Lord. This word says that because the Lord washes away all our sins perfectly, because He sees our faith and washes us clean, we obtain refreshing before God, receive the remission of sins, and become people who have been washed completely clean—the righteous.

When we look at what Peter and John did, they were different from ordinary people. Ordinary people would exalt themselves, get carried away, and try to lord it over others. When we look at the revival speakers of the world or those who claim to have the gift of healing, they exalt themselves as though they had the power. But the apostles were not like that. They preached the gospel of Jesus Christ. They testified of Jesus Christ. Among these things, the word of verse 19 is an especially vital word for people these days who try to have their sins washed away by offering prayers of repentance.

If until now we have wrongly thought that our sins are washed away by repenting, and if no matter how much we offered prayers of repentance our sins did not disappear, we must believe again. If until now we have known and believed wrongly, we should come to know rightly, listen to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, hear about Jesus Christ, and when we realize, "Ah, I believed wrongly," all of us need only repent and be converted

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and receive the remission of sins. The Lord has removed our sins, and when we believe that fact, we receive the remission of sins. This is precisely believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and this is the faith that receives the remission of sins. It is not something else; it is this.

Have you received the remission of sins? Have you received the refreshing that comes from the Lord? Does the Lord tell you that He has removed all your sins? The remission of sins is received only when the Lord says that He has removed all my sins and yours. It is not that we on our side say that we have no sin, but that the Lord on His side must say to us, "You have no sin; you are one who has received the remission of sins." The Lord has removed our sins with the power of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. When we hear and believe that gospel, the Lord speaks. He says, "You now have no sin; you are My people." That is why refreshing comes to me and to you. Freshness comes.

Dear fellow believers, once we have received the remission of sins it just feels ordinary, but how was it when you came to know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Some people were overjoyed, and some realized, "I have no sin; I thought I had sin, but I have no sin; the Lord has truly removed my sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit," and at the same time as they came to know and believe this, was there not a peace that came from the Lord?

It says, *"That your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*. Dear fellow believers, is it that we must wash away our sins every day? It says to receive the remission of sins. They disappear once and for all. If we do so, the day of refreshing comes from the presence of the Lord. The Lord has removed our sins. The Lord tells us that we have no sin. He says that He has removed our sins with the truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Because of this, we obtain refreshing.

Jesus Christ, whom heaven has received

The apostles also said, *"That He may send Jesus Christ, who was preached to you before, whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began" (Acts 3:20–21)*. Jesus Christ will appear again to the people of Israel in the last days. But it said that heaven must receive Him until the times of restoration of all things. Jesus Christ came to this earth, removed all the sin of mankind once and for all, and ascended into heaven. That is why it says of Him, *"Whom heaven must receive until the times of restoration of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began."* Jesus Christ will come at the end of the seven-year Great Tribulation. He will appear, judge His enemies, and make all things new. Until then He is at the right hand of the throne of God.

Who is Jesus Christ? The apostles speak further: *"Moses truly said to the fathers, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear in all things, whatever He says to you. And it shall be that every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people.' Yes, and all the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days" (Acts 3:22–24)*. What Moses said here was speaking of Jesus Christ. From the Pentateuch of Moses through Joshua, then past the period of the Judges that comes next, down to the prophet Samuel who appears in the Books of Samuel—from Moses, from Samuel, the prophets keep appearing throughout the Old Testament, and whom do they speak of? It means they spoke of Jesus Christ.

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Moses was the guide of the Old Testament age. And those who did not listen to Moses were those who did not listen to the word of God. It was said that in the New Testament age a Prophet like Moses would be sent and raised up. And it said that whoever does not listen to that Prophet will be destroyed from among the people. Who is that Prophet? He is Jesus Christ.

The Prophet Moses spoke of is Jesus Christ

Jesus Christ is the One who held the three offices of Prophet, High Priest, and King together and fulfilled them. He is the true Prophet. Jesus said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. Jesus Christ is the way to the kingdom of heaven. The words He spoke are the truth. The words He spoke are life. It said that whoever does not listen to the words of Jesus Christ will be destroyed from among the people. Jesus Christ came to this earth and received baptism from John, through which all our sins were transferred to Him. He was then crucified and received the judgment for our sins. He rose again from the dead and is seated at the right hand of God. Through these works of salvation, the Lord tells us that He has saved us and that He is our Savior. The Lord is speaking to us in this way. It means that it was said that those who do not accept His word, those who do not listen to the Prophet, will be destroyed. So whoever does not accept into his heart and does not believe that Jesus saved us from sin with the gospel of the water and the Spirit perishes. It is not that one perishes in some other way; the one who believes the fact that Jesus Christ is our God and our Savior and has removed our sins completely, and the fact that He is alive even now, seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and is coming again—that

person is saved from sin and becomes a child of God, while the one who does not believe will go into the fire that is never quenched in the time to come. That is why we must believe in Jesus Christ. We must believe that Jesus Christ has saved us with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must believe that He has made us righteous. We must believe that He has enabled us to live a right life. We must believe that He has made us live a life that brings others back to a right life. This is tremendously important.

But who makes much use of such words? It is cult leaders. Quoting the word that says, *"Every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23)*, they subtly say that the guide of their own denomination is the very Prophet the Bible speaks of. So, quoting the saying that whoever does not hear that Prophet perishes, they say that all who do not listen to the head of their denomination will be destroyed.

It is the person who does not believe that Jesus has washed away all our sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit who is destroyed. Such a person is put to death because of sin. It is nothing else. But when we look at denominations, they call the head of their own denomination the prophet. Some even say that the vine in the word Jesus spoke, *"I am the vine, you are the branches" (John 15:5)*, is themselves. That, too, speaks of Jesus. Such people talk a great deal about power and try to display their own power to their congregants.

The Servant who came as the seed of Abraham

That Prophet speaks of Jesus. The whole Bible speaks of Jesus. And this word is spoken to me and you, and to those who

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have not been born again it is telling them to receive the remission of sins. The word we read today is all speaking of Jesus. In fact, it said that those who do not listen to the words of Jesus will be destroyed from among the people, and that is a right word. It said, *"All the prophets, from Samuel and those who follow, as many as have spoken, have also foretold these days" (Acts 3:24),* and this was spoken of Jesus. The prophet Samuel, the prophet Ezekiel, the prophet Daniel—all of them prophesied of Jesus. So it said, *"You are sons of the prophets, and of the covenant which God made with our fathers, saying to Abraham, 'And in your seed all the families of the earth shall be blessed.' To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:25–26).* It means that He sent Jesus Christ. Through the physical seed of Abraham, Jesus Christ, the Savior, is born. Because it keeps saying here that God raised up His Servant, one might think of Jesus as a lowly being, but that is not so; God here refers to God the Father. It means that God the Father sent His own Son to this earth and the Son saved us as a servant. He was sent to the people of Israel first. That means that He made every one of you turn and forsake your evil. It is saying that for you, though you are descendants of Abraham, not to believe in Jesus Christ as your own Savior is evil, that you must forsake that evil, and that only when you forsake the evil are you saved.

The one who believes the word of that Prophet is blessed

It is spoken to me and you today as well. Truly, you and I also must believe the words Jesus Christ spoke, the word about

the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Doing so is how we are saved from sin and also blessed. But if, instead, we harbor an evil heart and do not believe, we are destroyed. Because Jesus Christ has removed our sins impartially, we receive before God the blessing of salvation and also the blessing of everlasting life, and all of that belongs to me and you.

If we believe the word of that Jesus Christ whom God raised up, we are blessed, and if we do not believe, we are destroyed. There is nothing more to it. On God's side, He has removed the sin of all mankind through Jesus Christ. He has saved us all. When we look through the word of the Bible, that Prophet is Jesus Christ. If we do not listen to the word of Jesus Christ we perish, and if we believe we are blessed. I hope you will believe and be blessed.

When we go into the Bible in detail, false people are plainly exposed. They are plainly exposed even when we look at how they act. False people exalt themselves. Dear fellow believers, is it right to exalt ourselves, or must we exalt Jesus Christ? We must exalt Jesus Christ. Must we serve ourselves, or must we serve Jesus Christ? We must serve Jesus Christ. Then naturally we, too, come to be served. This is the truth.

Dear fellow believers, it said that those who do not listen to the Prophet will be destroyed. Put the other way around, those who listen well to the Prophet are blessed. Who is that Prophet? He is Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the Prophet; He is the One who teaches us everything, who teaches us about heaven and hell as well, and who teaches us that believing in this way is believing wrongly; and He is the High Priest of the kingdom of heaven. In order to bring us into the kingdom of heaven, He had my sins and yours transferred onto His own body through the baptism He received from John, offered His own body as the sacrificial offering, and removed our sins once and for all. So He delivered

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us from sin. He is our Savior. He is the Master and Creator of me and you. The apostles John and Peter spoke in this way of how truly Jesus Christ is the truth and how exalted He is. I give thanks before God, and I cannot tell you how thankful I am that we did not fall for such false people; I am truly thankful. ✉

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CHAPTER

4

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Do not be afraid, but preach the doctrine of the resurrection

< Acts 4:1–22 >

“Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power or by what name have you done this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the “stone which was rejected by you builders, which has

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become the chief cornerstone.” Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’ Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, ‘What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.’ So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, ‘Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.’ So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed.”

Persecution follows when the doctrine of the resurrection is preached

Whether in the apostolic age of the early church or now, people hate the preaching of this gospel. Moreover, not only do

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they hate the preaching of the gospel of God, but there is also persecution in the same way.

When Peter and John were going up to the temple to pray, there was a lame man who lay prostrate and begged at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. When Peter and John went up to the Beautiful Gate of the temple, he asked them for help, begging for a coin. When Peter said, *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6),* this beggar, this lame man, received strength in his ankles and feet, stood up, and walked.

Because of this incident, a commotion arose in the temple of Israel and in the great city of Jerusalem. The questions were how this man had risen up, how this lame man had risen up, who the person was who had raised this man up, and then what these people were preaching. They preached the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Jesus' disciples preached this: that a man who had died came back to life, and that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of mankind. A great uproar arose because of this incident, yet even in the midst of it the gospel was preached, and it is recorded that about five thousand people received the remission of sins.

The doctrine of the resurrection, by which dead souls come to life

"Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them" (Acts 4:1–3). They hated the preaching of the doctrine of the

resurrection. In other words, a person dying and coming back to life again, this body dying and coming back to life again—this is the resurrection.

When we human beings hear this gospel of the truth, our souls that had been dead come back to life. The captain of the temple and the Sadducees hated this doctrine of the resurrection, so they seized these disciples and threatened them.

In fact, the doctrine of the resurrection was not only about the body dying and coming back to life. That is actually true as well, but, just as the word says that *"it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment" (Hebrews 9:27)*, in the future there is the judgment of the resurrection.

The righteous will appear in the resurrection of everlasting life, and the wicked and sinners will appear in the resurrection that receives the punishment of destruction. That concerns the body, but the matter of our souls is that when we hear this gospel of the truth, our dead souls come to life. The apostles preached this doctrine of the resurrection, of coming to life from death. Now we also preach this doctrine of the resurrection. You and I also preach it. The apostles' preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection long ago and our preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection now are exactly the same.

You and I preach the gospel. When we preach the gospel, the soul that hears the gospel comes to life. That heart comes to life. Before hearing the whole gospel, a person had sin, but after hearing the whole gospel, he experiences his inner self coming to life again, saying, "Oh, I have no sin. I have come to life." This is something that is done through the Lord. I hope you will know that, as we are now preaching the gospel to many souls, we are preaching the doctrine of the resurrection. The soul has received the remission of sins and come to life again.

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To have received the remission of sins is to have gained new life. It is to have been born again. It is to have been born twice. We were born once from our mother's womb and died once because of sin, and then, by believing in Jesus and accepting Jesus Christ's remission of sins, we were born a second time. This is the resurrection.

The doctrine of the resurrection, preached without man's permission

However, we must know that persecution arose when this doctrine of the resurrection was preached. Political leaders, religious people, and religious leaders—that is, many religious organizations and leaders who spoke of the doctrine of Jesus' resurrection only with their mouths and did not actually believe it—persecuted the apostles. *"And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, 'By what power or by what name have you done this?'" (Acts 4:5–7)*. So, for these apostles to preach the doctrine of the resurrection was to preach this: that Jesus Christ had healed the lame man and made him rise up again, and that in the same way Jesus Christ had remitted all our sins, all the sin of mankind, and had removed it.

Those who persecuted them when they preached this were the family of the high priest, the scribes, and the political leaders. Those who were living on salaries—the elders, the senior men among the religious leaders, and the scribes—all these people were living on salaries, and they threatened the apostles, saying,

"Our family is the family of the high priest, and yet without the high priest's seal do you expound the word of God, fearlessly preach this gospel, and preach faith in God? If you want to do that, isn't it right that you come to us, get our stamp of approval, and then do it?" They said, "By whose name have you done this? By what authority and by whose name have you done it?"

It is the same even now. *"By what power or by what name have you done this?" (Acts 4:7)*. Even now, when one tries to preach the gospel of the truth of Jesus Christ, this doctrine of the resurrection, there are still the religious leaders of this world. There are people who claim an exclusive right, saying that only when one has received the seal of those people, the leaders of the denominations, has received an appointment, has been appointed as an evangelist or a pastor, has received the laying on of hands from them, and has received their stamp of approval, can one preach the doctrine of the resurrection.

Dear fellow believers, should the apostles have gone to those who did not believe in the doctrine of the resurrection, to the family of the high priest who hated its being preached, to Caiaphas, and said, "I, too, am going to preach the doctrine of the resurrection, so please put your stamp on this; please write me a letter of appointment"? Did Peter have to do that, did the Apostle John have to do that, did James have to do that, and did Mark, Luke, and the Apostle Paul all have to get their permission before they could preach the gospel?

It is as if these people were saying, "By what authority from us and by whose name do you do this? Have you done this without even getting our permission?"

Dear fellow believers, think about it. Dear fellow believers, have you received the remission of sins? Dear fellow believers, do you have no sin? Do you want to preach the doctrine of the resurrection, this gospel? Then, when you preach because you

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want to preach the doctrine of the resurrection, isn't preaching enough in itself—must you go to some religious leaders, get their permission, and then come back and preach? No. Jesus has given the Holy Spirit within you, and Jesus said, *"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 word meant that He makes us witnesses.

But it makes no sense at all that we should have to go and get permission from the people of the world, who do not even believe in the doctrine of the resurrection. Where is there such a law? Dear fellow believers, even now people are doing this. Dear fellow believers, however, think about it. Did the Apostle Peter have to get permission from them? When God remitted our sins so that we would preach the gospel, and gave the Holy Spirit into our hearts, must we get permission from them? Must God get permission from human beings, get permission from religious leaders, and then do the work of God? And is the authority with them? It is not. Even now people ask you, "Which denomination are you? Have you received permission? Has your preaching of this gospel been permitted? Has it been approved? Are you in an approved denomination?" It is the same even now.

In the apostolic age, as for who persecuted these twelve disciples of Jesus the most, it was the family of the high priest, the scribes, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees. The Sadducees were those who said there is no resurrection, and the Pharisees said there is a resurrection, but both were people who did not believe in Jesus. They were told to get permission from these people. People are doing the same even now.

He removed all our sins with the water, the blood, and the Spirit

Once, when I went to a hospital to preach the gospel, the director of the hospital, who claimed to believe in Jesus, blocked me, saying that I was preaching the gospel without his permission. Is it wrong to preach the gospel in that hospital? Is it wrong to preach to someone who, though he believes in Jesus, has not yet met the Lord? He said that if I acknowledged the faith he believed in, he would also acknowledge the faith I was preaching. But I told him clearly. Does sin disappear by believing like that? Is that believing according to the Bible? I said that I could not acknowledge his faith, and that he had to receive the remission of sins. So he said that he, too, could not acknowledge me, and told me not to preach the gospel in his hospital but to leave. In fact, if I had just said one word, that his faith was also right, I would have been acknowledged by him and treated as a pastor, and that would have been simple. But I could not acknowledge it.

The doctrine of the resurrection is that Jesus Christ has removed all our sins. Dear fellow believers, He removed all our sins with the water, the blood, and the Spirit. It was not by the water only, nor by the blood only. Nor was it by the Spirit only. Nor was it done in a dream. Clearly, God Himself, by His own word, came to this earth, and by receiving baptism from John and shedding His blood on the Cross He delivered us from death; by receiving baptism from John He had all our sins transferred to Him; by receiving the judgment on the Cross in our place He saved us from sin; and by dying and rising again in three days He brought us back to life. He brought our souls to life and brought our bodies back to life. That is how it is.

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Wherever we go to preach the gospel, must we get permission from them? Dear fellow believers, that goes against God's principle. The servants of God preach the gospel in God's way, as God is pleased, and as God gives them power, with the word and with power. And so souls receive the remission of sins. It says that about five thousand people heard the doctrine of the resurrection and believed in Jesus Christ; isn't it the same? Yet they persecute the servants of God and subtly threaten them to keep them from preaching the gospel.

Dear fellow believers, everywhere it is the religious leaders who are the problem. Like the family of the high priest, there are also ministers who think they have a solid backing because their father is a denominational leader or because they married a leader's daughter. That is nothing but worldly backing.

Dear fellow believers, there is a book called the church constitution, and in the church constitution it says that if a certain deacon does not keep the Lord's Day holy and commits some sin, he is to be disciplined in such and such a way; it is set out in such and such an article and clause of the church constitution. They say it must be done exactly as written. Dear fellow believers, our Jesus said, *"I do not say to you, up to seven times, but up to seventy times seven" (Matthew 18:22)*, but this is different from the church constitution. Then, with what should we teach, exhort, and fellowship with one another?

We must do it with the word of God. It does not work for pastors to put on airs, learn oratory, and preach with well-modulated rising and falling tones. Oratory may feel refreshing while you listen to it, but once you have heard it, nothing remains in your heart.

There is no salvation apart from the name of Jesus Christ

When they asked by what authority and by whose name they had done this, Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said, *"Let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:10–12).* This means that he raised up this lame man in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is a name meaning Savior, and this means that Jesus Christ has made us sinless. It means that He has brought us back to life.

And he said, *"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:11–12).* Dear fellow believers, everyone rejected Jesus. Although Jesus came to this earth, they all spat on Him, stripped Him of His clothes, beat Him with whips, and pointed their fingers, saying He should be crucified and killed. As the stone rejected by the builders, Jesus became the chief cornerstone. He became the most important thing. This means that He became the stone that connects us to God.

And he said that no other name has been given to mankind under heaven by which they can be saved. He has made it so that anyone may receive the remission of sins before God by believing in Jesus, in Him. The gospel the apostles preached was

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this. It was the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit. It was the gospel that you and I know.

This Peter also said, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21)*. Peter said that Jesus Christ is our God. He said that Jesus is the Son of God and also our Savior. He says that Jesus Christ has given us new life. He preached the doctrine of that gospel.

In fact, among Peter and John and the rest of Jesus' twelve disciples, there were hardly any learned men. When these elders, high priests, and scribes heard Peter and John speaking boldly, they said, "Those men are originally uneducated people, so how can they speak so well and so powerfully? It is truly strange."

Dear fellow believers, a person who becomes a disciple of Jesus Christ does not need to have such deep learning. Dear fellow believers, on the contrary, a person who has worldly learning and believes in learning cannot believe in Jesus Christ well. And even if he believes, he has hardly any faith. Of course, this does not mean that worldly learning is unnecessary. It means that when we know and believe the Bible of Jesus Christ, we realize that worldly learning is elementary learning, that the learning of this world amounts to nothing more than very basic learning.

Listen to the word of God rather than the words of men

These men, Peter and John, testified boldly. As for the high priests, the elders, and the scribes, because Peter and John had clearly raised up this lame man in the name of Jesus Christ, there

was evidence, and therefore they could no longer revile them. They said, "We cannot do anything to these men."

Thinking, "If all the common people in Jerusalem hear this news and believe, if they all hear the doctrine of the resurrection and receive the remission of sins and their hearts come to life again and they regain life, then our role as religious leaders and our livelihood will all be cut off; what shall we do about this?" the family of the high priest gathered and conferred, saying, "Let us threaten them. We will release them now, so that they can no longer preach from now on; if they say they will not preach, let us release them, and if they say they will preach from now on, let us not release them." When they threatened them like that and told them not to preach, Peter stood up boldly and said, *"Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge" (Acts 4:19)*. What he was saying was, "It is right to listen to the word of God; we cannot listen to you. If you want to arrest and imprison us, imprison us. For what crime would you imprison us? Does telling a lame man to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ amount to a crime? If it is a crime, arrest and imprison us." Even the high priest had no grounds to arrest and imprison them.

So these people schemed to threaten them so that the news would spread no further among the people and so that they could not preach this doctrine of the resurrection: that Jesus Christ is the Savior, that Jesus Christ has removed all the sins of our world, that He has saved us, and that all the people of mankind have no sin.

Even when threatened, the apostles said, "If you want to arrest and imprison us, arrest and imprison us." But they could find no way to punish them, so they let them go. There was an incident like this in the time of the early church, and even in the

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midst of such things, the Apostle Peter, Paul, and the twelve disciples testified of the gospel. The power belongs to God.

Dear fellow believers, even now, when we preach the gospel, people ask, "What denomination are you? Secondly, under whom are you? And from whom did you receive approval?" Dear fellow believers, that is not right. Dear fellow believers, even now people are doing this, but it is not right.

At the same time, while persecuting the righteous and persecuting the servants of God, they ask, "What is your denomination? Do you have chairs? Do you have a pipe organ? How many years of history do you have?" Our gospel is the gospel that is two thousand years old, and we are the successors of the gospel that the Apostle Paul preached. It is nothing to boast about, to stand before a two-thousand-year-old gospel with a denominational history of a few hundred years. Whether a pastor or an evangelist approved by a denomination, when you meet one and ask, "Do you have sin or not?" at that one question he shrinks back and says, "Of course I have sin; who is there without sin?" How can someone with sin teach others? Are you a sinner or a righteous person? If you are righteous, how are you righteous? They say, "I have sin, but I am righteous. Why? It was said that because I believe in Jesus I am regarded as righteous and called righteous; so although I have sin, I am righteous because I believe." Jesus is the truth, and this is nonsense. Has Jesus removed all our sins, or has He failed to remove them? They say that He removed original sin but has not yet removed the sins we will commit in the future, so that they are removed only if we pray every day. If people believe like that, not only they themselves but even those they teach will fail to receive the remission of sins.

Dear fellow believers, leaders who knew nothing persecuted them. That is what they did in the time of the early church. And

they are doing the same even now. Dear fellow believers, when you preach the gospel and then say that you have no sin, don't people persecute you fiercely?

And what is the very first thing they ask? "What denomination is that? What church is that?" That is the very first thing they ask. Dear fellow believers, what does it matter what denomination or what church it is? Then must we get their permission even to name our church and to attach a denomination to it? Then from whom did they get permission to attach their denomination? If they got permission from a denomination in another country, then from whom did that denomination get permission? Didn't they make it up among themselves? If they got permission from Calvin, then from whom did Calvin get permission?

The gospel of the apostles has come down to us

Catholics say things like this. To Catholics, the Presbyterian Church and Protestantism are a branch house, and Catholicism is the main house; that is how they talk. Dear fellow believers, how is it that Catholicism is the main house and Protestantism a branch house? Then was Jesus born within Catholicism and did He found Protestantism? Jesus is the Head of this church; about two thousand years ago Jesus was born, preached the gospel of salvation and raised the twelve disciples, preached the gospel of salvation, received baptism from John and had all the sins of this world transferred to Him, and so died on the Cross and rose again in three days and saved us, and sent the Holy Spirit and preached the gospel to the whole world through the twelve disciples.

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So those who believed in Jesus Christ and were saved, those who followed Jesus, were called Christians, which meant the company of those who follow Jesus. The term "Christian believers" means those who follow Jesus. Then, coming straight down from there, the Edict of Milan took place in the year 313. From A.D. 1 to 100 is the apostolic age. The twelve apostles were alive, and after they died, the age of the Church Fathers came. It was the age of the guides of the church who had heard directly from the apostles, the age of the Church Fathers.

As for what began after the age of the Church Fathers, the age of Catholicism, the age of the popes, arrived. By the Edict of Milan in 313, the Roman state officially recognized the Christian faith. From then on, the power of the emperor and the pope stood over the church, and nothing could be done without the pope's permission. From then on, for a thousand years, it was the Dark Ages. It is called the Middle Ages. While things were like this, Luther, who had been a Catholic priest and a seminary professor, rose up and said, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. He cried out that the Bible says one becomes righteous not through asceticism but through faith, and that therefore one becomes righteous by believing. From there, the nations of Europe, which had been crushed under Catholicism for a thousand years, rose up, saying, "Let us recover our humanity; we cannot live crushed under religion; let us break free from that pressure of Catholicism," and that was Renaissance humanism, and from there the Reformers arose.

"Let us return to the Bible; where the word goes, we go, and where the word stops, we stop"—from there, men like Zwingli, John Knox, Luther, and Calvin rose up as religious leaders. And even in the midst of all that, even in the Dark Ages, those who held the gospel of the water, the blood, and the Spirit that the apostles had preached kept on preaching this gospel in hiding, in

hiding, and so it has come down to this day. Dear fellow believers, that is what has reached even you and me today.

Dear fellow believers, how can Protestantism be a branch house of Catholicism? No, dear fellow believers, Catholicism believes in other scriptures besides the Bible, and what the pope says carries greater authority than the Bible. It is absolute authoritarianism. For Catholicism, their church constitution is the highest authority.

I know Catholicism well. Not only did I study that field, but I was also involved in it, so I know as much as anyone who claims to know it reasonably well. Dear fellow believers, those who do not know history say that Protestantism is a branch house of Catholicism. But for those who know history—if they know even just the history—Protestantism is the main house. And it has never had such a branch house. This is something they made up.

And within Protestantism, too, this sort of thing arose. A custom came about in which one simply graduates from school and becomes a pastor and a leader, and in which anything can be had if one just has the right connections. And as things came down, at first they followed only Jesus. They followed only the word. Later on, with each one saying, "You are great; I am great," there came to be hundreds of Protestant denominations. In our country, too, there are more than a hundred. Every one of the Protestant denominations says that it is the best.

That is not right before God. When we preach the gospel like these disciples, the apostles of Jesus, we are persecuted, but whose words will we listen to? Before God, it is right for us to preach according to the word of God rather than to listen to their words, the words of the religious leaders.

And we preach this gospel. We also suffer persecution. Dear fellow believers, wherever we are, we must preach the gospel to

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our friends and families with faith. We do not need to hesitate in the least. We do not need to fall into weakness in the least.

Dear fellow believers, when it comes to talk of denominations, a gospel two thousand years old and a denomination a few hundred years old cannot even be compared. Dear fellow believers, the Puritans of England rose up and crossed over to America, and it went around again from there; it has come down from the apostolic age and gone around and come down again, but the denominations of today—the Baptists, the Presbyterians, the Methodists—all of them are no more than a few hundred years old.

At most, the oldest of them is four hundred years old. This is nothing. People who do not know history, who look only at what is right in front of their eyes, look only at the prevailing trend and say that Presbyterianism seems to be the truth, that the Baptists seem to be the truth, that Methodism seems to be the truth, that the Pentecostal denomination seems to be the truth. What truth is there in a denomination? Even if they boast loudly, putting forward the name of their denomination, it does not work before someone who knows world history, knows the history of mankind, and knows the Bible.

Do not be afraid, but preach boldly

Dear fellow believers, the gospel that you and I have was the doctrine of the resurrection that the apostles had. We are the ones who preach the doctrine of the resurrection. Wherever we go, we testify of this doctrine of the resurrection. And so those who hear the doctrine of the resurrection will come to life again. They gain new life, in the literal sense of the words.

Dear fellow believers, have you gained new life? Dear fellow believers, preach with faith.

This present age is a dark age. The dark age of the medieval period has returned. That age has come back again. We must look carefully at history. We must look carefully at the world. We must also look carefully within this religious world. Dear fellow believers, were the ecclesiastical authoritarians of the Middle Ages holy as persons just because they wore Roman collars and dressed in holy-looking clothes? Is a pastor holy because he has pinned a white ribbon here? Is one holy because one speaks in a dignified way? Dear fellow believers, the apostles did not do that. The apostles were in some ways uneducated and in some ways audacious.

When an official in charge of the treasury of a nation was passing by, Philip ran up to his chariot and said, *"Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30)*. He had no manners at all. It was not so much that he was uneducated; rather, he asked directly. He went straight to the point.

Dear fellow believers, there was persecution in the age of the apostles. There is this kind of persecution even now. Are you, too, perhaps suffering this kind of persecution? Dear fellow believers, do not be afraid. It is only natural. It is written, *"Blessed are they that have been persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven –ASV" (Matthew 5:10)*. Dear fellow believers, no matter what anyone says, if souls receive the remission of sins when the gospel is preached, this is the gospel of the truth.

Dear fellow believers, do not hesitate. Shall we, too, play a pipe organ? Shall we set up chairs made of gold here? We can. If we decide to do it, we can do it in two days. Once we start, we finish it.

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Dear fellow believers, is it a right church if people worship sitting on chairs, and a wrong church if they sit on the bare floor? Dear fellow believers, where is the standard of right and wrong? Dear fellow believers, is a church right if its numbers are large and wrong if its numbers are small; is it wrong to have no sin, and right to have sin even while believing in Jesus? Dear fellow believers, does a church become right just because its numbers are large?

Dear fellow believers, when you preach the gospel, Satan enters into people and persecutes you with such things. People, on the contrary, like such things. There is no need for that. There is no need to be crushed.

What I want to say today is that such things happened in the past, such things happen now, and such things will happen in the future as well. Even so, the apostles overcame in the past. We overcome now, too. All the brothers and sisters overcome. We will overcome in the future as well.

There are pastors who tell us that they will acknowledge us if we join their denomination. How could we join them? What would happen if the genuine were mixed with the counterfeit? Only when the genuine is preserved as genuine does it exert its power. They cannot come in here. To come in, they must receive the remission of sins. So even if they say to us, “Come and join us,” it will not do. We would rather worship in a family-like atmosphere because our numbers are small than join them. And this is by no means a small number.

How is one righteous person a small number? Even when a few dozen righteous people gather, how is that a small number? The land of Sodom and Gomorrah was destroyed because there were not ten righteous people in it, so how many righteous people are there here? It is not a small number.

If they want to come to us, if they want to go where we are going, they must gain new life. They must all receive the remission of sins.

Today we have looked at this word. We must preach this doctrine of the resurrection everywhere. In any case, whatever persecution there may be, no one can kill us. As long as the Lord protects us, no one can do anything to us at all until the real end of the world comes.

Dear fellow believers, in any case, I hope that you will never be crushed but will preach the gospel to the whole world with boldness. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Testify of the gospel by believing in God

< Acts 4:1–22 >

“Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power or by what name have you done this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the “stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.” Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’ Now when they saw the

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boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it. But when they had commanded them to go aside out of the council, they conferred among themselves, saying, 'What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name.' So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus. But Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard.' So when they had further threatened them, they let them go, finding no way of punishing them, because of the people, since they all glorified God for what had been done. For the man was over forty years old on whom this miracle of healing had been performed."

The Book of Acts is the acts of the Holy Spirit

The Book of Acts is the work of the Holy Spirit, who came upon the apostles and worked upon them. That is why it is called the Acts of the Apostles. Jesus Christ became the sacrificial offering of atonement for redemption on this earth, reconciled God the Father and mankind, accomplished all that work of saving us human beings, and gave a charge to the apostles, who were His disciples. The word apostle means one who has been

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sent by God. It means that Jesus went up, left His disciples behind in this world, and sent them to all the people in this world who had not heard the gospel. That is why they are called apostles.

So, after Jesus rose again and ascended, the Holy Spirit worked in the apostles, and the gospel was spread through the Holy Spirit; that is what the Book of Acts is. It means the footsteps the apostles left together with the Holy Spirit.

If we look at the beginning of the Book of Acts, before our Lord went up, the apostles asked Him, *"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)*. How did the apostles think of this kingdom of the Lord? They asked this thinking that Jesus would become the King of the nation of Israel and that they themselves would be something like prime ministers or cabinet ministers. Jesus said, *"It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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 1:7–8)*. He was saying that when the Holy Spirit came upon them, they would reach to the end of the earth and become witnesses of this gospel—that He had removed the sins of all people.

When the Day of Pentecost came, the Holy Spirit came upon them in great fullness. What happens after the Holy Spirit works fully in the apostles? Things like spreading the gospel happen. So, if we look at the previous chapter, John and Peter were going up to the temple at the hour of prayer, the ninth hour, when they saw a lame man sitting at the Beautiful Gate of the temple. The lame man was saying, "Please give me a penny," and when he saw Peter and John going into the temple, he asked for something as usual. Peter and John had no material possessions.

Peter said, *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6)*. He spoke to him with faith like this, and with faith in God he told him to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ. This lame man received strength in his ankles, stood up, and praised God, leaping and walking.

Because of this, great confusion came to Jerusalem. Saying, "Who are those people, that they perform such power?" many people began to flock to these apostles, who were the disciples of Jesus Christ. At that time, Judaism was a sect that believed in the LORD God and believed in the Old Testament. They did not believe in Jesus Christ, but they believed only in God, the LORD. These people lived devoutly and so on, and then a strange faction sprang up. So they sought to kill the disciples of Jesus. Because of this, many disputes arose and many things happened. Many problems arose because of that event in which the lame man rose up and walked in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.

The lame man rising up is a miracle. Although the lame man actually rose up physically, this is in fact telling us that in our lives, in our hearts, we were lame in faith, having the heart to desire good but being unable to do it, and that after receiving the remission of sins we came to do righteousness.

If we look at the word, after the Holy Spirit came fully upon the hearts of the apostles, they spread the gospel to people everywhere. The apostles spread the gospel, and they preached the doctrine of rising again from the dead in Jesus Christ; that is, they preached that Jesus had risen again from the dead. In other words, since Jesus rose again from the dead, God is alive. God Himself saved mankind. They preached that He came to this earth as Jesus and saved all mankind from sin, and that He is alive at the right hand of the throne of God. While preaching this resurrection, the disciples spread faith in God. They preached

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that Jesus Christ had risen again, that Jesus Christ is God, that Jesus Christ is the Savior, and that Jesus Christ is the sacrificial Lamb who removed sins and the Savior.

Baptism cannot be left out of the gospel the apostles preached

At that time, the priests, the captain of the temple, the Sadducees, and people like these disliked the disciples of Jesus preaching the resurrection, so they seized them, put them in prison, and persecuted them greatly. However, after the Holy Spirit came upon them, the disciples of Jesus spread the gospel everywhere. So how does the Bible record this time? Through the preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, through the testifying that God is alive and that Jesus Christ is God, among those who heard the word and believed, the number of the men came to be about five thousand. So if we include women, it would have been about ten thousand, and if we count children too, we can put it at around fifteen thousand.

As the apostles preached the gospel, this is how so many works of God took place all at one time. In the early church days, it was very easy for them to preach the gospel. Why is that? Because they preached the gospel to the Jews. “God, when the time came, was born in a manger in order to come to this earth as He had promised; when He turned thirty, He received baptism from John and had all the sin of us mankind transferred to Him, died on the Cross, rose again three days after His death, testified for forty days, and now sits at the right hand of the throne of God. Did you not see it?” At that time, because Jesus Christ had risen again and had directly shown Himself testifying for forty days in the nation of Israel, it was easy for the Jews to believe.

Because after Jesus rose again He appeared frequently to His disciples and many brothers for forty days and testified, and those witnesses preached it, the people of that nation knew well that Jesus Christ is God. Many people believed it. Some people deliberately refused to believe, but many people believed.

These apostles spread the gospel. If we look at the previous chapter, it says, *"Every soul who will not hear that Prophet shall be utterly destroyed from among the people" (Acts 3:23)*, and along with that they testified that the One whom Moses and all the prophets spoke of was none other than Jesus Christ. On the Day of Pentecost, too, people said, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)*, and in the temple also, Peter said, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*. *"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)*. Baptism cannot be left out of this gospel. It means that whenever they preached the gospel, they always preached baptism and spoke of receiving the remission of sins. It is all that same story.

"Jesus Christ is none other than God. The One you seized and killed was God, the Messiah whom He promised in the Old Testament to send, the sacrificial Lamb, God, and the Creator," the apostles testified. Therefore, if those Jews just knew the fact that Jesus is God, the fact that He is the Lamb of God, believing came as a matter of course. So at that time, the gospel was preached not one-on-one to individuals but to crowds gathered together. "Jesus is God. And He is the Savior. The One prophesied in the Old Testament is none other than Jesus." When they testified like that, all those who believe it receive salvation. They come to believe it all: that when hands were laid on the sacrificial lamb of the Old Testament, sins were passed on to it; that Jesus had sins transferred to Him when He received baptism

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from John; and that God is the sacrificial Lamb. Whether He is God or not, whether He is the Savior or not—only that was needed.

It says that the people who had gathered there numbered about five thousand. In the old days, this is how the gospel was preached. In the early church days, this is how the works of God took place. With Gentiles it does not go like that. If we try to come to know even one thing, we have to dig into things one by one. To preach the gospel, we have to tell them all about the sacrificial system of the Old Testament, and while telling it our voices go completely hoarse. That is because they know so little. We have to lump it all together and tell them about the burnt offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and everything. Even to explain just the sin offering alone takes quite a while.

But the people of Israel all know this well. The only question is whether they believe it or not. These people received the remission of sins by faith alone.

When one receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon him and he becomes a witness

Now, after the Holy Spirit came fully upon the apostles, works of God take place. After Jesus Christ came, Peter made the confession of faith, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*. Jesus said, *"Blessed are you, Simon Bar-Jonah, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to you, but My Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 16:17)*. In fact, that too was done through the Holy Spirit.

But it is the same whether at the time the disciples received the remission of sins or at the time we received the remission of sins. Only, in the Old Testament, the Holy Spirit worked

inwardly, too, particularly in the prophets, in God's special servants, but generally speaking, God the Holy Spirit worked outwardly. In the New Testament age, after Jesus Christ made atonement for all the sin of all mankind, the Holy Spirit began to dwell in the hearts of people as a whole.

After the Holy Spirit came upon these disciples, what did they do? They spread the gospel. Even if they did not want to spread the gospel, they could not help preaching it. Because they had the Holy Spirit in their hearts, to everyone they met they told this fact: "Jesus is God. Jesus is our Savior. Jesus has removed all our sins." It means they could not help telling it.

Dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit is in our hearts, too. When we receive the remission of sins, we cannot help telling this story. Everyone who has received the remission of sins cannot keep from telling this story. The doctrine of the resurrection—that God removed all our sins and rose again, that God is alive, that He is our Savior, that Jesus was God, that Jesus was the Savior—it means that one cannot keep from telling these facts.

Dear fellow believers, our Lord clearly said to His disciples, *"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)*. Saying that they shall be means that they do become so. It means that they carry out this work. It is not a word telling them to become, but a promise that they shall become. Whoever receives the remission of sins in his heart has the Holy Spirit come upon his heart. The Holy Spirit comes upon the hearts of all who have received the remission of sins. *"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)*. When we receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes

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upon our hearts. Then what happens? When the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we become preachers of the gospel, evangelists.

Even though you have received the remission of sins, are you unable to preach it because you are ashamed of having received the remission of sins? That is not so, is it? Even if you feel ashamed, you end up talking about the gospel, don't you? That is because the Holy Spirit is there, because the Holy Spirit testifies of Jesus Christ. He testifies that Jesus Christ is the Son of God.

Dear fellow believers, we must know that after the Holy Spirit comes upon us, we come to do the work of the gospel. It means that after the Holy Spirit came upon these apostles, the Holy Spirit led them, the Holy Spirit made them speak, the Holy Spirit spread the gospel, and God made them suffer persecution for the sake of this gospel of God. Why is that? Because the Holy Spirit came upon their hearts. It is telling us that because they had the Holy Spirit, the work of the gospel took place through the Holy Spirit wherever the apostles went. Wherever the apostles went, the work of persecution also arose along with it. It is not only to us now that the work of persecution comes.

Persecution comes from those who claim to believe in God well

If we look at the word, it says, *"As they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them" (Acts 4:1)*. These three kinds of people did the persecuting. Why do they persecute? Because the lame man was healed. It would have been fine if he had not been healed, but because he was healed in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, the persecution begins.

The priests are people who believe in God well. The captain of the temple, those who move the furnishings and work in the temple—such people seem to have been Levites among the Jews, descendants of Aaron, priests. So we can see how corrupt they had become. The work of offering sacrifices that they were doing in the temple every day was a shadow of the work Jesus came to this earth and did; what Jesus did was the substance; the substance came and actually removed the sin of mankind and made atonement; and His disciples raised up the lame man in the name of Jesus Christ and caused people to receive the remission of sins—and yet they opposed these things. They colluded with the world and opposed them. *"And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, 'By what power or by what name have you done this?' Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole" (Acts 4:5–10).*

The disciples are persecuted because of this gospel. And those who persecute are the people who, at that time, claimed to believe in God well. Rather than those who say they do not believe in God, it is those who claim to believe in God well. It is so today, and it was so in the old days. The high priest and Annas and Caiaphas, the rulers, elders, and scribes did so.

Dear fellow believers, in fact the Sadducees here were originally people who did not mix with the Pharisees. The

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Sadducees were the progressives and the Pharisees were the conservatives. So the Pharisees were the ones who said the word must be kept firmly just as it is, while the Sadducees were the ones who said, "We believe in God too, but we must get involved in politics and change something by our own strength; we must also stabilize the nation, and as for religion, we must just keep it from being corrupted and get along with the world to some extent." Speaking of the rulers of the world, they were the Romans, and the rulers here were people who worked under the Romans.

It says that Caiaphas the high priest, his whole family, had gathered. At that time, the office of high priest was bought and sold with money. So strictly speaking, there was no legitimacy. So anyone could become high priest as long as he played politics well. And the high priests had tremendous political power. There are such religious groups even now. It means there are religious groups that hold political power.

These people gathered and asked, *"By what power or by what name have you done this?" (Acts 4:7)*. They had healed a lame man, so what was wrong with that? For him to sit all his life saying, "Please give me a penny," was to their benefit. Every time beggars said, "Give me a penny, give me two pennies," they would give a penny or two pennies, dispensing favors and pretending to be good, and that was what made them feel worthwhile; but that lame man jumped right up, and was leaping and walking, and now he does not say, "Give me a penny, give me two pennies." Because their chance to make a name for themselves had disappeared, they pressed them, asking, "By whose name have you done this?" So they seized the apostles and put them in custody. *"And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening" (Acts 4:3)*. I cannot tell you how alike the old days and now are.

Even now, there are cases where people who claim to believe in God well seize a person who has received the remission of sins and badger him. Then or now, they are just the same.

It says that in the old days they did this to the disciples of Jesus. The family of the high priest, the scribes, the elders, the rulers—all those who were anybody gathered together, and though the disciples were all seafaring men and people who had hardly been educated, they put them in the middle and badgered them, asking, "By whose name, by what power, did you do that?" *"By what power or by what name have you done this?" (Acts 4:7)*. Look at how boldly the disciples speak. *"Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, 'Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the "stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone." Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved'" (Acts 4:8–12)*.

Dear fellow believers, where did Peter come from? He was a fisherman by background. Yet I cannot tell you how crisply and well he spoke.

Why are we persecuted even now? We preached the gospel to someone who was like the lame man, for whom nothing worked no matter how he lived a life of faith every day and believed in God, and caused him to receive the remission of sins; yet when that person receives the remission of sins, what do the false ones say to the servants of God who preach the word of God, to the apostles of God, to the saints of the Church of God?

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They reject them and treat them as if they were spreading a plague. It is the same now as it was in the past.

One can only say someone did wrong if there is something he did wrong. Even so, those who are to be saved are saved. Look here. Were not fifteen thousand people saved? I do not know how many the people of Israel numbered at that time, but ten thousand is a large number. Whatever people may say, the gospel is spread. Amid the persecution of the false ones, whether they persecuted or not, the apostles believed in Jesus Christ, and after meeting the risen Jesus Christ, their hearts were filled with the Holy Spirit and they preached the gospel. "Jesus is God. He is the Savior. He has removed all our sins and made us perfect."

The remission of sins is a greater miracle than raising up a lame man

God brings about such works. Even now, works of God are taking place in this church. Dear fellow believers, which is easier: to raise up a lame man in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, or to remove the sins of a person who has sin in his heart? If there were a lame man and a sinner, which person would be easier to save? Raising up the lame man is easier, isn't it? A lame man can be raised up one way or another, can't he? Such things happen in other religions, too. But how does one save a sinner? No matter what a person does, he cannot make a sinner into a righteous person. Yet they did it in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. This is a great miracle. Because they do such work, people dislike it.

When we believe in God, such things actually happen. At that time, there was no Bible but the Old Testament. At that time the four Gospels may not have been completed yet, since the

four Gospels were written in the days of the disciples. So that is why they had tongues, isn't it? Because there was no New Testament, the Holy Spirit worked powerfully, and so it says, *"And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak with other tongues, as the Spirit gave them utterance" (Acts 2:4)*. The devout Jews who had come from every nation under heaven and were dwelling in Jerusalem said, *"We hear them speaking in our own tongues the wonderful works of God" (Acts 2:11)*. Had the disciples learned foreign languages? No, they had not. The disciples spoke of the wonderful works of God in the language of each nation as the Spirit gave them utterance, and the Egyptians heard it in the Egyptian language, the Cyrenians heard it in the language of Cyrene, and all heard it in the language of their own region.

Why was it done this way? Because in that age there was no Bible, because there was nothing written down. That is why the Holy Spirit Himself worked powerfully. The Holy Spirit still works today, but if we preachers of the gospel preach the word accurately and confirm it, and the other person just acknowledges the word, the Holy Spirit sets His seal. It means that at that time, because there was no New Testament, the Holy Spirit Himself taught them and made it heard in the language of each nation. So the work of the Holy Spirit arose powerfully in the early church days.

Dear fellow believers, why do the works of the Holy Spirit not take place like this now? "Why can't you raise up a lame man? If you raised up a lame man, many people would come flocking, so why can't you do that?" Dear fellow believers, of course it can be done even now. But this age is the age in which the Book of Revelation has been completed. God had the Gospels of Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John written by His Holy Spirit. Also, the Epistles of Paul, the Epistles of Peter, and the

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Epistles of John were written. He had them written through the disciples, even up to the Book of Revelation written by the Apostle John, and then completed it. After that, He has made it so that when the word is preached and people just acknowledge the word, they receive the remission of sins.

But although such works can still be brought about now, we must know that God wants people to receive the remission of sins in their hearts more than for their bodies to be healed. Dear fellow believers, how many people gather even now at places where they heal diseases and the like! Once only the diseases of their bodies are healed, they just leave. When I first believed in Jesus, I too said, “God, heal the weakness of my body. Then I will believe in You.” And God healed me for a short while. If He had healed me perfectly, I too might have left. Because I had made a promise before God, I could not leave, but when a person’s illness is perfectly healed and there are no more aftereffects, he hardly seeks God. It means that because we will live on this earth only for a short while and then come before God Himself, God causes our hearts to receive the remission of sins, and wants us to receive the eternal remission of sins and enter His kingdom, and wants us to receive the eternal blessing He has given.

Where is our God’s interest now, too? It is in our hearts receiving the remission of sins. After the Bible was completed, our God wants everyone, whether healthy or weak, to receive the remission of sins through Jesus and enter the kingdom of God. That is God’s will. “The Bible records it like this, so why can’t you do so now?” Dear fellow believers, that is not so. What good is it if only the lame man’s illness is healed? The lame man was healed of his illness because he was told to rise up and walk in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth. Along with this healing, this man believed in Jesus Christ, and because he was a Jew,

through believing that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, he had his body healed, but at the same time his soul also received the remission of sins. The Bible is telling us that now.

Dear fellow believers, what good would it be if that lame man never received the remission of sins in his heart, and only had his stiffened legs stretched out straight so that he stood up and walked and leaped, and then died and went to hell? Even if one lives as a lame man, isn't it better to receive the remission of sins, live on this earth for a short while, and then go to the eternal kingdom of God and live forever? We must know that receiving the remission of sins in our hearts is more precious. Our God is telling us that.

The Holy Spirit, who makes us speak boldly

Truly, Jesus is God. He is the Savior. He has completely removed our sins. Jesus, who had all our sins passed on to Him when He received baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment as the price of those sins, and rose from the dead and delivered us from sin. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? The Holy Spirit has come upon our hearts. So we want to spread this gospel. Just as the disciples spread the gospel like this, although we also have many adversaries like this, we want to preach the gospel because the Holy Spirit is in our hearts. The Book of Acts is the acts that the Holy Spirit performed together with the apostles. We must know that God even now has sent us to this earth, caused us to be saved, and placed us on this earth, and that the God who spread the gospel through the apostles is spreading the gospel through us. We too are spreading the gospel now. It means God is spreading this gospel of the remission of sins through us.

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Dear fellow believers, beyond the whole twenty-eight chapters of the Book of Acts, we are continuing to write chapter 29, chapter 30, and chapter 31. Until the very day we exist on this earth, our God preaches the word through His people and His servants. It means that just as it is recorded in the word, He uses us as His instruments, spreads the gospel through us, acts together with us, and works together with us. And so He saves souls. Even now our God is doing that work. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

He is doing that work even now through you and me. God is using us as His instruments, the Holy Spirit is with us, and the word is with us; He causes us to testify of the gospel, and when we testify of the gospel He brings about works of God and causes people to receive the remission of sins. Therefore, even now people receive the remission of sins one by one, and even now you and I have received the remission of sins and are here like this before God.

Peter was a man without learning. Yet rather than saying he became very learned after he received the remission of sins, he was the guide among the disciples at that time. This man preached the word very boldly, following the guidance of the Holy Spirit. So, as for the people, it says, *"Now when they saw the boldness of Peter and John, and perceived that they were uneducated and untrained men, they marveled. And they realized that they had been with Jesus. And seeing the man who had been healed standing with them, they could say nothing against it" (Acts 4:13–14)*. In the hearts of those who have received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes even when there is no feeling. As soon as one receives the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit sets His seal. And the Holy Spirit sits enthroned in that heart and blocks anything else from coming in. He dwells in us, making our hearts His temple.

And when we preach this gospel, the Holy Spirit makes us speak very boldly. We speak without anything at all getting in the way. The apostles truly spoke boldly, with faith. Dear fellow believers, what about us? We hesitate while speaking, don't we? Rather than having nothing hold us back, we have things holding us back, don't we? Rather than being without reserve, we have reservations, don't we? While talking, we think, "Oh no, what if that person misunderstands?" and then it takes us hours to clear up that misunderstanding. Some days it takes a month, or two months.

Dear fellow believers, whatever people may say to us, let us speak boldly. Whatever they call us, it is fine. We are on Jesus' side and on God's side. If we speak boldly, we will be cursed at for a while, but later we will be acknowledged. "Those people have always been like that." Then it is even better.

Dear fellow believers, people cursed us, and they cursed the disciples. They pressed them down, saying, "By what power have you done this?" and Peter, saying that he had done it in the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, testified, *"There is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*, *"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone'" (Acts 4:11)*. He testified like this: "You rejected Jesus, saying He is not your Savior, but the most indispensable One in this world is Jesus Christ. Jesus has removed all the sins of this world, the sins of all the people of this world, and has saved us completely from sin." Dear fellow believers, why is that stone which the builders rejected the chief cornerstone? Because Jesus bore all the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John, and bearing that sin, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again and removed all our sins. That is why there is no other name under heaven by which we can be saved.

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When the apostles were preaching the gospel and looked beside them, the lame man was there with them. The lame man's faith was good. When the disciples were being persecuted, if he stayed beside them he would be persecuted along with them, yet he united with them, saying, "If I die, I die." The lame man had been healed and had risen up, so why could he not unite with them? He had been despised every day and then his legs were healed; he had been saved in the name of Jesus Christ through the faith of those apostles, so what would be shameful about uniting with them?

It says the people could say nothing against it. There was nothing they could say against it. The man who had been lame was standing right there beside them in plain sight and even leaping on the spot, so there was nothing they could say.

Dear fellow believers, many people persecute us, but when people who have received the remission of sins through us and actually have no sin in their hearts are beside us, they have nothing to say. They themselves have not received the remission of sins even though they have led a life of faith for a long time, yet here is someone who heard the gospel and received the remission of sins in a matter of days, so they have nothing to say. Even after cursing for a long while, they have nothing to say. Because there actually are people who have received the remission of sins.

Our Lord protects us like this, and our God works together with us with such power. Though we may be lacking, He Himself works upon that soul, causes him to believe perfectly, seals him with the Holy Spirit, gives us strength, shows us His power, and shows us that He is with us. God manifests it.

Listen to the word of God rather than the words of men

Dear fellow believers, it tells us that those who persecuted the apostles threatened those who preached the word of God as though they would kill them if they so much as preached it. *"What shall we do to these men? For, indeed, that a notable miracle has been done through them is evident to all who dwell in Jerusalem, and we cannot deny it. But so that it spreads no further among the people, let us severely threaten them, that from now on they speak to no man in this name. So they called them and commanded them not to speak at all nor teach in the name of Jesus" (Acts 4:16–18)*.

"Don't do it. If you don't speak, we will let you off. You have done it until now, but don't do it from now on." When they threatened them like this and told them not to speak, *"Peter and John answered and said to them, 'Whether it is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge. For we cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard'" (Acts 4:19–20)*. How truly bold they are. Peter, John, and James always followed Jesus around.

Dear fellow believers, even now many people say, "Don't talk about that. Isn't it enough that you yourself have received the remission of sins? It is good that you received the remission of sins. Who says it is bad? It is good that you received the remission of sins, but don't talk about it; don't talk about the gospel; keep your mouth shut." What they did in the old days and what they do now are the same. It is because we too have received the remission of sins exactly as the Bible says and likewise have the Holy Spirit in our hearts.

Then what should we say when people persecute us and curse us? Like Peter and John, we must say these words, *"Whether it*

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is right in the sight of God to listen to you more than to God, you judge" (Acts 4:19). "Would it be right to listen to your words, or would it be right to listen to the word of God? When I think about it, it is right to listen to the word of God. I cannot do as you say. I want to preach the word of God. If you tell me not to, I want to do it all the more." If they tell us not to, we must do it all the more. That is how it is by nature.

If they tell us not to, we should do it all the more, but the devil of this world has changed his tactics. In the early church days, they persecuted fiercely and seized and killed. But when they seized and killed, a certain side effect occurred. After they seized and killed, there were the remaining family members, who went around all the more zealously preaching. As they said, "Jesus Christ is our God. Jesus Christ has removed all our sins," the gospel was spreading faster than the number they seized and killed. When people preach the gospel with their lives on the line, is there any way that works of God would not arise? So at first the works of the gospel burst forth, it says.

So the devil watched quietly and said, "This won't do. Let's change. How? Let's not persecute. Instead of persecuting, let's look after them. Don't they have physical lacks and hardships? Let's help them, and in any case let's say that if they believe in Jesus they will get this. So let's just keep them from receiving the remission of sins, and let them receive every other blessing in the name of Jesus." Satan the devil changed his tactics. He did not persecute. He kept quiet.

As I always say, when Emperor Constantine issued the Edict of Milan, officially recognizing Christianity in the Roman Empire, Satan the devil had drawn up his whole plan and put it into action. Did he not completely devastate Christianity through Emperor Constantine? He did not devastate it with persecution; he devastated it with peace and rest. Even now, if we do not

testify of the gospel powerfully while doing the work of the gospel, if we do not take up the challenge by faith even when persecuted and testify of the gospel to you, we will, as in that day, be satisfied with the things of the flesh, stay still, fail to preach the gospel, and end up serving as slaves of Satan the devil. That tactic worked.

Dear fellow believers, we must know this as we look at the Book of Acts. We must learn through the Book of Acts that we must take up the challenge of spreading the gospel by faith, that we must spread the gospel whatever happens, and that we must speak boldly. We must know that this is what pleases God.

We must not live settled in comfort. We must invest in the gospel ceaselessly and take up challenges for the gospel. We must take up challenges so that souls can receive the remission of sins.

We must preach the gospel everywhere, establish churches, and by faith devote our living, our lives, and our whole lifetime to the gospel of God, offering ourselves before God as His instruments. Those who have received the remission of sins must do so.

Like the apostles who preached what they had seen and heard

This Book of Acts is called the acts of the Holy Spirit. And it is also spoken of as the deeds of the apostles. Dear fellow believers, the apostles did not listen to the words of men. Then whose words did they listen to? They listened to the word of God. They obeyed the word of God. *"We cannot but speak the things which we have seen and heard" (Acts 4:20)*. The apostles had actually seen with their eyes. They had lived with Jesus for three

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years. They had lived with Jesus; they had seen Jesus die on the Cross; they had lived with the risen Jesus Christ, who appeared to them, for some forty days; and they had also seen Him go up; they had also seen through Him such works as raising the dead; they knew the fact that everything He said was the truth; they came to know that when they believed that word the Holy Spirit came upon their hearts; and they actually saw with their eyes and touched the fact that Jesus Christ was God. Because they had lived with Jesus, the apostles always speak that way.

If one is to be attested as an apostle, if one is to be established as an apostle, there are minimum conditions. He must have lived with Jesus. He must have seen with his eyes. He must have touched Him. He must have heard the word in person. He must have personally seen the work the Lord did. This is an apostle. Jesus told His disciples to preach what they had seen and heard. One who preaches what he has seen and heard is an apostle.

We have not seen with our eyes, but through the word we have seen, heard, and touched Jesus Christ, and we have received the remission of sins in our hearts.

Dear fellow believers, we must live making right judgments. We must live giving glory to God. And we must spread the gospel ceaselessly by faith. God the Holy Spirit is working with us now. Dear fellow believers, do you believe that? How blessed we are!

It means that after the Holy Spirit came upon our hearts, after we received the remission of sins in our hearts, we were changed and became new people; my heart, which had been meaningless, overflows with joy and peace; and we have become God's people and God's servants who boldly spread this gospel of Jesus Christ. Those upon whom the Holy Spirit has come live with the Holy Spirit, as the Holy Spirit leads and as the word leads. Through those who have received the remission of sins,

people who receive the remission of sins appear. Through the disciples, people who received the remission of sins appeared. In this age there are many people who, without having received the remission of sins themselves, claim to preach the gospel to others, aren't there? That is wrong.

Dear fellow believers, we are living within the acts of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Acts must be written ceaselessly—chapter 29, chapter 50, chapter 100. Even now, countless people are receiving the remission of sins through us, and in the future they will receive the remission of sins as well. I believe that God will work through you and me by the Holy Spirit and the word of God, and do the work of saving many people through the faith we believe with and through the Holy Spirit who is in us. I believe that He is with us.

Even if many people persecute us, when we unite before God by believing in God, God works and He Himself saves souls. I believe that God Himself will save the lame, and enable them to leap, walk, and praise. Believing that God Himself will bring about many works, I give Him praise.

Dear fellow believers, God is working with us even now. He is advancing in step with us. We really do not know how we came to receive such a blessing. Even if we do not want to preach the gospel, all those who have the Holy Spirit in their hearts have become instruments of the Holy Spirit, instruments of righteousness. It means that through us God has accomplished His good purposes, and He has worked with us. And He is still working with us now. He plans new things, gives us desires in our hearts, and He Himself fulfills the desires of our hearts. He gives us the abilities to carry them out.

Dear fellow believers, I hope you will testify of the gospel by faith. I hope you will testify by believing in God. I hope you

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will testify of what you have experienced, of your having received the remission of sins, with faith that believes the word.

Our God continually brings about the Acts of the Apostles without ceasing until the day our Lord comes. I give thanks before God that we have become saints who give glory before God by believing in God, and who give glory by listening to the word of God rather than listening to the words of men, and by doing it. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Witnesses who preach the doctrine of the resurrection

< Acts 4:1–4 >

“Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand.”

The doctrine of the resurrection that the apostles preached

It is said that the Book of Acts is the Acts of the Holy Spirit. The Book of Acts is a record of the wondrous deeds that the servants of God did together with the Spirit of God. After Jesus Christ rose again and ascended into heaven, the disciples of Jesus were now entrusted with the gospel of the kingdom of heaven that Jesus Christ had preached on this earth, and they came to spread it.

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What doctrine did the apostles preach? What doctrine did they preach after Jesus Christ had gone? When we look at this, we can know well what doctrine we must preach. When we look at the word, we come across the following word: *"Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening" (Acts 4:1–3)*. This means that these apostles brought up Jesus and preached the doctrine that Jesus had risen again from the dead. It means that they preached this doctrine that people come back to life. But it means that people disliked this.

It was said that the apostles preached the doctrine of rising again; then what is this doctrine of the resurrection? This doctrine of the resurrection lay in the gospel that we are preaching today, in the remission of sins. And preaching the doctrine of having been saved from death and from the curse, of having gained new life again and having come to have nothing to do with sin, and of having gained life again—this was the doctrine of the resurrection. The disciples of Jesus Christ brought up Jesus Christ and preached the doctrine of rising again. It means that since Jesus Christ rose again, saved us from sin, and saved us from the curse, we are those who have been saved and have gained new life, and those who have no sin. It means that the apostles preached this doctrine.

What doctrine did the apostles preach? They preached the doctrine of the resurrection. In the past, I once had the question of what the doctrine of the resurrection was, and why it was spoken of as the doctrine of the resurrection rather than as the gospel. Jesus Christ rose again. He came back to life. His coming back to life means that He fought against Satan the devil and

won the victory. Preaching that Jesus Christ has won is the doctrine of the resurrection. Preaching that Jesus Christ came to this earth and removed our sins, that He saved us from the curse, and that He brought us back to life from death is the doctrine of the resurrection. We come back to life just as Jesus Christ rose again. We must preach this doctrine.

What doctrine must you and I preach? Preaching the doctrine that Jesus Christ overcame Satan the devil, that He drove back and overcame all the power and all the schemes of Satan the devil, and that therefore we have been saved from sin and have gained everlasting life, have won the victory, live again, and gain everlasting life—this is the work that we must do.

The firm foundation for us in preaching the gospel is that we preach that we have already won the victory, that Satan the devil has been defeated and Jesus Christ has won the victory. When you and I preach the gospel, we must spread, like these disciples, like the apostles, the fact that Jesus Christ bore all our death and rose again, that the death of Jesus Christ is our death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ is our resurrection, that we have won the victory just as Jesus Christ won the victory, and that we have been saved through faith in Jesus Christ—we must spread the fact that Jesus Christ has won the victory and that we have won the victory. That is what it means for us to preach the doctrine of the resurrection.

When we preach the gospel, we are preaching the doctrine of the resurrection. We are preaching that Jesus Christ has already saved us. We must preach that we have received the remission of sins, that He has given us life, and that He has given us everlasting life.

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People who dislike the doctrine of the resurrection

Dear fellow believers, people today dislike the preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection. In the past, too, they disliked it. The Sadducees and the Pharisees disliked it. Why do they dislike it? They like being told to believe in God. But people dislike this doctrine of the resurrection, which says that Jesus has removed all sins, that He rose again three days after He died, and that He has therefore shattered death, removed death, and removed the curse. They like being told to believe in God. But they dislike the preaching that He came back to life and won the victory, that He has already removed sin perfectly, that we have become those who have nothing to do with sin, and that our Lord has already made us such people.

If Christianity today truly preached the doctrine of the resurrection, would this Christianity be recognized in the world? If this Christianity preached the right doctrine, the doctrine of the resurrection, would it be recognized by the people in this world and even by unbelievers, and would it be called orthodox even by unbelievers? It is because they do not preach the doctrine of the resurrection that the people of the world recognize them. Even people who have not been saved dislike it when someone says that he has no sin. They dislike the preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection. Satan the devil, the evil spirit, dislikes the doctrine of the resurrection. So even though the people of the world dislike those who have received the remission of sins, those who have not received the remission of sins, who believe in God while having sin in their hearts, are recognized even by unbelievers. They say, “Believing in Jesus means believing like that.” It is the same even now.

Dear fellow believers, the fact that you and I have received the remission of sins—this is truly precious. By receiving the

preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection, we clearly know that the Lord has removed our death and abolished it, has removed our curse, and has also removed our sins. The Lord has saved us completely. Just as our Lord won the victory, we too have won the victory.

Do not be afraid, but preach the doctrine of the resurrection

Dear fellow believers, it is a small number of people who have received the remission of sins. Dear fellow believers, this world will be destroyed someday. Each year is different from the last, and we do not know how harsh the world will become after a few more years pass.

But it is simple for the end to come upon this world. If natural disasters strike the whole world just a few times, this world is finished. If earthquakes occur all over the world, if the sun loses its light or beats down too hot, or if a nuclear war breaks out or nuclear weapons explode, the radioactive contamination will be so severe that people will not be able to breathe and live. Dear fellow believers, destruction comes in an instant.

Dear fellow believers, we have been saved. We are thankful that we have been saved. From now on, as you live, your soul must live. The spirit must live first. It means that by believing in God with our hearts, we have gained new strength, received the remission of sins, gained everlasting life, and been saved from every curse and from every evil. With this faith, with the spirit having faith first, with our hearts first believing in what our Lord has done, we spread this doctrine. That alone is what is left for us.

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In the past, people disliked the apostles preaching the doctrine of the resurrection of Jesus, and so they imprisoned the apostles. But among those who heard this word, the number of those who believed came to be about five thousand. Dear fellow believers, the people of this world dislike the preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection, and they seize people and lock them up. In the past they seized and locked people up physically, but now they cannot do that. However, many people, though it is not visible to the eye, join forces and try to seize us and lock us up. Even so, we must not dislike preaching the doctrine of the resurrection, nor be afraid of it, nor refuse to do it. We must know that our preaching the doctrine of the resurrection is precisely the gospel.

Let us not be afraid in preaching the doctrine of the resurrection. The Lord has already won the victory. The Lord has removed your sins. He has already removed your death as well. Preaching the doctrine that He has saved you from death and has saved you from your curse is precisely the doctrine of the resurrection.

Dear fellow believers, do you believe that our Lord rose again? Do you believe that our Lord has saved us? Do you believe that our Lord not only saved us from sin but also saved us from death? Do you believe that He saved us from the curse? Those who believe like this are those who believe in the doctrine of the resurrection.

Dear fellow believers, from now on let us preach the gospel with a little more strength. I hope that you will become those who preach the doctrine of the resurrection at your workplaces, at your schools, and at your churches as well.

Do not worry, but believe in the Lord

Dear fellow believers, the spirit must live first. We have received the remission of sins. Our hearts must not die because of a lack of faith, because of the gains of the world or anxieties, because of money, because of worries, because of the anxiety about what we will eat and drink and live on in the future. Although there are all kinds of anxieties, worries, and cares, our spirits must come alive through faith in the Lord, with the faith that God protects me, gives me food to eat, and blesses me. We must cast all our anxieties on the LORD. The Lord said, *"Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?" (Matthew 6:27)*. Worrying does not make one rich, nor does it make one live well. It is through faith in the Lord that we can live well by the blessing of the Lord.

Dear fellow believers, it has not been long since you received the remission of sins, but have you not worried after receiving the remission of sins? Rather than worrying, think instead of what blessings the Lord has given us and what word He is promising us. And look to the Lord and believe in the Lord. Believe that He will bless us and feed us just as He has said. Then our Lord works in you and me. He also surely fulfills His word.

That is why it says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. Because the Lord provides for us as we believe in Him, we are protected and go on living. The righteous live by faith. Things do not get done by worrying. We believe in the Lord, pray, and follow the Lord. Then the Lord brings it to pass. I hope that you will become those who are mature in faith.

Dear fellow believers, if you worry, your heart dies. Do not worry, but believe in the Lord. Believe in the word. Then your souls come alive. And you receive help from God.

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Satan the devil brings us anxieties. In the time when we would worry, do not worry, but believe in the word that the Lord has promised us. Look at the word of the Scriptures and believe in the word. Then you live. There is only that one way to live.

For those who have sin in their hearts, the resurrection of Jesus is not their own resurrection

It is said that there are many people in this world who believe in Jesus. But those who still have sin in their hearts have not risen again. They have not gained new life. They do not believe in Jesus. For those who have sin in their hearts, the resurrection of Jesus is not their own resurrection. Only for those who have received the remission of sins in their hearts through our Lord is the resurrection of Jesus their own resurrection, is Jesus living forever their own everlasting life, and is the victory of Jesus their own victory. This applies only to those who have received the remission of sins.

There are many people on this earth who believe in Jesus, but many of them have sin in their hearts. They believe in a completely backward way. Some people come forward as representatives at Easter services and pray, “Lord, we have nailed You to the Cross. Remit our sins.” If they themselves nailed Jesus to the Cross, they themselves should die. Of course, our Jesus bore our sins because of our sins and was nailed to the Cross. Of course, His being nailed to the Cross was because of us.

Dear fellow believers, however, in this matter of believing in Jesus, to say, while claiming to believe, “Lord, we nail You to the Cross every day” may seem humble, but it is taking the side of the devil. Jesus was nailed to the Cross only once, so who

nails Jesus to the Cross every day? Where is there any created being or spiritual being that could nail Jesus to the Cross every day? The Lord was nailed to the Cross once and for all. The Lord said, *"I have power to lay it down, and I have power to take it again" (John 10:18)*.

If someone nails Jesus to the Cross every day, he is mocking Jesus and abusing Him. And then such people ask Him to remove their sins. Dear fellow believers, when we have won the victory and have been saved from sin, is there any sin left to be remitted? We have already won the victory, after all. If someone fell into the water and was rescued, must he be rescued again? They are saying things that make no sense.

For those who have sin in their hearts, the resurrection of Jesus is not their own resurrection. Our souls came alive through Jesus Christ coming back to life. Our spirits have come alive. It means that our souls, which had been dead because of sin, came back to life and gained new life through the events of the baptism that Jesus Christ received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. The event of the resurrection of Jesus Christ has brought victory to us who believe. It has brought victory to those who truly believe in Jesus. It means that to those who believe falsely, the resurrection of Jesus Christ comes as the Lord of judgment.

The word says, *"Their sins and their lawless deeds I will remember no more" (Hebrews 10:17)*. The Scripture says of our Lord, *"To those who eagerly wait for Him He will appear a second time, apart from sin, for salvation" (Hebrews 9:28)*. He is coming to this earth a second time in order to appear a second time to those who have no sin. Our Lord, who gave us life, the Lord of the second coming who is coming again in order to live together with us and to take us to the eternal kingdom and live with us there, is coming precisely to take those who have been

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born again, those who have gained new life, and those who believe in the victory of Jesus Christ. This is the doctrine of the resurrection.

Dear fellow believers, what doctrine must you preach at your workplaces, in your homes, to your friends, and to the people you meet? You must preach the doctrine of the resurrection. You must preach that Jesus Christ has removed all sins and has removed all the curse. You must preach this: "He has removed your sins too; you too have gained new life." And you must live believing in the Lord.

In this age, now as in the past, there is no one but the born-again who preaches the doctrine of the resurrection. Those who have not been born again are sinners even if they believe in Jesus. They will go into the unquenchable fire in the future.

Those who have received the remission of sins become witnesses

How good it is to have become one who preaches the doctrine of the resurrection! I clearly preach the doctrine of the resurrection. You also preach this doctrine of the resurrection, don't you? Just as the word says, we must preach *"in Jesus the resurrection from the dead" (Acts 4:2)*. And we must do so having first confirmed that our hearts, our spirits, have come alive first.

Dear fellow believers, have you clearly been born again? Have you gained new life forever and come alive? Then play the role of a witness. Live the life of a witness. "Jesus has saved me. He has given me life. He has brought my dead soul back to life. I have come alive again. I have no sin. Now I have new life." We must live the life of witnesses. Now, those who have

received the remission of sins by believing in the doctrine of the resurrection must live preaching the doctrine of the resurrection. We must fulfill the role of witnesses, this mission.

Dear fellow believers, you and I must do the work of witnesses. What is that work of witnesses? "Jesus has saved me. He has saved you too. He has saved us. He has brought you too back to life. He has saved you too from death and from the curse. Our Lord has rescued you and made you whole. He has given you life." We must become such witnesses. We must become witnesses to what Jesus has done for us human beings.

At the very beginning of the Book of Acts, there is a word telling us to become witnesses: *"And He said to them, 'It is not for you to know times or seasons which the Father has put in His own authority. 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 1:7–8)*. Dear fellow believers, the disciples had asked, *"Lord, will You at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts 1:6)*. He said that the Father had put those times and seasons in His own authority, and so it was not for them to know. When does the end of this earth come? That is not for us to claim. We are not to make claims about that authority. Judging this world and doing away with it lies in the authority of God Himself.

We are very interested in when the rapture will take place, aren't we? Of course, we too must know. We must know to a certain extent. But we must not be interested only in this. Some people, without even having received the remission of sins, are interested only in when Jesus will come, when He will come again. What will they do if Jesus comes when they have not even received the remission of sins? If Jesus comes, such a person will be in big trouble. Whether Jesus comes sooner or later, and

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whether they know it and wait for it or not, since they will be judged as soon as Jesus comes, what good does it do them to know? It would be better not to know. It seems that they feel uneasy if they do not know. But since it is not a judgment that is received once and is then over, but a judgment that must be received forever, it would be better not to know, and better to live forgetting about it.

Yet it says, *"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)*. Those for whom the resurrection of the Lord has become their own resurrection, those who believe in the Lord completely and have received the remission of sins, come to live the life of witnesses. They become witnesses.

A witness is a witness, but one must not become a witness who gives false testimony. A witness is a witness, but one must not become a witness who evades the role of a witness either. If one only stands as a witness rightly, it benefits the wronged person who is on trial. If I only serve as a proper witness, the person being judged could escape judgment and get out of prison; yet there are many people who are unjustly serving time in prison because no one stood as a witness for them.

The word says, *"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 means that those who have received the remission of sins are qualified to be witnesses. It means that they automatically become witnesses and cannot help standing as witnesses. It means that they cannot but stand as witnesses. It means that one becomes a witness as soon as one receives the remission of sins. Those who believe that Jesus Christ has removed our sins and have received the remission of sins cannot

help speaking of this remission of sins, even if they try not to. Even if they want to keep their mouths shut, they cannot, and they cannot help speaking.

The Lord met us so that we could stand as witnesses; He saved us from sin, set us free from the curse, gave us new life, and gave us everlasting life. Yet there are people who do not play the role of witnesses because they find it troublesome. The Holy Spirit is within them and testifies. He tells them to spread the gospel. But there are people who do not do it for fear of being put to shame or for fear of being looked down upon. There are people who do not do it because it is troublesome, because they are afraid, because they are lazy, or for fear of being persecuted. Dear fellow believers, do not disobey. If the Holy Spirit within you testifies to you, speak no matter what. Become witnesses. Testify that Jesus Christ has saved us from sin, that He has removed our death, and that He has saved us from death. If they do not believe even after you have testified, there is nothing that can be done. But there are Christians who cannot testify because they are too shrewd or too weak. Let us not become such people. If we die, we die once; would we die twice?

Dear fellow believers, our Lord has already saved us. He has brought us back to life from death and given us new life. We come alive. And we go to the Lord's kingdom and live forever. If the Lord permits, we will reign as kings for a thousand years on this earth as well.

Dear fellow believers, people disliked the preaching of the doctrine of the resurrection. And they carried out persecution. They seized people and locked them up. This age is the same. If we testify and speak of how Jesus rose again and removed all our sins, they dislike it. Just because Satan the devil and those who have not received the remission of sins dislike it, will we

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bury what our Lord has done? Will you bury it only in your hearts?

Let us obey the word in which the Lord told us to live the life of witnesses. Let us live a life of obedience. It is difficult and hard, isn't it? Even so, let us live a life of obedience. When we testify of what the Lord has done, the Lord works in the other person and saves him. I hope that you will live the life of witnesses. ✉

Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The providence of salvation that God prepared

< Acts 4:1–12 >

“Now as they spoke to the people, the priests, the captain of the temple, and the Sadducees came upon them, being greatly disturbed that they taught the people and preached in Jesus the resurrection from the dead. And they laid hands on them, and put them in custody until the next day, for it was already evening. However, many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand. And it came to pass, on the next day, that their rulers, elders, and scribes, as well as Annas the high priest, Caiaphas, John, and Alexander, and as many as were of the family of the high priest, were gathered together at Jerusalem. And when they had set them in the midst, they asked, ‘By what power or by what name have you done this?’ Then Peter, filled with the Holy Spirit, said to them, ‘Rulers of the people and elders of Israel: If we this day are judged for a good deed done to a helpless man, by what means he has been made well, let it be known to you all, and to all the people of Israel, that by the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, whom you crucified, whom God raised from the dead, by Him this man stands here before you whole. This is the “stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.” Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved.’”

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Why do people make religions and believe in them?

Mankind, having sinned against God, became those who stood in the face of the problem of their own limits and death from the time they were cut off from God. They had to stand in the face of the fate that they could neither sustain their own lives by themselves nor escape death. And mankind, having realized this fact, became those who sought a being that transcended themselves. So they became those who lived captivated by pantheistic ideas—the sky and the sun, the moon and the stars, the wind and animals, and so on. Because they were living apart from God, in the end they became those who wandered in search of answers to such fundamental questions as "Where did I come from?" "Why must I live?" and "What awaits me after death?"

The word of God has said that the cause of the religious attempts of human beings must be sought in the sin of not believing the word of God and in fear. Because Adam and Eve did not believe the word of God, they fell for the deceptive words of the serpent and ate the fruit of the tree that God had told them not to eat, and so their hearts became stained with sin. To resolve this, they made religions and came to attach meaning to fasting, ascetic practices, and various religious rituals. But such efforts could not solve the problem of sin in the human heart. In the end, the religions made by man turned out to be something that arose from a futile attempt to soothe their own sins.

Moreover, the religions of the world came to play an important role in society and culture as well, going beyond the merely individual level. In ancient societies, religion became a great force that bound the community together and maintained order. It was also combined with politics, functioning as the basis for deifying royal authority or for justifying law and

morality. As a result, diverse forms of religion developed in each culture and region and came to be deeply rooted in the history and life of each people.

However, God Himself solved the problem of sin in the heart, which man could not solve through religion. Jesus Christ, the Son of God, came to this earth and, by receiving baptism from John, had all the sins of the world, including our sins, transferred to Him once and for all; by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, He paid the price of those sins and received in our place the judgment we were to receive; and by rising again from death, He became the Savior who delivers sinners from sin. For mankind, who had left God and wandered in search of answers, the way to escape from the problem of sin and death was opened through faith in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

What religions are there in this world?

The religions that have had the greatest influence on human history and culture are commonly called the "five major world religions." First, Christianity believes in Jesus Christ as the Son of God and the Savior and takes the Bible as its scripture, and it has the largest number of believers in the whole world. Islam takes as its scripture the Quran, revealed through the prophet Muhammad, and has a system of faith that serves Allah as the only god. Buddhism follows the teachings of Shakyamuni, that is, Gautama Buddha, and presents a way for human beings to escape from suffering and reach nirvana. Hinduism is a polytheistic religion that developed in India; it serves countless gods centered on Brahman, the ultimate reality, and takes the ideas of reincarnation and karma as its core. Judaism takes the Old Testament, that is, the Hebrew Bible, as its scripture, serves

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the LORD God, and carries on a tradition of faith that keeps the Torah, its law.

Along with these, indigenous traditional religions developed in East Asia. Confucianism, based on the teachings of Confucius, values ren (仁, benevolence) and li (禮, propriety), and it played a great role in establishing social ethics and moral order. Taoism is rooted in the thought of Laozi and Zhuangzi, emphasizes the Tao (道) and harmony with nature, and pursues immortality (長生不死). Also, in Japan, Shinto developed, and an indigenous system of faith that worships nature and ancestral spirits was formed.

Meanwhile, various religions and faiths appeared in other regions. Sikhism was begun by Guru Nanak in the Punjab region of India, and it emphasizes faith in one god while taking equality and service as important values. The Baha'i Faith emerged in Persia in the nineteenth century and emphasizes the unity of all religions and the peace of mankind. Also, indigenous religions remain in Africa, the Americas, Oceania, and elsewhere, and their faith continues mainly centered on the worship of ancestors and the worship of nature gods.

As the modern and contemporary era arrived, new forms of newly arisen religions also appeared. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries many new religious groups appeared, and they have expanded their power by altering the doctrines of existing religions or by claiming new revelations.

Is there anyone who has been saved from sin by believing in a religion?

Religion made by human beings is in essence a system of institutions and efforts set up to seek a god on their own and to

solve the problem of their own sins. However, the Bible clearly says, *"There is none righteous, no, not one" (Romans 3:10)*. No one can ever be justified before God by human good deeds or religious rituals. Therefore, one could not obtain salvation merely by the fact of having "believed" in some religion.

The Bible clearly presents the only way of salvation. Jesus Himself said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6)*. Also, Acts 4:12 testifies, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."* In other words, salvation is not a matter of which religion one belongs to; it came to be given only through faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

Then why can one not reach salvation through other religions? The reason is that other religions try to solve sin by human effort. Buddhism pursues liberation through ascetic practice, and Hinduism believes in reincarnation and karma, but the sins of human beings could not be washed away by any effort whatsoever. The remission of sins that the Bible speaks of is that Jesus bore the sin of mankind by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again on the third day, and so accomplished complete redemption.

In conclusion, religion made by man can never in itself be the basis of salvation. Only through faith in Jesus Christ as the Savior can one receive true salvation. There are countless religions in the world, but the true way of salvation that the Bible testifies of is only one. It is the Cross and resurrection of Jesus Christ, and the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

To sum up, religion can never save a person. Salvation is given only in Jesus Christ.

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Can a person also be saved by the emotions he has?

Salvation and emotion are essentially different. Emotion means a psychological state that arises temporarily in the human heart. Things like joy, tears, fear, and peace belong here. So some people mistakenly think, "I have been saved," when they shed tears or experience deep emotion during worship. However, the Bible does not define salvation from sin merely as a change of emotion. Salvation is not a matter of the heart momentarily growing warm and then cooling again; it depends on whether one has known and accepted by faith the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the word of salvation that God has ordained.

The Bible clearly says that the basis of salvation is not emotion but faith. Ephesians 2:8–9 declares, *"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast."* In other words, salvation is not accomplished by human emotions or deeds. True salvation is the salvation received by faith in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, the death of Jesus Christ on the Cross, and the Lord who rose again.

Moreover, emotion is not the cause of salvation. When a person truly believes the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and receives the remission of sins in his heart, the Holy Spirit comes to dwell in that heart. At that time, the joy, thanksgiving, peace, and tears of having been saved can flow out naturally. But these are not the cause that brings about salvation; they are phenomena that appear in one who has been saved. It is just as fruit is evidence of the life of a tree, but the fruit itself does not make the tree live.

Therefore, one can never be saved from one's own sins by one's emotions alone. Salvation is given as the result of the work

in which Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Emotion can appear as the result of faith, but one must not make it the basis of salvation or mistake it for its evidence.

To sum up, salvation is received not by emotion but only by faith in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Emotion can be a fruit of salvation, but it cannot be the basis of salvation.

The greatest problem that human beings have is precisely sin. No matter how strong a will one has and how many good deeds one piles up, one cannot wash away the sins of the past and the present. This is because sin inevitably brings judgment for sin.

The Bible clearly presents the way of salvation. It says, *"By grace you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8)* and *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*. Salvation is not obtained by human resolve of will or by effort; it is given only by believing in the work of Jesus, who received baptism from John at the Jordan River, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

That said, the will is not entirely useless. The will can be used to accept in one's heart the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit when one has heard it with one's ears. However, the power that produces salvation itself lies only in the word of God, in the power of Jesus Christ, who received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death, and in the remission of sins that He has given.

In conclusion, one can never be saved by one's own will alone. Salvation is possible only through faith in the righteousness of Jesus Christ.

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Can one be saved from one's own sins through prayer?

Prayer is an expression of faith in which one lays open one's heart to God, makes supplication, and offers up thanksgiving and praise. The Bible emphasizes the importance of prayer, saying, *"Pray without ceasing" (1 Thessalonians 5:17)*. However, prayer in itself is not the means that brings about salvation.

The Bible clearly shows the way of salvation. It says, *"By grace you have been saved through faith" (Ephesians 2:8)* and *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*. In other words, salvation does not come from the act of prayer; it comes from faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. One becomes a person who receives salvation by believing in Jesus as the Savior, who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and overcame the power of death and rose again.

Then what relationship is there between prayer and salvation? Many churches teach that one is saved by saying a "prayer of acceptance" or a "prayer of repentance." But biblically speaking, prayer is asking God for help; it is not the truth of salvation. Someone may pray a prayer of repentance with tears, but if he does not believe in his heart the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord has given, he may still remain in sin. Conversely, someone who has not said any special prayer receives eternal salvation before God when he hears the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes it in his heart.

In conclusion, a person is not saved by his own prayer. Salvation is possible only through faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ. Prayer is a channel of grace

through which a saved saint gives thanks to God and has fellowship with Him; it can never be a condition of salvation.

Did God plan to save us who had fallen into sin?

God had, from before eternity, a plan to save mankind, who had fallen into sin, from sin and destruction. After Adam and Eve sinned, all mankind came to be placed under sin (Romans 5:12). The result was death and destruction (Romans 6:23). However, God is not One who merely intends to judge mankind; He is the One who, in love, prepared the way of salvation beforehand.

Ephesians 1:4–5 says as follows: *"Just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will."* God predestined, from before the world was created, to save mankind, who would fall into sin, through Jesus Christ.

This plan of salvation was contained in the promises of the many prophecies of the Old Testament. In the Old Testament era, the sacrificial system of Leviticus was a shadow of Jesus Christ who was to come. The event in which a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it and received atonement through its blood was a type showing beforehand the atonement that Jesus would accomplish by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River to bear the sin of the world, by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and by rising again from death. Isaiah 53 says, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for*

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our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5), prophesying the work of redemption of the Messiah.

Coming to the New Testament era, the plan of salvation God established was fulfilled in Jesus Christ. Jesus came to have the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving the baptism John gave at the Jordan River (Matthew 3:15), and because He paid the price of sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross and rising again, He completed the salvation of those who believe. John 3:16 sums up this gospel of the water and the Spirit best. *"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."*

In conclusion, it was that God had established the plan of salvation from before the foundation of the world in order to remove the sins of mankind, who had fallen into the scheme of the serpent.

The word of Acts 4:11–12 says, *"This is the 'stone which was rejected by you builders, which has become the chief cornerstone.' Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

Jesus Christ, in order to become the Savior indispensable to mankind, had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism John gave, hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so became the Savior of sinners. It means that the sinners living on this earth were able to obtain salvation by faith because there was the work of salvation in which Jesus received baptism from John, was nailed to the Cross, and rose again from death.

In the Old Testament, this providence of salvation had already appeared in various ways. In the Book of Leviticus, in God's law of sacrifice, there was a sacrifice that enabled a person's sins to be remitted. A sinner laid his hands on the head

of the sacrificial offering to pass his sins on to it, and the priest received its blood, put it on the horns of the altar of burnt offering, and offered the sacrifice, so that the sinner could receive the remission of sins. The sacrifices of the Old Testament became a type showing the sacrifice of atonement that would be accomplished in the future through Jesus Christ.

Also, prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Ezekiel prophesied of the Messiah who was to come. In particular, Isaiah 53 was prophesying, *"He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities" (Isaiah 53:5)*.

God the Father sent His only begotten Son Jesus Christ to this earth as the Savior, just as He had promised mankind. Jesus was able to have the sin of the world transferred onto His own body once and for all by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River (Matthew 3:15). And by being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood to pay the price of that sin, and by breaking the power of death and rising again from death, He gave true salvation and eternal life to those who believe. This was precisely the providence of salvation by which God saved sinners.

However, the providence of salvation God established has been proceeding in Jesus Christ both in the past and in the present. Even today, God is working so that the gospel of the water and the Spirit may be spread. The Apostle Peter said in Acts 2:38, *"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."* In this way, whoever believes that Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so settled that sin, receives the remission of sins and receives the gift of the Holy Spirit.

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In conclusion, God's clear providence to save sinners from sin was able to be completed through Jesus Christ, the Son of God. The providence of salvation God planned was prophesied beforehand through the sacrifices and prophecies of the Old Testament, and in the New Testament it was completely fulfilled through the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. This word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit was able to spread to the whole world and lead those who believe to be saved.

Can one realize the providence of salvation toward each individual?

God is not One who saves only one nation from sin. The word of the Bible clearly says that God knows each and every person deeply and has a providence of salvation toward each individual: *"Before I formed you in the womb I knew you" (Jeremiah 1:5)* and *"the very hairs of your head are all numbered" (Matthew 10:30)*. In this way, God had been establishing a personal plan of salvation toward every person.

Therefore, it means that human beings cannot fully realize the providence of salvation God planned by their own philosophical speculation or religious rituals alone. God is revealing the providence of salvation through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which was composed according to God's plan. Romans 10:17 says, *"Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God."* In other words, when we hear God's word of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit works and so enables us to realize the truth of salvation.

Practical examples of realizing the providence of salvation can be found in the Bible. Looking at the sacrificial system of

the Old Testament, the scene in which a sinner lays his hands on an animal to pass his sins on to it was a truth showing beforehand the providence of redemption that would be fulfilled through the blood of the Cross, as Jesus Christ received baptism from John and had the sin of the world transferred to Him. In the New Testament we can see that Jesus received the baptism John gave, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was put to death on the Cross, and rose again, and so became the eternal Savior.

In conclusion, through the word of God we can realize the providence by which God desires to save each individual. That providence of salvation is contained precisely in the gospel of the water and the Spirit of Jesus Christ, that is, in the word of the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. Today also, God is opening our spiritual eyes right now through the word of God and is enabling us to realize that amazing providence of salvation.

Why did mankind have to live apart from God?

Adam and Eve, the ancestors of mankind, sinned in the Garden of Eden by doubting the word of God (Genesis chapter 3). At that moment, an evil heart that could not believe the word of God entered into their hearts, and within their hearts a barrier called sin came to be set up. The holy God, as One who cannot be with sin, could not be with man (Isaiah 59:2).

Therefore, the Bible says that *"the wages of sin is death" (Romans 6:23)*. The sin and death spoken of here mean not merely the death of the body but spiritual separation from God. The life that has left God became one that can never obtain salvation from its own sins by its own strength. Those who had

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become sinners before God were those who could not but live wandering in sin.

God is love, but at the same time He was also a righteous God. Therefore, He had to bring down the judgment for sin without fail upon the sin of those who did not believe the word of God. Therefore, God had been planning in His heart to deliver sinners from their sin—the sin of the world—through His Son Jesus Christ. In the New Testament era, because there was the event in which Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him through the work of the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, there could be the remission of sins through faith (Hebrews 9:22). This is because, as long as a sinner remained in sin, he could not dwell with God and was one who could not but live apart from God.

However, God did not leave mankind, who had fallen into sin, forever; He determined to save them. From before the foundation of the world, God the Father was the One who had a plan of salvation through His Son Jesus Christ (Ephesians 1:4). Jesus came to this earth as the Savior and received the baptism John gave, and therefore had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body, shed His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so opened the way to be saved for those who believe this truth from now on. Jesus Himself said, *"I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (John 14:6).*

In conclusion, the reason we could not but live apart from God was that we had hearts that did not believe the word of God and distrusted it. However, God the Father was the One who had determined to save us again through the gospel of the water and the Spirit of His Son Jesus Christ.

By what can it be known that one fears God?

Our fearing God means that we have a heart that fears God, respects Him, and loves Him. Our fearing God is to know God as the Holy One and, by believing faith, to have the faith that is reconciled with Him through faith in His majesty and His love and in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the word of salvation. In other words, it means an attitude of obedience. Proverbs 9:10 says, *"The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, And the knowledge of the Holy One is understanding."* In other words, fearing God is the starting point of faith as well as the foundation of faith.

One who fears God becomes one who follows God by faith in the word God has spoken. Deuteronomy 10:12 says, *"What does the LORD your God require of you, but to fear the LORD your God, to walk in all His ways and to love Him, to serve the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul."* In other words, we are those who have a heart that, before the word of God, believes His word, fears Him, honors His name, and desires to follow His will.

Above all, one who fears God is one who, by faith, gratefully accepts in his heart the truth of salvation that Jesus received baptism from John and removed the sin of the world. In other words, one who receives the remission of sins in his heart by faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the word of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, becomes one who fears God. This is not merely an attitude shown in outward appearance; it is accepting the righteousness of God by faith in one's heart and revealing His glory.

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Does a person have the authority to remit the sins of another person?

The word of the Bible says that the remission of sins is an authority that belongs to God alone. In Isaiah 43:25 God said, *"I, even I, am He who blots out your transgressions for My own sake; And I will not remember your sins."* In Mark 2:7 also, the scribes said concerning Jesus, *"Why does this Man speak blasphemies like this? Who can forgive sins but God alone?"* In other words, this word stated the fact that, in essence, man is one who has no authority to remit the sins of another person.

However, Jesus Christ, as the Son of God, came to this earth as the Savior of sinners, and so He was the One who had the authority to remit the sins of sinners. In Mark 2:10 Jesus said, *"That ye may know that the Son of man hath authority on earth to forgive sins."* Because Jesus received the baptism John gave and had the sin of the world transferred onto His own body, He was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, paid the price of our sins, and rose again from death, and so became the Savior.

Then what is the role entrusted to those who have received the remission of sins? It is not to remit the sins of other people directly; rather, they must be those who testify of the work of Jesus Christ in order to do the work of teaching the way to receive the remission of sins. In John 20:23 Jesus said to His disciples, *"If you forgive the sins of any, they are forgiven them."* This is because the Lord received baptism from John, had the sin of the world, including their sins, transferred to Him, hung on the Cross, and rose again from death, and gave His disciples the authority to remit sins. It means that Jesus gave His disciples the authority to remit the sins of people by preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The gospel of the baptism of Jesus that the Apostle Peter preaches

The Apostle Peter at first followed Jesus simply as the Messiah, but he became one who believed in Jesus, who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, went to the Cross, and rose again from death. After the descent of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, Peter proclaimed as follows through his sermon: *"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)*. The core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Peter preached was precisely that one comes to receive the remission of sins by faith in the baptism Jesus Christ received from John, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection.

It means that Peter, as a witness who directly saw the work of the baptism of Jesus, was one who believed in Jesus, who received baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him, was nailed to the Cross and died, and rose again from death (Matthew 3:15).

Peter came to know that Jesus' receiving baptism from John, His being nailed to the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, and His resurrection were the event of redemption. So he testified of Him *"who Himself bore our sins in His own body on the tree" (1 Peter 2:24)*. Moreover, the resurrection of Jesus, as the evidence that He overcame sin and death, became the evidence of salvation that gives a living hope to those who believe in Jesus as the Savior (1 Peter 1:3).

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that Peter preached has several characteristics. First, he emphasized the continuity of the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection. He proclaimed the fact that through the baptism

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Jesus received from John the sin of the world was passed on to the body of Jesus, that Jesus was then nailed to the Cross and the sin of the world was washed away by the blood He shed, and that through His rising again from death He became the Savior.

Peter taught that one obtains the washing of sins by faith in the baptism Jesus received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection (Acts 10:43). He became convinced, through the event of Cornelius (Acts chapter 10), of the fact that the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached equally not only to the Jews but also to all the Gentiles.

The word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Apostle John preaches

The core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Apostle John testified of is that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and that one obtains everlasting life by believing in Him. John 20:31 says as follows: *"But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in His name."* The gospel of the water and the Spirit that John preached was precisely the gospel of faith by which one believes in Jesus and obtains everlasting life.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit that John preached has several important characteristics. First is the fact that Jesus came as the Word of God (the Logos). Just as the words *"In the beginning was the Word" (John 1:1)* and *"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)* say, John testified that Jesus is God who has existed from the beginning and is the One who came clothed in a human body and saved mankind.

Second, John held fast to the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the blood of the Cross, and the testimony of the Holy Spirit who came after the resurrection as the core of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. 1 John 5:6–7 says, *"This is he that came by water and blood, even Jesus Christ; not with the water only, but with the water and with the blood. And it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is the truth –ASV."* This shows that salvation was completed through the baptism Jesus received from John at the Jordan River (the water), His death on the Cross (the blood), and the testimony of the Holy Spirit who came after the resurrection.

Third, John testifies of Jesus as the *"Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world" (John 1:29)*. This proclamation of John the Baptist made clear that Jesus is the Lamb who would have the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, shed His blood and die on the Cross, and rise again from death. The Apostle John held fast to this proclamation as the core truth of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Fourth, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that John preached was the gospel of everlasting life and love. The word *"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)* directly connects the love of God with the gospel. Also, 1 John 4:9–10 emphasizes that the love of God was revealed through the work of atonement of Jesus Christ.

When John summarized the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he expressed it as "love" and "everlasting life." He saw the baptism Jesus received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection as the completion of the love of God, and he testified that one obtains everlasting life by believing in that love. In the end, the gospel John believed was the gospel of salvation

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through the water (the baptism), the blood (the Cross), and the Spirit (the Spirit of God who came after the resurrection).

In conclusion, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Apostle John believed and preached is the gospel that testifies of the fact that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the One who came as the Word, and that He is the Lamb who bore the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. John proclaimed that whoever believes this gospel receives the remission of sins, receives the Holy Spirit as a gift, and enjoys eternal life.

The word of Song of Solomon 8:6 that *"love is as strong as death"* takes as a metaphor the fact that death is an absolute power that human beings cannot defy. True love is a mighty power that is just as unshakable and unchanging. Biblically speaking, the love of God, that is, the love Jesus Christ showed through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection, is a love that is stronger than the power of death and holds believers forever (Romans 8:38–39).

The verse *"Jealousy as cruel as the grave" (Song of Solomon 8:6)* means the exclusiveness and jealousy of love. True love is accompanied by an intense passion not to let its object be taken away. The grave, that is, Sheol, refers to the place of death and judgment, and the jealousy of love is likewise just as fierce and stern. The love of God also includes a holy jealousy, and God is One who does not let His people be taken away by other gods (Exodus 34:14).

Ruth also confessed to her mother-in-law Naomi, *"Your God, my God. Where you die, I will die, And there will I be buried" (Ruth 1:16–17),* and so revealed a covenantal love that staked her life, going beyond mere family affection. The prophet Hosea, following God's command to love the adulterous woman Gomer to the end, did not give up even amid betrayal and pain. His love

was precisely a foreshadowing of the love of holy jealousy toward the people of God.

In history also, such love has been revealed. The saints of the early church staked their lives because of their love for Jesus Christ. The faith of the martyrs who did not deny the Lord even as they stood before beasts in the Roman amphitheaters was evidence of a love stronger than death. Also, the sight of parents throwing away their lives for their children has been recorded countless times amid wars, famines, and disasters. The love of parents goes beyond instinct and shows a power stronger than death, as parents sacrifice themselves to save their children. The love of husband and wife is the same. The stories of couples who protected their spouses to the end even in the crisis of war or illness and ended their lives together can be called human examples of this.

Above all, on the spiritual level, the eternal remission of sins points to the love of Jesus Christ. The Lord loved His disciples, and loved them to the end (John 13:1); that love was stronger than death and triumphed through the resurrection, and it holds the saints even to this day. Among the saints who realized this love there were martyrs and reformers who staked their lives and followed the Lord to the end, and countless believers who kept the faith without leaving a name.

Also, there are examples of love that transcended death within the faith. In the early church and in the age of the Reformation, there were those who did not abandon their faith and were martyred together. They were those who could face martyrdom without fearing even death, not merely because of human love toward one another, but because of their love for God and for the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The love the Bible speaks of is not a love that merely stops in the face of death, but a love that overcame death and gave

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everlasting life. The love with which God loved mankind lay in the love by which Jesus Christ received baptism from John, bore the sin of the world, went to the Cross and shed His blood, and rose again from death to become our Savior. By believing in the love of the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and of the Cross, we have become those who are saved by faith in the love of God, who gave us eternal salvation and everlasting life beyond the limits of human beings, and we have become those who give glory to God and those who wait for the second coming of the Lord in the remaining years of our lives. Hallelujah! ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Ask for the strength to preach the word boldly in the face of threats

< Acts 4:23–31 >

“And being let go, they went to their own companions and reported all that the chief priests and elders had said to them. So when they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: ‘Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them, who by the mouth of Your servant David have said: “Why did the nations rage, And the people plot vain things? The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ.” 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. Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word, by stretching out Your hand to heal, and that signs and wonders may be done through the name of Your holy Servant Jesus.’ And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness.”

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What the church that heard the threats asked for together

The news that the apostles had been released carried a heavy threat along with joy. Because the priests and elders had commanded them neither to speak nor to teach in the name of Jesus, the return of the apostles did not mean that the difficulty of preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit had also ended. The people of the same faith heard this news and sought God together. At that time, when persecution was severe and it was hard to preach the gospel, there was nothing they could do but pray; and rather than leaving it to the few who had been threatened to endure on their own, the whole church took that matter as its own and prayed. When we see what that church asked of God, we also come to know what we must ask for when we meet difficulties while serving the gospel.

Let us read verse 24. *"When they heard that, they raised their voice to God with one accord and said: Lord, You are God, who made heaven and earth and the sea, and all that is in them" (Acts 4:24)*. Before speaking of the strength of the people who opposed them, the church confessed who God, who made all things, is. The Lord is the Master of all things and the One who rules. People set the apostles before them and questioned their authority, but the authority that the apostles and the church relied on was with God, who made heaven and earth and the sea. Prayer turns the heart that had been looking only at the blocked situation toward the living God.

We too, when we meet difficulties while serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must first tell those difficulties to God together. If we only worry alone and let our hearts be weighed down, or only wait for someone else to solve them, we miss the very thing we should really do, which is relying on God. The

church praying with one heart does not stop at making the same sound. It is knowing what the word of salvation is that we must preach together, and asking together for the help needed in the work of preaching that word. That word is that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world, including my sins and yours, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us from sin. It was precisely this gospel that the church sought to preach even amid threats.

God accomplished His will of salvation amid opposition

Those who were praying recalled the word given through David. *"The kings of the earth took their stand, And the rulers were gathered together Against the LORD and against His Christ" (Acts 4:26).* The church did not take the threat that blocked the name of Jesus as a strange thing they were experiencing for the first time. They saw within the word that opposition against the Christ had been foretold beforehand in the word, that the going of Herod and Pontius Pilate against Jesus had happened according to that word, and that now the same opposition had arisen against the apostles who testified of the Christ. It is the same now as it was then: opposition arises wherever the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached. The faith that knows this fact keeps us from changing the content of salvation in order to avoid persecution. Because they remembered the word the Holy Spirit had given beforehand through the mouth of David, the church did not judge the work of God by the opposition before their eyes alone, and rather than the fact that those who went against Jesus had gathered together,

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they held more firmly to the fact that God had spoken and had accomplished salvation according to that word. We too, when we hear difficult news, must return to the written word; only then does the judgment of our hearts stand straight.

This is the word of verse 28. *"To do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done" (Acts 4:28)*. Even within the gathering of those who went against Jesus, the will of salvation that God accomplished did not collapse. Here lies the reason we cannot judge that salvation failed when we see the death the Christ suffered. God gave up His Son Jesus Christ in order to save sinners, and Jesus Christ Himself received the judgment for our sins. The church told the present threat also to the God who had accomplished that salvation.

Only when we clearly know why Jesus hung on the Cross does the word we are to preach also become clear. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and those sins include the sins that you and I commit throughout our whole lives. Because of those sins, Jesus received the judgment for sin in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and completed salvation. If we leave out any part of this work because of the threats of people, we cannot fully preach the basis of the remission of sins.

We have received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished. Therefore, our confidence in coming to God also lies in the grace of that salvation. We stand not as people who must pile up more merits of their own to remove their sins, but as children who ask for help from the God who saved them. Since the One who delivered us from sin is alive even now, we can rely on Him even in the face of the difficulties we meet while preaching the gospel. The prayer of the church came out of this faith in salvation.

Ask for the strength to preach the word boldly in the face of threats

Grant that we may preach the word boldly

Let us read verse 29. *"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word" (Acts 4:29)*. The church, while asking God to look on the threats, asked for the boldness to preach the word right in the midst of those threats. The plea to be enabled to preach in the midst of the threats came before any word asking that the threats be made to disappear. Entrusting the problem to God and carrying out the task entrusted to them are joined together as one. It was not a boast that they would try to endure by their own strength alone, but a plea that God must uphold His servants and enable them to preach.

What is to be preached here is the word of God. Preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not vaguely urging people to believe or making known the zeal of the one who preaches. It is making clear by the word that Jesus is our Savior and preaching how He removed sin. If the other person is suffering because of sin, we must explain the salvation in which Jesus bore that sin. If he knows only the death on the Cross, we must make clear, together with it, that before that death Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and that after that death He rose again; only then is the content of salvation that the person is to believe fully revealed.

The church also prayed that God would heal the sick and that signs and wonders would be done in the name of Jesus. They did not ask for power to exalt their own names, but asked that the work of God be manifested in the name of Jesus. While telling God the difficulties of the sick as well, they testified of Jesus Christ, the Savior who gives life to that person. We too must not turn away from the needs that come upon the bodies and lives of

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people, and when we tell God those needs, we must hold together with it the purpose of preaching the word that gives life to souls.

Verse 31 tells what happened after the prayer. *"And when they had prayed, the place where they were assembled together was shaken; and they were all filled with the Holy Spirit, and they spoke the word of God with boldness" (Acts 4:31)*. The answer God gave did not end with the shaking of the place where they were gathered. The multitude were filled with the Holy Spirit and preached the word boldly, and they carried out the very thing they had asked for earlier. If we think of being filled with the Holy Spirit only as an experience we want to feel, we miss this conclusion. The Holy Spirit caused them to testify of the salvation Jesus accomplished, and opened the mouths they had been about to close because of the threats so that they preached that word.

We too must rely on the help of God when we serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We need boldness and wisdom, and we also need the grace that upholds our weary bodies and the provision needed for actual living. Ask God for these things and continue the work entrusted to you together with the church. Do not separate the prayer that asks for needs from the life that preaches the gospel, and use the help you have received for the work that pleases God. The faith that relies on God is revealed also in the steps taken after finishing prayer.

At first, what the church heard together was the threat meant to silence the apostles, but in the end, what came out of that multitude was the bold word of God. In between, there was the prayer of one heart offered to God, the Master of all things. What the church asked for in the face of threats was not that the threats be removed, but the help of God enabling them to preach the word of salvation boldly even in the midst of those threats. Let

us too not stay in hearing words of difficulty together and being discouraged, but tell those difficulties to the God who saved us, receive His help, and boldly preach the word of Jesus Christ that we must preach now. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The sharing of born-again people who do not call what is theirs their own

< Acts 4:32–35 >

"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common. And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all. Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold, and laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need."

Only those who have the Holy Spirit can have things in common

When we read about the sharing in the early church, our eyes go first to how much property they gave up. But the word shows us the heart of the multitude of those who believed before it shows us a list of possessions. Because people of different

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circumstances became of one heart and one soul, they were able to use their possessions together, and among the multitude that had thus become of one heart there was no one who lacked. To us, who even after receiving the remission of sins regard only our own livelihood as important, this word asks what the salvation we have received together accomplishes in our view of material things and in our hearts toward our brothers.

Let us read verse 32. *"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4:32)*. They did not hold on to what they had as possessions that had nothing to do with their brothers. Because they accepted as their own family the people whom the same Savior had brought to life, giving up their possessions was not regarded as having their property taken away by strangers. Being of one heart is not a result that arises by itself when goods are gathered together; it is a union that came from people who believed in the same Lord and served Him together.

Since the verse just before this says that the multitude, having finished praying, were filled with the Holy Spirit and preached the word, their giving up what was theirs and having it in common like this was also a flow that the Holy Spirit created. A person who has not been born again cannot live a life of laying what is his before the church and using it together with others, but a person who has received the remission of sins and has the Holy Spirit dwelling in his heart can do so. That remission of sins is what Jesus accomplished for us by having all the sins of the world, including my sins and yours, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, by shedding His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and by rising again from death. God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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Therefore, this word does not lay on us an obligation that we must have things in common; it shows us the fact that those with whom the Holy Spirit is present have become able to have things in common. Salvation has already been received by faith, and sharing is the fruit that the Holy Spirit brings about among those who have received that salvation.

We are apt to think that we can take care of one another only when we come to have more money. But no matter how much I have, if I am looking only at my own needs, my brother's hardship does not become my concern. On the contrary, if I regard those who have been brought to life by the same gospel of the water and the Spirit as one family, I come to give thought to their lack as well and to consider how to use what I have. The heart that does not separate serving the Lord from using one's own possessions begins here.

What that heart was based on is revealed in the next verse. The apostles testified of the resurrection of the Lord Jesus, and the multitude obtained great grace. If we single out only the sharing of possessions in common and make it the center of the early church, we miss this grace. They were people who gathered together and shared their food, and at the same time they were people who believed in the living Jesus Christ, who had saved them. Within that faith, the way they looked at their own possessions also changed.

The change of master in our lives brought about by the grace of the resurrection

Verse 33 says: *"And with great power the apostles gave witness to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And great grace was upon them all" (Acts 4:33)*. The testimony that Jesus had

risen again from death made clear whom the people who had been under the judgment of sin now relied on to live. The doctrine of the resurrection that the apostles preached contained the salvation by which sinners receive the remission of sins and obtain new life. Because the multitude who had obtained that salvation served the Lord together, at the center of their sharing was the grace they had received from the risen Jesus Christ.

Our sins are not something that can be removed by offering our property, and the basis of the remission of sins lies only in the salvation that Jesus carried out for us. The doctrine of the resurrection that the apostles preached was the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which says that Jesus, by receiving baptism from John at the age of thirty, had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again on the third day after He died. Since the sins we commit throughout our whole lives are also included in the sin of the world that was passed on to Jesus at that time, the judgment Jesus received on the Cross was the judgment we were to receive, and the resurrection of Jesus was the completion of the salvation that delivers us from sin and death.

We who believe in this salvation, which He accomplished through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, do not give up our property as the price of salvation. Because the Lord has already borne the price of sin for us, we serve the Lord with thanksgiving. The faith that our lives belong to Jesus, who delivered us from the judgment of sin, enables us to use the possessions we have for the Lord as well. The heart that tries to become righteous through sharing and the heart that shares out of thanks for the grace that brought us to life as righteous people are different from the very start.

The Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts, which have received the remission of sins, and testifies of what Christ has accomplished.

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Therefore, we must examine before the word whether it is right to go on being indifferent to a brother's poverty while thinking of the Lord's grace. Ask the Lord for guidance so that your heart, which has been accustomed to protecting your own livelihood, may come to think even of the livelihood of those who serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together with you. When we use our possessions according to the grace of life we have already received, our confession that we serve the same Lord becomes clear in our lives as well.

Look after your brother's needs as your own concern

Let us read verse 34. *"Nor was there anyone among them who lacked; for all who were possessors of lands or houses sold them, and brought the proceeds of the things that were sold" (Acts 4:34)*. The reason there was no one who lacked was not that each person had provided everything he needed on his own. Those who had lands and houses sold them and brought the proceeds, and those who were in want received the supply they needed through that sharing. What was left over for someone was used to fill up another person's lack. The word shows caring for those who are actually in need as a concrete fruit of being of one heart.

Verse 35 makes clear how they used those possessions. *"And laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need" (Acts 4:35)*. They distributed not in a way that set a larger share for those who had given more, but according to each person's need. The possessions laid at the apostles' feet were not used to increase the personal wealth of the apostles. They were used to look after the needs of the people in the

church and to meet those needs. Those entrusted with the distribution must not forget this purpose, and we who give together must also unite our hearts in this purpose.

In the word that they distributed according to need, there is the labor of actually looking into the circumstances of those who receive. This is because, rather than the outward appearance that everyone received the same amount, one has to know what a person now lacks that makes his life hard in order to help that person. Also, those who receive help must not collapse alone out of shame, but must be able to make their circumstances honestly known to the brothers who have received the remission of sins together with them through the baptism Jesus received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection. When we regard one another as one family, giving and receiving continue within the same grace.

To force everyone today to sell all their property because the early church did so is to miss the heart we should learn from this word. What we must learn first is the faith that unites our hearts with the Lord and the church, and that manages well the possessions entrusted to us while using them where they are needed. Do not judge people by how much material wealth they have given; look after the hardships of those who believe in the same gospel of the water and the Spirit as your own concern. Having little does not mean that one cannot share even one's heart.

In actual practice, when I am in want I can receive help, and when I have something to spare I can fill up another person's need. It is the secret of the life of faith that if we use things for ourselves alone we become needy, but if we lay them before God and use them together we become rich. If in that process we exalt someone's name or demean the person who was helped, we go against the meaning of being one family. Just as the grace the

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Lord Jesus has given us is precious to everyone, we must also treat each person as precious in sharing what is needed. It is to care together so that a soul the Lord has brought to life does not grow weary alone because of the hardships of life.

To us, whose eyes went first to the size of the possessions, the word has shown by whose grace the people who gave up those possessions became of one heart. The risen Jesus has brought us to life, we are people of the same Lord, and the same Holy Spirit is in our hearts. With a heart that believes in that grace, look after the needs of the brother beside you. Just as there was no one who lacked among the multitude that obtained great grace, let us also enjoy together the grace we have received and actually fill up one another's lack. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Devotion that is not the price of salvation but a response to the grace received

< Acts 4:36–37 >

“And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus, having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles’ feet.”

One person’s land meets the needs of the church

At the end of the account of the multitude of believers having their possessions in common, the Scriptures record one person’s name. He is Joses, a Levite from Cyprus, the man whom the apostles called Barnabas. He is the man who would later bring Saul, who had returned from Damascus, to the apostles and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit together in Antioch, but the place where the Scriptures first introduce him is the act of selling his own land and laying the money at the apostles’ feet. We do not know how large that land was or how much it sold for, but we clearly know the fact that he gave up his own possession to be used together with the church. Rather than making us compare the size of offerings, the word makes us see the devotion of one person who united his heart with people of

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the same faith. That faith is the faith that Jesus had all the sins of the world, including my sins and yours, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and rose again from death, and so saved us from sin. The devotion of Barnabas was the response of a person who had received this salvation free of charge.

Let us read verse 36. *"And Joses, who was also named Barnabas by the apostles (which is translated Son of Encouragement), a Levite of the country of Cyprus" (Acts 4:36)*. His original name, Joses, and the name Barnabas, by which the apostles called him, are recorded together. He was a man so respected among the saints that the apostles gave him a separate name to call him by, but he did not seek to be treated well because of that name; he was a man who actually responded with his own possessions. When we too speak of the church being of one heart, we must not think only of the labor of others but must examine how we ourselves are taking part in that heart.

Verse 37 says: *"Having land, sold it, and brought the money and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 4:37)*. The action of Barnabas did not end with selling the land. By bringing the money and laying it before the apostles, he entrusted it to be used where the church had need. Converting one's possessions is different from offering one's possessions for the Lord. Even after turning the land into money, he could have used it only for himself, but Barnabas gave it up so that the money would be used for the believers.

Laying it at the apostles' feet was an act of entrusting the money to the church, which used it in common. A little earlier the word said, *"And laid them at the apostles' feet; and they distributed to each as anyone had need" (Acts 4:35)*, so where the money from the land of Barnabas went must also be

understood within that distribution. The passage does not treat what Barnabas gave as a gift presented to the apostles personally, but places it within the life of the church that was caring for those in want. The possessions he gave were for the people who believed in the same Lord.

A life that belongs to the Lord, who brought us to life

Let us read again in verse 32 what the multitude to which Barnabas belonged was like. *"Now the multitude of those who believed were of one heart and one soul; neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4:32)*. If we single out one person's devotion and exalt only that person in particular, we forget the foundation, which is that the multitude who had received the same grace had become of one heart. Barnabas united his heart with the faith of that multitude, and used what he had according to that faith. The salvation the Lord has given us does not leave us as people unrelated to one another.

What binds us together as one family is the remission of sins that Jesus Christ accomplished. Just as in the Old Testament sins passed on to the sacrificial offering when hands were laid on it, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His body by receiving baptism from John, and the sins of my whole life and yours are all included in the sin of the world that passed on to Jesus at that time. Because He had that sin passed on to Him, Jesus shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and brought us to life. We believe in that salvation, which He accomplished

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through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and stand as righteous people.

There is no adding land or money in order to obtain this salvation. Because the Savior has given us life, we now think about how to live that life together with the Lord. If we set the starting point of devotion wrongly, we come to seek God's approval through the material things we have given, or to boast of our own merit in having given much. But the heart that believes in the Lord, who bore all our sins, leads us to use our possessions in service while giving thanks for the grace we have already received.

Therefore, the devotion of Barnabas was something that a born-again person had become able to do in the Holy Spirit. If a person who has not been born again is told to sell his land and give it up, nothing remains but compulsion and loss; but a person who believes in the Lord, who bore all our sins, knows that his life belongs to the Lord, and so, whether it is much or little, he can give up what he has and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit while eating and drinking together with the church. The Scriptures do not record what Barnabas hesitated over before he sold his land; they record only the act of laying the money at the apostles' feet. Because the Holy Spirit, who was in his heart that had received the remission of sins, led him to do so, that act was not a devotion squeezed out by force but a response to the grace he had received. When we decide where to use the time and possessions entrusted to us, too, the reason we come to think first of what pleases the Lord while giving thanks to Jesus, who brought me to life, is that the same Holy Spirit is in us.

Saying that we belong to the Lord does not mean that we should hide our own needs and put on an appearance that is beyond our strength. Because God has brought us to life and

cares for us, we rely on Him while also looking honestly at our own circumstances. Know what you have, see the needs of the church, and ask for the heart and faith to take part in those needs. Actually taking part in what pleases the Lord is more precious than the craving to appear as great devotion in people's eyes.

Serve together with a heart that entrusts what you have

The money for the land that Barnabas gave up was used for the service that the church undertook together. The apostles testified of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rose again from death. And they distributed the possessions according to the needs of the believers. When possessions are entrusted with a heart united with that service, the one who gives also comes to bear the needs of the brothers together with the church. It is to accept the work of the church in preaching the word and caring for the brothers as my own work.

For us too, along with what we give, the heart with which we give is important. If we try to push through our own will in proportion to what we have given, or insist that it be used only for the people we want, it becomes difficult to look after the common needs. Look into who needs what among those who have received the Lord's grace together with you, and unite your hearts in meeting those needs. I must be able to rejoice that the material things I have given are used for the gospel of the water and the Spirit rather than for my name.

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Those who are entrusted with what has been given and use it must also act with the same faith. They must not treat one person's devotion lightly or use it for their own convenience, but must think together of the heart with which he gave it out of faith in the Lord and of the actual needs of the church. The flow of the context, that the possessions laid at the apostles' feet were distributed according to each person's need, makes the direction clear to both the one who gives and the one who is entrusted. The faith that seeks to serve the Lord together must continue also in the place where it is used.

Right after this come Ananias and Sapphira, who sold their property and yet lied about its price. Peter says as follows in chapter 5, verse 4: *"While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:4)*. As we read that incident, we must not think that the problem was that the amount they gave was small. Through this incident, placed side by side with the devotion of Barnabas, we see the fact that within the same multitude, putting on the outward form of an action is different from uniting one's heart. We too need the faith that guards against hidden cravings and stands honestly before God.

Even so, it is not that everyone must have land like Barnabas in order to show the same devotion. It is enough to serve the Lord with what has actually been entrusted to us. Look at what the church needs now, find the work you can take part in, and talk honestly in fellowship about what weighs on your heart. It is a matter of not pretending to have what we do not have, not holding on to what we have only for ourselves, and putting it into practice one thing at a time with the faith of living together with the Lord.

The place where the Scriptures first introduce Barnabas was not words he taught before the multitude, but the act of laying the money for his land at the apostles' feet. For us too, what we have united our hearts for must be clearer than the memory of how much we gave. Believe in the life Jesus has given, and take part in the work of His Church in preaching the word and caring for the brothers. When I use what has been entrusted to me with thanks to the Lord, our service also comes to meet the actual needs of the church, just as the one piece of land of Barnabas was a help to the distribution. ✉

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CHAPTER

5

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Ananias and Sapphira, who followed the desires of the flesh

< Acts 5:1–11 >

"But a certain man named Ananias, with Sapphira his wife, sold a possession. And he kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet. But Peter said, 'Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control? Why have you conceived this thing in your heart? You have not lied to men but to God.' Then Ananias, hearing these words, fell down and breathed his last. So great fear came upon all those who heard these things. And the young men arose and wrapped him up, carried him out, and buried him. Now it was about three hours later when his wife came in, not knowing what had happened. And Peter answered her, 'Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?' She said, 'Yes, for so much.' Then Peter said to her, 'How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.' Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found

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her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things."

How the saints of the early church viewed material possessions

The word in Acts chapter 5 tells us how those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit should live their lives of faith, with what kind of faith they should live their lives of faith, and what their view of material possessions should be. At the very least, it tells us what kind of faith those who say they believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have become children of God should have toward material possessions as they live—the proper standard of the Christian life. It is not something that is settled just by knowing it in theory. So, through this word of the Book of Acts, I intend to preach the word about the view of material possessions of us Christians and about our lives.

Here we see that a man named Ananias lived with his wife Sapphira. As they were living, in the time of the early church they heard and believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit and came to live within the church; at that time, it was not that everyone gathered and lived in one place, but, just as now, each lived separately. And when the time came to gather together for worship, they gathered and heard the word of God, and each brought bread wrapped up from home and shared it with one another. They shared the bread of the word, and they shared the bread for the body as well; that is how they lived.

In particular, in the time of the early church, the church began in Jerusalem, and the apostles were there. There were also

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many saints, and the work of the Holy Spirit arose powerfully, so that when the Apostle Peter preached, a work took place in which as many as three thousand people turned to God in a single day. So they gathered and heard the word, preached the gospel by faith, and served; that is how they lived. As they lived like this, what came about very naturally was this: because people who had much material wealth and people who did not have much lived mixed together among the saints, what the apostles mainly preached at that time was about love, about this gospel, about serving the gospel, and about our being brothers and sisters, one in Christ.

So in the time of the early church, the material possessions of all the saints were not divided into yours and mine. Those who truly wanted to live united with the servants of God, having the faith that those who are in Christ are brothers, sisters, and parents to one another, laid their material possessions as one before the church, before the apostles, rather than saying this is mine and that is yours. Not everyone did so, but the people of faith sold their land and sold their houses and laid the proceeds before the apostles, and the apostles did not merely receive it and distribute it to each person; with those possessions they all lived a communal life together. That is why it says, *"Neither did anyone say that any of the things he possessed was his own, but they had all things in common" (Acts 4:32)*. The Holy Spirit was working powerfully, and above all, they were so thankful that they had been saved from sin and had become children of God, that this became the general current among them: since the children of God are brothers and sisters and one family in Christ, where is there any yours and mine? We should put everything into one purse and live a communal life together, with those who have nothing and those who have something living alike in food, clothing, and shelter.

Ananias and Sapphira, who kept back part of the price of the land

Flowing on like this, it was in full bloom for a time. But among them there were people named Ananias and Sapphira, who appear in chapter 5. Ananias is the husband and Sapphira is the wife. This couple also imitated the faith of the apostles and of the many people who followed the apostles, and sold the land they had. And they did not bring all of those proceeds; they brought only a part and laid it at the apostles' feet, at Peter's feet. When Peter looked at Ananias, it was truly outrageous. They should rather not have sold it and brought it at all. But they did sell it and bring it, and later, when Peter asked Ananias's wife Sapphira whether this was really the whole price of the land they had sold, she said it was all of it, and when he asked whether that was true, she said it was true. Peter could see the whole thing, yet they kept saying it was all of it. It says, *"He kept back part of the proceeds, his wife also being aware of it, and brought a certain part and laid it at the apostles' feet" (Acts 5:2)*, and yet they were deceiving by saying that this was all of it.

So Peter rebuked him, saying, *"Ananias, why has Satan filled your heart to lie to the Holy Spirit and keep back part of the price of the land for yourself? While it remained, was it not your own? And after it was sold, was it not in your own control?" (Acts 5:3–4)*. And when Peter said of the lie he had told, *"You have not lied to men but to God" (Acts 5:4)*, Ananias fell down on the spot and died. His soul departed. He simply became a corpse. No one laid a hand on him or did anything to him, yet when that word was spoken, he died. Since he had died, what was to be done? He had to be taken away and buried. So the young men of the church carried him off to one side, buried him, and came back.

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But while they were burying him, his wife Sapphira came before the apostles. Not knowing that her husband had died, not knowing that such a thing had happened, she came in from wherever she had been, and Peter asked her. This is what happened: *"'Tell me whether you sold the land for so much?' She said, 'Yes, for so much.' Then Peter said to her, 'How is it that you have agreed together to test the Spirit of the Lord? Look, the feet of those who have buried your husband are at the door, and they will carry you out.' Then immediately she fell down at his feet and breathed her last. And the young men came in and found her dead, and carrying her out, buried her by her husband. So great fear came upon all the church and upon all who heard these things" (Acts 5:8–11).*

Where on earth does such a thing happen? When we think about it in a fleshly way with regard to property, in this age it is a story that makes no sense at all. Yet this is recorded in the Bible. Then why was it recorded? Would it not have been recorded because there was a reason? Then was it so in the time of the early church, and is it not so now? The Bible is always the same. The truth never changes. And yet the thought often arises that this is too much.

As you read this word, do you not feel that it is just too much? My goodness, if I sold my own property and brought a part of it to the church, the church should be grateful instead; do I really have to offer up all of it? To the point of becoming a complete beggar? The point is that this word does not make sense. It does not make sense even by worldly standards. You too have received the remission of sins, but when you think about it, does it make sense? Because it is written in the Bible, you cannot bring yourself to open your mouth and say that it does not make sense, but when you think about it, you probably often feel that

something is a little off. And yet, the point is that it is written that way in the Bible.

Then what on earth is this word telling us? There is a very great secret here. When you actually come to know it, it is very simple, but if you do not know it, it is an extremely difficult word. One may even come to think: Must we live like this? Is God such a strict God? That is why we must know the Bible spiritually and correctly, interpret it correctly, learn it correctly, believe it correctly, and live our lives of faith by faith. What is clear here is that the two people, Ananias and Sapphira, died, and so they were buried. This is the core. And they died because, after selling their land, they kept back part of the proceeds and deceived the Holy Spirit and the apostles by pretending that they had offered the entire amount. If we summarize the account, that is the conclusion. Then what does this mean?

This word still applies just as it is today

Then does this word apply just as it is in this age? It applies exactly the same. This word applies exactly as it is, without the slightest error. To whom does it apply? It applies just as it is to us who are born again, to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, to the apostles, to the servants of God, to the workers and the saints. Then one might say, is there no one at all who would not die? What kind of word is this? But I have told you that this word applies the same in the New Testament age as well. Then if someone deceives like this, does he really die? He dies. That is actually how it is. Then must we offer up everything we have? We must know the word correctly.

In the time of the early church, they lived this way. Then, now that the early church has completely passed and we are

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living in the last days, must this Church of God, and the servants of God and all the workers and saints living within it, live this way? Spiritually, they must live this way. Then the question arises as to who exactly is the one who dies and who is the one who lives. Who on earth is the one who dies? Let us take a look at the one who dies. Who is the one who will die within the church? It is someone like Ananias and Sapphira. At that time, in the time of the early church, when everyone put all their goods together in one place without distinguishing mine from yours and lived a communal life, Ananias and Sapphira sold their own personal possessions, kept back a part, and it says they gave a part to God. The point is that they followed after their own possessions.

Dear fellow believers, in this age, you and I who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and all the servants of God, workers, and saints within the Church of God, are living in order to spread the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And in order to do this, we give all our bodies, hearts, and time and serve the Lord in various ways, each in our own position. While we live like this, what happens to those who follow after their own desires? The point is that such people die. Such a person dies without fail.

In actual fact, even now in this age, the Church of God is living just as the early church did. It is living this way for the spread of the gospel. How are the workers of God, the servants of God, living? Those who live wholly for the Lord do not set aside possessions of their own; they give everything to the Lord, and while serving the gospel they live on what the Lord gives them. It is exactly the same as the early church. Then why does the one who dies die? The point is that he had possessions of his own set apart.

Dear fellow believers, whether you and I are physically present here right now or not, as we believe in, serve, and follow the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we are in fact living a communal life. Although after we finish the worship service we each scatter and live this way and that, in reality our hearts are one. Just as the word *"one Lord, one faith, one baptism" (Ephesians 4:5)* says, we are the same. The point is that we are living the same way, serving like that.

But there are people who do not live like that and have possessions of their own set apart. One may do the Lord's work wholly and eat when there is something that comes from it, or live on what someone at home earns; yet a person for whom it is firmly settled that his life, his very life, belongs to the Lord eats and lives on whatever the church eats, together with it. But apart from this, there are people who have their own desires set apart and their own lives set apart, regardless of how the church fares, regardless of whether the gospel is spread or not. The point is that such people come to die like Ananias and Sapphira. Why did Ananias and Sapphira die? They died because they followed after their own desires.

Dear fellow believers, you and I have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, received the remission of sins, and come into the church, and some people, the workers of God, live wholly for the Lord. They have no possessions of their own. While they live like this, who is it that, like Ananias and Sapphira, is put to death before Peter, dragged off, and buried—the one who is dead spiritually and physically? The point is that if one follows after his own desires, this is what happens.

Dear fellow believers, we do this work and that work for the Lord, and no one supervises us. But how is it? We give everything we have into the gospel, to God, and with what comes from it we work, making a living for ourselves and also serving

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the gospel; this is the united life of community that we live. But what happens to those who do not live this life, who keep their own lives separate, the life of the church separate, and the work of spreading the gospel separate? The point is that they are put to death.

This is what this word is saying. Peter was a servant of God, but did he do that—tell him to die? He did not say that. He only said that he had deceived not man but God, the Holy Spirit. Yet he fell down before him and died. It is not that we are proposing to do this now; rather, this kind of life has already come down this way from the time of the early church until now. Anyone who lives for the gospel has no life of his own set apart. It is a life united with the Lord.

"I have been crucified with Christ"

After I met the Lord, I was praying at dawn and opened the Bible and looked at it. At that time, as I read straight through a chapter of Galatians, the word *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)* came into my heart. I thought about it. Had I died with Christ, or had I not? Since I was at that time a person who had believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and been born again, I thought about it. If I have been crucified with Christ and now it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, then what is this that I am now trying to do—fulfilling the human duties of the flesh because of family or relatives? At that time I was not earning any money and was receiving training, and I had many worries because there were family members whom, by human duty, I ought to help. By duty it seemed I ought to do so, but if I

did that, the point was that I could not serve the gospel of God. It was truly a dilemma. A conflict arose in my heart.

Then, if I have been crucified with Christ and now it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me, what has happened? If I have died, what then? Jesus was nailed to the Cross, shed His blood, and died. Then, since I believe in the Lord, and since the Lord bore my sin through the baptism He received from John and died on the Cross, have I not died too? Then can a dead man come down and help his family? He cannot. A dead man has no words. If so, this is nothing at all. I am a new creation in Christ, and *"old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new" (2 Corinthians 5:17)*—that is it. It is not something I can do anything about. So at that time, seeing the word and realizing the word, it was settled clearly for me: all my old life is over; it is over, and yet I have been thinking about and worrying over the people who were connected with me in the old days. From then on, the word *"I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me" (Galatians 2:20)* became firmly established in me. From now on, if I die I die with Christ, and if I live I live with Christ; now my life is not my own; my life is Christ's life and I belong to Christ—that was settled clearly. The Lord did not end with bearing my sin and dying on the Cross; He rose again. So I, who died with the Lord, am one who has come back to life with the Lord, and the One who now lives in me is the risen Christ.

And from then on, selfish desire for material things, covetousness, disappeared. Personal desires and greed, whether for material things or anything else, disappeared. It would be a lie to say they disappeared one hundred percent, and they come up from time to time, but even so, since it was not mine no matter what I did, I lived that way. Generally, that is how I live. I also teach the ministers: Where is anything of yours? All this is the

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Lord's; where is anything of yours? It is all the Lord's. That is what I believe, and that is how I myself live.

But among the people who have come into the church, even among those who are called workers, there are people like Ananias and Sapphira. Such people are put to death. It is not that I kill them, nor that I tell them to die; the point is that they are put to death by God. Do you live this united life, giving everything you have entirely to Christ and, with all that Christ gives us, serving the gospel and living your own life as well? Or do you look after your own desires, saying that this is yours, and that although you give some portion of your life to the Lord, your life and everything you have are clearly your own and have not been given entirely to the Lord?

Such people, whether laypeople or workers, or those who live having given their hearts wholly and set their hearts, were all put to death—that is the point. That does not mean that I am telling you to sell your property and give it to the Lord, to sell it within a month and give it. Even in the days when Ananias and Sapphira were around, there were many people whose faith had not reached that point and who simply lived as they were. But among those who had said they would live wholly for the Lord, there were some who looked after their own desires. The point is that all such people were put to death before the Lord. And in order to show that such people will be put to death in the future as well, the Lord recorded this word of Acts chapter 5, left it to us, and is showing it to us.

What is the Lord's is mine, and what is mine is the Lord's

That is actually how it is. Everything is the Lord's. When I look at people who have not come to such faith, it is truly strange. They give small things but cannot give big things. We have already become Christ's, so where is there anything that is mine or yours? We have become one with Christ; we have gone into Christ and live there, and Christ has come into us and lives there; now that we are one body, where is there any yours and mine? Since we live as one body with God, is there such a thing as this is mine and this is God's? There is not. Yet among the people in the church, even among those who have become workers, there are people who have their own things set apart. Such people are put to death by God. They are buried. That is what this word is.

Such people are put to death, while those who are not like that, those who live united with Christ, receive glory together with Christ and suffer together with Christ, and live that way. Among those who have received the remission of sins living in the church, those who live wholly for the Lord, whether they come from home or from wherever, or live here, are of one heart. The point is that you and I have already been united with Christ, and God has given us material possessions. In the Psalms it says, *"Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!" (Psalm 133:1)*. How beautiful it is for us to live like this—united with the Lord, doing what pleases the Lord, giving our lives to the Lord, and with the ability the Lord gives us, serving the gospel while we ourselves also make a living! It is truly beautiful. There is nothing more beautiful than this. Dear fellow believers, where does a born-again person, a person who does the work of God, have anything of his own? Is there anything he can claim as his own? What is mine is the Lord's,

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and what is the Lord's is mine. People of the world say that what is mine is mine and what is yours is also mine, but when it comes down to it, what is the Lord's is mine and what is mine is also the Lord's. The point is that we live joined together as one.

Such people live well. When the Lord receives glory, they receive glory together with Him, and when the Lord suffers, they suffer together with Him. This word is telling that story. The point is that we do not carry a separate purse. If we have received the remission of sins within the church because of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have met the Lord, we must live united with the Lord. We must do what pleases the Lord. We must have the united faith that what is the Lord's is mine and what is mine is the Lord's. That is the right faith and the right attitude of a worker.

According to the Bible, this kind of life is possible for those who have become one in heart, one in faith, and one with Christ. Born-again people, those who live for the Lord, do not have things of their own set apart, nor things of the church set apart. What they have lived on all their lives belongs to the church; with it they serve the gospel, and when they die they leave it all behind and go. That is the Christian life.

We must be careful. Even the born-again must be careful. That does not mean that I am saying you are like that now. We are reading this word together and sharing it together. If you want to die like Ananias and Sapphira, all you have to do is follow after your own desires like this. Then who is there that does not follow after his own desires? Everyone follows after them, but the question is whether one is a person who lives only for himself, or a person who puts the Lord first and, as he lives for the Lord, finds his own things lacking and lives by being supplied with what comes through the Lord. The latter is very sound. It is right. But a person who looks after only his own life

and his own desires and has no interest in whether the Lord's work gets done or not is put to death. It is a life that is not right. Such people also come to regard their fellow workers neither with compassion nor with honor.

That is because that brother, that sister, that minister all belong to God and are God's people; because they are one family in Christ, they are all precious. It is not that one is more precious and another less precious, nor that it is all right for one to be ruined while another must not be ruined. Because they are all the same family, there is this kind of heart toward all of them, just as it hurts whichever of the ten fingers is bitten. But those who do not have this heart and this faith are not attached to these ten fingers. Dear fellow believers, you must live a normal life of faith.

Choose the good side

This is the content of the word I am preaching. You must understand it and think about yourselves. If by any chance you are even slightly connected to this, I ask you to repent quickly. I ask you to turn back. Dear fellow believers, the air is the Lord's, the sunlight is the Lord's, the gentle breeze is the Lord's, and the sun, the moon, the stars, the soil, and all of nature are the Lord's. We receive and use what is the Lord's, using it for the Lord and also using it for ourselves, and then we go. There is no one who does not use what is the Lord's. There is no one who uses what is his own. So our faith must be right.

We must know this precisely. We have believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit and have already set our hearts to live for the Lord, and as we live together and live for the gospel, we receive what is the Lord's and give a portion of it to the Lord

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while we ourselves also live on it, and then we receive more from the Lord and serve the Lord more—is this not how it is? In the end, where in this world is there anyone who lives on his own things and then goes? Among those who are not born again there is no such person, and among those who are born again there is no such person either. Am I telling you now to live that way? I am not saying let us live that way; I am saying that this is how it is. I am not insisting on anything. I am teaching you the principle. Then, as for the rest, whom does it depend on? It depends on each person himself. If I say you must not live that way, this is how to live, follow me—how many of you would follow? Some do not follow if even their thinking does not match; some do not follow because their circumstances do not fit; some follow, but say they will follow ten years from now; some have followed until now, but say it is too hard now and they simply cannot follow anymore—how many different kinds there are! I am telling you the principle. After that, who does it? You all do it. I ask you to choose the good side.

If I apply this word to myself and to you as well, it fits exactly. So we come to see: Ananias and Sapphira died; they died because they followed after their own desires; they were taken and buried; and that is why the Bible records it. When we apply this word to us living in modern times, it seems like a word that does not fit, but we come to realize that within the world of true faith, this word is right. I believe this word is the truth. In fact, I live this way without claiming anything as my own. I think that all workers should live well. Then should those who are not workers live poorly? That is not it; serving the gospel much and we ourselves also living well and abundantly—I say that this is good. I hope that God will do this for us, and this is what is right.

But what about a person who tries to live well only for himself while the gospel is not much served or spread—a person

who earns material things and spends much only on himself and tries to live well only for himself? The point is that he is like Ananias and Sapphira. In the end he is put to death spiritually and becomes an adversary of God. It does not end with merely being put to death. He becomes an adversary of God. Who do you want to become? Do you want to become Ananias and Sapphira, or do you want to become like the apostles, like the saints of the early church? I, too, am for the latter.

Dear fellow believers, like the apostles of the early church, like its saints, let us choose the good side and become people who serve God much and who, within the blessings God gives, receive many blessings in both spirit and body and live well. I hope that we will live not a cursed life of being put to death spiritually and physically, but a truly blessed life—being truly blessed both spiritually and physically, benefiting other people more, giving more glory to God, receiving more blessings ourselves, and so benefiting others. I wish that such a life be given to you, and I wish that it be given to me as well. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Resist the devil as children of God

< Acts 5:12–32 >

“And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon’s Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed. Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison. But at night an angel of the Lord opened the prison doors and brought them out, and said, ‘Go, stand in the temple and speak to the people all the words of this life.’ And when they heard that, they entered the temple early in the morning and taught. But the high priest and those with him came and called the council together, with all the elders of the children of Israel, and sent to the prison to have them brought. But when the officers came and did not find them in the prison, they returned and reported, saying, ‘Indeed we found the prison shut securely, and the guards

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standing outside before the doors; but when we opened them, we found no one inside!' Now when the high priest, the captain of the temple, and the chief priests heard these things, they wondered what the outcome would be. So one came and told them, saying, 'Look, the men whom you put in prison are standing in the temple and teaching the people!' Then the captain went with the officers and brought them without violence, for they feared the people, lest they should be stoned. And when they had brought them, they set them before the council. And the high priest asked them, saying, 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!' But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.'"

The church came into being through the Holy Spirit

The Book of Acts is the record of the servants of God who served the Lord together with the Holy Spirit after the Holy Spirit descended on the Day of Pentecost and came upon the hearts of believers. It is the record of the early church. The church came into being through the Holy Spirit. Through the Holy Spirit, God enabled people to receive the remission of sins through Jesus Christ, and He also gave the Holy Spirit into the

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hearts of those who had received the remission of sins, so that through that Holy Spirit the church came into being and the work of the gospel took place, and through the work of the Holy Spirit He saved all people. That is why we call the Book of Acts the Acts of the Holy Spirit. We are saying that it is the record of the apostles working together with the Holy Spirit.

The Book of Acts says, *"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)*. In Acts chapter 2, we see the Holy Spirit being with the servants of God and testifying of Jesus Christ. At that time Peter preached the very same gospel as we do, saying, *"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. For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:38–39)*. It says that God preached the gospel of baptism and the water and the blood through Peter and gained three thousand people at that time.

In this age it is hard to preach the gospel even to one person, so how was it preached to as many as three thousand people back then? That is the power of God. Peter is the apostle to the Jews. He is the one who was sent to the Jews. The Jews are those who believe in God. If they just acknowledge that Jesus is the Son of God, the Jews know all too well that Jesus had our sins passed on to Him when He received baptism from John. This is because they know the Old Testament well.

This is what Peter 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)*. So at first, a work took place in which the Jews returned. And it said that the gospel would reach Judea and Samaria and the end of

the earth and be spread throughout the whole world. First, just as Jesus was born in Bethlehem in Israel, that country is evangelized first, and from that country the disciples are scattered throughout the whole world so that the gospel goes all around the whole world, and when it comes back into Jerusalem, this world comes to an end.

So in the days of the early church, the people of the nation of Israel received the remission of sins. At this time three thousand people received the remission of sins, had fellowship with one another, broke bread, devoted themselves to prayer, and also did not call their possessions their own but brought them all before the church and shared their goods. That is how good it was in the days of the early church. If we look at Acts chapter 3, the man who had been sitting at the Beautiful Gate of the temple, who had been unable to walk from birth, was healed of his sickness and rose up through the faith of Peter and John, through the name of Jesus Christ. Because of this, people began to hate the preaching of Jesus. They hated such things as working in the name of Jesus, spreading the gospel in the name of Jesus, performing miracles in the name of Jesus to heal the sick, and enabling people to receive the remission of sins.

In Acts chapter 4, they began in earnest to persecute those who believed in Jesus. In fact, if you ask who persecutes those who believe in Jesus, it is those who believe in Jesus who persecute those who believe in Jesus.

Coming to Acts chapter 5, if we look at this passage we have read, it says, *"And through the hands of the apostles many signs and wonders were done among the people. And they were all with one accord in Solomon's Porch. Yet none of the rest dared join them, but the people esteemed them highly. And believers were increasingly added to the Lord, multitudes of both men and women, so that they brought the sick out into the streets and laid*

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them on beds and couches, that at least the shadow of Peter passing by might fall on some of them. Also a multitude gathered from the surrounding cities to Jerusalem, bringing sick people and those who were tormented by unclean spirits, and they were all healed" (Acts 5:12–16). Such works took place through the apostles.

Continuing on, it says, *"Then the high priest rose up, and all those who were with him (which is the sect of the Sadducees), and they were filled with indignation, and laid their hands on the apostles and put them in the common prison" (Acts 5:17–18)*. Those who persecuted the apostles were the high priests. And the Sadducees who were with them told them not to preach the word, and persecuted them in that way.

The children of God and the children of the devil

Dear fellow believers, there are two kinds of people. One kind is those who have received the remission of sins before God and have become children of God, and the other kind is the children of the devil. Those who have believed in Jesus Christ as their own Savior and received the remission of sins, whose sins in their hearts have been completely remitted so that they have received the remission of sins cleanly, and who have received the Holy Spirit in their hearts, are children of God. But those who have not received the remission of sins and have sin in their hearts are all children of the devil.

Then how can a person become a child of the devil? What matters is who is inside that person. If the Spirit of God is in a person's soul, that person is a child of God, and if the Spirit of God is not there, that person is a child of the devil.

Those who believe in Jesus can be distinguished in this way. Then what about those who do not believe in Jesus? They are lost sheep, lost souls. Originally, all people are God's people who resemble the image of God. But among those who believe in Jesus, they can be divided into two kinds. They can be divided into the children of God and the children of the devil.

How can someone who believes in Jesus persecute someone who believes in Jesus? That they are able to persecute means that the spirit of the devil is inside them. If the spirit of the devil were not inside them, they could not persecute in that way. The apostles, who believed in Jesus Christ and were sent by God, preached the gospel in Judea, in the nation of Israel. In the days of the early church, three kinds of works appeared clearly: casting out demons, healing the sick, and preaching this gospel so that people received the remission of sins in their hearts.

Ordinary people did not associate with the apostles, but as for who did associate with them, the sick, those who had been demon-possessed—many such people came before the apostles. And they were healed. As for what power the apostles exercised, in the days of the early church there were such works that even when the shadow of the apostles fell on someone, the sickness was healed and demons went out. Many people brought the sick and they were healed, and they also believed in Jesus Christ and received the remission of sins; such works took place.

Those with vested interests persecuted the apostles

But at that time, among those who believed in God, there was one group other than the apostles and the people of God who had received the remission of sins through the apostles. As for who that group was, it was the high priests and the Sadducees who

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held the vested interests at that time. There was the family of the high priests, descended from the Levites of the Old Testament, and there were three or four sects, of which the most important were the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The Sadducees were named after a priest, named after very spiritual and righteous people, and so were called the Sadducees. There was another faction called the Pharisees, a sect that believed everything that is written in the word of God.

If we divide those who believe in Jesus into two kinds in light of today, first there are those who follow conservative theology. They are people who believe the word exactly as it is. If it says that Jesus walked on the water, they believe that He walked on the water, and they have the faith that believes that the Word became flesh and that God came to this earth clothed in human form. Another group is those who follow new theology. They say that Jesus is not the Son of God but just a fine young man. And they say that Jesus did not walk on the water but was walking along the embankment by the sea, and that when the evening glow lay over the Sea of Galilee and people looked from afar, Jesus walking along the embankment overlapped with the horizon so that He appeared as if He were walking on the water; they are people who believe by thinking rationally in this way. There are these two kinds of people.

In this age too, there are those two kinds of people. There are those who believe according to new theology, and there are those who believe according to the word of God. At that time too, apart from the twelve disciples of Jesus and those who believed the gospel through the twelve disciples, received the remission of sins, and believed in Jesus, there were Jewish believers and Jewish leaders who had believed in God from long ago and believed in Judaism. These people persecuted the twelve

disciples of Jesus and those who had received the remission of sins through them and believed in Jesus.

As for the high priest, because the nation of Israel was a religious nation, the high priest held all authority. In fact, it would be no exaggeration to call him the president. Now, apart from the family of the high priests, there were the Sadducees and the Pharisees, and the Sadducees, as I said a moment ago, were people who believed everything rationally. They were people who believed that among the words of the Scriptures only the Pentateuch of Moses, that is, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, was the word of God. Actually, every part does appear in this Pentateuch of Moses. However, they absolutely did not believe what they did not know. For that reason the Sadducees did not believe in the resurrection of Jesus Christ, nor did they believe that there is a resurrection or that there is an afterlife. Even these days there are people who say that there is no hell, asking where hell is and where heaven is, saying that this earth is heaven and this earth is the kingdom of heaven, so where is hell, and saying that hell is the place where garbage is burned, that is, that the grave is hell; they are just like them.

In reality, hell and heaven do exist. But the Sadducees at that time held all the politics, culture, wealth, and financial power of Israel in their grasp. And they had complete control over religion. They were claiming that they alone believed in God well and were true believers, but Jesus came to this earth and healed countless sick people, and the work of people hearing the word and receiving the remission of sins in their hearts took place. So because a new group arose, they were greatly challenged. Since they could not do such things while others did, they felt challenged, and so they exerted all the power they had and, with their vested interests, hauled in the disciples who were preaching

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the gospel of Jesus, putting them in prison and beating them with rods. They said, “Never preach in the name of Jesus Christ. Who gave you permission to preach the gospel, heal the sick, and cast out demons in the name of Jesus? We did not give you permission, so are you doing as you please?” That is what they did.

Must we go to the government office and get permission to believe in Jesus and preach the gospel? That is not so. But because these people held the vested interests, they asked how anyone could lead a religious life or spread the gospel without their permission, and they flogged them, put them in prison, and stopped them. This is precisely what the children of the devil do.

When the apostles Peter and John were arrested by these people, the clan of the high priest set them in their midst and said, “Who insolently told you to believe in God and to preach believing in God without our permission?” and bullied them, threatening, “If you do not listen, you will die,” and even went so far as to seize them and put them in prison, so was that not tremendous authority? How could they seize people and put them in prison for believing in Jesus? They had never done anything wrong, yet they seized them, put them in prison, and whipped them; so they held tremendous authority.

Even so, these disciples said, *“We ought to obey God rather than men” (Acts 5:29)*. They said, “Is it wise and sensible for us to listen to you? Which is more right, for us to listen to the word of God or to listen to you? We will listen to the word of God.” At any rate, the high priests and the Sadducees persecuted them a great deal.

There are two kinds of people in this world. It may not feel real, but in reality there are these two groups of people. We think of people only as people. But what about it? Are there not times when people do the work of the devil? There are people who so

hate others believing in God, who persecute them, and who slander them falsely. The Book of Acts tells us about such things.

Even today, when someone believes in Jesus, as for what those who hold power say, they say, "You are supposed to believe in Jesus and still have sin, so why do you have no sin? We have believed this long and still have sin; we boast of our history and tradition, believe in Jesus, make our confession of faith, and have believed for thousands of years, and yet even though we believe we have sin; from our Church Fathers through our ancestors down to the lowliest Sunday school student, we believe and still have sin, so how is it that you have just believed and immediately have no sin? You believed for one day and have no sin, you believed for one year and have no sin? How can you so insolently have no sin?" There are established people who persecute in this way.

We cannot see them as merely people. Those who do not know Jesus can be called lost sheep, but those who claim to have believed in Jesus Christ for a long time and yet hold down those who believe in Jesus, harass them, persecute them, and keep them from preaching Jesus are servants of the devil. The Bible says that they are children of the devil.

The work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the devil

These are not my own words. If you read the Book of Acts, the work of the Holy Spirit and the work of the devil appear. The work of the Holy Spirit was to preach the gospel to people so that they received the remission of sins. And it was the work of the Holy Spirit to care for people in their weaknesses, to mend them, and to heal them. But the work of the devil is that, no

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matter what, people must remain bound by sin, must always be crushed by sin, must by no means be healed of their sickness, must always die, must by all means be ruined, must become servants of the devil, must simply be crushed by sin and have sick hearts not knowing what to do; it makes people live miserably rather than happily, and makes something happen rather than letting nothing happen.

The high priests and the Sadducees who held the vested interests at that time were not children of God. The children of God bear the fruit of the Spirit. The fruit of the Spirit has only good things such as love, gentleness, peace, patience, kindness, self-control, and goodness, and so it is with the children of God. When the children of God see a weak person, they feel great pity, and for a person who has problems in his soul and worry and anxiety in his heart, they want to heal him with the word of God and give peace to his heart, and they actually heal him. And they pray to God for those who are oppressed in the flesh, and hoping that they will by all means become healthy, they pray and those people actually get well, and so it goes. And they guide those suffering from hardships of life so that they no longer suffer from hardships of life, and so they do.

But as for those who say they believe in Jesus yet are not children of God but children of the devil, it suits their will only if people, even though they believe in Jesus, come out at dawn and weep every day, are sad every day even though they believe in Jesus, pray and fast every day if they believe in Jesus, and live in pain every day. They do not want people to believe in Jesus and have their faces light up and their hearts light up and live more happily as the days go by; rather, the children of the devil hold that even though people believe in Jesus they must be ruined, must be trampled by sin, must always go to the hospital, must always go to prayer houses because of sin, must live

oppressed by evil spirits, must receive comfort because of that, and must receive prayer with the laying on of hands from them. That is how the children of the devil are.

We see people as three kinds. The first is the lost sheep: those who do not yet know Jesus, those who are wandering, are the lost sheep. Christianity means the company of those who follow Jesus. Among those who have come into Christianity and believe in and follow Jesus, there are also two kinds of people. There are children of God and there are children of the devil. They must be divided into these two kinds of people.

We must not simply see people as people. We must see whether they are children of God or children of the devil. That is why 1 John says, *"Do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits, whether they are of God" (1 John 4:1)*. It said that those who do not have the Spirit of Christ are children of the devil, and those who have the Spirit of Christ are children of God. It told us to discern the spirits. Those who have sin in their hearts even though they believe in Jesus Christ are still servants of the devil and children of the devil. What happens to such people? They are trampled mercilessly. Whenever they are weak, Satan the devil tramples their hearts and tramples their spirits. And it makes them demon-possessed.

They may think they believe well, but those who have sin even though they believe in Jesus are children of the devil. So when there is someone who believes in Jesus, has received the remission of sins, and enjoys peace, they say, "How can you believe in Jesus and have no sin? I have believed for decades and still have sin. Believing like that is all wrong," and they slander, talk nonsense, and oppose that person.

Among those who believe in Jesus, there are two kinds. There are children of God and there are children of the devil. We

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must not think of all people as merely people. People are people, but there are children of the devil and there are children of God.

The Jesus whom the apostles believed in, the Jesus whom the Sadducees did not believe in

In Jerusalem the apostles testified, “Jesus is the Son of God. Jesus rose again. And He removed all our sins. Jesus is alive. Jesus, He is God.” The high priests, the Pharisees, and the Sadducees did not believe that Jesus is the Son of God. Then who believed? The twelve disciples of Jesus and all the saints who had received the remission of sins through them believed that Jesus is God, the King of kings, our Prince, our Savior, and that He is none other than our God.

But the high priests trembled with fear, saying, “What did you say? You are stirring up a commotion, saying that that man who was crucified and died rose again three days after He died—is He a king? Is He God? Then what will we do if the Roman nation invades again and kills us? There is no king but Caesar, yet this young man called Jesus is God? The King of kings? The Messiah who has saved people from all sins? You are saying something that will bring disaster. If you say such things, the Roman nation will invade and seize and kill all of you. Not only will you die, but we will die too.”

The reason they trembled with fear was that they did not believe in the identity of Jesus—that Jesus is God, that He is the Son of God, that Jesus is the Savior God who has saved us from all sins—nor in the work of salvation that Jesus did, nor in His being our God. That is why they opposed the disciples of Jesus. If they had truly believed that Jesus was their own Savior, would they have opposed them? They believed in the LORD God and

believed in the Messiah who was to come. They believed that the Son of God, promised and prophesied in the Old Testament, would come in majesty.

But the disciples of Jesus already believed not in a Jesus who would come in majesty, but in Jesus, who had already been born in Bethlehem, who bore all our sins through the baptism He received from John at the Jordan River when He was thirty years old, who received the judgment on the Cross, who died and rose again and ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father, and who has become the Savior of all mankind. But the Sadducees, the Pharisees, and the high priests did not believe in this Jesus. That is why even now the nation of Israel is waiting for the Messiah to come. The Sadducees and the high priests did not believe.

What we must know is this: people are people, but those who act as children of the devil must be seen as children of the devil. And we must resist the devil. It says, *"Resist the devil and he will flee from you" (James 4:7)*. If the other side is attacking and we just stand still, we get hurt. Those who are serving as servants of Satan the devil are children of the devil.

There are a great many people in this world who believe in Jesus, but they are divided into exactly two kinds. Just as the Psalms divided people into the righteous and sinners, they are without fail divided into two kinds of people. They are the children of God and the children of the devil. Let us look at the children of the devil. Such people have not accepted what Jesus did. They become children of the devil by believing in a religious way.

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Discern the spirits and resist the devil

A life of faith is real. How can someone who believes in Jesus persecute others for believing in Jesus? I think that is something that cannot be. I simply cannot understand it. So even while listening to someone's story, I find it hard to believe and say, "How can someone who believes in Jesus persecute someone who believes in Jesus?" I even doubt it to the point of thinking, "Shouldn't I see it with my eyes?" But those who believe in Jesus persecuting those who believe in Jesus—they persecute them severely. They demand that people listen only to them. While they cannot even teach the remission of sins, while they cannot even preach into people's hearts the word of the remission of sins that Jesus spoke, they just say that people must come to their church and give offerings, and at every turn tell them to receive prayer with the laying on of hands. If one wrongly receives prayer with the laying on of hands, an evil spirit comes in.

If you receive the laying on of hands from a person who has an evil spirit, you receive the evil spirit. When hands are laid on, the hands are placed on the head, and then the evil spirit is passed on. If there is an evil spirit inside the person laying on hands, the evil spirit is passed on. It is a disaster. The laying on of hands is a medium of transmission. That is why Jesus also laid His hands on the heads of little children and prayed, and in the Bible the expression "laid hands on" appears often. That is the passing on of the power of Jesus. If you hold out your head to a person who has sin and receive the laying on of hands, sin cannot actually be passed on to someone who has received the remission of sins, but to someone who has not received the remission of sins, the evil spirit of the person laying on hands is passed on.

We must actually see that among those who believe in Jesus there are two kinds of people. Those who believe in Jesus but have not received the remission of sins are children of the devil. If it is because they truly do not know, that is one thing, but if, while believing in Jesus themselves, the desire arises in them to torment those who believe in Jesus, that is evidence that the devil has settled inside them. When someone who used to suffer constantly because he had not received the remission of sins receives the remission of sins, enjoys peace in his heart, and leads a good life of faith, they instead become angry and say that it is wrong. Those who say how could it happen so quickly when it did not happen for them even after believing for a long time, and who lump it all together as wrong without even going to see or meeting the guide, are like that because they are children of the devil.

Dear fellow believers, among those who believe in Jesus in this world there are two kinds of people. We must know that there are children of God and there are children of the devil. This is not a theory, nor is it a doctrine. All people look the same on the outside, but depending on whether the Holy Spirit is inside them, or the devil, or an evil spirit, they become either children of God or children of the devil. And they either work as befits children of God or behave as the devil does. The children of the devil behave like the devil. The children of God behave like children of God. We must know this.

In reality there are two kinds of people. There are children of the devil and there are children of God. We must resist the children of the devil. We must resist the evil spirit that is inside them. And we must preach the right word of God's truth to the souls who have become children of the devil and save them.

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Demons leave when the word of the remission of sins enters

Dear fellow believers, do you know when Satan the devil, that is, a demon, withdraws? If someone says, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you, Satan, be gone,” Satan the devil puts on a show. “Be gone, you say? Fine, I will withdraw for a little while.” It goes off to the side, and after a little while it slips right back in. That is precisely mocking. If someone says to a demon-possessed person, “In the name of Jesus Christ I command you, Satan, be gone,” the demon seems to go out, but after a little while it comes back in again. Those who used to be demon-possessed say so. As for when demons go out, when we tell someone the word of the remission of sins, the word of God, and that person hears it with his ears and believes it in his heart, the demon cannot remain. When the word comes right into the heart, the demon can no longer remain. It goes right out. When the word of God comes in, the demon goes out.

Long ago there was a sister who had been demon-possessed, and she said that she had gone around to countless people who were said to be famous, asking them to drive out the demon, and had even gone to live at a prayer house, but it did not work. Demon-possessed people say that they can see demons. She said that when someone said, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth I command you, Satan the devil, be gone,” the demon inside her would go out for a moment and then come back in after a little while. Then she heard the word of God, the word of the gospel of the remission of sins. She was taught countless times, but the demon interfered, so it did not go well. It interferes so that the person cannot hear the word. What demons hate most is for the person to hear the word. Demon-possessed people hate hearing the word of God very much. But as the word of God kept

being told to her, at the very moment the demon had gone out, that word went inside her. Since she heard it with her ears and believed it in her heart, from that time on she no longer saw the demon.

That sister who had been demon-possessed testified, "Demons put on a show. They put on a show among themselves. When someone says, 'In the name of Jesus, demon, get out,' they pretend to go out and then come back in." When do demons go out? When a person receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit comes inside him, demons cannot come in. They can cause disturbance from the outside. But they cannot come in.

Dear fellow believers, we must enable people to receive the remission of sins through the word of truth. We must not take this remission of sins lightly. These days there are people who hold large gatherings claiming to cast out demons, but when someone who has not received the remission of sins himself claims to cast out demons, it is nothing but a show put on by demons.

I once asked a deacon who was urging me to come to such a gathering. "Deacon, is there sin in your heart, or not?" "There is, of course." "There is sin in your heart, Deacon, so will a demon go out just because you say so?" "It goes out. I have experienced it going out many times." "Deacon, if you have sin, does that mean you believe in God, or that you do not?" "It means I believe." "Then how is it that you believe in Jesus and yet have sin? Was Jesus unable to take away all your sins, Deacon?" "He took them away, but since we commit sins every day, can we say that we have no sin?" Then he asked me, "Do you have no sin?" "The Lord took away all my sins. So I have no sin in my heart." Then from that moment on, he glared at me and opposed me.

If Jesus has taken all the sins away, then there is no sin. Jesus had all our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He

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received from John, and He shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of those sins in full. And by rising again from death, He showed that the debt had been paid in full with not a penny left. Dear fellow believers, if a debt has been paid in full, is there anything more to pay? If a debt has been paid in full, is it normal to say, “I am sorry. I am sorry for paying it all at one time. Take some more”? It is not normal.

Among those who believe in Jesus, there are many who are demon-possessed. From a demon-possessed person, the demon does not go out. Truly, demons go out in the name of Jesus Christ. Jesus is our Savior. To believe in Jesus completely is to believe that Jesus is our Savior. It is when we believe in the name of Jesus Christ completely that the demon goes out. No demon can remain. When we believe that Jesus took away all our sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon us, and no demon can possibly remain in that heart.

There are two kinds of people. Those who have demons, servants of the devil, those who have not received the remission of sins are all servants of the devil. Those who have received the remission of sins are servants of God and children of God. Knowing this, if there is someone who claims to believe in Jesus and yet slanders you, I want you to know that he is a child of the devil. And pray for him. And teach him the word. Once that person receives the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit comes upon his heart, he will no longer do so.

Dear fellow believers, we must know this and lead a life of faith in a practical way. If you command a demon-possessed person in the name of Jesus Christ, does the demon go out? But what good does it do to drive out the demon? If that person has not received the remission of sins in his heart, the demon comes right back in. It brings even more demons in with it. That is a disaster. The person suffers even more torment. Therefore, we

must teach that person the word while his mind is clear. It is the word of truth. It says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. When one knows and believes the word of God, they all withdraw.

Whether you are actually preaching the gospel or living a life of faith, I want you to know the fact that this is real. And you must live your life of faith for real. It must not remain armchair theory. Actually praying, taking on challenges by faith, actually preaching the gospel, actually asking God, actually asking and receiving—it is real. The children of God really exist, and the children of the devil really exist. Let us know that a life of faith is real and live our life of faith for real. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Who receives salvation

< Acts 5:28–32 >

"Saying, 'Did we not strictly command you not to teach in this name? And look, you have filled Jerusalem with your doctrine, and intend to bring this Man's blood on us!' But Peter and the other apostles answered and said: 'We ought to obey God rather than men. The God of our fathers raised up Jesus whom you murdered by hanging on a tree. Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins. And we are His witnesses to these things, and so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him.'"

What gospel must we obey in order to receive the Holy Spirit

This word gives no help and no comfort to a faith that zealously keeps adding conditions in the name of obedience. The reason the Sanhedrin council did not receive the Holy Spirit was their disobedience of not believing in Jesus Christ. Even though they heard the apostles' testimony that God had raised again the Jesus whom they had killed by hanging Him on a tree, they did not accept the risen Jesus as Prince and Savior.

But above all, the obedience spoken of in *"so also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32)* was also the teaching of the Holy Spirit, and it was also what is found best in the disciples, who received the Holy Spirit while

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obeying the gospel of the Lord. The remission of sins that the Lord gave was regarded as insufficient by the members of the Sanhedrin council, but to the apostles it was the gospel of the remission of sins that satisfied them. Obedience is simply believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John, and bore the Cross. Therefore, this tells us that receiving the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit before the Lord requires fighting against false people and overcoming them.

The Book of Revelation says, *"He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7)*. Believing is a simple thing for you, but fighting against false gospels and overcoming them is harder than obeying the gospel of the remission of sins. Have you also fought against false gospels?

It is said that before God, the Holy Spirit is received by the one who fights against untruth with the word of truth and overcomes it. When all mankind had been enticed by the evil devil, sinned, and fallen into great destruction, God gave the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit through Jesus Christ.

Every person hears voices coming from two places. One voice is the voice of truth, and the other voice is the voice spoken by the devil. When a person listens to voices coming from these two directions, he becomes confused. This is because one voice is the voice of God and the other voice is the voice of the devil. The one who hears these two voices is none other than man. Two voices come to everyone at the same time, but only when one believes just one of these two words does one receive the Holy Spirit. Also, in order to receive the Holy Spirit and the remission of sins, one can receive the Holy Spirit only when one fights

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against one's own thoughts and also fights against false gospels and overcomes them. It is said that those who do not believe the written word of God because the word of the remission of sins differs from their own thoughts cannot receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.

Some people came to church to receive the remission of sins because life as a sinner was already hard enough, but when they were told that they had to keep the law in order to receive the remission of sins, the hearts of these sinners could only become even more burdened. Yet fundamentally, people sin because they cannot help but sin. If a person had the strength not to sin, who would sin? Because they were born as descendants of Adam, as the seed of sin, they cannot help but sin.

What word do sinners need most? Is it not the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that they need? They need the gospel of the water and the remission of sins, of which Jesus said, *"Thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15)*. They must hear the gospel of the water and the blood—how Jesus took away my sins, and how He dealt with the sins He took away. The gospel of the Spirit must be preached to those who are still sinners even though they believe in Jesus, but the problem is that in this age there are not many who preach the word of God's gospel of the water and the Spirit.

If you have received the gospel of the water and the Spirit, it is because you fought against the false gospel and overcame it. Everyone receives the remission of sins only when he accepts into his heart the gospel by which one is delivered from all sins, that is, the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit of God and the remission of sins are given to those who drive out false gospels and believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. This is what God has ordained. He has arranged it so that those who drive out false gospels and believe in the true gospel receive

the remission of sins. A false gospel is a gospel that cannot remove the sins in one's heart even if one believes in Jesus. Many people believe in such false gospels.

Who receives the Holy Spirit and goes to the kingdom of heaven

If a person does not fight against false gospels and overcome them, he becomes a captive of sin. We must know the reason God told us to fight the spiritual battle. If we look at the Book of Revelation, we can see that it says, *"To him who overcomes I will give to eat from the tree of life, which is in the midst of the Paradise of God" (Revelation 2:7)*. It has been made known that a person who has been saved from sin and received the Holy Spirit does not suffer the second death of hell, just as it says, *"He who overcomes shall not be hurt by the second death" (Revelation 2:11)*.

There is a saying that the lion or the tiger, the king of the animals, rolls its cubs down a hill and raises only the cubs that climb back up. In the same way, God, too, has granted the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit to those who drive out false gospels and believe in the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Here, overcoming is not a victory of the flesh. This word does not speak of fighting well in the flesh, but of driving out false gospels that are not written, by believing the written word of God in one's heart. A person comes to hear the word of God and the words of the devil at the same time, and the outcome is decided by which of the two he believes.

Would Satan leave us human beings alone so that we believe in Jesus and go to the kingdom of heaven? For fear that we might

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believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, by which Jesus removed all our sins, and be saved from sin and receive the Holy Spirit, Satan sowed tares in advance by every possible means, using false gospels so that we could not believe the real gospel. Jesus took away all the sin of the world with the baptism He received from John in the Jordan River, but they deceive people, saying, "That is not so. Jesus took away only original sin and has not yet taken away actual sins. So even if you believe in Jesus, you are a sinner."

Those among us whose faith was neither one thing nor the other—who merely said they believed in Jesus and yet called themselves sinners—must believe when they encounter the gospel of the water and the Spirit. So, when they encountered the true gospel and tried to believe it, they had no choice but to fight a spiritual battle. When we meet people who have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit, we hear that they went through countless inner conflicts while hearing the word of God and the words of Satan the devil, and then believed in the written gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins once and for all. A person's being saved from sin and receiving the Holy Spirit is not something that was received just by chance.

The point is that in people's hearts, the words of untruth that have been handed down since the creation of the world and the word of the Holy Spirit are still heard, and while they live agonizing over which word to believe, they drive the false gospel out of their hearts, believe in the gospel of the water and the blood, and obtain salvation. That is, some at the age of twenty, some at the age of thirty, and some after living seventy or eighty years hearing false gospels, have come to believe in their hearts the true gospel, the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and have received the Holy Spirit as a gift.

For example, let us suppose that there is a world in this world where people with only one eye live. If a person with two eyes comes to the country of those who have only one eye, he will be called a strange person. Then they will each call the other strange. The person with two eyes will say that the person with one eye is strange, and the person with one eye will look at the person with two eyes and say that he is strange. But the standard is not the number of people, but the form in which God made man.

Then which side is normal? This is just like the faith of people who have been saved from all sins by believing in the gospel of the Spirit and the faith of people who still call themselves sinners even though they believe in Jesus, each fighting, claiming that its own faith is right. The true gospel is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but in this world, where only sinners still live, it is treated as an oddity. Rather, within the religions of this world, those who believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit are like people who are not recognized. Is a faith that tries to become righteous by believing in Jesus and then becomes a sinner again the right one? Becoming a righteous person by believing in Jesus is the right faith.

Has Jesus removed all the sin of this world? Jesus received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross, and so completely accomplished the salvation of sinners. And He rose again from the dead in three days and overcame sin and death. The true gospel is something that happened two thousand years ago. The Lord removed all the sin of the world through the gospel of the water and the Spirit and caused those who believe to receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit. Yet even now, people who believe in Jesus have fallen into a faith of confusion, believing in Jesus and yet asking, “Is there sin, or is there not?” At a time like this, should we not establish the right faith by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit? Jesus

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Christ has clearly made us, who were sinners, righteous. The truth that causes people to receive the Holy Spirit is the gospel of the Spirit. I ask those who are living a life of faith without yet having received the remission of sins to hear once about the true baptism and the blood of the Cross. Then you will receive the remission of sins in your hearts and surely receive the Holy Spirit.

In His letter to the church in Smyrna, the Lord said, *"I know your works, tribulation, and poverty (but you are rich); and I know the blasphemy of those who say they are Jews and are not, but are a synagogue of Satan" (Revelation 2:9)*. Those who say they are Jews here refer to sinners who believe in God but have not received the Holy Spirit. God said that those who have not actually received the remission of sins, though they call themselves Jews, are a synagogue of Satan. In this world, those who believe in Jesus and have received the Holy Spirit and those who believe in Jesus but have not received the Holy Spirit are divided.

At the end of this world, the righteous and sinners will be clearly revealed. God divides them clearly. We must know which gospel is the real gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we do not know, we receive neither the remission of sins nor the Holy Spirit. In this world, there are still sinners who belong to false gospels.

Dear fellow believers, it is not the case that everyone who believes in Jesus Christ, just because he believes, is saved from his sins, receives the Holy Spirit in his heart, and goes to the kingdom of heaven. The Lord clearly said, *"Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven. (Many will say to me in that day, Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy by thy name, and by thy name cast out demons, and by thy name do many*

mighty works? –ASV). And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness!'" (Matthew 7:21–23). Even if anyone clings to Jesus Christ and holds on to Him, crying, "Lord, Lord, I believe," those who have not received the gospel of the Spirit in their hearts and have not received the remission of sins will end up going to hell even though they believe—even though they themselves have believed in Jesus Christ.

People are still hearing false gospels. Those who have received the Holy Spirit are recorded in the Book of Life. One must believe in one's heart the gospel of the Spirit, which is the word of God; only then can one receive the remission of sins, go to the kingdom of heaven, and obtain everlasting life.

A faith that says amen unconditionally

We must discern what kind of words the words of the devil are and what kind of word the word of the Holy Spirit of God is, and fight and overcome. If people believe false gospels, saying, "Amen, amen," unconditionally, they go to hell. Do you know how many false people there are in this world who use God's name as a pretext? Swindlers have smooth, respectable-looking faces. Is the one who teaches you not deceiving you?

If we look for the words of Scripture that speak about false people, 2 John says, *"For many deceivers have gone out into the world who do not confess Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist" (2 John 1:7)*. As for who the deceivers here are, it says that they are those who deny that Jesus, who is fundamentally God, came to this earth clothed in flesh in order to save us from sin. In other words, this word refers to those who do not accept this Jesus—who put on human flesh,

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bore all the sin of men through His baptism, and put an end to the sin of the world on the Cross—as their own Savior.

Those who deny that Jesus came by water and blood—such people go against the gospel of the Spirit. Whoever goes against the gospel of the Spirit is certainly an antichrist. Such a person is one who deceives many people with his own lips. He is one who spreads a fog of deception. What did Plato say, what did Socrates say, what did Karl Barth say, and Calvin said this, Luther said this, Charles Finney said this, Wesley said this—how can the audience know all the philosophies of all these people? Should not the one who preaches the word give the correct answer, saying, "This word of God means this," so that people can either believe or not? Whatever Karl Barth or Nietzsche said, that is what those men said, so is there any reason to compare it with the word Jesus spoke? Philosophy builds logic, but what does that have to do with those who believe in Jesus? We must know and believe the gospel of the Spirit.

A faith that believes like brute beasts

Jude says, *"But these rail at whatsoever things they know not: and what they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed –ASV" (Jude 1:10).* Those without reason speak evil of the true gospel, which they themselves do not know. The gospel they preach while speaking evil is this: "Original sin has been remitted, but actual sins and the future sins we will commit must be remitted by repenting every day." Such people are deceivers.

There are many people without reason in this world. "No! How could Jesus have taken away all sins? He took away only original sin! How can there be no sin? It is right that there is sin.

People sin every day, so there is sin, there is, there is." It is said that such people, who are like brute beasts, will perish in the end.

To be like beasts means that even though our Lord Himself said through the words of Scripture that He received baptism from John in the Jordan River, removed all sins, and fulfilled all the righteousness of God, these people unconditionally say that it is not so, and instead ask back how the sin of the world could have passed on to Jesus when He received baptism. If we look at the Bible, Jesus did receive baptism. Jesus received baptism from John and had all the sin of the world, the sin of all mankind, transferred to Him and removed it, and so saved us, so why do they speak evil, asking how the sin of the world could have passed on to Him when He received baptism? Is that not speaking evil without reason?

Beasts act according to what they feel with their senses, without knowledge. The one who believes according to what his own emotions feel, regardless of the word of God, is the one without reason, and he is the one who sets aside the word of God and believes that his own thoughts are right. If the word of God has said that Jesus bore all the sin of the world with the baptism He received, then that is what the baptism Jesus received is, so why do they have so many thoughts of their own? True faith must believe according to the written word of God. Only then do we receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

But it says, "*What they understand naturally, like the creatures without reason, in these things are they destroyed" (Jude 1:10)*. In Africa, there is an animal that belongs to the sheep family, and it is said that when just one of these sheep runs, the other sheep are startled and run unconditionally as well. When one sheep runs, the rest of the sheep, which had been grazing well, follow and run without knowing why. So they go forward, forward, only forward. But as the sheep at the very

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front runs, the edge of a cliff appears. Now it has to stop, but since the ones behind keep pushing, it ends up falling off the precipice and dying. How many sheep have died like this! How many sheep have died running without reason across that vast plain of Africa, just as they felt, without knowing why! Sheep that run without reason try to sound the alarm only when they reach a dangerous situation, but by then it is already too late. In the same way, there are many people who, though they say they believe in Jesus, have gone to hell because they did not believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This is a beastlike faith. People like this, who do not have the Holy Spirit, go to hell even though they believe in Jesus. This is because they believe in Jesus unconditionally, by emotion. Those without the Holy Spirit gather together with their religious leaders, and when they are told, "Jesus took away only original sin and did not take away actual sins. Our sins disappear only when we repent every day," they say, "Amen, Lord!" If they believe like that, they are treated exactly the same as brute beasts. Only when they turn away from their wrong faith as soon as possible are they saved from sin and receive the Holy Spirit.

Believing according to the written word is true obedience

Even when we believe in Jesus, we must know with our reason and believe. If Jesus has taken away all of our own sins, we must know, see, and believe which sins He took away and specifically how He took them away. For Jesus to save sinners, He had to have the sins of sinners transferred to Him through His baptism; then by what method did He have them transferred

to Him? We must search through the Bible, confirm it, and believe.

Beastlike people try to remove even the sins in their hearts through their senses, but the remission of sins and the giving of the Holy Spirit that the Lord has given are felt in the heart; it is not that there is some sensation in the body. So, because they try to feel it with their senses like beasts, and because they set aside the word of God and try to receive the remission of sins through prayers of repentance, the remission of sins does not happen. Salvation from sin is received by learning the word of God with reason and believing it in the heart. God has given us the intellect to think while looking at the words of Scripture. This is the difference between man and beasts.

In this way, even though we were not present at the time Jesus received baptism, when we come to know from the Bible, "When Jesus received baptism from John, all sins passed on to Him, and my sins must have been included, too," we come to realize the gospel of the Spirit, the gospel of the remission of sins.

But someone who judges by what he himself has felt, saying, "So-and-so has believed for only one year and says he has no sin? Just wait and see; after believing for fifteen years, he will become a sinner again. After just fifteen years, he will become just like me," is someone who is living a life of faith without reason, like a beast.

True obedience is believing the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, of which Jesus spoke when He said, *"Unless one is born of water and the Spirit, he cannot enter the kingdom of God" (John 3:5)*. The Holy Spirit is given to those who fight against falsehood and overcome it. The Holy Spirit is given to those who obey the gospel of the water and the Spirit. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Do not cease preaching Jesus as the Christ

< Acts 5:33–42 >

"When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them. Then one in the council stood up, a Pharisee named Gamaliel, a teacher of the law held in respect by all the people, and commanded them to put the apostles outside for a little while. And he said to them: 'Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men. For some time ago Theudas rose up, claiming to be somebody. A number of men, about four hundred, joined him. He was slain, and all who obeyed him were scattered and came to nothing. After this man, Judas of Galilee rose up in the days of the census, and drew away many people after him. He also perished, and all who obeyed him were dispersed. And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God.' And they agreed with him, and when they had called for the apostles and beaten them, they commanded that they should not speak in the name of Jesus, and let them go. So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name. And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ."

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The council that tried to do away with the apostles

Before the council, the apostles testified of Jesus as Prince and Savior. The apostles preached His salvation so that people would turn to the Savior and receive the remission of sins, but the people of the council were furious and sought to do away with the apostles. To the news that God had exalted Jesus in order to grant the remission of sins, they responded with the intention of killing the people who were preaching that news. Today's word shows how God opened a way in the midst of that danger and what the apostles continued to do.

Let us read verse 33. *"When they heard this, they were furious and plotted to kill them" (Acts 5:33)*. The reason the apostles went against people's hearts was not that they asserted their own honor. It was because they preached that God had raised Jesus, whom the people had killed, and that He is the Savior who saves sinners. Jesus had all the sins of the world, including my sins and yours, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and rose again from death; what the apostles preached was this gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even though they had already been put in prison, this gospel did not fall silent, and the apostles testified of the same Savior even before the council. Now the danger of losing their lives came upon them.

At that time Gamaliel, a teacher of the law who was respected by all the people, stood up, had the apostles put outside for a little while, and said to those who were gathered, *"Men of Israel, take heed to yourselves what you intend to do regarding these men" (Acts 5:35)*. The anger that sought to do away with the apostles filled the council, but God had prepared a person right there who would stop that action. God, who had earlier sent

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an angel and opened the prison doors, this time protected the apostles from the danger of death through the words of Gamaliel.

Our serving the gospel of the water and the Spirit is also not something we push forward by our own strength alone. When there are people who hinder us and things that are blocked, it is easy to have our hearts captured by our circumstances, but it is not that God does not know those circumstances. Rely on God, who protected the apostles, and ask for the help you need. It is not that I can believe only when I know in advance everything about who will help me; rather, it is believing that God, who delights in the gospel, is even now preparing the people and the way that are needed.

Where did the gospel we preach come from

Gamaliel gave the cases of Theudas and Judas of Galilee as examples. There were people who followed them, but when the men at the center perished, the crowds that followed them were also scattered. The fact that many people followed them for a while could not make those things stand forever. Through those two cases, Gamaliel distinguished what came from men from what came from God, and warned against the council's attempt to judge everything and overthrow it by its own strength.

Let us read verses 38 through 39. *"And now I say to you, keep away from these men and let them alone; for if this plan or this work is of men, it will come to nothing; but if it is of God, you cannot overthrow it—lest you even be found to fight against God" (Acts 5:38–39).* This means that if they hinder the work God is doing, they will come to be fighting against God. It was a warning that was needed by those who sought to do away with the apostles who were preaching Jesus, and it is also a word that

makes us look back on what we ourselves believe and preach. It must be clear whether we will hold on to teachings made by gathering people's thoughts, or believe in the salvation that God has actually accomplished and testified of.

Therefore, the assurance that the gospel of the water and the Spirit has come from God is not something gained from the loud voice of the one who preaches it. We must confirm from the written word how Jesus bore our sins and removed them. We cannot create salvation by selecting and piecing together only words that agree with our own thoughts. What sinners need is not a reassurance that people have pieced together, but the remission of sins that God has given, and the One who accomplished it completely is none other than Jesus Christ.

Through the baptism He received from John, Jesus had all the sins of the world, including even the sins of my whole life and yours, passed on to Him once and for all; by being hung on the Cross and shedding His blood and dying, He paid the price of those sins and received the judgment for our sins in our place; and He rose again from death and completed salvation. All this work was not a method that sinners thought up, but what God Himself accomplished in order to save sinners. Therefore, we do not entrust our salvation to people's thoughts, but believe in this salvation revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The Savior whom the apostles testified of did not leave the work of washing away sins in our hands. If we believe that original sin is to be entrusted to the Lord while the rest of our sins must be erased by our own efforts, we are reducing, by our own thinking, the scope of the sin of the world that Jesus took upon Himself through the baptism He received from John. The reason we have the assurance of the remission of sins in our hearts is not that we have become confident that we will not sin, but that the Lord bore all our sins, even the sins of our whole

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lives, was judged on the Cross, and then rose again. To the person who believes in that salvation and has received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes as a gift and testifies that there is no sin in his heart.

Salvation confirmed by the word does not change because of people's opposition. Therefore, we cannot take away from what we believe because the opposition is great, or change the basis of the remission of sins into words that people will like. If what we preach is the word God has given, no one can stop it, and if it has come from people's thoughts, it will come to nothing even if it is left alone, just as Gamaliel said. What we must preach is what Jesus has done, and because God has given this word, we preach it with thanksgiving. We who read the words of Gamaliel also must not warn only others, but must first examine whether what we ourselves preach is the same as the word God has given.

Even after the flogging, they taught Christ

The council, agreeing with the words of Gamaliel, did not kill the apostles, but called them in, flogged them, and forbade them to speak in the name of Jesus. The fact that God protected them and the fact that pain came upon the bodies of the apostles are recorded together. The apostles who had been flogged left the presence of the council still as people who testified of the name of Jesus. The next word reveals the reason they rejoiced even in the midst of their pain.

This is the word of verse 41. *"So they departed from the presence of the council, rejoicing that they were counted worthy to suffer shame for His name" (Acts 5:41)*. The apostles did not go around looking for insults that had nothing to do with the name of Jesus. Because they suffered shame for His name, they

rejoiced that they had been used in the work of serving Jesus the Savior. What held their hearts was not their lowered position before people, but for whom they had suffered that affliction. We, too, when we go through difficulties because of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, must first think of the relationship we have with the Lord.

Let us read verse 42. *"And daily in the temple, and in every house, they did not cease teaching and preaching Jesus as the Christ" (Acts 5:42)*. What the council forbade was speaking in the name of Jesus, but the apostles continued to teach that this very Jesus is the Christ. In the word that says they preached daily, whether in the temple or in houses, there is no picture of being zealous only in a particular place and being silent in the rest of life. The faith that knew the Savior gave them something to preach every day, and the help they received from God became the strength to continue that testimony.

We, too, have Christ to teach and preach today. If we think only of people's reactions, our mouths close, but when we think of the fact that we must preach the salvation the Lord accomplished to souls suffering because of sin, what we have to do becomes clear. Explain with the word the parts the other person has not understood, and confirm together the parts where he cannot accept salvation because of his own thoughts. Do not end your service because of a single opposition or a single difficulty; rather, preach the word of life, following the wisdom and the way that God gives.

The intention that was in the council at first was to do away with the apostles, but in the end what remained was the sight of the apostles teaching Jesus every day. God opened the way, and on that way the apostles testified of the Savior. Let us, too, rely on the Lord who saved us, ask for the help we need, and continue to preach the Christ whom we have come to know clearly

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through the word. Because the salvation that gave us life did not come from people's thoughts, there is no reason to change that salvation even in the face of people's threats. ✉

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CHAPTER

6

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The church that serves together in both the word and care

< Acts 6:1–6 >

“Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution. Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, ‘It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables. Therefore, brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business; but we will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word.’ And the saying pleased the whole multitude. And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip, Prochorus, Nicanor, Timon, Parmenas, and Nicolas, a proselyte from Antioch, whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them.”

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Look after those who are neglected in the distribution

A complaint was heard within the church in Jerusalem, where the disciples were multiplying. It was because, even amid the joy of the growing number of people who believed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, there were people who were being neglected in the daily distribution. We tend to think that the church is doing well when people gather and the work increases, but if we do not look into the actual circumstances of the brothers and sisters who are with us, hardship remains within it. When the apostles heard of this problem, they summoned all the disciples, and they entrusted the work so that the preaching of the word and the care of the saints would continue together.

Let us read verse 1. *"Now in those days, when the number of the disciples was multiplying, there arose a complaint against the Hebrews by the Hellenists, because their widows were neglected in the daily distribution" (Acts 6:1)*. What we must look at here is not which side's people were better, but the fact that the widows, who should have received help, were neglected in the daily distribution. The care that is needed does not come about on its own merely because people say they belong to the same church. Since we can actually help only when we know who is beside us and what that person is struggling with, a heart toward those who are one family with us must be shown in looking into their circumstances.

At that time, many people who had nothing came into the church, and the reason the saints met their needs was that they had become brothers and sisters and one family in Jesus Christ. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again

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from death and gave life to sinners. Because the grace of being saved from sin through this gospel of the water and the Spirit and becoming children of God was so great, the saints met the needs of those who lived with them out of what they had. Today we too must look after one another with that heart which the Holy Spirit has given us. If we comfort with words only while seeing someone who needs help, or help as we see fit without knowing that person's circumstances, the needs that are truly essential may remain as they are.

Therefore, those who want to give help also need wisdom. This is because, before giving material things, they must listen to what worries are in that person's heart, hold up his faith with the word, and also look together into what is essential for his actual life. Helping in this way is possible only when those who belong to the Lord do not dismiss one another's hardships as matters unrelated to themselves, and so the apostles appointed men so that this care would continue. We too must serve through the work entrusted to us so that the needs of our brothers and sisters are not neglected.

Service that does not leave the word

The apostles called the people together in order not to lose the center of the church because of the difficulty over the distribution. This is the word of verse 2. "*Then the twelve summoned the multitude of the disciples and said, 'It is not desirable that we should leave the word of God and serve tables'" (Acts 6:2)*. The apostles did not say that they would do away with the distribution; they sought people to whom they could entrust that work. This was because, while the work of giving help had to continue, it was also not desirable for the apostles to

be bound to that work and become unable to preach the word of God. Taking up different tasks yet serving for the same gospel of the water and the Spirit was the way to resolve this problem.

Preaching the word is not a matter of telling people human thoughts or good teachings; it is a matter of making clear from the Scriptures how Jesus saved us, who were to be judged because of sin. Since preaching the word is none other than preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, however precious the help that meets the needs of the flesh may be, for the soul to be delivered from sin, one must hear and believe the salvation the Lord has accomplished. For that reason, the church cannot put off the word of the remission of sins even while caring for people, and it must know clearly for what purpose it serves together.

That word which the apostles preached is that Jesus, by receiving baptism from John, had all the sins of the world passed on to His own body once and for all, that He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the judgment we were to receive, and that He rose again from death and gave us new life. Because the sins that you and I commit throughout our whole lives are also included in that sin of the world, we cannot find salvation in our own good living. We serve the brothers and sisters who have received the same grace because we have believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts and received the remission of sins.

Let us look at verse 4 together. *"We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4)*. The apostles resolved to devote themselves to preaching the word of salvation while seeking God's help. Prayer is acknowledging that one cannot solve everything by one's own strength and relying on God, and preaching the word is making known to people what that God has accomplished through Jesus

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Christ. Those entrusted with the distribution were not separated from this purpose either, and so, though the tasks entrusted to them differed, the whole church could serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together.

People full of faith and the Holy Spirit

Let us look in verse 3 at the standard for the people who were to take on that work. *"Brethren, seek out from among you seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business" (Acts 6:3)*. The reason they looked for the Holy Spirit and wisdom while entrusting the work of caring for people is that the church's service must come from a heart that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. With only a heart that wants to get the work done quickly or to be recognized by people, one cannot serve one's brothers and sisters according to the Lord's will. People who knew and followed what pleases the Holy Spirit, and who knew how to look into people's hearts and needs, had to take on this work.

The Holy Spirit is not received as a reward for a person's labor, but is received as a gift at the same time one receives the remission of sins by believing in the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished. Therefore, looking for people full of the Holy Spirit is not a matter of looking for people who put forward conspicuous experiences. It is a matter of looking into whether the faith of the remission of sins is clear in their hearts, whether they serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit according to the will of the Holy Spirit who dwells in those hearts, and whether they are trusted by the people they live with. We too, rather than boasting of the size of the work entrusted to us, must look back on whom we rely upon and for what we do that work.

A life of good reputation is not separated from this faith either. If, while preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we turn away from the hardships of those near us or do not faithfully do the work entrusted to us, it is hard to preach the word of salvation clearly to those who hear. For that reason, knowing the grace of the remission of sins does not become an excuse for taking the faults of one's life lightly; it becomes the strength to examine one's own words and deeds out of gratitude to the Lord. It must not be service that tries to show that we are better than others, but service that exalts the Lord who has saved us all.

The whole multitude was pleased with the apostles' words and chose seven men, including Stephen and Philip. Let us read what happened next in verse 6. *"Whom they set before the apostles; and when they had prayed, they laid hands on them" (Acts 6:6)*. The passage makes the order clear: people who were already full of faith and the Holy Spirit were chosen and set before the apostles. The prayer and the laying on of hands by the apostles did not pass on the Holy Spirit or the remission of sins to them; rather, people who had received the remission of sins and had the Holy Spirit dwelling in their hearts were appointed to that work in prayer.

How should we take the complaint that was heard at the beginning? Rather than devoting our attention to blaming one another, we must serve together so that the needs that were neglected are looked after and the word is not left aside. Since the grace of the Lord, who has made you and me one family, is the basis of that service, there is no reason for our hearts to be divided just because the tasks entrusted to us differ. When those who preach the word and those who care for the saints each carry out their own work with the same joy of salvation, we can look

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after the brothers and sisters who need help and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit together. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The way of salvation that even the office of priest cannot replace

< Acts 6:7 >

"Then the word of God spread, and the number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith."

What it means for the word to spread

In telling of the church in Jerusalem, the Book of Acts first records that the word of God spread. That the word is placed before the fact that the people increased makes us look at what the disciples heard and believed. Before any talk of how well the church found ways to gather people, what we must know first is the content of the salvation that was preached there. What the apostles preached was the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved us from sin. What we hope for as we read this word must also be not simply the sight of many people gathering, but an increase in the number of people who hear and believe in this salvation of Jesus Christ.

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That the word spread means that the number of people who heard and believed that word increased. Of the word the apostles had preached earlier as well, the Scriptures record that *"many of those who heard the word believed; and the number of the men came to be about five thousand" (Acts 4:4)*. Since the word of God, unlike human opinions, has the power to save sinners, the focus is not on who persuaded people by his own wisdom, but on the fact that the word which conveys what God has accomplished was heard and believed. If we look for the power by which the gospel of the water and the Spirit spreads only in the ability of the one who preaches it, our hearts are weighed down, but if we believe the word God has given, it becomes clear what we must preach.

Before this word is recorded the appointing of the people who would be entrusted with the distribution within the church. Rather than leaving as it was the problem of the widows who should have received help being neglected, the apostles entrusted the care to seven men and resolved to devote themselves to prayer and preaching the word. When looking after the needs of those who were one family with them and preaching the word of the remission of sins were carried out together, the gospel of the water and the Spirit also spread all the more. Therefore, as we read the joy of verse 7, we must not forget the service that came before it, and we too must look after the brothers and sisters who are with us with a heart that treasures the word.

Let us look again at what the apostles resolved to devote themselves to. *"We will give ourselves continually to prayer and to the ministry of the word" (Acts 6:4)*. What those who prayed and relied on God preached was the salvation the Lord had already accomplished. Those who heard that word did not stop at following the one who preached it; they came to believe in

Jesus Christ as their own Savior. We too must make clear the Jesus to whom the Scriptures testify rather than putting our own thoughts first, and we must keep in mind the fact that a person is saved by believing the word God has given.

The way of salvation that even the priests had to believe

Let us read in verse 7 the result of the word's spreading. *"The number of the disciples multiplied greatly in Jerusalem, and a great many of the priests were obedient to the faith" (Acts 6:7)*. Not only did the number of the disciples multiply, but the priests also became obedient to the way of salvation. Because the office of priest and the work they did in the temple could not take the place of faith in Jesus Christ, they too had to receive the word of salvation the apostles preached. One must not regard the gospel of the water and the Spirit as having nothing to do with oneself on the grounds that one has long known and practiced the work of God.

The priests were the people who knew better than anyone the law of sacrifice, in which sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering by the laying on of hands and that offering received judgment by shedding its blood and dying. Therefore, if only they accepted that Jesus is the Son of God and the promised Savior, they could also understand that He had our sins passed on to Him when He received baptism from John. Conversely, if one does not accept Jesus as the Son of God, one cannot accept the sins He bore, nor the salvation that His death on the Cross and His resurrection give us. When we believe in Jesus as the Savior, we come to know that the word we learned in the Old

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Testament and the Lord's work of salvation are not separate matters.

What the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, in which hands were laid on the offering, pointed to is none other than the baptism Jesus received from John. Because Jesus, by thus receiving baptism from John, had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him once and for all, He received in our place the judgment for that sin by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again from death and saved us completely. Since the lifelong sins of you and me are all included in the sin of the world that was passed on to Jesus, there is no room for our own righteousness or our religious office to add anything to salvation. What we need is to believe in our hearts in Jesus, who has saved us through this gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The way to which the priests became obedient was not a new set of rules for managing people more strictly, but the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus Christ accomplished. Before the council the apostles said, *"So also is the Holy Spirit whom God has given to those who obey Him" (Acts 5:32)*, and the obedience here is faith that believes in this gospel, which Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection. To obey the gospel is to accept what the Lord has done, without holding on to one's own thoughts and religious pride as the basis of salvation. If one tries to obtain the remission of sins by one's own labor, a sense of lack always remains in the heart, but if one believes that the Lord bore all sins and received the judgment, His righteousness becomes our assurance. Therefore, what must be laid down before the gospel is not the word of the Scriptures but one's own thoughts, which one had put ahead of the word.

What we who believed first are to preach

This one verse, in which many people came to believe, asks us today as well what we are preaching. If we speak the name of Jesus but do not make clear how He removed sin, those who hear may still try to solve their own problem of sin by their own strength. For that reason, we must not separate the fact that Jesus had the sin of the world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John from the atonement on the Cross for that sin; we must preach the complete salvation the risen Savior accomplished. Even words that comfort the heart can give true assurance only when they are based on the remission of sins the Lord has actually accomplished.

The Scriptures do not set up any person's name or authority as our salvation. This is the word the apostles preached before the council. *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4:12)*. Because Jesus Christ is the Savior who removed our sins, no other person's righteousness or ability can take the place of that salvation. Just as the priests too had to believe in this Savior, we also, rather than boasting of our labors up to now, must confirm what the word of salvation that has been preached to us is, and believe it.

If we have believed the word and received the remission of sins, we can now preach to others the fact we have heard. We do not begin with the burden that we must become special witnesses on our own; rather, because it is clear that the Lord is the Savior who removed my sins, we make that fact known. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the heart that has received the remission of sins and causes it to testify of the salvation Jesus accomplished, there is no reason to close our mouths looking only at the shortcomings we have. We need only preach the word so that

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those who hear believe in Christ, rather than making the one who preaches stand out.

We must also remember that right after this, people who opposed Stephen appear. The record that many people believed does not mean that everyone welcomed the gospel of the water and the Spirit, nor does the fact that there are people who refuse mean that the word of salvation is not the truth. Even though people's responses to hearing the gospel differ, what Jesus accomplished does not change, and so we must not reduce or alter its content according to people's evaluations. Believing in and relying on the word of God, we must clearly preach the Savior to those who do not yet know the remission of sins.

A church in which the word spreads is to be recognized not by the number of people, but by whether it preaches the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished and obeys that word from the heart. Let us, who first believed in this way of salvation, also look after the needs of those who are one family with us while not putting off the word of the remission of sins that someone must hear and believe. The joy of Jerusalem, where even the priests accepted the gospel of the water and the Spirit, is for us today as well a clear reason to believe and preach the word of salvation. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The boldness of a witness comes not from eloquence but from the Holy Spirit

< Acts 6:8–15 >

"(And Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people –ASV). Then there arose some from what is called the Synagogue of the Freedmen (Cyrenians, Alexandrians, and those from Cilicia and Asia), disputing with Stephen. And they were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke. Then they secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God.' And they stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes; and they came upon him, seized him, and brought him to the council. They also set up false witnesses who said, 'This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law; for we have heard him say that this Jesus of Nazareth will destroy this place and change the customs which Moses delivered to us.' And all who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel."

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The Savior to whom the signs point

When great wonders and signs appeared through Stephen, not everyone rejoiced over him. Some people disputed with him, and when they were not able to resist his words, they induced men to accuse him. The preceding verse records that even a great many of the priests became obedient to the way of salvation, but here appear people who disputed with Stephen and tried to block his testimony. Since opposition arises together like this wherever the gospel of the water and the Spirit is preached, rather than having our hearts carried away by people's reactions, we must look at by whose power and of what Stephen testified.

This is the word of verse 8. *"Stephen, full of grace and power, wrought great wonders and signs among the people" (Acts 6:8)*. Stephen was one of the seven men appointed earlier to be entrusted with the work of the distribution. That it is recorded after his name that he was full of grace and power does not mean that the source of all power lay in himself. God works through those who have received the remission of sins, and through the signs He caused people to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God and the Savior. Therefore, we must not dwell on Stephen's distinctiveness, but look to the Lord who is testified of through him.

It is precious that bodies are healed and people's difficulties are resolved, but if sin remains in that person, the soul still needs salvation. The purpose for which God gave the signs also lay not in making people look only at marvelous power, but in making them believe who Jesus is and how He saved sinners. We too, rather than asking only whether we have experienced something extraordinary, must know from the word how the sin of our own hearts has been washed away. If we hold on only to outwardly

visible things without the remission of sins being clear, we drift away from faith in the Savior.

Jesus, though He is the sinless Son of God, received baptism from John in order to save us, and thereby had all the sins of the world, including the lifelong sins of you and me, transferred to Him once and for all. Therefore, Jesus paid the price of those sins and received our judgment in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and He rose again three days after He died and is alive even now; the new life we have received is based on this very salvation. The power of God that worked in Stephen was also meant to cause people to believe in this Savior, and so the center of what we preach is always Jesus Christ.

The people who opposed the witness who spoke by the Spirit

Some people from the various synagogues disputed with Stephen. They had religious language and knowledge, but these did not give them the power to overcome Stephen's testimony. Let us read verse 10. *"They were not able to resist the wisdom and the Spirit by which he spoke" (Acts 6:10)*. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in the one who knows the gospel of the water and the Spirit and causes him to speak the truth of salvation, the boldness of a witness is different from trusting in one's own eloquence. Because the remission of sins the Lord has accomplished is clear in his own heart, he clearly testifies of that fact.

When we speak before people, we may hesitate because of our own shortcomings. However, it is not that one must have much worldly knowledge to become a witness of salvation; the one who believes the word, "The Lord has removed my sins,"

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can preach that salvation. Since the words that come out of the mouth also differ according to what is clearly settled in the heart, the salvation of Jesus Christ must first become our own faith. The Holy Spirit makes us understand that word and gives us the strength to testify of it, and so we must rely on the truth rather than on a hot temper that tries to overpower people.

Those who opposed Stephen, instead of receiving his words, induced other people to tell lies. This is verse 11. *"They secretly induced men to say, 'We have heard him speak blasphemous words against Moses and God'" (Acts 6:11)*. This was not a verdict that Stephen had actually blasphemed God, but words that people made up in order to accuse him. Since the passage makes clear who induced whom to speak, we must not accept words as the truth merely because many people say the same thing. If one abandons the heart that listens to the truth, one can go as far as gathering people to add force to a lie.

They stirred up the people, the elders, and the scribes, and dragged Stephen to the council. Here we see that even if one has the pride of knowing the word of God, one can oppose the person who preaches that word if one does not believe in the salvation of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we must not feel secure in having religious experience, but must examine whether our own hearts are now receiving the word of God. We must look back on whether we are pushing away the word of salvation on the grounds that it differs from our own thoughts, and whether we are putting people's evaluations ahead of the word.

Rely on the Lord even in the face of false accusations

Let us look in verse 13 at the content of the accusation made before the council. *"They also set up false witnesses who said, 'This man does not cease to speak blasphemous words against this holy place and the law'" (Acts 6:13)*. The false witnesses tried to make Stephen out to be a guilty man by holding up the temple and the law. They went on to put forward the claim that Stephen had said that Jesus would destroy that place and change the customs Moses had handed down. We must not immediately accept the words of the accusers as Stephen's teaching, but must look at the order of the passage, in which they set up false witnesses to block his testimony.

God, who gave the law and the law of sacrifice, sent Jesus Christ to save sinners. Through the law we come to know our own sins, and through the law of sacrifice, in which sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering and that offering received judgment, we come to know the Lord's atonement. The word in which the Lord told them to destroy the temple and said that He would raise it up in three days was also spoken concerning the death and resurrection of His own body. The Lord offered not an animal but His own body as the offering: through the baptism He received from John He bore all the sins of the world, including our sins; He shed His blood on the Cross and received judgment in that body; and He rose again from death. Therefore, believing in the salvation Jesus accomplished is not despising the word of God, but accepting the One who saved us according to that word. If one rejects the Savior out of a desire to keep one's religious position, one ends up far from the meaning of the very word one claims to be keeping.

A person who has received the remission of sins does not

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lose even the basis of his salvation because of another person's accusation. This is because the One who has made us righteous is Jesus Christ, and the Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts that the salvation He accomplished is true. For that reason, when we meet opposition, rather than answering people's harsh words with the same harsh words, we must make clear from the word what the truth is. Since the work of a witness is not to make the other person submit but to let that person also hear the word of the remission of sins, we must speak and pray with a heart that believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

This chapter ends with the council looking at Stephen. This is the word of verse 15. *"All who sat in the council, looking steadfastly at him, saw his face as the face of an angel" (Acts 6:15)*. The passage only tells of the face of Stephen, who had been falsely accused, by comparing it to the face of an angel, and does not separately explain its meaning; yet even at the moment when his adversaries sat around him looking at him, the Holy Spirit gave him what to say and made him bold. Seeing the course in the next chapter, in which he opens his mouth to testify and finally is martyred, the fact that the Lord is with us cannot be reduced to meaning that we suffer no hardship at all.

Just because the voices accusing Stephen grew louder, the Savior he preached did not change, nor did the testimony of the Holy Spirit disappear. Just as there were people who opposed him even after seeing the signs, today too there are people who do not welcome the gospel of the water and the Spirit; but rather than doubting the remission of sins in our hearts because of people's reactions, we must believe in the salvation the Lord has accomplished and clearly preach that fact. Even before the council that tried to shut Stephen's mouth, God's testimony continued, and so in the place entrusted to us as well, let us rely on the Holy Spirit and clearly preach the word of the Savior. ✉

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CHAPTER

7

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Knowing the Bible is different from believing in the Savior who was sent

< Acts 7:1–53 >

"Then the high priest said, 'Are these things so?' And he said, 'Brethren and fathers, listen: The God of glory appeared to our father Abraham when he was in Mesopotamia, before he dwelt in Haran, and said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you.' Then he came out of the land of the Chaldeans and dwelt in Haran. And from there, when his father was dead, He moved him to this land in which you now dwell. And God gave him no inheritance in it, not even enough to set his foot on. But even when Abraham had no child, He promised to give it to him for a possession, and to his descendants after him. But God spoke in this way: that his descendants would dwell in a foreign land, and that they would bring them into bondage and oppress them four hundred years. 'And the nation to whom they will be in bondage I will judge,' said God, 'and after that they shall come out and serve Me in this place.' Then He gave him the covenant of circumcision; and so Abraham begot Isaac and circumcised him on the eighth day; and Isaac begot Jacob, and Jacob begot the twelve patriarchs. And the patriarchs, becoming envious, sold Joseph into Egypt. But God was with

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him and delivered him out of all his troubles, and gave him favor and wisdom in the presence of Pharaoh, king of Egypt; and he made him governor over Egypt and all his house. Now a famine and great trouble came over all the land of Egypt and Canaan, and our fathers found no sustenance. But when Jacob heard that there was grain in Egypt, he sent out our fathers first. And the second time Joseph was made known to his brothers, and Joseph's family became known to the Pharaoh. Then Joseph sent and called his father Jacob and all his relatives to him, seventy-five people. So Jacob went down to Egypt; and he died, he and our fathers. And they were carried back to Shechem and laid in the tomb that Abraham bought for a sum of money from the sons of Hamor, the father of Shechem. But when the time of the promise drew near which God had sworn to Abraham, the people grew and multiplied in Egypt till another king arose who did not know Joseph. This man dealt treacherously with our people, and oppressed our forefathers, making them expose their babies, so that they might not live. At this time Moses was born, and was well pleasing to God; and he was brought up in his father's house for three months. But when he was set out, Pharaoh's daughter took him away and brought him up as her own son. And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds. Now when he was forty years old, it came into his heart to visit his brethren, the children of Israel. And seeing one of them suffer wrong, he defended and avenged him who was oppressed, and struck down the Egyptian. For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand. And the next day he appeared to two of them as they were fighting, and tried to reconcile them, saying, 'Men, you are

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brethren; why do you wrong one another?' But he who did his neighbor wrong pushed him away, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge over us? Do you want to kill me as you did the Egyptian yesterday?' Then, at this saying, Moses fled and became a dweller in the land of Midian, where he had two sons. And when forty years had passed, an Angel of the Lord appeared to him in a flame of fire in a bush, in the wilderness of Mount Sinai. When Moses saw it, he marveled at the sight; and as he drew near to observe, the voice of the Lord came to him, saying, 'I am the God of your fathers—the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob.' And Moses trembled and dared not look. 'Then the LORD said to him, 'Take your sandals off your feet, for the place where you stand is holy ground. I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt; I have heard their groaning and have come down to deliver them. And now come, I will send you to Egypt.'' This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush. He brought them out, after he had shown wonders and signs in the land of Egypt, and in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness forty years. This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear.' This is he who was in the congregation in the wilderness with the Angel who spoke to him on Mount Sinai, and with our fathers, the one who received the living oracles to give to us, whom our fathers would not obey, but rejected. And in their hearts they turned back to Egypt, saying to Aaron, 'Make us gods to go before us; as for this Moses who brought us out of the land of Egypt, we do not know what has become of him.' And they made a

calf in those days, offered sacrifices to the idol, and rejoiced in the works of their own hands. Then God turned and gave them up to worship the host of heaven, as it is written in the book of the Prophets: 'Did you offer Me slaughtered animals and sacrifices during forty years in the wilderness, O house of Israel? You also took up the tabernacle of Moloch, And the star of your god Remphan, Images which you made to worship; And I will carry you away beyond Babylon.' Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen, which our fathers, having received it in turn, also brought with Joshua into the land possessed by the Gentiles, whom God drove out before the face of our fathers until the days of David, who found favor before God and asked to find a dwelling for the God of Jacob. But Solomon built Him a house. However, the Most High does not dwell in temples made with hands, as the prophet says: 'Heaven is My throne, And earth is My footstool. What house will you build for Me? says the LORD, Or what is the place of My rest? Has My hand not made all these things?' You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you. Which of the prophets did your fathers not persecute? And they killed those who foretold the coming of the Just One, of whom you now have become the betrayers and murderers, who have received the law by the direction of angels and have not kept it.'"

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The word of God heard in the history of the fathers

The high priest asked Stephen whether what he had been accused of was true. In the face of the accusation that he had spoken against the temple and the law, Stephen recounted what God had done, beginning from Abraham. His speaking at length about the history of the fathers was not a matter of boasting of the past, but of revealing what kind of heart those who claimed to have received the word of God now had before that word. We, too, must not be satisfied with knowing the Bible, but must examine whether we are accepting the Savior who is made known to us through that word. The Savior whom the word makes known is Jesus Christ, who, by receiving baptism from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and rose again from death.

Let us read in verse 3 the word given to Abraham. *"And said to him, 'Get out of your country and from your relatives, and come to a land that I will show you'" (Acts 7:3)*. God first appeared to Abraham and told him the way he should go, and he left his own land and arrived at the place to which God moved him. When he had not yet received any inheritance there, not even enough to set his foot on, and had no child, God promised to give the land to him and to his descendants. Since it was not the possessions before his eyes but the word God gave that was the beginning of faith, we must not put the circumstances we see at present ahead of the promise we have received.

God spoke of how Abraham's descendants would become slaves in another land and how He would judge the nation that oppressed them, and He gave the covenant of circumcision. In the history of Joseph that follows, too, the will of men and the

help of God are revealed side by side. His brothers envied Joseph and sold him, but God was with him and delivered him out of his troubles, and in the time of famine it was through him that Jacob's family went down to Egypt. Pointing out what God had done in this way, Stephen makes clear that the One we should boast of is not the fathers themselves but God, who led them.

The One who sent Moses, who had been rejected

When the people had multiplied in Egypt, a new king who did not know Joseph oppressed them. Moses, who was born at that time, grew up and went to visit his brethren, but his brethren did not understand that God was delivering them through his hand. There was even one who pushed Moses away and asked who had made him a ruler and a judge, and Moses fled to Midian and lived as a stranger. But the story did not end with the people's rejection, for God called him again and sent him to the people.

This is the word of verse 35. *"This Moses whom they rejected, saying, 'Who made you a ruler and a judge?' is the one God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer by the hand of the Angel who appeared to him in the bush" (Acts 7:35)*. That Moses, who had been rejected by the people, God sent to be a ruler and a deliverer. Since God always works by raising up His servant, and that work does not begin from the recognition of men, the people's pushing Moses away by their own judgment was nothing other than rejecting the work of God, who had sent him. If we say we believe in God and yet do not receive the work He does, we are in the end placing our own thoughts higher than the word of God.

God saw the oppression of the people and heard their groaning, and He sent Moses and brought them out of Egypt.

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Moses, who did wonders and signs in Egypt, in the Red Sea, and in the wilderness, was not a man to boast of his own power, but a servant who followed God, who had sent him. Likewise, those who preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit today must not put themselves forward to people as the ground of salvation, but must make known the work God accomplished in order to save sinners. It must be clear what people hear and in whom they come to believe through the one who preaches.

Let us look at the promise Moses proclaimed in verse 37. *"This is that Moses who said to the children of Israel, 'The LORD your God will raise up for you a Prophet like me from your brethren. Him you shall hear'" (Acts 7:37)*. If one holds Moses in honor, one must also receive this promise he proclaimed. Jesus Christ, who came according to that promise, is the One who bore our sins on His own body not by the blood of animals but by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for those sins in our place, and accomplished salvation by rising again from death. If one speaks of Moses and the law and yet does not actually accept the Savior who came according to that word, even the pride of knowing much of the Bible cannot wash away a person's sins.

The gods men made and the way God gave

The fathers received the living oracles in the wilderness, but they were not willing to obey Moses. Their hearts turned back to Egypt, and they told Aaron to make them gods to go before them, so that in the end they made a calf, offered sacrifices before it, and rejoiced in what their own hands had made. If we depart from the word God has given and make something that suits our own will, even if it is visible to the eye and gives

satisfaction to the heart, it cannot be the service of God. In our faith, too, before asking how much we have done, we must examine whose word we are following in our believing.

The tabernacle of witness was given in a way different from that idol. It is verse 44. *"Our fathers had the tabernacle of witness in the wilderness, as He appointed, instructing Moses to make it according to the pattern that he had seen" (Acts 7:44)*. In the tabernacle made as God had commanded Moses, the way for a sinner to come before God was not something decided according to his own thinking. The law made people realize their sins, and the law of sacrifice that God gave along with it showed the way by which sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering and that offering received the judgment. Therefore, the remission of sins must be received not through a righteousness that man produces, but through the atonement God appointed.

In order to accomplish that atonement, Jesus received baptism from John and, just as sins passed on to the offering when hands were laid on it, had all the sins of the world transferred onto His body once and for all, and that is why there was the Cross. The Lord, who bore even the sins of our whole lifetime, received the judgment for those sins in our place by shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, and by rising again from death He completely accomplished the salvation He had promised. Since the salvation God has given is received by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Lord accomplished in this way, we cannot diminish the Lord's work or replace it with something else because of the religious thinking we are used to. Nor can boasting of having the building of the temple or the law take the place of the remission of sins the Savior accomplished.

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Do not resist the Holy Spirit, but receive the Savior

After recounting the history of the tabernacle and the temple, Stephen made clear that the Most High God is not One who is confined to places made with human hands. Though the One who made the earth and the heavens cannot be limited within what we possess, people try to judge God by what they themselves hold on to. What matters is not the pride of defending the temple but a heart that believes in the Savior whom God sent. Since the Holy Spirit dwells in a heart that has received the remission of sins, we, too, must not find our assurance in what we have outwardly, but must receive the Lord's salvation in our hearts.

Let us hear the rebuke of verse 51. *"You stiff-necked and uncircumcised in heart and ears! You always resist the Holy Spirit; as your fathers did, so do you" (Acts 7:51)*. Stephen connected the history of the fathers' persecuting the prophets with what his hearers had done in betraying and murdering Jesus, the Just One. The fact that they had received the law was no evidence that they had kept that law, nor did calling on the names of the fathers mean obeying God, who had spoken to those fathers. If we reject the salvation Jesus accomplished because it differs from our own thinking, then we, too, are resisting the word the Holy Spirit testifies of.

Let us not pass over this rebuke as merely a story about people of a distant age. Even we who have believed in the Lord's remission of sins can put the thoughts of the flesh and our own plans first and turn away from the counsel of the Holy Spirit, so we must turn our hearts before the word and follow the Lord's will. This is not to say that we should obtain the remission of sins through our obedience; it is an exhortation to know how precious the salvation already given is and to serve the gospel of

the water and the Spirit. The long history Stephen recounted in the face of the high priest's question leaves the same question for us as well in the end. Do you know what God has done only in words, or do you believe in and follow with your heart the Savior whom He sent? ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Stephen, who entrusted his soul to the Lord in the face of death

< Acts 7:54–60 >

“When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth. But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God, and said, ‘Look! I see the heavens opened and the Son of Man standing at the right hand of God!’ Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord; and they cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, ‘Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.’ Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, ‘Lord, do not charge them with this sin.’ And when he had said this, he fell asleep.”

Those who stopped their ears even after hearing the word

Those who heard Stephen’s words began to gnash their teeth. While recounting the history of the fathers and preaching the

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word of God, he had exposed their sin of rejecting Jesus, the Just One, but instead of turning their hearts, those who heard rushed at him. But Stephen did not entrust even his soul into their hands. This passage does not stop at the tragedy of one man being stoned to death; it shows us whom we can look to and rely on even in the face of death.

Let us read verse 54. *"When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth" (Acts 7:54)*. The mere fact that they were cut to the heart on hearing the word did not mean they had repented. They needed to acknowledge the sin that had been exposed and accept the Savior. That Savior is Jesus Christ, whom they had seized and killed. By receiving baptism from John, Jesus had not only their sins but also all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all; He shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and He rose again from death. Yet they raged against the one who had preached the word to them. When our faults are exposed before the word, we, too, rather than avoiding that word or hating the one who preaches it, must understand why we are being rebuked and turn our hearts. We must not, in trying to protect our own thinking, push away even the word of the remission of sins.

In verse 57 that reaction is recorded even more clearly. *"Then they cried out with a loud voice, stopped their ears, and ran at him with one accord" (Acts 7:57)*. The fact that they raised loud voices and were united in heart is no evidence that they followed the truth. For we must examine what they did not want to hear when they stopped their ears, and at whom they ran together. We must not be overwhelmed by people's words just because their strength is great and their voices are loud; we must know what is right by the standard of the word God has given.

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The faith that gazed into heaven and saw the Lord

Unlike his adversaries, who fixed their eyes on Stephen, Stephen gazed into heaven. This is the word of verse 55. *"But he, being full of the Holy Spirit, gazed into heaven and saw the glory of God, and Jesus standing at the right hand of God" (Acts 7:55)*. The One Stephen looked upon was not a Jesus who had ended as one seized and killed by men on earth, but the Savior who had risen again and was at the right hand of God. Since the salvation the Lord accomplished remained unchanged even for Stephen, who stood before the council while being held fast by the hands of men, his adversaries could not take away the ground of his faith.

We must know the work Jesus accomplished until He came to the right hand of God. At the age of thirty, by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River, the Lord had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all, and in order to pay the price of those sins He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving the judgment in the place of sinners. And He rose again from death and ascended into heaven; so the lifelong sins of you and me are also included in that sin of the world which the Lord bore and for which He completed the judgment. The assurance of the remission of sins does not depend on how strong we are in the face of death, but rests on this salvation the Lord accomplished.

The Holy Spirit comes as a gift upon the heart that has received the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He testifies of the fact that Jesus Christ has removed all sins, and He leads us to understand the Lord's word and to live according to His will. Therefore, being full of the Holy Spirit does not mean that one's emotions rise so high that one forgets a hard reality; it means believing in and testifying of

the Lord's salvation, following the Holy Spirit who is in one's heart. Stephen declared the Lord he had seen even in the midst of his adversaries, and here we see what a witness accompanied by the Holy Spirit looks like.

When difficulties arise, we come to stare for a long time at the people and circumstances before our eyes. The more we do so, the more our hearts may waver, wondering, "Have I done something wrong and been pushed out of salvation? Has God forsaken me?" But Stephen's martyrdom shows both the fact that those who believe in the Lord face suffering and the fact that the Holy Spirit is with them. We must not take the Holy Spirit's presence with us to mean that there is no suffering; rather, we must believe that even in that suffering we can commit our hearts and souls to the Savior.

Entrust your soul to the Lord even at the moment you are being stoned

The people cast Stephen out of the city and stoned him, and the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul. This Saul is Paul before he was born again; later he would come to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, but now he is a man taking part in Stephen's death. This scene makes us reflect on what a person who claims to know the word of God can lend his strength to when he does not believe in that salvation. Rather than trusting in our own religious zeal, we, too, must examine before the word whom that zeal follows and what it is for.

Let us read in verse 59 what Stephen cried out as he was being stoned. *"And they stoned Stephen as he was calling on God and saying, 'Lord Jesus, receive my spirit'" (Acts 7:59)*.

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People could harm his body, but Stephen called on Jesus as the One who would receive his soul. Because he knew to whom his life belonged, he prayed to the Lord even in the face of death. To one who has received the remission of sins, Jesus Christ is not someone from whom he receives help only while he is alive, but the Savior to whom he entrusts his soul even beyond death.

The death of Jesus Christ is our death, and His resurrection is our resurrection. Those who believe that the Lord had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John and that He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment for that sin in our place have already received the remission of sins, and so the life that belongs to that Lord cannot be taken away by people's accusations. At the moment of his death, Stephen did not offer his own service or boldness as the price of salvation, but entrusted his soul to the Lord Jesus. We, too, when we think of the end of our lives, must clearly believe who the Lord is who has already saved us, rather than counting the things we have done.

The last prayer for his adversaries

Even after entrusting his soul, Stephen did not stop praying for those who were stoning him. This is the word of verse 60. *"Then he knelt down and cried out with a loud voice, 'Lord, do not charge them with this sin.' And when he had said this, he fell asleep" (Acts 7:60)*. Stephen, who had clearly exposed and rebuked their sin, at the last asked that this sin not be charged to them; so the boldness to preach the truth and the heart toward souls in need of the remission of sins were not separated from each other.

Words and actions that oppose the gospel of the water and the Spirit are not right, and so this must be made clear. At the same time, since the person doing so is also a soul who must hear and believe in the salvation the Lord accomplished, we must pray for that person and preach the right word to him. If only a heart that repays hatred with hatred remains, we become unable to see the soul of the person who needs to be saved; but when we think of the Lord's grace, we come to know that he, too, needs the remission of sins. Just as Stephen did not remove another person's sin by his own power but asked the Lord, we, too, must rely on God, who changes people's hearts.

After Stephen died, a great persecution arose against the church, and the saints were scattered. But those who were scattered preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and so the death of a witness could neither do away with the salvation the Lord accomplished nor put an end to the testimony of that gospel. The One we must look to in the midst of suffering is also Jesus Christ, who was alive then and is alive now. It is not the hands of those who gnashed their teeth and rushed in that determine the final destiny of our souls; it is the Lord, who saved us from sin, who receives us. Let us entrust our hearts to that Lord, and let us pray, hoping that the word of salvation will be preached also to the souls who oppose us. ✉

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CHAPTER

8

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Conviction that does not know Jesus opposes God

< Acts 8:1a >

“Saul was consenting to his death”

Even a heart that consented to a death is revealed before God

When Stephen was stoned to death, Saul regarded that death as fitting. Even though a man who had testified of Jesus Christ had died, Saul had the conviction that judged that death to be right. Before this short record, we come to look back on what our own conviction is founded upon. This is because merely having no doubt in one’s heart does not make a person right before God. If we do not know the Savior whom God sent, we can regard ourselves as right even while going against the work of God. That Savior, Jesus Christ, by receiving baptism from John, had all the sins of the world, including, of course, the sins of Saul, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Without knowing this One, Saul regarded the death of that witness as right.

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The preceding record reveals where Saul was at Stephen's last moment: *"They cast him out of the city and stoned him. And the witnesses laid down their clothes at the feet of a young man named Saul" (Acts 7:58)*. Saul was not someone who merely happened to pass by that place. The witnesses laid their clothes at his feet, and he regarded the killing that followed as fitting. The Bible does not record only the actions of those who threw the stones, but also reveals the heart of Saul, who consented to those actions.

From the word *"Saul was consenting to his death" (Acts 8:1)*, we can know that Saul was standing on the side of Stephen's death. Saul himself later confessed this without hiding it: *"When the blood of Your martyr Stephen was shed, I also was standing by consenting to his death, and guarding the clothes of those who were killing him" (Acts 22:20)*. The hands that threw the stones were the hands of other people, but the heart that consented to that death was Saul's own. If we consider only what we have done with our own hands, we may think little of the evil of the heart, but before God, what we regarded as right and what we joined our hearts to are also revealed. The death Saul regarded as right was the death of a man who had been testifying of Jesus. Because his judgment stood on the side opposed to the testimony of Christ, it could not be justified on the grounds that his conviction was strong.

We, too, when someone who thinks differently from us suffers hardship, can regard that hardship as a matter of course. Before we have even fully listened to what the other person says, we decide that he is wrong, and we even take the suffering that has befallen him as evidence for our own judgment. In particular, if we put our own familiar thoughts first when we encounter the word that conveys the Lord's salvation, it is easy to push away the one who preaches it rather than to examine the word. As we

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read about Saul, before pointing out the stubbornness of others, we must examine whether we are not measuring what the Lord has done by our own thoughts.

Therefore, this word does not end with condemning from a distance those who took part in the killing at that time. I, too, have a heart that regards itself as right, and that heart moves in the wrong direction if it does not know Jesus Christ. When more people agree, one's own judgment may seem even more certain, but that agreement cannot make an act that opposes the Lord righteous. The standard we must return to is not the size of our self-confidence but the truth that God has testified.

The Lord, who stopped Saul's judgment

Look at the word that this Saul heard when he later met the Lord: *"He fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?'" (Acts 9:4)*. Saul had persecuted those who believed in Jesus, but the Lord spoke of that as persecuting the Lord. The judgment of "right" that Saul had attached to his own actions and the Lord's judgment were completely different. Until he met the Lord, he kept moving according to his own judgment, but before the word of the Lord, it was revealed whom he had been opposing.

What Saul needed was not merely to tone down his zeal a little. He had to turn from having known Jesus wrongly and come to know rightly the Savior whom God sent. We, too, cannot substitute the fact that we are zealous in our faith for the remission of sins. This is because, if we do not know what sin is and who bore that sin, we may rely on our own labor and yet fail to believe in the very Lord who saved us. Laying down our own

judgment before the word must lead to accepting the salvation that the Savior has accomplished.

It was precisely this salvation that Saul, who believed the Old Testament and was zealous for the law, did not know. Just as in the Old Testament, when a sinner laid his hands on the head of the sacrificial offering, his sins were passed on to the offering, Jesus had the sin of the world transferred onto His body by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and the sins we commit throughout our lifetime are also included in the sin of the world that was passed on at that time. Because He had the sins passed on to Him in this way, Jesus could shed His blood and die on the Cross, and through that death He received in our place the judgment that sinners had to receive, and He rose again from death and became the living Savior who saved us from sin and death. The gospel of the water and the Spirit does not make us boast of how strong the conviction in our hearts is, but makes us believe how this Savior remitted our sins.

When our own wrongs are revealed before the word, we must go to Jesus Christ, who has already borne those sins. Just as Saul's zeal could not make him right, we, too, cannot solve the problem of sin by holding on to our own righteousness. Only when we believe the salvation God has accomplished do we obtain the assurance of the remission of sins. This does not mean that it is all right to take our sins lightly, but that we do not have to hide our sins or try to cover them with our own zeal. Because the Lord received the judgment on the Cross for our sins that were passed on to Him when He received baptism from John, and rose again from death, the basis for the remission of sins can be found in the Lord's salvation, which lies outside my own judgment. The Holy Spirit testifies in our hearts, through the written gospel of the water and the Spirit, that this salvation is true.

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The direction of conviction that changed toward testifying of the Savior

The change that took place in Saul after he met the Lord is recorded: *"Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20)*. The man who had tried to wipe out those who believed in Jesus came to preach that Jesus is the Son of God. It was not merely that his character became gentler; the basis of the judgment he had regarded as right and the content he testified with his mouth were changed. A person whom the Lord has saved does not remain opposing the Savior in order to keep his old conviction, but comes to testify of the One who saved him.

Knowing Saul's later days does not make his consent to Stephen's death any lighter. That death actually happened, and Saul's consent also remains in the Bible. Precisely because the Lord turned around such a man, we cannot regard a person's present state as greater than the power of salvation. When we deal with someone who persecutes us, while not going along with his evil, we can preach the word and pray so that he may hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtain the remission of sins. This is because we ourselves did not seek the Savior with right judgment from the beginning, but came to know the truth by the grace of the Lord.

Also, if we keep looking only at our own failures even after realizing our past wrongs, we may miss what the Lord has accomplished. As we look at Saul's change, we must set our hearts on the gospel of the water and the Spirit rather than striving to prove our own goodness. My wrongs are also included in the scope of the sins Jesus bore, and the judgment I had to receive is also included in the judgment He received in our place. From a heart that has believed that salvation and

received the remission of sins comes testimony toward other souls.

Dear beloved saints, Saul regarded Stephen's death as fitting, but that conviction was opposing the Lord. Let us, too, not confirm the direction of our hearts merely by saying that we believe firmly. Let us examine what we believe and whose word we follow, and rely on Jesus, who remitted our sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit that we have looked at above. Then, with the mouth that used to push away other souls in order to keep its own judgment, we can now testify of the Lord's salvation that gives life to those souls. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord's salvation, which even the persecution that scattered the saints could not stop

< Acts 8:1b–3 >

"At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles. And devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him. As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison"

The scattered saints and the apostles who kept their place

What the church faced after Stephen's death was not peaceful days. A great persecution arose in Jerusalem, and the saints left the places where they had lived and were scattered. Meanwhile, devout men buried Stephen and wept greatly, and Saul entered house after house and committed men and women to prison. This word does not hide the suffering that came upon the lives of believers. Here, as we look at the weeping church,

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we come to examine whom saints in hardship should rely on and how they should treat one another.

"At that time a great persecution arose against the church which was at Jerusalem; and they were all scattered throughout the regions of Judea and Samaria, except the apostles" (Acts 8:1). The persecution that had been directed at Stephen now spread to the whole church in Jerusalem, and the saints had to leave the places where they had lived. Since the people who had been living together were scattered to various lands, that hardship cannot be spoken of as if it were something to be endured simply by steeling one's heart. The Bible records it as a great persecution and shows the actual situation they were in.

And yet the text makes clear that all were scattered except the apostles, thereby indicating that the apostles remained in Jerusalem. Not everyone did the same thing in the same place; the apostles kept their place, and the other saints moved to Judea and Samaria. Yet these names of lands were already included in the word the Lord spoke before He ascended: *"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)*. It was persecution that scattered the saints, but the places their scattered steps reached were the very lands where the Lord had said they would be witnesses. Therefore, the text does not say that the scattered saints forsook the Lord, and it goes on to record that they went everywhere preaching the word.

This distinction is also needed when the church meets hardship and looks after one another's circumstances. Some have work to bear while keeping their place, and some gain the opportunity to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the place to which they have moved; since the Savior we believe in together and the salvation we have received are the same, the fact of being apart does not in itself mean a severing of faith.

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That Savior whom we believe in together, Jesus Christ, when He received baptism from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, and after paying the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, He rose again from death. Even the persecution that scattered the saints could not stop the word of God, and so what we should unite our hearts around is not a particular circumstance but the Lord who saved us from sin and His gospel.

Even so, we cannot lightly say that the pain of being scattered is in itself a good thing. Those who leave a familiar place have worries about the days ahead, and those who remain also face the threat of persecution. The fact that God caused the gospel of the water and the Spirit to be preached even in the midst of this does not turn the suffering into something that never happened. Rather, it lets us see that, even though the suffering was real, the Holy Spirit upheld the saints and caused them to preach the word of the Savior. Therefore, when we help a church in hardship, we must acknowledge the suffering, pray together, and look into what is actually needed.

Those who buried Stephen and wept greatly

"Devout men carried Stephen to his burial, and made great lamentation over him" (Acts 8:2). Devout men buried Stephen's body and wept greatly for him. The Bible does not rebuke those tears as an act without faith, but records them as they were. The fact that Stephen died testifying of the Lord by faith and the fact that those who lost him grieved stand together. Believing in the Lord does not make the pain of losing someone we lived with disappear.

We may be used to urging people to cheer up quickly when someone is going through grief. But before this word, we must also consider staying beside the one who grieves. Burying required hands that cared for the dead, and in weeping greatly there was a heart that grieved over that death together. The sight of devout men burying him and weeping together teaches us that we, too, must not pass lightly over the sorrow of our neighbors. A saint who is going through sorrow needs the hands of the church to bear that pain together with him.

Relying on the Lord in sorrow is not hiding a hurting heart; it is believing, even while shedding tears, that death is not the last word of salvation. Look at how Jesus Christ, of whom Stephen testified, gave life to sinners. The Lord had all the sin of the world transferred to Him when He received baptism from John, and that sin includes all the sins of the days we have passed through and all the sins of the days we have yet to live. Because He had the sin passed on to Him in this way, there was the Cross; the Lord paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross and received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and He rose again from death on the third day. For us who believe in Him, the resurrection of Jesus is none other than our own coming to life.

The church that has believed this gospel of the water and the Spirit and obtained the remission of sins relies on the risen Savior even in the face of death. This is not because our emotions overcome death, but because the Lord has overcome death. That faith does not drive the grieving saint by telling him not to weep, but helps him, even while weeping together with him, not to lose sight of the salvation the Lord has accomplished. Because there is the hope that the death of the body cannot do away with the life the Lord has given, the church can bear sorrow together.

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Even in the persecution that tries to wipe out the church, life continues

"As for Saul, he made havoc of the church, entering every house, and dragging off men and women, committing them to prison" (Acts 8:3). Saul's persecution did not stop at opposing with words. Since he entered every house and dragged off men and women and committed them to prison, the threat reached deep into the lives of the saints. The statement that he tried to ravage the church reveals that he was trying to wipe out the church. We must not mix this evil deed with the good work of God, but must look with discernment at how God upheld the saints in the midst of that persecution.

The record that follows tells us what came next in this situation: *"Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4)*. Contrary to Saul's intention to wipe out the church, the gospel of the water and the Spirit was preached by the scattered saints. Even though their place was taken from them and their bodies were moved, the word of the remission of sins they had received from the Lord did not disappear as well. Because the Holy Spirit who dwelt in their hearts caused them to testify of the living Savior, even though the persecution scattered the steps of the saints, it could not put an end to the gospel.

We, too, cannot explain every purpose right away when we meet difficult circumstances. At such times, rather than hastily making up reasons for our suffering, we must first take hold of the salvation the Lord has already accomplished. The grace of the Lord, who bore our sins through the baptism He received from John and received the judgment on the Cross, does not collapse along with our circumstances when they have collapsed. When we set our hearts on the risen Savior and share the word

with the church, we gain the strength to look after souls again even in sorrow and worry. Even a single opportunity to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit can be carried out by relying on that grace.

In the text, those who are scattered, those who weep, and those who are dragged off to prison appear together. While not forgetting their suffering, we believe that even in the midst of it the life of the Lord was not cut off. Let us weep with the brothers and sisters who grieve, pray for the saints who are persecuted, and share the gospel of the water and the Spirit in the place now entrusted to us. There was an attempt to wipe out the church, but the salvation of the Lord who gave life to sinners continued to be preached through the scattered saints. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The great joy that the gospel of the remission of sins gave to Samaria

< Acts 8:4–8 >

“Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word. Then Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them. And the multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did. For unclean spirits, crying with a loud voice, came out of many who were possessed; and many who were paralyzed and lame were healed. And there was great joy in that city”

The gospel preached from the mouths of those who were scattered

Those who were scattered from Jerusalem preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit wherever they went, and Philip also went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ, so that great joy arose in that city. How could people who had left the foundation of their lives because of persecution convey joy to other places? It was because the Savior they relied on was not One who disappears along with circumstances, and because the remission of sins they had received was life that other souls, too,

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absolutely needed.

"Those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4). Those who were scattered preached that word wherever they went, wherever they sat, and wherever they stood. A life different from when they stayed only in Jerusalem had begun, but in the places they moved to there were also people who needed salvation. The gospel of the water and the Spirit that they preached was not news that their own circumstances had improved, but the news that Jesus Christ, by receiving baptism from John, had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death and saved sinners; therefore they could preach it even in the midst of hardship.

Here we see the fact that those who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit were not only the apostles. Earlier it said that the apostles remained in Jerusalem, and now it says that those who were scattered preached the word. The saints who had received the word of the remission of sins also had mouths with which to share that word, and the Holy Spirit upheld them and caused them to testify. We must not think of preaching the gospel as a work entrusted only to a few people with special titles. A person who knows through the word and believes how the Lord remitted his sins has something to preach to other souls.

What troubles our hearts may be the thought that we lack the eloquence needed for evangelism. But what we must look at first is whether I clearly believe in the Lord who saved me. If the fact that we have believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit and received the remission of sins is clear in our hearts, then when we meet someone, we come to preach what the Savior has done rather than words meant to make ourselves look good. We may worry that the other person will not listen, but there is no need to decide that reaction in advance and close our mouths. We can

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begin our testimony by explaining step by step the word of salvation that I have received, so that he, too, may hear it.

If the basis of their strength to preach had lain in comfortable circumstances, the scattered saints could not have preached like this. But the grace of the remission of sins did not disappear along with their circumstances, and the Holy Spirit upheld their hearts and caused them to testify of the Savior. We, too, without waiting until all our circumstances are resolved, can entrust our present difficulties to the Lord and explain that salvation to the souls we meet.

The Christ whom Philip preached in Samaria

"Philip went down to the city of Samaria and preached Christ to them" (Acts 8:5). This Philip was the man who was appointed together with Stephen earlier when the church in Jerusalem chose seven men: *"Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit, and Philip" (Acts 6:5)*. Stephen was stoned to death, and Philip was scattered and went down to Samaria, and the One he preached was Christ. He did not introduce some new object of curiosity to people or boast of his own ability; he preached the Lord who saved sinners. For that, the heart of the one who preaches must first be turned toward Christ. If one is full only of worldly worries and one's own thoughts, those worries easily come out of one's mouth even when meeting people, but when one thinks of the salvation the Lord has bestowed, a desire arises to share that grace.

The Christ whom Philip preached was not a Christ whose name alone was made known. He preached who Jesus is and what He accomplished for us—that very work. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He had all the sins of

the world transferred onto His body, and in them are included, without exception, the sins we commit throughout our lives. To pay the price of those sins, He was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, thereby ending the judgment we were to receive, and He rose again from death and became the perfect Savior. This news of the kingdom of heaven, that God came to this earth and removed all our sins, is the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and to preach Christ is to preach this news together with the name Jesus.

If we merely tell a person who is tormented because of sin to set his heart at ease, he cannot know from those words how sin is remitted. Only when he hears that his sins are also included in the sin of the world that the Lord took upon Himself when He received baptism from John, and that the judgment for that sin was finished on the Cross, can he believe not his own feelings but what the Lord has accomplished. Also, when he comes to know that the risen Jesus is the living Savior, he gains the hope of relying on Him even in the face of death. The spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit does not consist in stirring up a person's heart for a moment, but is the work of preaching the word so that his heart may receive this salvation and obtain the remission of sins.

Therefore, we, too, must take time to think of the Lord's grace in the midst of the busyness of daily life. This does not mean abandoning going to work and caring for our families. It means that, while doing what we have to do, rather than holding on to all our worries by ourselves, we pray to the Lord and entrust them to Him, and keep in our hearts the word that saved me. When we rely on the Lord in this way, the things before our eyes do not take up our whole heart, and we can also pay attention to the soul of the person next to us. Reminding our hearts of the Lord's salvation is connected to a life of preaching

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Christ.

Do not stop at the signs, but hear the word of salvation

"The multitudes with one accord heeded the things spoken by Philip, hearing and seeing the miracles which he did" (Acts 8:6). The multitudes heard what Philip said and also saw the signs he did. The Bible does not stop at saying that they were amazed at seeing the signs, but records that with one accord they heeded what he said. The power God manifested did not have its purpose in making Philip as an individual look great. God worked together with the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit so that people would hear the word of Christ and believe in the Savior.

The demons that had possessed many people came out, and the paralyzed and those who could not walk were healed. Being released from bodily suffering must have been a real joy to those people and to those beside them. But if one chases only the healing of diseases while leaving out the word that conveys Christ, one may still not know the problem of sin even after the body has been healed. Following the purpose for which God gave the signs, we must listen to the word of salvation. This is because both the healthy and the sick must obtain the remission of sins and receive eternal life.

The Bible tells the result briefly: *"There was great joy in that city" (Acts 8:8)*. This joy cannot be read as the joy of healing alone, for the word of Christ was preached in that city, and later we see that the people believed that word and received water baptism. When there is no sin in the heart, a person becomes cheerful, and the Holy Spirit comes upon that heart. Therefore,

when we think of this joy, we, too, must not seek only the visible phenomena set apart on their own, but must treasure the grace of hearing and believing the salvation God accomplished for sinners and obtaining the remission of sins. The Holy Spirit gives our hearts the assurance of salvation through that word, and leads us to convey the joy we have received to other souls.

Today we, too, have the word with which to preach Christ. Let us first examine the content of the salvation we ourselves believe, and explain the baptism the Lord received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection so that the other person can understand. If that soul is released from the burden of sin and comes to rejoice in the Lord's grace, we who preach also enjoy the joy together. The joy of the city of Samaria is not a boast meant to exalt Philip's name, but evidence that God worked together with the word that conveys Christ.

Let us think again of the saints who were scattered at the beginning. In their steps there was the pain of persecution, but in their mouths there was the gospel of the water and the Spirit that gives life to other souls. Let us, too, not forget the word of salvation while looking only at our own circumstances. When we believe and share the grace Christ has already bestowed, the Lord gives the joy of the remission of sins to the people we meet now as well. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Examine what you believe rather than what you are amazed at

< Acts 8:9–13 >

"But there was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great, to whom they all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God.' And they heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time. But when they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done."

A reputation for being someone great does not guarantee the truth

The people of Samaria had long been astonished at Simon's sorcery and regarded him as someone great. But when Philip

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preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, they believed that word and received water baptism, and Simon also was baptized and followed Philip around. Yet what Simon was amazed at was the signs and great miracles that were being done. As we read this word, we must examine what we believe rather than what we are amazed at. For having one's heart captivated by a man's power and receiving in one's heart the salvation the Savior accomplished are not the same thing. That salvation is what Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all through receiving baptism from John, by shedding His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and by rising again from death.

"There was a certain man called Simon, who previously practiced sorcery in the city and astonished the people of Samaria, claiming that he was someone great" (Acts 8:9). Simon astonished the people and called himself someone great. The people accepted the name he had exalted with his own mouth and began to give heed to him. From the record that they followed him from the least to the greatest, we can see that his influence did not stay with only some of the people. But the fact that many people followed him is no evidence that what he proclaimed came from God.

Look at what the people called him. *"They all gave heed, from the least to the greatest, saying, 'This man is the great power of God'" (Acts 8:10)*. This was what the people said of Simon, not a declaration that God had acknowledged Simon as such. Simon practiced sorcery, and the people followed him because they had long been astonished at his sorceries. The experience of having seen astonishing things took the place of a right knowledge of God. If we, too, accept even everything a person says as if it were the word of God, only because he does

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special things, we may repeat the judgment of the people who followed Simon.

The Bible reveals the reason the people followed him as follows: *"They heeded him because he had astonished them with his sorceries for a long time" (Acts 8:11)*. The longer the time one has grown accustomed to following, the harder it can be to recognize what is wrong. This is because, having already acknowledged someone as a great man, one easily assumes that his words must also be right and stops examining the truth again. But right faith before God does not depend on the length of one's memory of having been astonished. We must examine what that person preaches and whether its content agrees with the word of the remission of sins.

Today we, too, have a heart that regards people as great. When we see someone speak well or solve difficult problems, we come to want to rely on him. There is no need to deny the fact that we have received such help, but a person's talent cannot remit sin or give eternal life. For a soul that needs salvation, knowing how Jesus Christ bore our sins comes first. Therefore, so that admiration for people does not obscure the hearing of the Savior's word, we must bring our hearts before the word of God.

The kingdom of God and Jesus Christ, toward which the people's faith was directed

"When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized" (Acts 8:12). What Philip preached was different from the things by which Simon had made himself appear great. He preached the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, and the people believed that

preaching. This is the passage where the eyes shift from a power that astonishes people to a faith that hears the word. When we speak of salvation, too, we must not ask only whom one follows, but examine whether that heart is receiving the salvation Jesus Christ accomplished.

Contained in the name of Jesus Christ is the fact that our sins were passed on to Jesus. Jesus is not one among the powerful of this world who has greater power; He is God, who came to save sinners, and He is our Savior. The Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist, and since He bore all the sins a person commits throughout his lifetime, the sins of each one of us are included among them. Because of that sin, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the judgment for sin that we were to receive, and He rose again from death and became the living Savior.

What we believe in within the gospel of the water and the Spirit is the salvation that the Lord actually accomplished in this way. It is not judging the remission of sins by what kind of power my heart has felt, but believing in the Savior who bore my sin and was judged. When a person who could not come to God because of sin accepts the word that the Lord has remitted that sin, he comes to rely on the Lord's righteousness instead of his own works. The Holy Spirit comes as a gift upon the heart that has believed that word and received the remission of sins; it is not the remission of sins separately and the Holy Spirit separately, but receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift at the same time as receiving the remission of sins. The grace of becoming children of God does not come from possessing human power.

The record that the men and women who believed received water baptism must also be read in that order. They believed Philip's preaching, and they expressed that faith through water

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baptism. The baptism we have received does not wash away sin by the water itself. We believe in the salvation in which Jesus had our sins passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of those sins, and rose again from death, and we confess that faith through water baptism. When we distinguish between the baptism Jesus received from John in order to have sin passed on to Him and the water baptism a believer receives while confessing that salvation, we can escape the misunderstanding of entrusting salvation to an outwardly performed rite.

What was it that Simon was amazed at as he followed along

"Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done" (Acts 8:13). Simon also believed and received water baptism, and he followed Philip around wholeheartedly. Outwardly he did the same things as the others, but at the end of this record it says that he was amazed, seeing the signs and great miracles. When we see that later he tried to obtain with money the power to make people receive the Holy Spirit, it becomes clearer where Simon's interest was directed. Rather than receiving in his heart the remission of sins that the Savior gives, he wanted to have that power himself.

If we read Simon's case merely as someone else's fault, we fail to examine ourselves. We, too, can have the desire to be recognized by others through our life of faith, or to become someone more special than other people. Even while hearing the word, we set our interest on what we can gain to become great, rather than on how the Lord saved us. Then, even while being in

the church together and imitating what the saints do, we may neglect the very thing that matters—accepting the gospel of the water and the Spirit as our own salvation.

What is needed at this point is not a stronger amazement. We must acknowledge what we have been relying on and return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit. We must examine whether we believe the word that our sins were passed on to Jesus, and whether we accept that the Lord received our judgment in our place on the Cross. If the salvation the Lord accomplished through the baptism He received from John, His shedding of blood on the Cross, and His resurrection is true life to me, I cannot treat the Lord as a means of exalting my own name. From a heart that has received the grace of salvation comes gratitude toward the Savior rather than boasting that tries to make oneself appear great.

Also, we must not look back on an act done as a sign of faith and feel secure in that act itself. When we remember having received water baptism, what matters is not only the rite performed at that time but the salvation we still believe in now. Because the Lord has already borne all sins, the assurance of the remission of sins is not something that is made anew each time our zeal increases or decreases. When we confirm that fact through the word and share our faith together with the church, even a heart that was shaken by people's evaluations comes to rely on the righteousness the Lord has given.

The people of Samaria looked at Simon and called him someone great, but in the word Philip preached they heard of the Christ who saved sinners. Let us, too, not make whose power we were amazed at the basis of our faith. Let us turn from the heart that sought power to make ourselves great, and believe in Jesus, who bore all sins and was judged in our place. What we must examine is not what we were amazed at but what we believe,

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and a person who has received in his heart the salvation the Lord has bestowed does not try to make himself appear great but comes to give thanks to the Savior who remitted his sins. ✉

Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

What does the Bible record about receiving the Holy Spirit and the gifts of the Holy Spirit

< Acts 8:14–24 >

"Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them, who, when they had come down, prayed for them that they might receive the Holy Spirit. For as yet He had fallen upon none of them. They had only been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. Then they laid hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit. And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.' Then Simon answered and said, 'Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.'"

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The two apostles who went down to Samaria and Simon the sorcerer

In this age, we must carry out a reformation of faith in our hearts. Only then can we live on. Then how should we carry out this reformation? Through this word, I intend to share, just as it is recorded in the Bible, how receiving the Holy Spirit differs from receiving the gifts of the Holy Spirit.

Looking at Acts chapter 8, when the Apostle Paul was Saul, he persecuted those who believed in Jesus, and he gave his consent to the seizing and killing of Deacon Stephen, joining forces with the others and being present at the killing. Paul's former name was Saul, and when he was Saul he greatly persecuted those who believed in Jesus. So people were afraid and went about avoiding him.

In the city of Samaria there was a man named Simon, who was skilled in sorcery. So the people liked him and were astonished and praised him, saying that this man was someone great; but when Philip went there and preached the gospel, it says, *"When they believed Philip as he preached the things concerning the kingdom of God and the name of Jesus Christ, both men and women were baptized. Then Simon himself also believed; and when he was baptized he continued with Philip, and was amazed, seeing the miracles and signs which were done" (Acts 8:12–13).*

Now let us look at the passage that was read. It says, *"When the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God, they sent Peter and John to them" (Acts 8:14)*. Since the people of Samaria had received the word of God but seemed not yet to know about the Holy Spirit, they dispatched Peter and John there. So when the two apostles met

those who believed in Jesus, laid their hands on their heads, and prayed, they came to receive the Holy Spirit.

The people were astonished, and Simon the sorcerer, seeing this, found it utterly marvelous. Saying that he too would believe in Jesus, he followed along with all his might, and when he saw people receiving the Holy Spirit, he offered money, asking them to pour out power on him as well, so that when he laid hands on people they would be able to receive the Holy Spirit. But Peter and John looked at him and rebuked him. They said, *"You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God" (Acts 8:21)* and *"I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity" (Acts 8:23)*. The point is that Simon, seeing people believe in Jesus and be baptized, followed suit himself. But what this man wanted, when he saw people receive the Holy Spirit as Peter and John laid hands on them, was that he too be given such power—that he too be enabled to do that—since such a thing cannot be done by sorcery. But it ended with him only getting a thorough rebuke.

Where did the teaching that one receives the Holy Spirit through the laying on of hands come from

The four Gospels are a record of what happened in the time when Jesus was with His disciples. Next, the Book of Acts is a record of how, after Jesus died, rose again, and ascended into heaven, the disciples of Jesus did the work of the Holy Spirit together with the Holy Spirit and preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and of how the power of the Holy Spirit was manifested.

In the Book of Acts, the land of Samaria also accepted the gospel of God, and so Peter and John were sent, and when they

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laid hands on the believers the Holy Spirit came upon them—this is what the word says. Seeing this, people say that if one believes in Jesus and has hands laid on his head and oil put on his head, the gifts of the Holy Spirit come upon him. Speaking in tongues, healing the sick, teaching—they say that various gifts appear as the evidence that one has received the Holy Spirit. That I teach well is also a gift God has given, and serving the gospel well, doing acts of service, preaching well and understanding the word of the Bible well—such things are all gifts, too.

Now, each denomination—and especially the Catholic Church—speaks of the seven sacraments; saying that if one keeps and follows the seven sacraments well, one can lead a life of faith safely and well and it is of much help, they have established seven sacraments and teach people to live their lives of faith by them.

The second one performed among them is called confirmation. Confirmation means that it makes one's faith firm. What is it that makes faith firm? The first is baptism. They say that when one is baptized on the grounds of believing in Jesus, he becomes a formal church member and a saint. The second is confirmation; they have put into their doctrine that in order to make one's faith firm one must receive the Holy Spirit, and that one comes to receive the Holy Spirit when a priest or pastor lays both hands on his head. That is the second sacrament. So they say that for a saint's faith to become firm he must receive the Holy Spirit, and that to do so he must receive the laying on of hands.

Citing this word here—that just as those who believed in Jesus in the region of Samaria received the Holy Spirit when Peter and John laid hands on them, so it must be done—they say that it is not enough just to believe in Jesus, that one must be

anointed with oil and receive the laying on of hands in order to receive the Holy Spirit, and that by doing so one's faith becomes firm. That is confirmation, the second sacrament. But the point is that countless people are going wrong because of this confirmation.

The Catholic Church has defined confirmation as making one's faith firm by laying on hands and anointing with oil and praying so that one may receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit; from whom does one receive this? Since it is Catholic, one must receive it from a priest. When one receives baptism, the first sacrament, he is recognized as a formal church member, and then, when he receives confirmation—being anointed with oil and receiving the laying on of hands—his faith becomes firm, they say. They say that when oil is put on one's head and hands are placed on his head and prayer is offered for him, what was in the one laying on hands passes to him and he receives the fullness of the Holy Spirit; that receiving confirmation is having hands laid on one so that one may receive the Holy Spirit, in order to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit—tongues, serving, acts of service, teaching, and the like—and do service within the church; and that this is confirmation.

One receives the Holy Spirit as a gift at the same time as receiving the remission of sins

Because of this there are many problems. Then does Protestant Christianity not do that? It is exactly the same. Only the method differs slightly from what the Catholic Church does; they do it for exactly the same purpose. Today, people like us who believe in Jesus call the faith that believes that Jesus was born on this earth, received baptism from John when He turned

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thirty, had the sin of the world transferred onto His body, died on the Cross, and rose again to become our Savior, the faith of the saved. And then, both the Catholic Church and Protestantism teach receiving the Holy Spirit separately after that. From this, many problems arise.

Dear fellow believers, when we truly receive the remission of sins in our hearts through the faith that believes that the Lord has saved us through the baptism Jesus received and the Cross, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts. It is absolutely not the case that the Holy Spirit comes only when one specially receives prayer with the laying on of hands. The people who made the seven sacraments in the Catholic Church, without being born again, looked at the Bible only outwardly and made a doctrine saying that to receive the Holy Spirit one must receive the laying on of hands, that one must receive the Holy Spirit through a ceremony of the laying on of hands. That is what confirmation is. It is the same in Protestant Christianity. They say that one must believe in Jesus and then receive the Holy Spirit separately, and so one must go pray on a mountain or go to a meeting for spiritual gifts and receive the laying on of hands from someone or other in order to receive the Holy Spirit; but what I am saying is that all of this is deceiving people.

Dear fellow believers, while we were sinners, we came to know that we were wrong, and we receive the remission of sins by believing that Jesus Christ had the sin of the world transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John, died on the Cross, and rose again to save us. At the same time as we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Receiving the Holy Spirit as a gift is not something received by specially receiving the laying on of hands; it is received when I accept Jesus as my Savior, and the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross as my salvation, and I receive the

remission of sins by faith—and it says that the Holy Spirit is a gift. A gift is given without cost. It is given without price. It is given without the laying on of hands.

Then why is it recorded that way in the Book of Acts? These people in the Book of Acts knew nothing. Because they were Samaritans, they did not know Jesus well either; the apostles knew well, but the believers did not. That is why it is recorded that way here. Where even we born-again people get confused is this: various doubts arise—"My life of faith is not going well"; "Why can I not follow the Lord with all my heart? Is this not because there is a problem with me? I was saved by believing, but could it be that this is happening because I have not received the Holy Spirit?"—the point is that one can think in this way. So, to receive the Holy Spirit separately, they go to someone and present their heads, thinking that if they go to people who are said to have the gift of healing and have hands laid on their heads they will receive the Holy Spirit; but if a born-again person does this, he is making a big mistake.

A person who has not received the remission of sins has sin in his heart, and in that person's heart there is also an evil spirit. And if one presents his head to receive the laying on of hands from such a person, the evil spirit comes over to him. Of course, because we are born-again people, it cannot come over to us and harm us. The devil cannot harm the people of God as he pleases. Because the Holy Spirit is present, the Holy Spirit firmly refuses it and does not let it lay a hand on us recklessly. But when even those who believe in Jesus find that their life of faith is not working and things are not going well, they think, "Is it because I have not received the Holy Spirit? I was told to be filled with the Holy Spirit; have I not received the fullness of the Holy Spirit?"—and so the point is that they fall into a trap.

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The Holy Spirit, who came as promised, sets a seal on the heart

Since Acts chapter 2 says that they were filled with the Holy Spirit and did the work, there are people who think that the Holy Spirit must be received separately. They have indeed read the Bible, but they have no understanding. God first sent Jesus, transferred our sins onto Jesus' body through the baptism He received from John, and had Him pay the price of our sins in full by being crucified on the Cross and become our Savior. Thus He caused us to be saved from sin and caused us to believe that fact. And after that, God promised them that if they were gathered together on the fiftieth day after Jesus rose again, He would pour out the Holy Spirit on them collectively.

God gave the Holy Spirit individually to the prophets or to people of faith like David, but the point is that, coming into the New Testament age, He promised those who believed in Jesus and the disciples of Jesus that the Holy Spirit would descend in fullness on this earth and that they would overflow with His fullness. He promised to pour out the Holy Spirit on the fiftieth day. That is why it is called Pentecost. On the fiftieth day after He died on the Cross and came back to life—the day that makes one month and twenty days—because it was a promise, God kept His promise.

So the disciples were filled with the Holy Spirit and preached the gospel, and from then on, when we accept in our hearts Jesus as our Savior—that He received baptism and shed His blood on the Cross for us—we become the people of God. Then we receive the Holy Spirit as a gift. Exactly as the Holy Spirit came on the Day of Pentecost, the moment you hear the word of the gospel and believe the fact that Jesus has become our Savior, you receive the remission of sins, and at the same time as you

receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts and sets a seal on our hearts—that is the point. He stamps His seal, saying, "You are Mine." And the Holy Spirit comes and dwells there. Because of this, from then on one's life of faith changes. Even without being specially taught, when one hears the word of God, one gains understanding—"Ah, this is what this word is talking about"—and when the church does something, one changes, realizing, "Ah, it is doing this for the gospel."

The churches that failed to return to the early church

Now, in A.D. 325 the Catholics proclaimed the Nicene Creed and established the church called the Catholic Church. They made use of Christianity, but in the end they did not accept Christianity as it was; they transformed it into Catholicism and accepted that. Syncretism—that is, "We will believe in Jesus and also believe in all the religions we have believed in until now; all the religions the Roman people believe in are lumped together into one so that anyone can believe; that is the Catholic Church"—and so they made a different denomination. Christianity is the company of those who follow Jesus, whereas Catholicism, through syncretism, became a mixed religion in which all religions gathered under the name of Jesus, believing in Jesus and also believing in other religions—this is what the word syncretism means.

"Catholic" means the most universal church, but the early church was a very distinctive church. The point is that it planted in us this distinctive faith: believing in that Jesus, who came to save sinners, received baptism from John in order to bear the sin

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of sinners, was crucified and died on the Cross, rose again, and became our Savior, it held that the Father, the Holy Spirit, and Jesus alone are our God, and that the miscellaneous gods believed in by the other religions of this world are not God. But the Catholic Church, while it did believe in Christianity, decided to follow only the outward form. So they reasoned: when Peter and John laid on hands, people received the Holy Spirit; then a sacrament for receiving the Holy Spirit after baptism must be established; and so they called praying while putting oil on the head a sacrament, a holy act.

What the Reformers who rebelled against the Catholic Church and came out of it made is today's Protestantism. They were rebels, those who believed in a corrected way, but they failed to correct things properly. They failed to return to the early church. Accepting the seven sacraments of the Catholic Church, they reasoned: there are seven, but only two are of any use; still, these are worth using; for us to make something new is close to impossible—and so, modeling themselves on it, they do what they do today. So today in Protestantism, too, it has become the official formula that if one goes to a gift rally and receives prayer with the laying on of hands from people who claim to have been clothed with the fullness of the Holy Spirit, one receives the Holy Spirit.

What one claims to have received through the laying on of hands and tongues is not the Holy Spirit

But if one does that, does one's life of faith work? Since the Holy Spirit is given as a gift, He is given as a gift at the same time as salvation when one believes; but because this has been

corrupted, when people who claim to have power pray with the laying on of hands and people fall backward or receive tongues, such things happen because an evil spirit has gone into them. When an evil spirit seizes a person, his body shakes with tremors; he collapses in what they call a trance and sometimes does not wake up all day; and then, when he gets up, he speaks unintelligible words and himself prays with the laying on of hands on other people's heads. If one receives the laying on of hands from such a person, that spirit also comes over along with it.

Today there are churches where such things are rampant. Calling it tongues that anyone can receive, they say that if one receives prayer with the laying on of hands, one receives the Holy Spirit. Then is that real? It is fake. Then have I tried it? I have. I did not receive prayer with the laying on of hands from anyone; I had gone out to pray at the dawn prayer meeting, and as I was praying, my tongue suddenly twisted up. As I was thinking, "Huh, what is happening to me?" my tongue twisted, and though I am a person who cannot really speak English, I was confessing the sins I had committed very fluently in English. Is that not embarrassing? I knew everything I was saying. People who speak in tongues these days do not know what they are saying. Being embarrassed, I tried several times to stop, but it would not stop, and only on the third try did I barely manage to stop. That was not the Holy Spirit; it was an evil spirit that had come upon me as if it were the Holy Spirit.

From then on, power arose within me. So when I saw a sick person, it seemed that if I just prayed once with the laying on of hands, the sickness would be healed, and I was afraid of no problem whatsoever. For example, I am a person who is very shy when standing in front of people, but after that happened, I became someone who would go up to a high place before an

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audience holding just a Bible, say, “Today I will introduce Jesus Christ to you,” and preach about the reason why we must believe in Jesus, saying that such-and-such a word is in such-and-such a place in the Bible. But had the sin in my heart disappeared? No. Just as the man named Simon who practiced sorcery tried to do the same and ended up being rebuked, the point is that demons also believe in God and do the very same things. They speak in tongues and cast out demons, too.

But ten years after I believed in Jesus, through the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, as I was reading the word of Matthew chapter 3, I realized, “So this is how Jesus removed my sin,” and the sin in my heart disappeared, I became a person who preaches the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and wherever I looked in the word of the Bible I came to know what that word was saying—that is the point. The Holy Spirit came upon me, and all kinds of gifts came, too. But for a person who has not received the remission of sins in his heart, a person who has sin in his heart, even if he claims to have received the Holy Spirit and speaks in tongues, the point is that it is not the Spirit of God but an evil spirit.

So we must carry out a reformation in our hearts. We must know properly. Without knowing properly, even if today one believes in Jesus, believes in Catholicism, claims, “I believe in Jesus as my Savior,” and claims to have received the Holy Spirit by receiving the laying on of hands and prayer, one has not truly received the Holy Spirit. The point is that only one who has received the remission of sins becomes a person who has received the Holy Spirit as a gift.

"Be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit"

If I speak only with words it is not trustworthy, but the Bible says, *"Peter said to them, '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)*. The point is that because the people of Israel did not know that the Messiah God had sent was Jesus, because they did not know that He was the Savior, they said to crucify Him and killed Him. When Peter taught them all this as he preached, and they were cut to the heart and in distress, saying, *"Men and brethren, what shall we do?" (Acts 2:37)*, Peter 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)*.

He is saying: why Jesus received baptism from John and had your sins transferred to Him, and why He was put to death—He is the One who, in order to save you from sin, had your sins transferred to Him and received the judgment to pay the price of your sins, and so became your Savior; receive the remission of sins in your hearts by believing this—*"and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)*. It is a gift, he says. A gift is not something I receive because I have done something; it is received for free. It is received freely. The other party simply gives it, and all I have to do is simply receive it—that is a gift. This is what the apostles' faith was like. Receiving the Holy Spirit is not a matter of "I received Him because I received the laying on of hands"; rather, they went separately to those who did not know this and gave them understanding. The point is that they gave them understanding, saying: when Jesus received

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baptism from John, He bore all our sins and had all the sin of the world transferred to Him, and He shed His blood on the Cross to pay the price of our sins and became our Savior; we receive the remission of sins by faith; therefore we are righteous; then the Holy Spirit is in your hearts; He is in your hearts, but you do not know it now.

Let us read the word that follows. *"The promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39)*. The point is that this word was spoken to me and to you today. It was not received as a gift only in the time of the early church; the gospel was spread through them, so that we read the word of God and receive the remission of sins, and in the same way for those who will believe in Jesus in the future: when we believe that Jesus had our sins transferred onto His body through the baptism He received from John, was crucified and died on the Cross, and rose again from death to become our Savior, we come to receive the Holy Spirit as a gift in our hearts at the same time as we receive the remission of sins. For those who will come after us, too, it says in the same way that it is to *"as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39)*. It comes upon us, too, in the same way. When we believe in the righteousness of Jesus Christ and receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes upon our hearts.

The salvation shown through baptism

"With many other words he testified and exhorted them, saying, 'Be saved from this perverse generation'" (Acts 2:40). A perverse generation—dear fellow believers, this world is a perverse world. It is a world that will perish. It is a very filthy world, and now is the age of demons. When an evil spirit enters

a person, he comes to act exactly like that evil spirit, exercise the same power, and behave strangely. That is why it says to be saved from this perverse generation. It said to be saved from the world of the devil, from the world of curses, from our hideous and contradictory lives.

"Those who gladly received his word were baptized; and that day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41). Dear fellow believers, salvation is shown precisely through baptism. Jesus, becoming our Savior, received baptism from John and thereby had the sin of the world transferred onto His body, was crucified and died on the Cross in our place, rose again, and saved us. Those who are not born again say that He saved us not by baptism but by the Cross. But to speak of baptism is to speak of both. Because Jesus received baptism, because He had sin transferred to Him, He is the One who was crucified and died on the Cross, paid the price, and became our Savior. If instead He had only had sin transferred to Him and had not been crucified and died on the Cross in our place, Jesus could not be our Savior. But because Jesus did both, He saved us by the water, the blood, and the Spirit. The point is that He, as God, received baptism from John and had all our sins transferred onto His own body, paid the price for our sins on the Cross—paying the price of death by pouring out His blood and dying Himself—and rose again from death and saved us.

So those who believe receive baptism. Some of you may not yet have received baptism. Even so, you have received baptism by faith. And when circumstances allow, you can receive baptism. It says, *"That day about three thousand souls were added to them" (Acts 2:41)*. The apostles preached the gospel, and in a single day three thousand people believed and received the remission of sins; the three thousand were the first. *"They continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in*

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the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42). It is saying that they all gathered together and lived a cooperative life.

The remission of sins and the Holy Spirit are not received separately

But since they say that they have received the remission of sins by believing only in the blood of Jesus' Cross, and that afterward receiving the Holy Spirit must also be done separately through the laying on of hands and the fullness of the Holy Spirit must also be received separately, the point is that both the Catholic Church and the Protestant churches have now become confused in this way. That is why there are so many people today who go to fasting prayer houses. There are also a great many people who receive the laying on of hands in order to receive the Holy Spirit. But all those things they claim to have received as the Holy Spirit in that way are not the Holy Spirit. It is not that it is not the Holy Spirit just because we say so; the point is that they themselves know it. Saying, "Huh, I am strange; I have become a strange person; I am acting strangely," they themselves do not really know what they are doing. Having received that, does it last long? It does not last long. The point is that as time passes, it disappears.

For a person who has been saved and at the same time received as a gift the Holy Spirit whom God has given, the Holy Spirit dwells in our hearts until the day Jesus comes, until the day we go before Jesus. So it is an amazing salvation. That is why you and I must know this fact. One thing we know clearly is that our becoming people who have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit comes through the faith that believes that our Lord Jesus Christ received baptism from John

the Baptist, had the sin of the world transferred onto His body, and was crucified on the Cross and shed His blood, and so became our Savior. Otherwise, believing in Jesus separately, claiming to have been saved by believing in Jesus, and receiving the Holy Spirit separately—all such things are lies. What the apostles of the early church are saying here is what is accurate. That is why the Bible records even such things as these.

But today, the great majority of those who believe in Jesus throughout the world say that they have been saved by believing in the blood of the Cross, and second, that they have received the Holy Spirit by receiving prayer with the laying on of hands. This is a worldly religion. Receiving the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit as a bonus, receiving them as one set, as when you receive one and are given one more—that is the reckoning God speaks of, and the Holy Spirit is received as a gift. But receiving them not as one set but separately, believing as if eating the soup separately and the rice separately—that is false. It is 100 percent false. So a person today who claims to believe in Jesus yet speaks only of the Cross, a person who does not know what baptism is or what meaning is hidden in it, is believing in one of the many religions of the world. The person who believes that way is a religious person of the world, a person no different from those who believe in other religions.

That is how we must know it. So we must be carrying out a reformation in our hearts. The word is telling us that we must become those who know—"Ah, believing this way is right; this is the truth"—what the true truth is and what is untruth, hold firmly to the word in our hearts and believe, become the people of God, live by faith, and then meet the Lord. Let us live with true faith. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

Those who tried to buy the Holy Spirit with money

< Acts 8:18–24 >

"And when Simon saw that through the laying on of the apostles' hands the Holy Spirit was given, he offered them money, saying, 'Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit.' But Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity.' Then Simon answered and said, 'Pray to the Lord for me, that none of the things which you have spoken may come upon me.'"

What Simon sought and Peter's rebuke

This word about Simon is an important word for rightly understanding the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Among the records concerning the Holy Spirit that appear in the Book of Acts, this is the only negative lesson that deals separately and at such length with a person who sought the Holy Spirit wrongly.

Did Simon seek the Holy Spirit in order to have greater spiritual power? And was he prepared to pay a costly sacrifice

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in order to obtain that power? But he could not escape the consequences that such an outward show of spiritual pursuit produces.

First, it says, *"Peter said to him, 'Your money perish with you, because you thought that the gift of God could be purchased with money! You have neither part nor portion in this matter, for your heart is not right in the sight of God. Repent therefore of this your wickedness, and pray God if perhaps the thought of your heart may be forgiven you. For I see that you are poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity'" (Acts 8:20–23)*. Simon's heart was moved when he saw the gifts of the Holy Spirit appear as the apostles laid on hands. So he wished to have this power, and asked that this power be given to him. He said, *"Give me this power also, that anyone on whom I lay hands may receive the Holy Spirit" (Acts 8:19)*. This word shows what a dangerous desire this motive and the desire that accompanies it are. In the matter of receiving the Holy Spirit, pursuing the Holy Spirit because the power of the Holy Spirit looks attractive is not only wrong but is evidence of a faith that is ignorant of the Holy Spirit.

Second, Simon tried to pay a considerable price in order to receive the gifts of the Holy Spirit. Peter was angry not only because Simon had foolishly offered money, but because he had treated the truth with insolence, thinking that the gift of God could be obtained by human means. What Simon tried to obtain by paying a price was *"the gift of God" (Acts 8:20)*. When Simon asked for the power of the Holy Spirit for himself, he was separated from God, yet he thought that he was seeking a better gift. He did so because he regarded the gift itself as the Holy Spirit.

If the Spirit of God could be obtained not by faith but by paying some price, the promise of God would become a mere reward, and then it would be neither a gift nor something of God.

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What Peter rebuked was the desire to possess the Spirit of God through costly means. That is the very heart that was said to be *"poisoned by bitterness and bound by iniquity" (Acts 8:23)*. Rather than praying to be given the Holy Spirit, one should receive in one's heart the salvation Jesus accomplished. Wrong beliefs or a wrong faith need to be repented of.

In fact, there is no great distance between sorcery and human desire. Both try to obtain the supernatural Holy Spirit apart from faith, so that heart can only be an act that lies outside the truth. Such things have appeared in the form of works and have always troubled the truth. The Holy Spirit, as the promise of the Father, is given only by God, and a person merely receives the Holy Spirit as a gift through the faith that believes that the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and the Cross are his own salvation.

Wrong perceptions about receiving the Holy Spirit

People these days think that the Holy Spirit, who is the gift of God, is received by praying—that one must shake a tree that is standing still and pray hard in order to receive the Holy Spirit—and so they pray at the top of their lungs. They wrongly think that they receive the Holy Spirit only by doing all-night prayers, fasting prayers, and prayers of repentance. And some wrongly think that speaking in tongues is the evidence of having received the Holy Spirit. But the Holy Spirit does not come as a gift because a person prays, nor has the Holy Spirit come because one speaks in tongues. People ask why not, since in the Bible, in the time of the early church, too, people received the Holy Spirit and spoke in tongues. But in the time of the early church, because they received the remission of sins by believing

in the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, they received the Holy Spirit as a gift through the promise of God. And they received tongues as well, because it was a gift the Holy Spirit gave. But we must not forget that those tongues were for testifying of the gospel.

Why do born-again people today not speak in tongues? You must know this well. Now that the world has every language, must one necessarily speak in tongues? The Apostle Paul said, *"In the church I would rather speak five words with my understanding, that I may teach others also, than ten thousand words in a tongue" (1 Corinthians 14:19)*. I am a person who spoke in tongues a great deal. But now I know that the word I pray and teach word by word, having understood the word, is a more precious lesson than ten thousand words in a tongue. Could Peter have preached the gospel in Greek or in the languages of other nations, other than Hebrew? He could not. He was a seaman; when would he have learned them? Because Peter could not speak the languages of each nation, he used tongues in order to spread the gospel to the people who had come from each nation, and the point is that God did the interpreting. So we can see that tongues were needed in order to spread the gospel. And in the time of the early church, because people would not believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of sinners unless they were shown tongues, healings, signs, and miracles, God permitted signs, tongues, and miracles.

When a sinner hears the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believes in the salvation by which the Lord has remitted his sins through the gospel of the water and the Spirit, he receives the Holy Spirit as a gift. People of this age receive the remission of sins through believing the word of God. But many people even now think that they receive their remission of sins separately and the Holy Spirit separately; but that is not so.

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For the Holy Spirit can dwell only in the heart of a person who has received the remission of sins.

Those who have received the remission of sins have the Holy Spirit

Is it not written in the Bible, *"Do not quench the Spirit. Do not despise prophecies" (1 Thessalonians 5:19–20)*? When a person in whom the Holy Spirit dwells chases after the world and chases after sin, the Holy Spirit groans. The Holy Spirit gives us understanding when we hear the word and also helps us when we preach the word of God. Therefore, a person who has the Holy Spirit is a person who has no sin. That is why the word calls those who have received the remission of sins the people of God. God said that He gives good things to His children. That is none other than the Holy Spirit. After Jesus rose again and ascended, what did He send down as a gift on the Day of Pentecost? He sent down the Holy Spirit. If today, too, Pentecost came as it did then and one received the Holy Spirit whenever that day arrived, would it not be enough just to wait for that day? But the Lord has given everyone the same opportunity in this age as well. God the Father has given the Holy Spirit, the gift of God, as a gift to those who believe in the gospel of being born again of water and the Spirit. So those who have received the remission of sins have the Holy Spirit in their hearts. But those who have sin in their hearts and call themselves righteous only in words do not have the Holy Spirit. That is because they have not received as a gift the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit that God gives. The Holy Spirit comes upon those who have received the remission of sins in their hearts, and those who have

the Holy Spirit know clearly about the Spirit of God. But those who do not have Him have nothing to say about the Holy Spirit.

Because those who claim to be carrying on a Holy Spirit movement loudly put forward only noise and emotion, people who do not believe in Jesus reject Jesus. The Holy Spirit comes into the heart of a person who believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and a person who has the Holy Spirit has become a child of God. Dear fellow believers, to receive the Holy Spirit, you must believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If you do not know this gospel, you cannot receive the remission of sins. If you do not believe in the real gospel, you will feel at times that you are saved and at other times that you are not.

The repentance that receives the Holy Spirit is turning to the gospel of the water and the Spirit

One who has sin in his heart is one who has not yet received the Holy Spirit. One who does not truly believe in the gospel of the water and the Spirit has neither salvation nor the Holy Spirit. The secret to receiving the Holy Spirit is to return to the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe, and then one has received the Holy Spirit. So complete repentance is not turning from the sins of one's daily life; rather, the faith that returns into the real gospel of the water and the Spirit that the Bible speaks of and believes it is the repentance that receives the Holy Spirit. Not knowing this, people these days ought to be led to the repentance that receives the Holy Spirit, but instead they do much repenting over their daily lives. They turn a little from the sins of their daily lives, but does that repentance make them receive the Holy Spirit? Therefore, we must do the repentance that receives the Holy Spirit.

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In the Gospel of John it says, *"You shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free" (John 8:32)*. Because they do not know the truth of receiving the Holy Spirit, even though they have repented over their daily lives 365 days a year, they do not receive the Holy Spirit and just sit there in the place of a sinner. Within Christianity, repentance over daily life is merely repentance over daily life; it is not the repentance that causes one to be born again. It says, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*. The repentance that receives the Holy Spirit is turning all the way to believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

As for the repentance that receives the Holy Spirit, the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received from John is true faith, and having true faith is true repentance. To receive the Holy Spirit, one must wash away all one's sins with the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and this is repentance. Peter said that one receives the remission of sins by believing in one's heart in the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross, and he said, *"And you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit" (Acts 2:38)*. I give thanks to the true God. I give thanks that He has given us the repentance that receives the Holy Spirit and the gospel of being born again, and has given the Holy Spirit as a gift into the hearts of those who believe. Jesus has delivered us from sin and given us the Holy Spirit, making us certain children of God. I give thanks before the Lord. Let us do the repentance that receives the Holy Spirit. Let us not try to receive the Spirit of God with money, with the sacrifices that human beings can make, as Simon did. ✉

Sermon 7 by Paul C. Jong

Preach the word of salvation even to a single soul on the way back

< Acts 8:25 >

“So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans.”

The apostles who together testified of the word preached in Samaria

When the road back has been decided, how much attention do we give to the people we meet on that road? When the thought that the work is finished comes first, from then on it is easy to regard only reaching the destination as important. But the two apostles who were returning from Samaria to Jerusalem preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit in many villages as well. Their steps were on the road back, but for the souls they met on that road, it became an opportunity to hear the word of salvation. This short word shows how the work entrusted to the Lord’s witnesses continues in the places where they meet people.

Let us first look at the preceding word to see why the two apostles came to Samaria. *“Now when the apostles who were at Jerusalem heard that Samaria had received the word of God,*

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they sent Peter and John to them" (Acts 8:14). The apostles who were in Jerusalem heard the news that the people of Samaria had received the word of God, and they sent Peter and John to them. They did not come because a rumor had arisen that would draw people's attention; they came for the souls who had received the word of God. Therefore, what they did before returning was also to testify of and speak the word of the Lord.

The Christ whom Philip preached and the Lord of whom the two apostles testified were not different. The salvation that Jesus accomplished by having the sin of the world, which included our sins, transferred to Him once and for all when He received baptism from John, by shedding His blood on the Cross to pay the price of that sin, and by rising again from death—this is what Philip preached and what the apostles also testified of. If the one who preached the word first and the ones who came later each exalt their own names, the hearts of the listeners will be divided, but the apostles testified of the word of the same Lord. Helping a saved soul does not consist in making more people take our side, but in causing that heart to believe clearly in the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished. If, while teaching the word, we leave behind only a good feeling toward a person, we have not sufficiently preached the Savior on whom that soul must actually rely.

Before this passage, the matter of Simon, who tried to obtain the gift of the Holy Spirit with money, is recorded. The apostles who rebuked such a thought spoke the word before returning, and preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit on the way back as well. What a person's heart needs is not to buy the authority of the apostles and make it one's own, but to hear and believe the word of salvation that God has given. Since the fact that the Holy Spirit dwells with a heart that has received the

remission of sins also cannot be known apart from that word, the one who serves souls must rightly testify of the basis of salvation.

The testimony of salvation that is needed even on the way back

"So when they had testified and preached the word of the Lord, they returned to Jerusalem, preaching the gospel in many villages of the Samaritans" (Acts 8:25). The apostles, having finished the work entrusted to them in Samaria, preached the word of salvation even as they passed through many villages. It was not only where a great crowd had gathered that the word of the Lord needed to be testified of. The people living in the villages also needed the remission of sins, and those souls, too, had to hear of the salvation that Jesus Christ accomplished. Even if the number of people or the place of meeting changes, the fact that they are souls in need of salvation does not change.

After He rose again, the Lord said to His disciples, *"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)*. Samaria is a place the Lord spoke of as a place where the disciples would be witnesses. Therefore, their preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit in many villages was not starting some new undertaking by their own zeal alone, but continuing the work of witnesses that the Lord had entrusted to them. A person with whom the Holy Spirit dwells comes to testify of how the Lord saved sinners, rather than looking for something to say to boast of his own great experiences.

What we preach must also be this salvation. When Jesus received baptism from John the Baptist, He had the sin of the

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world transferred to Him once and for all. Because of that sin, the Lord shed His blood and died on the Cross, receiving in our place the judgment for sin that we were to receive, and He rose again from the dead and gave us life. Since He bore not just a few of the sins a person commits while living, but all sins from beginning to end, we, too, must believe that our own sins were included in that sin. When we hear this gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe it in our hearts, we receive the remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit as a gift.

If, while preaching this salvation, we only say that good things will happen if one believes in Jesus, it does not become clear to a sinner's heart what it should rely on. What a person who collapses every time he recalls his own faults needs is not comfort that makes him forget his faults for a moment, but the word that the Lord bore even that sin with the baptism He received from John and was judged on the Cross. Only when we speak of what the risen Savior accomplished, so that it can be believed, can the listener also distinguish between his own efforts and the Lord's salvation.

Set the word before the soul you meet

The apostles preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit in many villages because the souls there also needed the same word of the remission of sins. Of Philip, too, it is written later, *"Passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea" (Acts 8:40)*, so those who had received the gospel preached this word wherever they went. We, too, cannot make the response of the people we meet as we please, but the responsibility to preach, without blurring it, the content of the salvation that they are to hear and believe lies with us.

Of the saints who were scattered from Jerusalem, too, it is written, *"Therefore those who were scattered went everywhere preaching the word" (Acts 8:4)*. There were those who preached the word even in the hardship of being scattered, and now there are the apostles who preach the word even on the way back. People who were in different circumstances testified of the same Savior because the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished was true life to them themselves. A saved heart knows that other souls also need this life.

We, too, are given opportunities to share the word, whether on the road or where we sit together. At such times, we need only listen to what the other person knows and what he wonders about, and explain the Lord's salvation in keeping with his questions. If time is short, we can preach the important content of salvation first, and if he is willing to hear more, we can open the word together and share its meaning in detail. Since preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not something possible only when speaking at length before many people, we must not lightly pass by the one soul who is right before our eyes now.

Also, if there is a fellow saint preaching together with us, we can help by continuing the word he has spoken. We explain the parts that the first-time hearer has not yet understood, and help him see how the baptism the Lord received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection are connected to the remission of his sins. Then, even if the names of those who preach are many, the salvation that remains in the hearer's heart is one. Serving together so that that soul's faith reaches Jesus Christ, who delivered us from sin, is the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit entrusted to the church.

The apostles were returning to Jerusalem, but they did not pass by the souls on that road. Let us, too, look carefully at the

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people we meet at the moment we finish our work and turn back. There may be a place to speak of the Lord's salvation to a soul who had been hidden from view by our desire to reach the destination quickly. When we preach to him as well the word of life that the Lord has let us hear, the testimony of salvation continues even on the way back. ✉

Preach the word of salvation even to a single soul on the way back

Sermon 8 by Paul C. Jong

Obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit

< Acts 8:26–40 >

"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet. Then the Spirit said to Philip, 'Go near and overtake this chariot.' So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him. The place in the Scripture which he read was this: 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.' So the eunuch answered Philip and said, 'I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?' Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him. Now as they went down the road, they came to some water. And the eunuch said, 'See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?' So he commanded the chariot to stand still. And both Philip and

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the eunuch went down into the water, and he baptized him. Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing. But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea."

The Holy Spirit speaks in our hearts

When we look at this word, in the days of the early church God gave the power of the Holy Spirit, and God's servants and saints received power and spread the gospel powerfully. We can see the record of God working through His servant Philip. It says, *"Now an angel of the Lord spoke to Philip, saying, 'Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza.' This is desert. So he arose and went. And behold, a man of Ethiopia, a eunuch of great authority under Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, who had charge of all her treasury, and had come to Jerusalem to worship, was returning. And sitting in his chariot, he was reading Isaiah the prophet" (Acts 8:26–28).*

We can see that an angel of the Lord led God's servant Philip. When he went as the angel of the Lord had told him, that road was desert, and on that road a eunuch of great authority, who had charge of all the treasury of Candace the queen of the Ethiopians, had come to Jerusalem to worship and was returning. Having charge of the treasury means that he was the minister of finance.

As for this work of the Holy Spirit, I want you to know that this is how the work of God appears. God speaks to all His people. He tells them to preach the gospel. Our Lord speaks in our hearts again and again. But the point is that we do not know

that this is the guidance of the Holy Spirit and that the Holy Spirit is speaking to us, and we simply ignore it. What is called the guidance of the Holy Spirit is His stirring up in our hearts the desire to preach the gospel and stirring up the desire to live for the Lord, so we must know that this is the word the Holy Spirit speaks in our hearts.

We have these two things. We have an instinctive mind, and we have a spiritual mind. The Holy Spirit causes us to preach the gospel, causes us to go where the gospel is to be preached, leads us, causes us to save souls, and causes us to do the work of God. This is the work of the Holy Spirit.

There may be some who say: When did God ever speak to us? I have never heard anything with my ears in all my life. To Philip, an angel of the Lord said, *"Arise and go toward the south along the road which goes down from Jerusalem to Gaza" (Acts 8:26)*, but however long I have tried living a life of faith, no such voice has been heard in my ears. Our Lord is not One who speaks into our physical ears. He is One who speaks in our hearts. So we must know well the ways in which our God speaks to us. In fact, when we come to know it, the Holy Spirit has spoken to me and to you in many areas. He has caused us to do spiritual work, directed us to do this and that, stirred up the desire to preach the gospel, and spoken much. But the point is that we do not know that this is the work of the Holy Spirit, that it is God speaking to us, and we just ignore it. We must not ignore it but listen carefully.

"Do you understand what you are reading?"

The point is that Philip, since the Holy Spirit had come upon his heart and he had faith, knew that the word the Holy Spirit

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was speaking to him was the word our Lord was speaking to him, and he obeyed immediately. And he became a man of faith. In the early church, a mighty work of spreading the gospel took place through him.

Philip went as the angel of the Lord had told him. When he went, the eunuch who had charge of the treasury of Ethiopia had come to Jerusalem in his chariot, worshiped, and was on his way back to Ethiopia. While Philip was hesitating by himself, wondering whether he was being told to speak to that man, the Holy Spirit spoke to Philip. *"Go near and overtake this chariot. So Philip ran to him, and heard him reading the prophet Isaiah, and said, 'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?' And he asked Philip to come up and sit with him" (Acts 8:29–31)*. The guidance of the Holy Spirit, and the heart of a person who seeks God, are this pure and simple.

In those days, a man traveling by chariot from Jerusalem to Ethiopia would have had a certain number of guards, and that chariot would have been quite luxurious. Since he was the minister of finance of a nation, it would have been fairly luxurious. Yet what Philip said and what the Ethiopian eunuch said were equally simple. While the chariot was moving, he followed it and said, *"Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30)*. The man, from inside, said, *"How can I, unless someone guides me?" (Acts 8:31)*. An ordinary minister of finance, if asked whether he understood what he was reading, would have been offended, thinking, "I am the minister of finance of a nation; how can you say such a thing to me?" and would not have talked, but in this man's heart there was a heart thirsting for God. He was on his way back from going to Jerusalem and worshiping, but though he had gone and tried, some problem in his heart had not been resolved, so even as he

was returning, he was wondering what on earth this word meant. Then Philip appeared and asked whether he understood what he was reading. He said, "Since there is no one to guide me, how can I understand? Come up, sit here, and teach me," and so Philip went up, sat in the chariot, and taught him the word on an equal footing.

What the Holy Spirit wants most is the spread of the gospel

This is what the spiritual life is like. Obeying when the Holy Spirit stirs up a spiritual mind in us is the spiritual life. What kind of mind does the Holy Spirit stir up? When we look at the Book of Acts and at the work done in the days of the early church, we see that He brings about the work of spreading the gospel. God set His will on the spread of the gospel and stirred up hearts. He caused the twelve disciples to spread the gospel, and said, *"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20)*. The point is that the first thing was the spread of the gospel.

The work of God is nothing else. The work of God and the guidance of the Holy Spirit are not greatly different things. What the Holy Spirit demands of us most is the spread of the gospel. He wants us to preach the gospel. So I know that all of us have the teaching of the Holy Spirit and the direction of the Holy Spirit that push us from behind in our hearts to preach the gospel. However much the Holy Spirit pushes us from behind, all we need to do is go like Philip, but the point is that we do not go. We say, "Why are You pushing me?" We would say, "Tell me

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to go in words; why push me?" He pushes us because when He tells us in words, we do not go.

The point is that man is born with the nature of a young donkey. A donkey does not listen when told in words. A young donkey must be led by a ring through its nose. If it does not follow even when pulled, only when the switch is raised does it follow, having no other choice. That is how young donkeys are. A person of the Spirit follows well even without being treated that way. The Holy Spirit within us pushes us from behind, stirs up our hearts, and speaks to us. He says, "Preach the gospel. Where should you go to preach? Look carefully; if you look carefully, there is someone. If you go to the hospital, there is someone looking for Me right now. If you go and say just a few words, he will accept it. Go and see." When we say, "Oh no, I will be driven out; they will not even listen," He says, "Still, go and see. Go to the school, too, and go to the neighbor behind your house." The point is that God keeps speaking in our hearts. But we do not listen well to His word. Whatever excuse we make, we do not listen. While we waver over whether to go or not, if some matter of the flesh comes up, that desire vanishes completely. We say, "When did I ever talk with the Lord?" There is much of this in us. We must admit that there is much of this in us, and not only admit it but live the spiritual life. The spiritual life is the work of preaching the gospel. We ourselves hesitate awkwardly when we preach the gospel. Even so, I believe that preaching the gospel is the spiritual life and spiritual work.

The gospel preached beginning at this Scripture

When we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, people receive the remission of sins. Philip asked the Ethiopian eunuch whether he understood what he was reading, and he, saying that he could not understand since there was no one to guide him, had Philip get up into the chariot. Just then, the Ethiopian eunuch happened to be reading the word of Isaiah chapter 53. *"The place in the Scripture which he read was this: 'He was led as a sheep to the slaughter; And as a lamb before its shearer is silent, So He opened not His mouth. In His humiliation His justice was taken away, And who will declare His generation? For His life is taken from the earth.' So the eunuch answered Philip and said, 'I ask you, of whom does the prophet say this, of himself or of some other man?' Then Philip opened his mouth, and beginning at this Scripture, preached Jesus to him" (Acts 8:32–35)*. The point is that Philip preached the gospel.

The Ethiopian eunuch was confused as to whether this word was speaking of the prophet Isaiah or of God Himself. Whether this was the word of the author of the Scripture or the word of our Lord, and who was speaking to whom—it was very hard to distinguish. So the Ethiopian eunuch asked of whom this was said. Philip, beginning from here, said that this word was a word that had prophesied that Jesus would come to this earth, receive baptism from John, have all sins transferred to Him, and give up His own life. Beginning from this part, he preached the gospel all the way through the account of slaughtering the sheep in the Old Testament and, in the New Testament, Jesus receiving baptism from John in the Jordan River, dying on the Cross, and rising again.

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Philip preached the gospel to him, and the eunuch believed this gospel. He was an Ethiopian eunuch who sought God so much that he came all the way to Jerusalem to worship; how earnest his heart must have been! He was taught only a little, and this man accepted the gospel right away. "So Jesus, He was the very Messiah; He is the One who received baptism; just as the lamb of the Old Testament received the laying on of hands and died, He received baptism from John and died on the Cross; He was the very Savior of mankind!" This eunuch accepted this gospel and asked, *"See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36).*

The baptism received immediately upon receiving the remission of sins

After receiving salvation, one receives baptism. Whoever believes in Jesus Christ receives baptism. Because the sign of baptism is the sign of salvation, 1 Peter says, *"There is also an antitype which now saves us—baptism (not the removal of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), through the resurrection of Jesus Christ" (1 Peter 3:21).* Because by this baptism Jesus had all our sins transferred to Him and bore them all, the Ethiopian eunuch said confidently, "I believe, so what is there now to prevent me from receiving baptism?"

So Philip said, "There is nothing to prevent it; if there is water as we go, let us have you baptized," and as they went there was water, so they stopped the chariot where the water was, and the two of them went right down into the water. Before saying, "I baptize you in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit," he asked, "Do you believe that when Jesus received

baptism from John, He bore all your sins?" "I believe." Going into the water: "Do you believe that Jesus bore all your sins and was judged and died on the Cross?" "I believe." "Do you believe that Jesus, in order to give life to me and to give life to you, came up out of the water, rose again, is now seated at the right hand of the throne of God, and is alive even now?" "I believe." "Do you have sin, or not?" "I have none." There was nothing to hinder giving him baptism.

So Philip and the twelve disciples of Jesus gave baptism immediately to those who accepted the gospel. They did not do as is done today, where after one attends church for six months there is a catechism examination, and then six months later baptism is given. When one receives the remission of sins, one is qualified to receive baptism at that very moment, as soon as one receives it. My receiving baptism is testifying, "This is what I believe." Looking at it biblically, we can see clearly how wrong the systems of some churches in this world are. Giving baptism after one year, giving baptism when one quits smoking and quits drinking, giving baptism when one memorizes the Ten Commandments well—these are all systems set up by man. It must be done by the truth. As for what happened after he received baptism, it says, *"Now when they came up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught Philip away, so that the eunuch saw him no more; and he went on his way rejoicing" (Acts 8:39).*

The apostles who obeyed simply

In doing the work of God, we must follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit well. The point is that those who follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit well preach the gospel. And they put

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all their strength into preaching the gospel. And they do not seek what is lofty and mystical. When we look at the Book of Acts, the Spirit of the Lord came and worked through the disciples of Jesus, and there were no disciples of Jesus Christ who sought loftiness. There was not a single one who sought loftiness. They concentrated on preaching the gospel, and they concentrated on nurturing.

If the twelve disciples of Jesus had sought loftiness and boasted of their learning, the Bible would have recorded all such things. Only Peter sought loftiness a little. While preaching the gospel to the Jews, he went to the Jews and, like the Jews, washed his hands thoroughly and kept the hypocrisy of reclining on his side when eating food. So people called Peter a Jew among Jews. In Galatians, the Apostle Paul rebuked such a Peter. He said, "You, too, are a Jew, yet you cannot keep all the ordinances of the Jews, so did you make a show before the Gentiles of keeping the ordinances? You, too, could not keep them all and so were saved by believing in Jesus, so how can you force the Gentiles to keep the law of the Jews? Why do you act hypocritically?" Peter, while acting hypocritically, drew back.

The guidance of the Holy Spirit lies in simplicity like this. If one were going to speak to the minister of finance of a nation, there would have been much to say—"Excuse me, I am a worker of the kingdom of God, and God told me to go this way, so I have come; I am glad to meet you like this"—but as soon as he arrived, he said, *"Do you understand what you are reading?" (Acts 8:30)*. We can see how simply he did just as the Holy Spirit directed. God's people are simple. There is depth within simplicity, but they never regarded worldly learning or worldly talk as important, and the point is that those who followed the guidance of the Holy Spirit did not make things complicated.

Whether we look at Philip or at Peter, they completely ignored the desires of instinct. We can see that they disregarded human courtesies.

When they did the work of God and received the guidance of the Spirit of God, they ignored their own instincts and were faithful to the guidance of the Holy Spirit. God wants us to spread this gospel. He wants us not only to spread the gospel, but also to nurture in order to spread the gospel, and to receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The point is that God wants to make us His instruments and, through us, preach the gospel to the people around us, to those who seek God, to the pitiable, and to adversaries. After we are born again, we must not follow our instincts; we must ignore our instincts. And following the Holy Spirit means obeying as He directs and acting as He directs. That is precisely receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit and following the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

When God told Philip to preach the gospel, he preached the gospel, and when God told him to go, he went. Here, he did not think of his own loftiness or his own prestige. Among the twelve disciples of Jesus, where was there anyone who thought of his own prestige? If the Lord told them to do something, they simply did it. If anything, among the twelve disciples of Jesus there were hardly any who were well-mannered by the world's standards. After they met the Lord, the Lord taught them new manners and trained them; there was no such thing as their having learned manners in the world and then trying to renew the guidance of the Holy Spirit with what is in the world.

We must know what the work that pleases God is. The work that pleases God is the spread of the gospel. The Lord is constantly telling us to go to someone and preach the gospel. And He hopes that we will obey. The Lord is pushing us from behind. But we resist by instinct. The point is that we know our

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own instincts well but do not know the guidance of the Holy Spirit well. When we try preaching the gospel, we can receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit and come to realize it.

The Holy Spirit wants us to obey immediately

Philip preached the gospel to the Ethiopian eunuch, and the Ethiopian eunuch heard this gospel preached and received the remission of sins. And God caused this Philip to come to Caesarea. *"But Philip was found at Azotus. And passing through, he preached in all the cities till he came to Caesarea" (Acts 8:40)*. He caused him to preach the gospel there and led him elsewhere. According to the stories handed down by oral tradition, Thomas is said to have gone to India and preached the gospel. So if you go to India, they know the name Thomas, and Thomas is said to have been martyred there. The Holy Spirit never works while leaving His servants idle. He leads them as He Himself desires. Sometimes He sends them to a hospital, sometimes He sends them to a school, sometimes He has them meet people nearby—God works within us constantly.

Just as Philip preached the gospel, just as he obeyed, and just as he lived a life led by the Holy Spirit, we must incline our hearts to our Lord. There must be no such thing as our being stubborn, or being impure, or trying to serve the Lord with our petty tricks, with our own wisdom or our own strength, which is not faith in the Lord and not obedience. How much do we ourselves obey God? We must look back at ourselves to see how much we obey the Holy Spirit and how much of the work of God we are doing.

Looking at this Philip, we must keep in mind the fact that God was with the spread of the gospel and worked in it. I hope

that when God tells each one of us to preach the gospel, we will be people who obey that word. And when He nurtures us through the church, teaches us, leads us, and directs us, we must know that it is God's teaching and obey. We must live lives that are used by God, receiving the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Until now, we have lived without knowing what the guidance of the Holy Spirit is. But what is clear is that our Lord has stirred up in our hearts the desire to preach the gospel and has caused us to preach the gospel. It is when we preach the gospel that we are led by the Holy Spirit. When we preach the gospel, He works together with the gospel, saves souls, and then teaches us what we must do next. And if we need a spiritual mind, He gives us understanding of the word, gives us a precious heart, and entrusts precious work to us.

If we are to live the spiritual life, we must obey the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We must without fail obey spiritual guidance. Like Philip, we must first become servants who receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit and preach the gospel. And even after that, we must continue to receive guidance. A life led by the Holy Spirit is precisely this kind of life. A person led by the Holy Spirit does not pursue his own things. He does what pleases God. Whether he does it well or poorly, he tries to do the work that pleases God. We know how much we are doing, how many new tasks God gives us to do, and how much He delights in the gospel being preached to many souls. The Holy Spirit wants to do spiritual work in our hearts; let us see how much we have obeyed. We must know the fact that God the Holy Spirit wants us to obey immediately.

In my experience, when God wanted to do something through me and I obeyed immediately, He worked, and through that work much fruit was reaped. But as for what the greatest obstacle is: when God wants spiritual work to be done, all we

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need to do is do it, but people say that to do this, we must have such and such, and must do it in such and such a way, and when we hear those words, our hearts just die. We become discouraged, thinking, "What can I do? All these things have to be in place first." When God gives us the desire, wanting to preach the gospel through you, all we need to do is go and tell them what the gospel is, whether they receive the remission of sins or not, but the point is that we put forward our own theories. So the reason we do not receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit and do not bear much fruit is that we are sunk in our own thoughts and put forward our own theories.

Would God want us to do something flawlessly? Or does He like our obeying? God wants obedience. If He liked things done flawlessly, He would have no need to raise up and use people like us. God is absolutely not like that. The Lord told me to preach the gospel. When I preached the gospel, souls received the remission of sins. Those who do the work God directs are simple people. If it is said to be the word of God, they say yes and just do it. If told to do it this way, they do it this way; if it does not go well while they are doing it, they pray, "It is not going well; what should I do?"—God works with people who obey like that. People like Philip and Peter, people who, even if their tempers were bad, did exactly as told if it was the word of the Lord—the point is that God works with such obedient saints.

Convey the Master's will clearly

We must never disregard the will of God with human thinking. We must not defy it. It is not a matter of "it must be done this way"; if God says to do it this way, there is nothing to do but say yes and do it. Our own thoughts get into it and our

reasons get into it, but that is not how it is supposed to be. When God gives us the desire to preach the gospel and we pray, God brings a soul to us. We go to that soul and, without saying anything else, ask whether he has sin. Even at the second meeting, we ask whether he has sin or not; whether old or young, everyone has sin. If one has sin, one must admit it. If one has sin, one goes to hell. We tell him straight out. There is no need to speak loftily; we need only speak properly about whether he has sin or not and preach the gospel. Without talking about the philosophical ideas of the world, we go as God directs and preach the gospel. "Jesus received baptism from John in the Jordan River and had the sin of the world transferred to Him; and He went to the Cross with all our sins and died; He rose again three days after He died, ascended to the kingdom of heaven, and will come again in the future"—the workers who do the work of God preach this. It is not teaching what is learned at school, philosophical ideas, or the knowledge learned at school.

Are you tired of my always asking whether there is sin or not and talking only about obedience? Are there people who think, "Why not speak eloquently and make them fall down before you—can't you even do that?" Obeying before God is power. We must obey before God. God wants to work through us, but how much we resist, saying, "But…"! How much we defy Him! How often our brothers and sisters defy God! We defy the guidance of the Holy Spirit very much. "Even granting that Jesus took away sin, how can I say that I have no sin?" Defying Him while saying "But…" is what ruins oneself. Our Lord wants to do works through me and through you. And He stirs up our hearts. Every time the Lord stirs up our hearts, how often we defy Him, saying, "Even if the Holy Spirit is God, He ought to know my circumstances; how can He say such a thing to me?" Is it all right to do that so much?

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We must become like simple people. Long ago, there was a certain simple child. His father said, “Child, go and buy some,” and without hearing what he was to buy, hearing only that he was to go and buy, he picked up a bowl and ran. Realizing that it was wrong to have simply gone to buy without even knowing what he was told to buy, he came back, heard what he was to buy, and went again and bought it. But as for us, even though we know, how we fail to obey, saying, “But, but…”! That is why God does not work the work of God through us. We must obey. We must become like this Philip. If we are told to go and preach the gospel, we must preach it. If we ask, *“Do you understand what you are reading?” (Acts 8:30)* he will say, “I do not understand,” and we say, “Jesus took away all our sins; then do you have sin or not? You have none, right? If you have no sin, are you righteous or a sinner?” and he will say, “I am righteous,” and then we say, “Then that is settled; go on your way.”

What matters is how clearly one has conveyed the Master’s will; even if one is a little embarrassed and looks clumsy in one’s own eyes, even if one is somewhat humiliated, it is enough if one has conveyed the Master’s will clearly. As for the Master’s will, how clearly have we planted in him that this person has no sin, that our Lord has removed all this person’s sins? Then it is done.

We must live the spiritual life. The spiritual life is the spread of the gospel. Only when we preach the gospel does our spirit come alive, and we obey and receive guidance. If God used Philip, God will surely use us. God surely works that way in us. God stirs up in our hearts the desire to preach the gospel. And He tells us to preach the gospel to someone. God also tells us to serve. He tells us to serve this way and to serve that way. I hope you will obey. When you obey, He causes you to bear many

blessings and spiritual fruits. And He makes you blessed. Be obedient saints and servants of God. ✉

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CHAPTER

9

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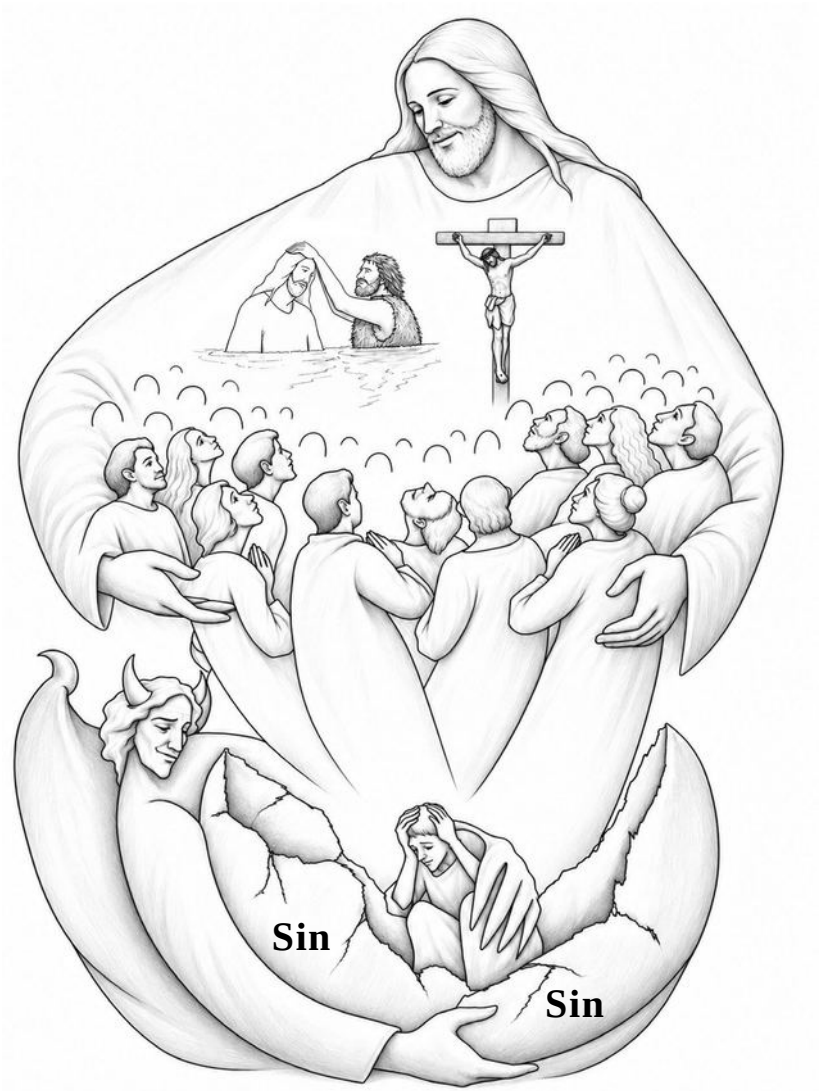

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Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

If you want to gain new strength, preach the gospel

< Acts 9:1–22 >

"Then Saul, still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem. As he journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' Then the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads.' So he, trembling and astonished, said, 'Lord, what do You want me to do?' Then the Lord said to him, 'Arise and go into the city, and you will be told what you must do.' And the men who journeyed with him stood speechless, hearing a voice but seeing no one. Then Saul arose from the ground, and when his eyes were opened he saw no one. But they led him by the hand and brought him into Damascus. And he was three days without sight, and neither ate nor drank. Now there was a certain disciple at Damascus named Ananias; and to him the Lord said in a vision, 'Ananias.' And he said, 'Here I am, Lord.' So the

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Lord said to him, 'Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight.' Then Ananias answered, 'Lord, I have heard from many about this man, how much harm he has done to Your saints in Jerusalem. And here he has authority from the chief priests to bind all who call on Your name.' But the Lord said to him, 'Go, for he is a chosen vessel of Mine to bear My name before Gentiles, kings, and the children of Israel. For I will show him how many things he must suffer for My name's sake.' And Ananias went his way and entered the house; and laying his hands on him he said, 'Brother Saul, the Lord Jesus, who appeared to you on the road as you came, has sent me that you may receive your sight and be filled with the Holy Spirit.' Immediately there fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened. Then Saul spent some days with the disciples at Damascus. Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God. Then all who heard were amazed, and said, 'Is this not he who destroyed those who called on this name in Jerusalem, and has come here for that purpose, so that he might bring them bound to the chief priests?' But Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ."

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Saul, who met the Lord at Damascus

Who is this man Saul? We are now receiving much grace through the Pauline epistles, and this servant of God named Paul was in the old days named Saul. Before he met Jesus, he was a Jew who believed the Old Testament, and he was the kind of man who did the work of seizing those who believed in Jesus, putting them in prison, and killing them. As we well know, it says that, with regard to the disciples of Jesus, Saul *"still breathing threats and murder against the disciples of the Lord, went to the high priest and asked letters from him to the synagogues of Damascus, so that if he found any who were of the Way, whether men or women, he might bring them bound to Jerusalem" (Acts 9:1–2).*

It says that when Saul was drawing near the region of Damascus *"a light shone around him from heaven. Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, 'Saul, Saul, why are you persecuting Me?' And he said, 'Who are You, Lord?' Then the Lord said, 'I am Jesus, whom you are persecuting. It is hard for you to kick against the goads'" (Acts 9:3–5).* While he was on his way to Damascus in order to seize those who believed in Jesus and drag them to Jerusalem, when he came near the region called Damascus, a light from heaven shone around him, the voice of Jesus was heard, and Jesus, in whom we believe, met Saul.

In the old days there were truly many such things. As we well know, there were the appearances of angels, the event in which Jesus Himself appeared on the road to Damascus, speaking in tongues, seeing some form, and so on—there were truly many such things. Even at that time the Bible had not yet been fully recorded, and so such miracles and wonders were necessary.

In any case, before the young man Saul became Paul, he met our Lord on the road to Damascus, received the light and fell down on the road, and came to know the fact that Jesus, in whom the people he was persecuting believed, was none other than the Son of God and his own Savior, the Messiah. Saul saw a strong light on the road to Damascus, and after falling to the ground he later got up, but even though his eyes were open, he could not see.

In the midst of this, our Lord appeared in a vision to a disciple named Ananias and said, *"Arise and go to the street called Straight, and inquire at the house of Judas for one called Saul of Tarsus, for behold, he is praying. And in a vision he has seen a man named Ananias coming in and putting his hand on him, so that he might receive his sight" (Acts 9:11–12)*. He was telling him to go and find the man named Saul, lay hands on him, and open his eyes.

When Ananias, a disciple of Jesus, went to the street called Straight, found Saul, and laid his hands on his head, something like scales fell from his eyes and he received his sight again, and it says, *"There fell from his eyes something like scales, and he received his sight at once; and he arose and was baptized. So when he had received food, he was strengthened" (Acts 9:18–19)*. And it says, *"Immediately he preached the Christ in the synagogues, that He is the Son of God" (Acts 9:20)*. He preached the gospel in this way, that Jesus is the Son of God.

The first thing the Holy Spirit does is to make us testify of Christ

When we meet the Lord, the first thing that happens is that, just as with Saul, just as with Paul who was changed, the Holy

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Spirit makes us people who preach the gospel. He makes us people who, led by the Holy Spirit, preach the gospel. He makes us preach the gospel and testify that Jesus is the Son of God and that Jesus is the Christ. When we too are led by the Holy Spirit, rather than doing something well, living a good life, and being good at such things, we come to testify of this gospel: that Jesus is the Savior, that Jesus is God, and also that Jesus has become the Savior of all mankind.

So the first thing the Holy Spirit who is in us does is precisely to make us testify of Jesus Christ. From this point on we come to be called Christians, we also suffer persecution because of Jesus, and not only do we suffer persecution because of Jesus, but we also come to bear the fruit of preaching the gospel.

When the Apostle Paul was Saul, before he met the Lord, he appeared as a man who seized those who believed in Jesus and killed them. But from the time he met the Lord, he changed into one who testifies of Jesus. It is because the Holy Spirit comes into us. When we believe that Jesus is the Son of God and receive the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes into us. The Holy Spirit comes into us and causes us to testify of Jesus and testify of the gospel, saying, "Jesus is God. He is the Savior who has removed all our sins."

In fact, this is the only thing we have to do. It is not that we believe in Jesus and put on airs, nor that we believe in Jesus and become good people, nor that we believe in Jesus and some other great change takes place. The greatest change is clearly that Jesus has removed all our sins. We come to believe this: that Jesus had our sins transferred to Him through the baptism He received from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross, and rose again, and thereby removed all our sins. It is that we come to testify of what Jesus has done, of that gospel, to the people we meet.

So we know well that the guidance of the Holy Spirit works very greatly in testifying of the gospel. When we testify of the gospel, the Holy Spirit within us rejoices greatly, and when we testify with our mouths, the Holy Spirit gives us new strength, saying, "That is right. That is so. I have saved this person too, and I have removed all this person's sin of the world as well. I have remitted it through the gospel of the water and the Spirit." When we preach the word, the Holy Spirit within us claps His hands along with us, saying that the word we preach is right, and He guides us, saying that it is right—that is what He does.

Paul, who preached the gospel wherever he went even amid persecution

Do you feel such things? Does He make you preach the gospel, and also make you testify with your lips of how thankful you are for this Jesus, and that this Jesus Christ is our God and our Savior? He does make you testify. He makes you testify, and does He also make you suffer persecution because you believe in Jesus? If you ask from whom you suffer persecution, you come to suffer persecution from the colleagues you used to know before you met Jesus Christ.

The Apostle Paul, too, persecuted those who believed in Jesus before he met the Lord, but when he himself had met the Lord, it says that the Jews of Damascus, his old friends who wanted to seize and kill him *"watched the gates day and night, to kill him" (Acts 9:24)*. This young man Saul was inside the city, and they had a desire to kill this man. Yet in fact those Jews were Paul's friends. They were Paul's acquaintances. Just as Paul had persecuted those who believed in Jesus, his friends, because they

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had not yet met Jesus, persecuted the Apostle Paul, who believed in Jesus and preached Jesus Christ, trying to kill him.

So it says, *"Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket" (Acts 9:25)*. The disciples who believed in Jesus tied a rope from the high city wall, let him down outside the city, and had him escape outside the city of Damascus by night. So Saul was able to go on living. And wherever he went, he boldly preached the gospel in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. "Jesus is our Savior. Jesus has removed all our sins. In the Old Testament in this way, and in the New Testament in this way, He has remitted them all with the water and the blood. He is our Savior. That is, Jesus Christ is not only my Savior but also your Savior." In this way he boldly testified of the gospel. Wherever the Apostle Paul went, he testified of the gospel. "Jesus is the Savior. And He is the King of kings. This Jesus has removed all your sins. He has removed not only your sins but the sins of all the people of the world." Wherever he went, wherever he sat, wherever he stood, he preached the gospel.

If we do not preach the gospel, the Holy Spirit has nothing to do

If you ask what the Holy Spirit who has come into our hearts does, He does the work of making us testify of the gospel. In any case, the Holy Spirit who is in us does not do other work, but makes us testify of the gospel. The Holy Spirit does not tell us to believe in Jesus and become good people. He does also teach us and lead us in such things as becoming people of upright conduct, saying, "You used to be like this, so now do like this." He also makes us give up our old habits, teaches us the right way

when we enter a wrong path, sometimes stirs up an uncomfortable feeling in our hearts, saying, “Ah, I do not like that,” so as to keep us from doing that thing, and when we read the Bible He also gives us the realization of what that word means. Yet when we try to realize it ourselves, it is not realized. It is that when we read the Bible, the Lord teaches us.

He is the Holy Spirit who makes us realize and know the word, teaches us, and at times makes us testify of the gospel ceaselessly. After we believed in the Lord, He came upon our hearts in holiness, and among the works He does, what He does most is the work, within us, of making us testify most of all of this: that Jesus is the Son of God, that He is our Savior, and that He saved us with the water and the blood. The Holy Spirit does not make us do other work. At times He gives wisdom and also gives understanding. And at other times He also teaches us about things to come. But if you ask what it is that the Holy Spirit most desires and works in us most, it is that the Holy Spirit who works in our hearts makes us preach Jesus Christ. Whomever we meet, He makes us preach Jesus Christ. Tomorrow, the day after, and the day after that, until the day our Lord comes, until the day we go before Jesus Christ, He makes us testify of Jesus Christ.

We must know this. The Lord who is in us is pleased with our testifying of Jesus Christ. So we are glad to open our mouths and preach the gospel of Jesus, and when we put our strength into preaching the gospel, the Holy Spirit who is in us rejoices and gives us fullness. He gives joy to our hearts and gives us new strength.

But what if we do not preach the gospel? The Holy Spirit who is in us feels uncomfortable, and if we do not preach the gospel, the Holy Spirit within us does not rejoice and does not work. Then He makes us people whose life of faith is dry, tedious, and hard. To put it simply, the Holy Spirit stays still

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within me and does not work. If we do not put our strength into the work of preaching the gospel, do not carry it out, and do not open our mouths to preach, there is nothing more He can do through us. The first thing we must put our strength into most of all, and the thing that pleases our Lord, is to open our mouths and preach the gospel. Whether people believe or not, we must preach the gospel *"in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2)*.

Concentrate on preaching the gospel

If we live preaching the gospel, the Holy Spirit who is in us gives us strength and stirs up a joyful heart. Then we want to serve as well, we want to do this work and that work of serving the Lord, and many areas in which we ought to serve come into view. And strength arises. So we must not be deceived by other things. When we preach the gospel the Lord is pleased; when we put our strength into preaching the gospel the Lord is pleased; and when we put our strength into preaching the gospel, the Lord gives us this and that according to our needs and bestows grace on us in every area. After receiving the remission of sins, we must know the will of God and live our life of faith. Only then can we obtain the fullness of the Holy Spirit. We can shake off the dryness of our faith. To whom shall I preach the gospel today? If some stranger is in front of us, we must concentrate on preaching this gospel, whether briefly or at length, saying, "Jesus has removed your sins with the gospel of the water and the Spirit. He has saved you"; only then is the Lord pleased.

And when an opportunity arises, we must preach the word *"in season and out of season" (2 Timothy 4:2)*. With a busy person there are times when we do it briefly, with some people who have plenty of time there are times when we do it at length,

and some people may believe and some may not, but on our part, only when we concentrate on preaching the gospel is the Lord pleased.

If we want to obtain joy in our hearts, if we want to obtain new strength, we must always open our mouths and testify that Jesus is God, that Jesus is the Christ, that He is our Savior. Then you obtain new strength, serving the Lord becomes a joy, you come to serve with a joyful heart, and new strength springs up. So you and I must concentrate on preaching the gospel. If we concentrate first of all on preaching the gospel and keep preaching it to every person we meet, the Lord gives us new strength so that we come to follow Him, the Lord also supplies what we need, and as we preach the Lord's gospel we also come to ask earnestly for what is needed for this gospel. But if we do not preach the gospel, there is nothing we need, we do not even know what we need, and consequently there is nothing to pray for either. Our faith becomes utterly dry.

After Saul met the Lord he became Paul, but the very first thing he did was to preach the gospel in the synagogues. As we see, the Apostle Paul preached until he died that Jesus is the Son of God, that Jesus is the Christ and the King of kings and the Savior who saved us with the water and the blood. Whether our years of faith are said to be many or few, and even as our years of faith accumulate, we too must concentrate on the work of preaching Jesus Christ to people, just as when we first believed—just as, when we first believed, our hearts were thankful, we were assured that we had no sin, that we had received the remission of sins, and we were so thankful that we spoke of the gospel to people. Only then can we obtain the fullness of the Holy Spirit, obtain the strength of faith, and enjoy the blessings of God.

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If we examine everything—what the Apostle Paul did right after he received the remission of sins, what persecution he suffered, and how he lived his whole life—we can see that he concentrated on preaching the gospel. He preached the gospel that Jesus is the Savior, that He has saved me and has saved you; the Apostle Paul did not speak of mystical things, and even when such things happened, he hardly spoke of them. As for what happened to the Apostle Paul after he met the Lord, Jesus Christ took him into the third heaven, took him up into the high heavens, and he heard *"inexpressible words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter" (2 Corinthians 12:4),* words that were simply too wonderful. That was something he merely heard, and this Apostle Paul did not boast because of such things, nor did he put his strength into anything other than the work of preaching the gospel. From beginning to end, until he was martyred, the Apostle Paul strove solely to preach the gospel.

When we preach the gospel, new strength arises

We must strive to preach the gospel. Try preaching the gospel. New strength arises. Try preaching it even to children, if nothing else. Strength arises. But try not preaching the gospel. Your chest becomes stifled. When we preach the gospel, strength arises, and when we do not preach the gospel, we feel stifled. Why? It is because we are not doing the work the Lord is pleased with. The Lord wants us to open our lips and testify that Jesus has become our Savior. He wants us to stand as witnesses. He wants us to stand as witnesses that this is certain.

Yet we close our mouths and do not do it. Rather, after we are saved, we come to seek something mystical, or we want to become good people, or we want the life we are living now to be

changed, and for our lives to be changed so that we live a happy and pleasant life. But it is not so. That is our wish, what we hope for, and what the Lord desires is the preaching of the gospel. It is that we must preach Jesus—preach who Jesus is. When we say we preach the gospel, although the core of this gospel is the water, the blood, and the Spirit, preaching the birth of Jesus is also preaching Jesus, and preaching that Jesus is the Judge is also preaching Jesus, and talking about anything concerning Jesus is all the same as preaching the gospel. In any case, we must boast of Jesus and preach Jesus. Only then is the Holy Spirit who is in us pleased.

Dear fellow believers, try preaching the gospel. You obtain new strength. Seeing those who received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, people said, *"They are full of new wine" (Acts 2:13)*. In the same way, when you try preaching the gospel, you feel as good as if you were drunk with the wine of the kingdom of heaven; even if you just sit still, your mouth opens of its own accord to speak of the gospel and runs smoothly, you feel good, and strength arises. When we testify of the gospel, of Jesus Christ, we feel good and become talkative. The word of God flows out freely. We feel good, saying, "Ah, this is good." When we testify of Jesus Christ, the Lord who is within us is pleased, saying, "Well done, well done," and so somehow we feel good. We feel so good that we say everything, things we should say and things we should not.

On the Day of Pentecost, some people mocked the disciples who had received the Holy Spirit, saying that they were full of new wine. However, Peter explained that they were not drunk but had received the Holy Spirit. In the same way, when we preach the gospel, we too become drunk with new wine. We are drunk with the wine of the kingdom of heaven, drunk with the wine of the Holy Spirit, and feel good; and also, try receiving

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the remission of sins. Dear fellow believers, have you ever had a baby? When you have a baby of your own, because of the joyful feeling that you have become a mother, that you have become a father, at first you cannot sleep well. In the same way, when you preach the gospel and a soul receives the remission of sins, you feel so good that you cannot bear it. You cannot bear it because you want to meet them, you cannot bear it because you want to talk with them, you cannot bear it because you want to embrace them; you talk and talk to them, and the next day you call again and talk again, talking away with overprotectiveness and excessive attention: "Don't boast to other people about the gospel you heard. If you are not careful, you will swallow poison and die. Anyway, keep your mouth tightly shut until I come."

Preach the gospel even to people you do not know

What pleases the Lord is the preaching of the gospel. It is testifying of Jesus. We must concentrate on preaching Jesus. Do you want to live your life of faith joyfully? Then preach the gospel. Do you have no strength? If you want to gain strength, preach the gospel. Then you will gain new strength. It is true.

If you try to preach the gospel only to people you know, you cannot preach it. Preach it to people you do not know as well. In this world there are many pitiful people. There are a great many people who are poor in heart. There are people who are sick in body and sick in heart, who are silently asking for help. There are people who want to receive help, whatever help anyone may give. When you preach the gospel to such people, they believe at once.

We must look for such people around us. If there are none, go out and preach the gospel at hospitals. If you go to a hospital,

there are many such people. If there are none, look for them. There are such people around you as well. Among the people around you, some are easy to talk to, and there are also some who are hard to talk to. It says, *"No prophet is accepted in his own country" (Luke 4:24)*. Preaching the gospel to those who know you can be easy, and it can also be very hard. If that does not work out, step out of the house for a while, set aside about an hour, meet a new soul, and try preaching the gospel. Do not go alone but go in pairs; sisters, pair up among sisters and try preaching the gospel. Amazing strength will arise. You will feel good. Your life of faith will become enjoyable. It will become rewarding. What pleases the Lord is the preaching of the gospel. It is the work of testifying of Jesus. I hope you will keep this in mind. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

The disciples who together protected the persecuted witness

< Acts 9:23–25 >

“Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him. But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him. Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.”

The persecution that came upon Saul, who preached Jesus

If there are people watching the city gates day and night, where can a person inside that city get out? Those who sought to kill Saul tried to block the road he would pass through, but the disciples took him by night and let him down from the city in a basket. In this scene, in which a man who had been preaching Jesus escapes from the city with the help of other saints, the danger of persecution and the service of the church are found together. Our life, too, of believing and preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit cannot be judged only by the reactions of those who oppose us, and we need to look after fellow believers in the midst of difficulties.

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Saul preached in the synagogues at Damascus that Jesus is the Son of God, and although it is recorded that *"Saul increased all the more in strength, and confounded the Jews who dwelt in Damascus, proving that this Jesus is the Christ" (Acts 9:22)*, not all who heard his words rejoiced. *"Now after many days were past, the Jews plotted to kill him" (Acts 9:23)*. There were those who, instead of hearing the word and believing, plotted to kill the one who preached it. The danger that came upon Saul was persecution intended to make him stop his testimony concerning Jesus.

Those who opposed Saul at this time are recorded in the text as the Jews. Even the old colleagues who had been with Saul before he met Jesus now came to stand on the side of those persecuting him. Saul, who formerly had tried to bind the disciples of the Lord, now preached the same Savior as they did, and so those who did not accept Jesus sought to kill Saul too. Even though Saul's change was clear, that change itself did not guarantee the recognition of the people around him.

We too may experience this kind of difficulty when we preach Jesus to people we have been close to since before we came to know the word of salvation. Just because we are on friendly terms, it does not mean the other person will necessarily welcome the gospel of the water and the Spirit; rather, they may even oppose it, failing to understand a faith that has become different from before. Even so, we must not look at the other person's reaction and judge that the remission of sins the Lord accomplished is wrong. The basis for whether the gospel is true lies not in whether people recognize us, but in what Jesus accomplished for our sins. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death.

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Those who plotted to kill Saul were not people who claimed not to know God, but people who claimed to believe in God well. Because wherever the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit takes place, opposition from those who claim to believe in God like this arises along with it, meeting opposition is no reason to be alarmed that the word we preached was wrong. Only when we know that fact can we look again to the Lord's salvation instead of abandoning our faith in the face of persecution. But the danger that came upon Saul was not only discouragement of heart, so we must look at how the people who sought to kill him watched even the city gates.

Rely on the Savior even before the blocked city gates

Although the plot of those who sought to kill Saul became known, the danger did not disappear right away. *"But their plot became known to Saul. And they watched the gates day and night, to kill him" (Acts 9:24)*. The word that they watched even the gates day and night shows that they did not easily give up their intent to kill Saul. Just because a man who preaches the word is placed in such a situation, we cannot think that he is a man who has not received the Lord's love. Persecution existed even in the age of the apostles, and today too it can come upon those who testify of the Lord.

To think that if we have faith we must always hold out alone in a dangerous place is also different from the flow of this word. Saul escaped with the help of the disciples, and afterward, in Jerusalem too, he spoke boldly in the name of Jesus. Escaping from the city and abandoning the Savior were not the same thing.

Taking care of the life the Lord has given while seeking a way to preach the word is also a service the church bears together.

The Savior on whom we rely to the end is not One who became the Savior through people's approval. Jesus is the Son of God, who has no sin, yet in order to save us sinners He received baptism from John the Baptist and thereby bore all the sins of the world once and for all. Because the sins we commit throughout our whole lives are also within that sin of the world, the Lord shed His blood and died on the Cross, paying the price of that sin and receiving the judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and gave us life. The fact of this redemption does not change because of the words of those who oppose, and we receive the remission of sins by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus accomplished.

Therefore, even on the day we suffer persecution, we must distinguish between the fear in our own hearts and the basis of our salvation. That our hearts tremble means that we sense danger; it does not mean that the sins the Lord bore have come back to us. The Holy Spirit is with the heart that has received the remission of sins and testifies through the word of the salvation Jesus accomplished. Rather than trying to manufacture faith by measuring how strong our feelings are, we must rely in our hearts on the Savior who saved us from sin through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection.

The apostles and saints who had been threatened earlier also prayed to God, *"Now, Lord, look on their threats, and grant to Your servants that with all boldness they may speak Your word" (Acts 4:29)*. They did not hide the fact that there were threats, and in the midst of those threats they asked for the boldness to speak the word. We too, rather than boasting of our ability to overcome difficulties alone, must tell the Lord our

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circumstances and ask for help. When we pray and consult with the church, we can also consider together in faith what to avoid and what to continue.

The service of the disciples who lowered the basket

"*Then the disciples took him by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket" (Acts 9:25)*. Whereas those watching the city gates tried to seize Saul, the disciples let him down outside the city and saved his life. They did not stop at worrying with words only, but actually helped him escape the danger. Since the text does not say that Saul escaped alone, as we read about that night we must not look only at the one man who preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit and pass over the service of the disciples who helped him.

Within the church there are saints who directly preach the word, and there are also saints who help the one preaching so that he can continue that work. Though the shape of the tasks entrusted to them differs, they are not separated from each other in that they serve together the salvation the Lord has given. Listening to a fellow believer in difficult circumstances and finding the help he needs is not an incidental matter unrelated to the spread of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. It is the life of one family that believes in the same Savior looking after one another's circumstances and serving the Lord.

We who receive that help also need an attitude of faith. Receiving help is no reason to feel ashamed and distance ourselves from the church; rather, we must give thanks for the care the Lord has bestowed through the saints and serve the word together. Just as Saul needed the hands of other disciples, we too cannot bear everything alone. When we lay down the desire to

display our own strength, we can receive the help that fellow believers give and also look after the burdens of other saints.

Even so, we must not turn this escape into a promise that every saint will escape danger in the same way every time. Earlier, Stephen was stoned to death while testifying of the Lord, and here Saul got out of the city with the help of the disciples. Even in their differing circumstances, the Savior they relied on was the same. We need to hold fast to the fact that the Lord has saved our souls, and in the circumstances given to us today, to consider how to help the saints.

If we look only at the city gates blocked day and night, it seems as though there was no way for Saul. But on that night there were also disciples who looked after Saul and lowered the basket. When we too face a fellow believer in difficulty, let us not merely repeat that the danger is great, but pray to the Lord and look for a way to help together. The hands of the church, which rely on the Lord who saved us from sin and look after one another, are the help needed by the witness standing before a blocked road. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

Listen to what the Lord has done for a brother rather than to his past

< Acts 9:26–30 >

“And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple. But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus. So he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out. And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him. When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus.”

The people who were afraid of the one who sought to join them

To the disciples in Jerusalem, Saul was a fearful name. The very man who had formerly tried to bind the disciples of the Lord and drag them away had now come seeking to join the disciples, saying that he believed in the same Lord, so it would have been hard to accept his words right away. The disciples did

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not believe that he was a disciple, and in the meantime Barnabas stepped forward and told what had happened to Saul. Rather than hastily demanding that the past be forgotten, this word makes us think about how we are to listen to what the Lord has done for a person and accept a brother who believes together with us.

"And when Saul had come to Jerusalem, he tried to join the disciples; but they were all afraid of him, and did not believe that he was a disciple" (Acts 9:26). Saul's coming to the disciples and the disciples' fear of him are found together in one verse. Because Saul was a man who had formerly tried to bind the disciples of the Lord and drag them back, behind the fear of the saints in Jerusalem when they saw him there was harm they had actually suffered. Therefore, if we only brand their fear as a prejudice that arose for no reason, we cannot sufficiently understand the difficulty of this meeting.

Nevertheless, the change that had taken place in Saul was also real. He had met the Lord and had preached in Damascus that Jesus is the Son of God. What Saul had done before was evil, but remembering that deed and denying the salvation the Lord bestowed on Saul are different things. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes not only Saul's sins but all the sin of mankind, transferred to Him once and for all, shed His blood on the Cross and paid the price of that sin, and rose again from death and gave Saul life. We too must examine whether we have a heart that, on the grounds that we know someone's past well, refuses even to listen to what that person now believes.

After meeting the Lord, Saul stayed with the disciples in Damascus too, and when he came to Jerusalem he also sought to join the disciples, and with Barnabas's help he went to the apostles. Because faith after receiving the remission of sins is not a permit to live alone as one pleases, we too must treasure

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the place where we share the word with the saints who believe in the same gospel of the water and the Spirit and serve together. The fact that the Savior has given us life is a reason to gather together and testify of that Savior.

When the church looks into a person it has newly met, it must not make human familiarity its only standard either. Even someone we have known for a long time may believe different things, and even someone we have just met may be a brother who has received the same remission of sins. Therefore, rather than an attitude of unconditionally doubting or unconditionally accepting, what is needed is to listen within the word to what Savior that person believes in and what he makes the basis of salvation. The next scene, in which Barnabas spoke concretely of what had happened to Saul, shows this.

What Barnabas spoke of was what the Lord had done

"But Barnabas took him and brought him to the apostles. And he declared to them how he had seen the Lord on the road, and that He had spoken to him, and how he had preached boldly at Damascus in the name of Jesus" (Acts 9:27). Barnabas did not speak first of how hard Saul had tried to become a good man. He told how Saul had seen the Lord and the Lord had spoken to him, and how he had spoken boldly in the name of Jesus at Damascus. To those who knew the former Saul, he now related how the Lord had changed him.

That Barnabas took Saul with him means that this explanation did not end as a rumor from afar. Saul himself was before the apostles, and Barnabas testified of what had happened to him. We too, when we help a brother's faith or introduce him

to other saints, must not make up and speak of inner thoughts we have not heard and events we have not experienced. Only when we rightly share the content of faith we have actually heard and the things we know can our hearts be joined to one another upon the word.

At the center of the faith we are to look into like this is the salvation Jesus accomplished. Jesus, who saved Saul, is the Son of God who came clothed in the same flesh as ours. The baptism the Lord received from John the Baptist was the baptism that passed the sin of the world on to Him, who has no sin. The Lord, who bore once and for all even all the sins of our lifetime, was hung on the Cross, shed His blood and died, paying the price of that sin and receiving in our place the judgment that sinners were to receive, and He rose again from death. We are justified not because our past was clean, but because we believe in our hearts in this salvation of redemption.

If we leave out only our own sins from the word that the Lord bore the sin of the world, our hearts remain bound to the past. The fact that what we did before was serious and shameful is no basis for saying that those sins were not passed on to the Lord. The gospel of the water and the Spirit is not a word that makes us take sin lightly, but a word that makes us believe that Jesus Himself received the judgment for sin. Therefore, when we look at a brother who has been saved, instead of making light of his past, we must together look at the Savior who bore those sins.

The Holy Spirit is with the heart that has believed this salvation and received the remission of sins, and He makes us testify of the Lord. Just as what Saul preached was Jesus, the center of our testimony too cannot stay at boasting that we ourselves have greatly changed. Only when we testify of what sins the Lord bore and what judgment He received in our place does the faith of those who hear also reach the Savior rather than

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a person's change. To follow Barnabas's example of help is not to exalt a person blindly, but to let one another hear clearly what the Lord has done.

Saul, who testified of the name of Jesus together with the disciples

After Barnabas spoke of what had happened to Saul, it is recorded that *"he was with them at Jerusalem, coming in and going out" (Acts 9:28)*. Saul was now together with the disciples who at first had feared him. As a result, Saul did not stop at having his sincerity recognized, but in Jerusalem too he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus. Fellowship in which they accepted one another led to a place of serving the Savior together.

"And he spoke boldly in the name of the Lord Jesus and disputed against the Hellenists, but they attempted to kill him" (Acts 9:29). Just because he had escaped danger in Damascus, it did not mean that all opposition had disappeared in Jerusalem, but he continued to testify of the same Lord. Boldness is not the hot temper that overpowers people with one's own words, but the faith that does not hide the salvation the Savior accomplished. We too need, more than the ability to raise our opinions, the clear content of the word and the faith to preach it.

When the brethren learned of the attempt to kill Saul, they did not leave him alone. *"When the brethren found out, they brought him down to Caesarea and sent him out to Tarsus" (Acts 9:30)*. The church that at first had feared Saul now cared for Saul, who was placed in danger. Sending him to Tarsus was not an act of denying fellowship with him, but an act in which the brethren who had learned of the threat actually protected him. The heart

that serves the word together is manifested in this way also as hands that look after a brother's circumstances.

We too must not treat a fellow believer as if he were a stranger when he is actually in difficulty, while saying that we have accepted him. The heart that has accepted a brother must not stop at helping his faith in the place where we share the word, but must lead to the action of seeking a way together, when we learn of his danger or trouble, so that he can continue to serve the word of the Lord. When the church treasures one another in this way, one person's preaching also continues together with the service of many saints.

The disciples who had feared Saul heard from Barnabas what the Lord had done for Saul and came to be together with him, and when there were people seeking to kill him, they sent him to Tarsus and protected him. When a person who formerly did harm says that he believes in the same Savior, what we too must listen to is not our impression of his past, but what the Lord has done for him and the word he believes and preaches. If we have come to know that he is a brother who has received the same remission of sins, let us testify of the Savior together and also look after his circumstances. That is the heart of the church that receives a brother whom the Lord has saved. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

By what does the church stand firm and go forward

< Acts 9:31 >

"Then the churches throughout all Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had peace and were edified. And walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied."

The church born of the gospel of the water and the Spirit

When we hear that a church is growing, what do we think of first? It is easy to think of the number of people who gather increasing, but today's passage records that, before their number multiplied, the church had peace and stood firm, feared the Lord, and went forward in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. By looking only at the numbers that appear outwardly, we cannot sufficiently know what that church relied on and how it went forward. We too, while hoping for the growth of the church, must examine the content of faith that is recorded together in this one verse.

Right before this word come the threats of the people who sought to kill Saul and the matter of the brothers who took care of him, and after Saul was sent to Tarsus, the word reports that then the churches in various regions had peace and stood firm. There was the dangerous situation of one man, but the record

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concerning the church did not end there; the lives of the saints who believed in the Lord and the work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit continued on.

The churches that were in Judea, Galilee, and Samaria had not received different salvations under the names of their regions. Just as the Lord said before His ascension, *"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8)*, the gospel of the water and the Spirit that was preached in Jerusalem was also preached in Samaria, and the people who believed that word became the people of the same Lord. That gospel is the word that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. Because the salvation by which the Lord gave life to sinners is the same, the saints in places far apart can also serve the one Savior. When we think of the church, what we must hold on to first is not the place or the number of people but the word of salvation that brought that church to birth.

The life of the saints who were saved in Jerusalem is also recorded as follows: *"And they continued steadfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, in the breaking of bread, and in prayers" (Acts 2:42)*. They shared their faith while learning the word, having fellowship, and praying together. It is not that, having received the remission of sins, they now no longer needed to hear the word; rather, they were together in order to come to know the salvation they had received and to live according to the Lord's will. We too must not take the gathering of the saints and the teaching of the word lightly by saying that we have faith on our own.

For the church to stand firm, service with hearts united is also needed. If each person puts forward only his own will and says

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that the mere fact of having gathered together is enough, it is hard to carry out one work according to the Lord's word. But when the saints who have received the remission of sins through the same gospel of the water and the Spirit look into the Lord's will together, they can also help one another in their shortcomings and serve the gospel. Unity is not a matter of making everyone's personality the same; it is believing together in the Lord who saved us and gathering our hearts for His will.

The comfort of the Holy Spirit received while fearing the Lord

After the record that the church had peace comes the word that they feared the Lord. When a time comes in which difficulties have quieted down, our hearts easily turn only to our own lives, but the saints must look to the Lord even in the midst of peace. Because the Lord delivered us from sin and made us His people, it is right that we, who have received that grace, live treasuring the Lord's word. Enjoying comfort and living according to the Lord's will must not be separated from each other.

The Holy Spirit who comforts the saints at this time is not One who vaguely makes people feel good. The Holy Spirit testifies of salvation—that Jesus Christ bore our sins and received the judgment in our place. Therefore, even when we look at our faults and are discouraged, rather than continuing to weigh only our own circumstances, we must look into the word to see how the Lord dealt even with those faults. When we know that the basis of salvation does not lie in some satisfactory appearance within us, our hearts can turn toward the Lord again.

John the Baptist saw Jesus and testified of Him as follows: *"The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him, and said, 'Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!'" (John 1:29)*. Because Jesus, when He received baptism from John, had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him once and for all, He became the Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world. In order to pay the price of that sin, the Lord shed His blood and died on the Cross and was judged in our place, and He rose again from death and gave us new life. We too are people who belong to this world, and the sins we commit from the time we are born until we die are also within that sin of the world which Jesus took upon Himself. We have believed in this gospel of the water and the Spirit in our hearts and received the remission of sins.

If one had to make a new salvation every time one recalled one's own sins, the heart could not gain peace. But the Holy Spirit makes us know through the word that our sins were passed on to Jesus and that the Lord also bore the price of those sins. Receiving that comfort is not a matter of hiding our wrongs or dressing them up as if we had done well; it is relying on the Savior even in the face of faults that have been exposed. The heart that can acknowledge its faults and set them right according to the Lord's will also gains strength in the midst of this assurance of salvation.

The reason the Holy Spirit is with us in our hearts is not that we paid the price to obtain the Holy Spirit by our works. When we believed in the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished, God gave us the Holy Spirit as a gift. Because that Holy Spirit makes us understand the word of salvation and also raises up in us the heart to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we do not need to regard faith as something possible only in moments when our emotions run hot. Believing the word we

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have received and serving together with the church in the work entrusted to us today, we can follow the guidance of the Holy Spirit.

The comfort we have received becomes the strength to serve the gospel

The text does not stop at the fact that the church received comfort, but says, *"Walking in the fear of the Lord and in the comfort of the Holy Spirit, they were multiplied" (Acts 9:31)*. The saints went forward fearing the Lord and receiving the comfort of the Holy Spirit. The peace of a saved heart is not a satisfaction to be kept only within oneself; it becomes the strength to preach the grace of the Savior to other souls as well and to serve the Lord.

The reason we preach the word of salvation is also that the remission of sins we ourselves first received is clear. To a person who is in the fear of sin, we can say that the Lord bore that sin, and to a person who tries to make his heart clean by his own efforts, we can explain the meaning of the baptism the Lord received from John, the blood He shed on the Cross, and His resurrection. The basis on which the hearer receives salvation is likewise not our eloquence or our confident expression but the atonement that Jesus accomplished. Therefore, the saint who preaches must set his heart on conveying the word clearly rather than on ways to make himself look great.

The comfort we have received also flows toward our brothers. When we speak again of the Lord who bore even those faults to a saint who is discouraged in the face of his faults, and when the church looks after together a saint who is in difficult circumstances, the love of believing in salvation together

appears in actual life, and the people around them also see that life. Even so, since good deeds themselves do not become the salvation that washes away sin, the church must go forward according to the Lord's will, preaching the word of the remission of sins along with its care.

Concerning the gathering of the early church, the Scripture reports, *"Praising God and having favor with all the people. And the Lord added to the church daily those who were being saved" (Acts 2:47)*. The One who adds those who are being saved is the Lord. We cannot produce the number of people as we please, but believing and testifying of the word the Lord has given and serving the saints are things we can carry out today. When we know how precious it is for one soul to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and believe it in his heart, we no longer treat him merely as a person who increases the number of the gathering.

Before the words that their number multiplied, the Scripture first recorded that the church had peace and stood firm, feared the Lord, and went forward in the comfort of the Holy Spirit. When the saints who believe in the same Savior stand firm in the word and serve the gospel of the water and the Spirit, fearing the Lord and receiving the comfort of the Holy Spirit, that church goes forward with the life it has received. Our gathering too must examine the faith that goes together with the word of salvation before counting only the number of people. Let us treasure the gospel through which the Lord brought us to birth, and let us testify of the Savior to other souls today as well with that comfort. ✉

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Sermon 5 by Paul C. Jong

Believe in the One who healed the body as the Savior who also bore sin

< Acts 9:32–35 >

“Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda. There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed. And Peter said to him, ‘Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.’ Then he arose immediately. So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord.”

Peter, who went down to the saints and met Aeneas

When we hear the news that a man who had been lying on a bed for eight years got up, we may first be curious about the power of the one who raised him. The one who met Aeneas was the Apostle Peter, but Peter did not say that he himself was healing him. He said clearly that Jesus Christ heals him. And the people who saw this turned to the Lord. The One we must look to in this word is also Jesus Christ, who healed Aeneas through Peter. Jesus is the Savior who, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by

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shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death to give life not only to the body but also to the soul.

"Now it came to pass, as Peter went through all parts of the country, that he also came down to the saints who dwelt in Lydda" (Acts 9:32). While the church had peace and stood firm, Peter went about in all directions, seeking out the saints. The work of an apostle preaching the word and serving those who believe did not stay only in one large gathering in one place. The record that he also went down to the saints who lived in Lydda shows that the saints there too were looked after in the Lord. We too must treasure the faith and circumstances of saints who are far away or not easily noticed.

There Peter met Aeneas. *"There he found a certain man named Aeneas, who had been bedridden eight years and was paralyzed" (Acts 9:33).* We must not read past a man who had lain there for a period of eight years as if he were only one short name. A real man who could not move his body and had to stay on a bed was before Peter. The Lord's work took place in the midst of that man's concrete circumstances, and Aeneas got up on the spot.

The circumstances of Aeneas, who spent the long time of eight years on a bed, are not evidence that his faith was wrong. Because the text only says that he had long been lying down with paralysis and does not explain the cause of his illness as unbelief, finding hidden sins or a lack of faith as we please while looking at a sick saint does not help that person. We must examine the recorded circumstances as they are and see what the Lord did.

When there is a saint among us whose body is sick, care that actually takes his pain into account is also needed. We cannot speak of the hardship of the flesh as if it were nothing just because the salvation of the soul is important. In the scene where Peter met Aeneas, the Lord's power toward a man in bodily

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suffering appears. Only, our faith in reading of this help must not end at taking account of the state of the body alone, but must go on to the Savior who bestowed that help.

The apostle's words that made clear who healed him

"And Peter said to him, 'Aeneas, Jesus the Christ heals you. Arise and make your bed.' Then he arose immediately" (Acts 9:34). In the words Peter commanded, the name of the One who heals comes first. After the words that Jesus Christ heals Aeneas came the command to arise and make his bed, and Aeneas arose immediately. The apostle did not put forward his own godliness or power as the basis of the healing. He spoke so that people's hearts would turn to the Lord who accomplishes that work.

Earlier in the Book of Acts as well, Peter raised up the man who had been at the Beautiful Gate of the temple in the name of Jesus Christ, and when the people fixed their eyes on them, he said, *"Why look so intently at us, as though by our own power or godliness we had made this man walk?" (Acts 3:12)*. The same Peter here too makes clear that the One who heals is Jesus Christ. Herein lies the reason that a person who serves the Lord's work must not make it an opportunity to make himself stand out, but must testify of the One who actually saves and works.

The name Jesus Christ, which Peter called upon, does not mean only the power to heal diseases. The Lord of that name had the sin of the world passed on to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River. Because the sins each of us commits from the time we are born until we die are also included in that sin of the world, the Lord was hung on the Cross and shed His blood and died, paying the

price of that sin and receiving the judgment in our place, and He rose again from death and gave new life to us who believe. The One who healed Aeneas is none other than the Son of God who remitted our sins in this way, and He is our Savior.

If we leave sin in our hearts as it is and seek only help for the body, we do not know the most precious salvation that Jesus accomplished. Even if one's illness is healed and one can be active again, if the problem of the soul's sin remains, one cannot gain the peace to stand before God. Conversely, there is no need to think that we have not received even the remission of sins merely because weakness remains in the body. We must not confuse the condition of the body with the salvation of the soul, but must believe in the fact that Jesus bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, and in the Cross and the resurrection by which He ended the judgment for those sins.

The Holy Spirit is with the heart that has received the remission of sins by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit. The Holy Spirit testifies of the word so that we may know that salvation clearly, and makes us preach the same Savior to other souls as well. Therefore, the most precious thing the church can give people today is the word of salvation that gives sinners life forever. While reading of the healing of the sick in the age of the apostles, we have no reason to wait, thinking that we can preach the gospel only if we too show the same things without fail; we can testify of what Jesus did with the word that is already written.

Where people must turn is to the Lord

"So all who dwelt at Lydda and Sharon saw him and turned to the Lord" (Acts 9:35). The people who saw what happened

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when Aeneas arose did not rely on the name of Peter; they turned to the Lord. We must read together the fact that a miracle took place and the result that through it people turned toward the Lord. If we keep only the exclamation that an amazing thing happened and miss whom they came to believe in, we do not fully receive the faith to which the end of this word points.

The reason the Lord manifested miracles through the apostles was to make people believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior of sinners. Since it was not a matter of gathering human ability to build a stronger gathering, we too must not try to hold on to the people who have received help for ourselves. Whether we help with the hardships of the flesh or teach the word, we must serve so that that person believes in and relies on Jesus. If we have the attitude that people must exalt us in proportion to the attention we have paid them, we end up clouding the very path by which they turn to the Savior.

We must also examine our own faith. Are we not drawing near to Jesus only when life improves and the body is comfortable, and doubting even the word of salvation when circumstances become difficult? The fact that the Lord bore our sins through the baptism He received from John, was judged on the Cross, and rose again is not something that is accomplished and then disappears according to the state of our health today. If we place the basis of salvation in that atonement, we can tell our hearts to the Lord even when we are sick, and we can also give thanks to Him when we have received help.

Also, when preaching the word to another person, we must not treat him as if his soul were lacking too, just because there is sickness in his body. We were all people who needed salvation from sin, and we have received the remission of sins by the grace of the same Lord. Therefore, respecting the other person's circumstances, we must speak step by step of the salvation Jesus

accomplished so that he can hear it. The joy of one soul who believes the word and turns to the Lord cannot be measured only by the outwardly visible change in the body.

When Aeneas, who had lain for eight years, arose, the name Peter made known was Jesus Christ. Just as the people who saw it turned not to Peter but to the Lord, let us too not stop at marveling at the power but accept in our hearts who the Master of that power is. Jesus Christ, who healed Aeneas, is the Savior who also bore all our sins, received the judgment in our place, and rose again from death. Let us turn our hearts to Him, and let us serve so that through the help given to us as well, other souls come to know the same Savior. ✉

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Sermon 6 by Paul C. Jong

The Lord, who raised the dead, also gives life to souls dead because of sin

< Acts 9:36–43 >

"At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did. But it happened in those days that she became sick and died. When they had washed her, they laid her in an upper room. And since Lydda was near Joppa, and the disciples had heard that Peter was there, they sent two men to him, imploring him not to delay in coming to them. Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them. But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up. Then he gave her his hand and lifted her up; and when he had called the saints and widows, he presented her alive. And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord. So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner."

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The woman disciple who lived with others and looked after their needs

There are times when, after someone has departed from this world, we look at the things left behind and remember that person's service. The widows of Joppa wept, showing the tunics and garments that Tabitha had made for them. To them, Tabitha was not a person they knew only by name but a disciple who lived with them and gave them help. But this word does not end in the sorrow of remembering someone who is missed; it reports that Tabitha came back to life and that many people came to believe in the Lord. Examining in turn the sorrow and the coming back to life in that upper room, we too must look to the Savior who gives life.

"At Joppa there was a certain disciple named Tabitha, which is translated Dorcas. This woman was full of good works and charitable deeds which she did" (Acts 9:36). Tabitha was a disciple who was full of good works and charitable deeds. The Scripture records together that she was a person who believed in Jesus and that she looked after others. The faith of a saint who has received the remission of sins does not stay only in the peace of one's own heart; it leads to a life that can recognize and help the needs of the people one lives with.

What kind of help Tabitha gave is revealed also in the things the widows showed after she died. *"Then Peter arose and went with them. When he had come, they brought him to the upper room. And all the widows stood by him weeping, showing the tunics and garments which Dorcas had made while she was with them" (Acts 9:39)*. The garments they showed were traces of service in which she had actually worked with her hands for someone. What is recorded in this scene is not how often she said that she loved the saints, but what she helped with while she

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was with them. We too must connect the heart that grieves over the hardships of our brothers and sisters with help that we can actually carry out.

Even so, we must not read the charitable deeds that Tabitha performed as merit piled up in order to obtain the remission of sins. She was introduced first as a woman disciple, and whether she was a disciple was not judged by the greatness or smallness of her charitable deeds. The reason we have been justified also does not lie in how much we helped others; it is because we believed in the atonement that Jesus Christ accomplished for sinners. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death. For a saint who has received that grace to help other saints with what he has is different from paying the price of salvation.

The widows grieved at losing the disciple who had lived with them and shared help with them, and they remembered the service they had received, showing the garments she had made for them. The church must not exalt only the name of the one who helps while overlooking the heart of the one who receives help, and when we know that we are all a people who have received the Lord's grace, we can look after one another's needs and sorrows as the affairs of the same family.

Peter, who prayed in the upper room of sorrow

When Tabitha became sick and died, the people washed her body and laid her in an upper room. Because Lydda was nearby, the disciples sent two men to Peter, who was there, imploring him to come without delay. Peter came to Joppa with them and

went up to the upper room where the weeping widows and Tabitha's body were. The text records the work of the apostle who came to that place, without hiding the fact of death and the sorrow of those who were left behind.

"But Peter put them all out, and knelt down and prayed. And turning to the body he said, 'Tabitha, arise.' And she opened her eyes, and when she saw Peter she sat up" (Acts 9:40). Peter first knelt down and prayed. Before the weeping people, he did not go on with words boasting of his own power; he poured out his heart to God. Then, when he told Tabitha to arise, she opened her eyes, saw Peter, and sat up. When we read the prayer and the rising together, we cannot attribute this work of life to a power that came from the apostle as an individual.

Peter gave her his hand and lifted Tabitha up, and he called the saints and widows and showed them that she was alive. The widows who until a moment before had been showing the garments Tabitha had made for them now came to see Tabitha alive. Just as the text recorded how great their sorrow was, the Lord's grace bestowed on them also appeared in the actual coming back to life of a real person. The Lord actually raised Tabitha through the apostle, and the saints and widows saw her alive.

However, we must not accept the event of Tabitha's coming back to life as a method that can be reproduced in the same way in the face of the death of every saint. A rule that a person comes back to life if one follows Peter's actions and words exactly is not what is recorded in this word. The scene in which the apostle knelt down and prayed rather shows us whom we must rely on. Even in the midst of sorrow, rather than boasting that we ourselves or someone else has the power to give life, we must bring our hearts and our circumstances before the living Lord.

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What we who pray need is also not the self-confidence to obtain results as we please, but a heart that believes in the Lord. We can tell the Savior of our pain without hiding it, and we can also share that burden with the saints who grieve together with us. Believing in the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection does not make the sorrow of losing a loved one false. That even in that sorrow we can entrust our hearts to the One who saved our souls is the grace we have received.

Who is the Lord in whom many people came to believe

After this event became known, it is recorded, *"And it became known throughout all Joppa, and many believed on the Lord" (Acts 9:42)*. What the people came to know was the event that Tabitha had come back to life, and the One in whom many came to believe because of it was the Lord. The Lord worked miracles through the apostles so that people would believe in the One who is the Savior of sinners. Therefore, we too must not keep Tabitha's coming back to life merely as an amazing story, but must believe in the Savior who was testified of through that event.

The Lord in whom the people of Joppa came to believe is not One who only raised the dead Tabitha; He is Jesus Christ, who came to this earth to give life to our souls that were dead because of sin. Jesus had all the sin of mankind passed on to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John the Baptist. Because the sins of our whole lives, without a single one left out, were included in that sin of the world, the Lord shed His blood and

died on the Cross, paying the price of that sin and receiving the judgment in our place, and He rose again from the dead and gave us eternal life. The Lord in whom the people came to believe when they saw Tabitha is none other than the Savior who accomplished this salvation.

The reason a sinner can stand before God is not that he has lived longer than others or done many good deeds. We are justified because we believe that the Lord has completely removed our sins through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and His resurrection. The Holy Spirit is with the heart that believes in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and testifies of the salvation that has already been accomplished. So even when we think of death, instead of calculating whether our own good deeds are sufficient, we can rely on the Savior who gave us life.

The service entrusted to us is also connected with a life of sharing this salvation. Like Tabitha, we can look after saints who actually need help, stay beside them when they grieve, and preach the remission of sins that the Lord accomplished to souls who have the fear of sin. As precious as the work of helping with the needs of the body is, the work of letting souls hear the word of salvation must not be missed either. Both kinds of service must be carried out not with a heart that wants to leave one's own name behind but with a heart that wants to enjoy together the grace received from the Lord.

At the end of this word it says, *"So it was that he stayed many days in Joppa with Simon, a tanner" (Acts 9:43)*. Even after Peter had shown the event of Tabitha's coming back to life, he stayed many days in Joppa, and in the next chapter he meets there the men sent by Cornelius. This means that the steps of the apostle testifying of the Lord did not end with one amazing event. We too, rather than staying put while only looking back on the

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help and joy we once received, must look for the souls with whom we are to share the word and whom we are to help now.

In the garments the widows showed, Tabitha's service remained, and the showing of Tabitha alive led the hearts of all the people of Joppa to the Lord. We must treasure the service of the saints and look after one another's sorrows, but our final reliance must be placed on Jesus Christ, who gives life. Because the Savior who bore our sins and rose again from death gave life to souls that had been dead because of sin, we can care for one another and testify of Him today as well. ✉

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CHAPTER

10

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

Even a devout person must hear the gospel

< Acts 10:1–8 >

“There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, ‘Cornelius!’ And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, ‘What is it, lord?’ So he said to him, ‘Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.’ And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa.”

What Cornelius, who feared God, did not yet have

Even a person who fears God, prays, and helps people in need still has a word that he must hear. Cornelius was a man who sought God, but God did not tell him merely to keep on doing what he was already doing; He told him to send for Peter. When

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we look into the reason for this verse by verse, we can know what we must hear and believe in order to receive the remission of sins.

Verse 1 makes clear who Cornelius was. *"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment" (Acts 10:1)*. He was not an Israelite but a centurion of the Roman army, that is, a Gentile, and yet God's attention was directed to this man as well. The position of centurion tells us about his life, but a position in the army does not guarantee salvation before God. God, in meeting this man, looked at his heart toward God rather than at what nation he was from or how high a position he held.

Verse 2 tells how that heart was shown in his life. *"A devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2)*. Cornelius was not a man who thought of God only by himself; he feared God together with all his household, and that fear was shown in the alms with which he helped the people and led to a life of praying to God always. The passage does not belittle his devoutness as a vain thing, and God, too, remembered his prayers and his alms.

However, we must distinguish this devoutness from the faith that has received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus. Cornelius feared God and lived a good life, but he did not yet know how Jesus had remitted his sins. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world—which included not only the sins of Cornelius but all the sin of mankind—transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death; yet Cornelius had not yet met anyone who would convey the meaning of this to him. To put it in today's terms, he was a man who believed only the Old Testament well, and so he was

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in a state where he had received neither the remission of sins nor the Holy Spirit. The sins of the heart are not washed away by the mere fact that one has given many alms, nor can the number of one's prayers take the place of the Lord's work of salvation. A person who seeks God receives the answer to that seeking when he accepts the word of salvation that God sends.

The grace of remembering him is revealed in His letting him hear the gospel

Verse 3 records what happened to Cornelius about the ninth hour of the day. He saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and calling his name. God was not unaware of this man who sought God; He sent an angel and called him by name. When Cornelius observed him and, being afraid, asked what it was, the angel told him that he was a man who had been remembered before God.

Let us read verse 4. *"Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God" (Acts 10:4)*. Here, the words that they have come up for a memorial, that He remembered them, mean that God knew what he had done and looked upon him. This must not be turned into a statement that God gave him the remission of sins as a reward for his alms. For the angel's words were not a declaration that his salvation was already finished and that he could rest assured; they led on to the concrete instruction of the next verse. The grace with which God remembered Cornelius is revealed in His opening the way so that he could hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

The fact that Cornelius saw an angel is also not the same as believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. If we make the amazing vision itself the basis of salvation, we miss why God

had him send for a man separately. The angel did not make Cornelius rely on him but told him of the meeting God had appointed, so this vision was God's guidance to let Cornelius hear the gospel. We, too, rather than dwelling on what we saw and felt in prayer, must set our hearts on hearing the word God has given concerning our sins.

Why did He have him send for Peter

God did not tell Cornelius to wait vaguely. Let us read verses 5 and 6. *"Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do" (Acts 10:5–6).* The place to send to was Joppa; the man to send for was Simon whose surname was Peter; and the place where he was staying was the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. Peter and the owner of the house shared the same name, Simon, but they were different people, and the angel made clear whom they were to look for.

The reason God designated the place and the person was to let Cornelius hear the word through God's servant. If Cornelius had already been a man who had received the remission of sins, there would have been no reason for God to have him send for Peter. The reason everything did not end with his meeting the angel, and the task of sending for someone who would preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit still remained, was that the content of salvation which his heart was to accept had to come from what Jesus Christ had accomplished. Having a zeal to believe does not mean that one automatically comes to know what one must believe.

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The gospel of the water and the Spirit that we must hear is the word of salvation by which Jesus has removed our sins. Just as the sacrificial offerings of the Old Testament had sins passed on to them through the laying on of hands, Jesus had all the sins of the world transferred to Him once and for all by receiving baptism from John. Because our sins were not passed on in part but passed on entirely, Jesus paid the price of those sins by shedding His blood on the Cross and received the judgment in our place, and He rose again on the third day and became our living Savior. The remission of sins is not a result produced by Cornelius's alms or by our good deeds; it is grace received by believing in this salvation the Lord has accomplished.

Therefore, to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit is not to look for a reason to rate one's own devoutness more highly; it is to know how Jesus removed the sins that one could not resolve by one's own strength, and to believe in Him as one's own Savior. God's telling Cornelius to send for Peter was not an attempt to add one more religious experience that he lacked; it was grace meant to let him hear this truth of salvation.

Do not be satisfied with good deeds, but come before the word of the gospel

After the angel departed, Cornelius carried out what he had been instructed to do. Let us read verses 7 and 8. *"And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa" (Acts 10:7–8)*. He called two of his household servants and a devout man from among his soldiers, told them everything that had happened to

him, and sent those three men to Joppa. It is not recorded that Cornelius went to find Peter himself; rather, he sent men to send for him, just as the angel had said.

In the statement that he explained all these things to them lies the sense that he let the messengers know what they were going for. The act of sending men did not stop at boasting of his own experience of having seen a vision; it was a response that actually followed the word God had made known to him. Cornelius, who had feared God, now wanted to hear the word God was sending as well; he did not consider himself satisfied with his good deeds and in no need of hearing more, but sought the meeting God had prepared.

The passage ends with the messengers being sent to Joppa, but why they set out on their way is clear. What Cornelius needed was not greater praise for his own devoutness but the word that made known the Savior who had remitted sins. Even now there are people who, like Cornelius, seek God and kneel before the word of God and yet have not heard the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and what such people must hear is also not praise for their own good deeds but the word of the salvation Jesus has accomplished. We, too, if we have a heart that seeks God, must not stop at prayer and alms but must hear of the salvation Jesus has accomplished. Just as God remembered Cornelius's prayers and had him send for Peter, those who want to receive the remission of sins must come before the word of the gospel that the Lord sends and hear that word. ✉

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Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

What God has cleansed you must not call common

< Acts 10:1–16 >

"There was a certain man in Caesarea called Cornelius, a centurion of what was called the Italian Regiment, a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always. About the ninth hour of the day he saw clearly in a vision an angel of God coming in and saying to him, 'Cornelius!' And when he observed him, he was afraid, and said, 'What is it, lord?' So he said to him, 'Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do.' And when the angel who spoke to him had departed, Cornelius called two of his household servants and a devout soldier from among those who waited on him continually. So when he had explained all these things to them, he sent them to Joppa. The next day, as they went on their journey and drew near the city, Peter went up on the housetop to pray, about the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to

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him, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But Peter said, 'Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean.' And a voice spoke to him again the second time, 'What God has cleansed you must not call common.' This was done three times. And the object was taken up into heaven again."

The gospel that spread even to the Gentiles

In Acts chapter 10 we can see the work of the Holy Spirit, the work by which the gospel, beginning from Jerusalem, spread even to the Gentiles. Jesus Christ and the disciples of Jesus Christ accomplished that work in Jerusalem. Jesus Christ was born in the nation of Judea, bore all the sin of the world by receiving baptism from John, shed His blood and died on the Cross in the nation of Judea, rose again, and ascended into heaven.

Many Jews and the disciples of Jesus Christ received the remission of sins by believing in this Jesus Christ. But now we can see that it is not only the disciples of Jesus and the people living in Judea who believe in Jesus Christ, but that the gospel is spread to the Gentiles, to the Romans, and to all the people of the whole world, and we can see that this is the will of God.

There was a centurion named Cornelius. One day, while this man was praying, an angel appeared and said, *"Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter" (Acts 10:4–5)*. It means that when a man who was a centurion of the army in the region of Caesarea was praying, an angel spoke to him. It means that the angel told him to send men to Joppa and send for Peter. So this centurion chose men from among his soldiers and sent them.

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The vision Peter saw

What happened the next day was that Peter went up on the housetop to pray. It was his habit of prayer. The word says, *"About the sixth hour. Then he became very hungry and wanted to eat; but while they made ready, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and an object like a great sheet bound at the four corners, descending to him and let down to the earth. In it were all kinds of four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And a voice came to him" (Acts 10:9–13)*. It means that this is what he saw. Peter was praying, and when it became the sixth hour and he was hungry and wanted to eat something, this vision appeared to him in a trance like this, so that he did not know whether it was a dream or reality.

He saw a vision of something like a great sheet coming down from heaven, bound at the four corners. While he was looking at it, there was a voice. When he looked inside it, there were many things in it. There were animals that creep on the earth, there were things that fly, and there were four-footed animals, and he was looking at these. Then there was a voice from heaven saying, *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 10:13)*. Peter said, *"Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean" (Acts 10:14)*. Then there was a second voice. It said, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. After this had happened three times, the object went up into heaven.

When we look at the five books of Moses in the Old Testament, such as Deuteronomy, there are animals that God has set apart as those to be eaten and those not to be eaten. Because Peter was a Jew, when the sheet came down from heaven in the vision and he looked, there were such unclean animals in it that must not be eaten. Among the four-footed animals, too, there are

unclean animals that must not be eaten, and creeping animals are not to be eaten.

But while he was looking at these things, there was a voice from heaven saying, *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 10:13)*. Peter was able to say that he could not do so, that he could not eat what was common and unclean. This was how Peter had lived his life of faith until then. According to the law of God, he never ate anything unclean. And he did not eat what God had told him not to eat, whether pigs or owls or things that fly.

But when he was told to kill and eat them, he said that he would never eat anything common and unclean. He was saying, how could he eat something unclean? Was it not what God had told him not to eat, and what God had called unclean? He was saying, how could he eat that? Then there was the voice of God from heaven saying, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. And it says that the sheet went up into heaven.

Now, what is this story about? Peter was in the region called Joppa, and in the army at Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius, who was a centurion. While Cornelius was praying, an angel appeared, and the next day such a thing also happened to Peter. What God showed Cornelius and what He showed Peter are in the same vein. Peter saw this in a vision.

So this Peter had never yet preached the gospel to the Gentiles. In a sense, Peter was a man who preached the gospel to the Jews. Paul went to the Gentiles, though. Peter had deeply rooted preconceptions about the Gentiles. Our Lord appeared to him and told him to preach the gospel to the Gentiles as well, saying that He had made them clean. For the Jews thought of the Gentiles as all too unclean.

If we read through to the end, Cornelius invites Peter, and when Peter goes to the house of Cornelius the centurion and

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preaches the word of God, these people receive the Holy Spirit. It means that they received the remission of sins through hearing the word. What was the word Peter preached in that house? It was none other than this word: that Jesus had the sin of the whole world passed on to Him through the baptism He received from John, that He shed His blood on the Cross and received the judgment because of that sin, and that He rose again from death on the third day.

"What God has cleansed you must not call common"

We know well what it is to preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and that this was the will of God, and that God has removed the sins of the Gentiles, too. This is what that word is about.

But do we not call common what God has cleansed? It said, *"You must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. We must know this. We must preach that our God has removed the sins of all the people of this world—that He has removed all these sins, whether the sins we commit in our hearts, the sins we commit in our thoughts, or the sins we commit in our deeds.

In the sheet that came down from heaven there were things that walk on four feet and many unclean animals that creep on the earth on their bellies, and though Peter saw them as unclean, God saw them as clean because He had made them clean. It means that in God's sight the creeping things were clean, the things that walk on four feet were clean, and the things that fly were clean. It means that everything, all of it, was clean. That is why He said, *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 10:13)*. With what did God make them clean? They are clean because, when Jesus received baptism from John, all the filthy sins of the world

passed on to Jesus, and Jesus bore those sins and received the judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross.

It means that when our God looks at all human beings in all the affairs of human life, our God has removed all the sins of every person and made them clean. People think and say that people commit sins in their deeds, that people cannot help sinning, so how can one say that a person is clean? But we must know this. It is saying, do not call unclean what God has called clean. Our Lord said that even if we harbor a lustful heart in our hearts, it is the sin of lust. Those sins we commit in our hearts, too, our Lord has borne them all. Sins committed in the heart are also tremendous sins. Our Lord said, *"Whoever looks at a woman to lust for her has already committed adultery with her in his heart" (Matthew 5:28)*. He is saying that merely having thought it is already having acted, that one has committed the sin of adultery.

If that is so, even if we humans do not sin physically, how many sins do we commit in our hearts? That is the point. Those sins we commit in our hearts, our Lord has borne them all. Dear fellow believers, do you believe? Do you believe that He has removed them all? Do you believe that the sins committed in the heart are also sins? And do you believe that our Lord has borne those sins as well? It means that He has borne them all. It means that He has borne the sins committed in the heart and the sins committed in thought alike.

"I wish this world would be turned completely upside down. I wish the whole world would burn up." How great a murder and how great an evil this is! That, too, is sin. That sin, too, our Lord has borne entirely. Then, He has also borne all these sins that we humans commit through our deeds while living in this world. We think only of the sins we commit with this flesh. It means that people say, since the flesh will sin again in the future, how

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can one say that there is no sin? And it means that they have no faith. Why is that? Because they know the weakness of their own flesh. What does God say? *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. It means that God has cleansed them.

Our God has borne all our sins—the sins we commit in our hearts, the sins we commit in our thoughts, and the sins we commit with our flesh—and has taken them away and removed them. By believing in our hearts that He has removed them all, we receive the remission of sins. When we preach the gospel to people and when we speak to ourselves—when we speak to those who, in such matters as our own shortcomings or the sins people commit with the flesh, say of themselves that they have sin—we must preach the word God has spoken. We must preach that He said, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*, and that however many sins you may have committed, our Lord has removed those sins entirely.

What we must know when we preach the gospel is that ordinary people are bound by the sins they commit through their deeds. And they look at the weakness of their own flesh. But if we know the fact that our Lord has borne all the sins we commit in our hearts, we come to know the fact that He has borne the sins we commit with the flesh all the more certainly.

A person must not think only of the sins committed with the flesh. Our Lord has borne all the sins we commit in our hearts and the sins we commit in our thoughts. If that is so, would He not have borne the sins that we commit with the flesh after being born on this earth? He has borne them all. That is what we preach. We must spread this gospel, that our Lord has removed all the sins we commit with our flesh and the sins we commit in our hearts and in our thoughts. And we believe this.

If we judge ourselves unclean, we are bound by the law again

Dear fellow believers, how many sins do you and I commit in our hearts? Yet we do not think of this very seriously. And what else? We also commit sins in various ways as we live in the world, because we have the flesh. Then what happens? If a person is bound by the sins he commits with the flesh, by the sins of his mistakes—if he thinks of himself as unclean—that is being bound by works, and it is being under the law. We must know this.

Our Lord has removed them abundantly. When we think about the fact that He has borne all our sins—the sins committed in thought, the sins committed in the heart, and all the sins I commit through the mistakes of my flesh—since our Lord has removed all the sin of the world, has He not also removed the sins I commit in my heart and in my thoughts? Then what about the sins committed with the flesh? Among us who have been saved, there are people who fall into their own weakness because their flesh is lacking. It means that they are bound by the sins their flesh commits. It means that this is not faith. Why is that? Because although they say that the sins committed in the heart have all been remitted and the sins committed with the flesh have also all been remitted, if, after receiving the remission of sins, they call themselves unclean over the sins they commit with the flesh, is that not exactly the same as this word? Just as our God said, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*, our Lord says to us as well that He has saved you, so you must not call yourself unclean. Among the sins Jesus took upon Himself through the baptism He received from John were included even those sins we commit through the mistakes of the flesh after we are saved. Because the Lord paid the price even

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for those sins in full by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again, those sins do not come back to us as our own just because they are mistakes made after salvation.

If a person condemns himself because he feels uneasy about the part where he has sinned with the flesh before God, that, too, is exactly the same as being saved and then being bound by the law. After the saints of Galatia were saved, false teachers told them that they had to go on to be circumcised in order to be saved, and this is exactly the same as that. It is as if to say, is there no salvation unless one is circumcised? If, after being saved, a person judges himself unclean over the sins he has committed with his flesh—even though he has received the remission of all his sins—that is exactly the same as binding himself with the law again. What God has called clean, what He has declared sinless after removing all our sins, we must not judge to be sinful by judging ourselves. Dear fellow believers, is that so, or is it not?

Dear fellow believers, it is wrong for a person who has been saved, because he knows himself well, to judge and condemn himself on the basis of human weakness and say, "You are such and such." It is also wrong for a person to judge himself. "*What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. Since our Lord has cleansed us, we cannot say to ourselves that we are unclean. This is important for those who have been saved. In fact, this passage is speaking about the Gentiles.

What about those who have been saved? When are they bound by works? When they have not acted rightly, when their deeds have fallen somewhat short, when their deeds have sinned, what happens? They say to themselves that they have sin, that they are unclean. It means that this is wrong. And this over what God has cleansed.

God says to us that we are clean. He says that we are righteous. He says that we have no sin at all. Then, even if we fall somewhat short, we ourselves must not look only at what we have done wrong, but must speak to ourselves with such faith. It means that we must render the verdict that we are clean. It means that we must make such a judgment within faith. It means that within faith, in Christ, we must make the same judgment as God.

There are times when we who have been saved are bound by the law. We have clearly been saved, yet we are in darkness. That is precisely being bound by works. We have judged ourselves and rendered the verdict that we are unclean. And this when God has rendered the verdict that we are clean. Then, is our own verdict right, or is it not? It is not right. God's verdict is right. What do we call this? It is being saved and then being bound by the law again.

Lazarus had gone into the tomb, and when Jesus said, *"Lazarus, come forth!" (John 11:43)*, Lazarus came out still bound with graveclothes. So Jesus said to the people beside him, *"Loose him, and let him go" (John 11:44)*. Although Lazarus had been saved from death, it means that even Lazarus did not have a perfect flesh as he went on living his whole life. We do not know at what age Lazarus died and came back to life, but even if he were to live another twenty years, it means that his flesh could not live one hundred percent perfectly according to the ordinances of God. It means that his heart was like that, and his thoughts were like that as well.

What did our Lord say? He said, *"Loose him, and let him go."* If the bandages were wound to the right, they must be unwound to the left. It means that only when the ones on his face are loosed, the ones on his head loosed, the ones on his neck loosed, the ones on his arms loosed, the ones on his body loosed, and the ones on his legs loosed—only when all of them are loosed—can

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he walk. After receiving the remission of sins before God, we must never live bound by the law. There are such people. There are many times when a person binds himself with the law. Dear fellow believers, isn't that so? When you think something wrong or act wrongly, are there times when you brand yourself a failure, or are there not? You do. That is being bound by the law. That is what God is not pleased with.

"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15). God has cleansed us. A person must not say to himself that he is unclean. That is what this word means. Is a person who has received the remission of sins perfect? Are his deeds perfect? He is not. Then, is such a judgment—that he is imperfect, always imperfect—always right? It is not right.

Preach the Gospel of the Complete Removal of Sins

We preach the gospel. We, the righteous who have received the remission of sins, do. The question is what we preach when we preach the gospel. Those who have not been able to accept the gospel are all bound by the law. Those who have not been able to accept the gospel are all, every one of them, bound by the law. "Because my deeds fall short, it is no use even if I receive the remission of sins. Because I will sin again tomorrow. I know it all too well. From my own experience, it is obvious." So people think that they can neither believe in the remission of sins nor want to receive it, and that even if they did receive it, since they cannot vouch for themselves, it is better not to know at all, better not to believe, and better not to receive.

What we must say to them is this: "God has made you holy. He has made you clean. The sins you commit in your thoughts

and the sins you commit in your hearts—He has removed those sins, too. Would He not have been able to remove the sins you have committed through your deeds? He has removed them abundantly. And He has abundantly removed the sins you commit throughout your whole life." In this way this gospel by which God has cleansed us is confirmed to us with the word: that Jesus Christ has borne all the sin of the whole world, that He has borne all our sins, all the sins we commit in our thoughts, our hearts, and our flesh. We spread this amazing good news. That is why the gospel we spread is amazing good news. Here lies the reason we can say that He has removed them abundantly. It is because, when Jesus received baptism from John, all the sins of our whole lives passed on to Jesus at one time, and Jesus paid the price of those sins in full by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again on the third day.

Dear fellow believers, do the born-again have sin, or do they not? Have you been saved abundantly? Can you say to yourselves that you fall short, that you have sin, or can you not?

Dear fellow believers, we have received the remission of sins abundantly. We have abundantly received the remission of sins. Do you know how many sins you have committed in your heart? Do you know how many sins you commit in your heart even in a single day? Why do you not speak of those, and speak only of the sins you have committed through your deeds? It says, *"Strain out a gnat and swallow a camel" (Matthew 23:24)*, and the sins committed in the heart are as big as a camel, while the sins committed through deeds are as small as a gnat. The sins we commit through our deeds are very small. Can we say that we have sin because of the sins we commit through our deeds? We cannot. Our Lord has removed all our sins that are as great as a camel, those sins we commit in our hearts. He has removed all the sins committed in thought. How many sins do we commit in

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thought? We think all kinds of thoughts. If those thoughts were to take concrete form, there would be no one left sitting here.

If the Lord had not been able to remove all those sins we commit in thought, we could not live. Has our Lord removed all the sins we commit in thought, or has He not? He has removed them. If that is so, has our Lord removed all the sins we commit with the flesh, or has He not? He has removed them all. It means that because people think only of the sins committed with the flesh, they say to themselves that they are unclean and bind themselves with the law again. We must not bind ourselves with the law.

When we preach the gospel, we must preach it this way: "God has cleansed you. He has removed all your sins. He has removed all the sins you commit in thought, the sins you commit in your heart, the sins you commit with your flesh—the sins of your whole life." And we must believe the word of truth that the Lord has removed, for ourselves as well, all the sins we commit in thought, the sins we commit in our hearts, and the sins we commit with our flesh. One who first believes this himself and then spreads it is a person who belongs to the truth.

The Lord said, *"Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest" (Matthew 11:28)*. What is the labor and the heavy burden? What is our burden? It is the sins we commit through our deeds, and our feeling ourselves unclean because of them; it means that when we call ourselves unclean on seeing them, it becomes a great burden to us. But our Lord has removed all those sins and cleansed us. That is why He gives us rest.

Do you yourselves have sin, or do you not? You do not. Then, can we preach the gospel, or can we not? We can. And is it right to preach it to people, or is it not? It is right. Is it right that God has cleansed us, or is it not? It is right.

The firm faith a worker of the gospel needs

Here there were creeping things of the earth, four-footed animals, and birds of the air, and Peter was told, *"Kill and eat" (Acts 10:13)*. This speaks of all the sins of mankind, of human beings. All the sins. It represented, in the form of a bundle, all the sins that not only the Gentiles but we human beings commit as we live on this earth.

Dear fellow believers, even if, before God, we only go so far as to say of ourselves, "I have been saved; I have received the remission of original sin and the remission of actual sins," that is of course salvation all the same. And to say, "Jesus bore all my sins by receiving baptism from John at the Jordan River," is salvation all the same. But what then? Salvation comes about when it becomes clear that one's own sins have been passed on; yet after we have been saved, as we live on this earth, the righteous do, without fail, commit sins through their deeds.

At such a time, our faith must not be merely the faith that we have been saved; we must have the firm faith that we are perfect, that we are clean. When we have that faith, we can preach the gospel to others, and we ourselves come to stand clearly as workers of the gospel. Without that faith, having barely received the remission of sins oneself and clinging only to "So He has taken all the sins away," one is far too lacking to preach the gospel to others. It is because one's deeds are not perfect as one lives on this earth. Because even when one looks at oneself with one's own heart, there are so many shortcomings in oneself, one cannot preach the gospel to another person with power.

But rather than doing it doctrinally, as in "one's own original sin and actual sins," we must believe concretely that our Lord has borne all the sins I commit in my thoughts; we must believe that the Lord has borne the sins committed in the heart as well

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and has removed those sins, too; and we must believe that He has also removed all the sins one commits with one's flesh—it means that we need the assured faith of having received a salvation that goes that far. When we have it, we can go forward as workers of righteousness at any time, without being entangled in our own shortcomings.

Otherwise, if one is entangled in the sins one commits with the flesh, if one thinks that one can preach the gospel only when one is perfectly clean, then since one's flesh is clearly lacking and the flesh is not divine, shortcomings are bound to appear, and when the shortcomings appear, it means that one becomes a person who cannot preach the gospel.

The reason we need such firm faith is this: if our Lord said, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*, then we believe it. Then it means that we, too, must say to ourselves that we are clean. We need such firm faith—firm faith. When we have it, we can live as workers of the gospel. Isn't that so?

Our brothers, isn't that so? Don't you keep binding yourselves to the weak parts of your own flesh? And don't you judge yourselves to be somewhat unclean, even though you have no sin? But God has called you clean, and He has removed the sins you commit in your hearts and the sins you commit in your thoughts—those sins, all of them. As for the sins committed with the flesh, I am not saying that you should sin deliberately. Because the flesh is not perfect, there are also sins committed with the flesh. Has He removed those sins entirely, or has He not? He has removed them all. So it means that we reach perfection. You have been bound a great deal until now, haven't you? Looking at yourselves with your own thoughts and not being able to hold your heads high.

We who preach the gospel, the people of God, must have a firm measure of faith. We must be able to say of ourselves at any time, "I am certain that I have no sin. I am clean." At any time.

Dear fellow believers, aren't there many times when you cannot say so at any time? To the point of feeling uneasy. There are truly many times when you feel uneasy about yourselves, aren't there? This is being bound by the law. It is being saved and becoming a sinner again. It is entirely possible. A saved sinner. Then what difference is there between them and us?

Our Lord has removed our sins abundantly. Cleanly and abundantly. We must believe in that abundant salvation and spread salvation. Our Lord saved us so that we would live that way. There are many such things, aren't there, dear fellow believers? Saying to yourselves, "You have no sin, but you fall very short. You are unclean." That is sin. That is wrong. Peter said that he had never eaten such things, but God said, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*.

God has made us clean. The Lord has cleansed us. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

Dear fellow believers, we have no sin. We are clean. We are completely, firmly, and eternally clean. And God has established us as His servants of righteousness. He has made us the people of God and made us servants of righteousness.

He has set us free from being bound by our thoughts, bound by our deeds, and bound by our weakness. He has made the people of the whole universe perfectly clean. He has saved them all and set them all free. The gospel we preach is precisely this. Not merely, "He has simply taken all the sins away," but we preach what the Lord has done—that the Lord has removed all the sins you commit in your thoughts, the sins you commit in your hearts, and the sins you commit with your flesh. Our

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spreading this firm gospel is precisely the gospel that we, the righteous, preach.

The saints are bound a great deal right now. I cannot tell you how much they are bound. It means that they judge just as Peter judged. Dear fellow believers, our Lord has delivered us from that. Would He not have removed the sins committed in thought and the sins committed with the flesh? He has removed them abundantly. Dear fellow believers, do you have shortcomings? Is there anything that makes you feel somewhat uneasy? There is not. Know the fact that the gospel is to spread what He has cleansed, believe this, and I hope that you will spread the gospel to souls. ✉

Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The Holy Spirit causes the gospel to be preached

< Acts 10:17–23a >

"Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them.' Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, 'Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?' (And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee –ASV). Then he invited them in and lodged them"

Where did He lead Peter, who was pondering the meaning of the vision

Peter saw the vision, but he did not immediately understand its whole meaning. While he was wondering, God had him meet the men Cornelius had sent and, through the word of the Holy

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Spirit, told him what he had to do. In this word we see where the Holy Spirit leads a believer. We will confirm from the text that this guidance is directed toward the person who is waiting for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. The gospel the Holy Spirit causes us to preach is the news that Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, which includes our sins, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death.

Let us read verses 17 and 18. *"Now while Peter wondered within himself what this vision which he had seen meant, behold, the men who had been sent from Cornelius had made inquiry for Simon's house, and stood before the gate. And they called and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there" (Acts 10:17–18).* What Peter wondered about was what the vision he had seen meant. While he was pondering its meaning, the messengers of Cornelius arrived just then; so his thoughts about the vision and what was happening outside the gate were not separate things but were being joined into one meeting that God had prepared. God did not let Peter dwell on the wonder of the vision; He leads him before the people he was to meet.

The messengers came to Simon's house and asked whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there. This house was not Peter's own but the house of Simon the tanner, where he was lodging, and the messengers came to the place made known to Cornelius and looked for the designated man by name. Peter, who was wondering about the meaning of the vision, and the messengers, who were looking for him, were now in one place; but the fact that the messengers were standing outside the gate did not mean that Peter had fully grasped the meaning of

the vision. So in the next verse the Holy Spirit Himself speaks to him.

The Holy Spirit brings together the one who hears and the one who preaches

While Peter was still thinking about the vision, the Holy Spirit spoke first. Let us read verses 19 and 20. *"While Peter thought about the vision, the Spirit said to him, 'Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them'" (Acts 10:19–20).* Following the notice that there were men seeking him, the command to arise and go down is given. So that Peter would not remain where he was, only thinking, the Holy Spirit tells him concretely what action he has to take. In the word to go with them lies the meaning that he must follow those messengers and meet Cornelius.

In particular, the ground for telling him to doubt nothing lies in the fact that the Holy Spirit had sent them. Because God was at work behind Cornelius's sending of men, Peter could not refuse this meeting on the grounds that they were men sent by a Gentile. God did not only tell Cornelius's side to send men; He also told Peter's side to go with them. This is how the Holy Spirit brings together the one who is to hear the gospel of the water and the Spirit and the one who is to preach it.

Here the guidance of the Holy Spirit is distinguished from Peter's interpreting the vision as he pleased and starting some new undertaking. Since the text clearly records who commanded whom to do what, we too must not regard everything that comes to our minds as a command of the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit, in the past and now alike, works to cause the gospel of the water

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and the Spirit—which Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection—to be preached, and He does not lead people to places unrelated to the spread of the gospel. The word the Holy Spirit gave Peter also led to his going to the person God had prepared and preaching the gospel to him, and a life guided by the Holy Spirit is revealed precisely in this way, in preaching the word according to His will.

Preach the remission of sins clearly even to those who seem devout

Verse 21 records that Peter heard the word of the Holy Spirit and went down. *"Then Peter went down to the men who had been sent to him from Cornelius, and said, 'Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?'" (Acts 10:21)*. He made known that he was the man they were seeking and asked the reason for their visit. Following the Holy Spirit's instruction does not mean asking nothing of the other party. Peter confirmed to them whom they were seeking, and he listens to the messengers' account of what had happened to Cornelius. His obedience to the word of the Holy Spirit led to an actual conversation with people.

In verse 22 the messengers introduce Cornelius and convey the purpose of the invitation. *"And they said, Cornelius a centurion, a righteous man and one that feareth God, and well reported of by all the nation of the Jews, was warned of God by a holy angel to send for thee into his house, and to hear words from thee" (Acts 10:22)*. The statement that he was a righteous man who feared God and had a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews is a description of his devout life. It means

that he was a man who feared God enough to be called a righteous man in people's eyes; it must not be read to mean that he was already a righteous man who had received the remission of sins by believing in the salvation of Jesus. Because Cornelius was a Gentile who had not yet received the remission of sins or the Holy Spirit, there was a word he had to hear, and the angel's instruction, too, was to summon Peter and hear his words. Devoutness that earns a good reputation from people and faith that knows the truth of salvation must not be regarded as the same thing.

Because what Cornelius wanted to hear was not praise for the man Peter or impressions about the vision but the word of salvation that God's servant would preach, he invited him to his house. In this invitation we must see the need of a soul waiting for the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Even a person who fears God cannot remove his sins by his own good deeds, and so he must know the fact that Jesus Christ has saved sinners. The Holy Spirit leads Peter precisely so that this need may be met.

To preach the fact that Jesus has saved us, we must make clear together both that He bore sins and that He received the judgment for sins. Jesus had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John, and the sins that you and I commit throughout our whole lives were also included in them. The Lord shed His blood and died on the Cross, thereby paying the price of those sins and receiving our judgment in our place, and He rose again from the dead. The reason we preach this gospel of the water and the Spirit is so that those who hear will not rely on their own deeds but will believe in Jesus, who has removed all their sins, as their Savior. Because God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to the heart that has heard and believed this word and received the remission

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of sins, the Holy Spirit sends one who will preach to the person who must hear the gospel.

Therefore, while speaking of the guidance of the Holy Spirit, we cannot leave the content of the gospel of the water and the Spirit empty. For the purpose for which the Holy Spirit sends Peter is to let Cornelius hear the salvation of God. We who know the gospel must not presume that, because someone seems devout, he already knows the word he needs. While valuing that person's heart that seeks God, we must clearly preach the remission of sins that Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the Cross, and the resurrection.

The way of the gospel opened by bringing the messengers inside

When Cornelius's messengers had finished speaking, Peter welcomed them. The first part of verse 23 records it this way. *"He invited them in and lodged them" (Acts 10:23)*. The men who had been seeking Peter outside the gate now came inside and stayed. Peter did not hear what they said and send them away, nor did he keep them standing outside the gate on the grounds that a Gentile had sent them; he actually received those whom the Holy Spirit had said He had sent.

Peter's going to Cornelius's house and preaching the word follows after this. But in this response of calling the messengers at the gate inside, the way to go and preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit was already opened. Peter, who had wondered about the meaning of the vision, came down according to the word of the Holy Spirit, talked with the messengers, and welcomed them. Just as the Holy Spirit sent Peter then, so today He leads us who have received the remission

of sins to the souls who must hear the gospel, and we must follow that guidance and go to those who are waiting for the word. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

Upon those who have received the remission of sins the Holy Spirit comes

< Acts 10:33–48 >

"So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God. Then Peter opened his mouth and said: 'In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him. The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. 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. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that,

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through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins.' While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also. For they heard them speak with tongues and magnify God. Then Peter answered, 'Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?' And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days."

God, who brought Cornelius and Peter together

In the region of Caesarea there was a man named Cornelius who feared God, and this Cornelius and all the members of his whole household received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit. I would like to share with you the word on this part: how they received the remission of sins and how they received the Holy Spirit.

The man called Cornelius was a Gentile, and he was a centurion of the Roman army. Yet this man was someone who had served God well in his everyday life. He was a man who feared God, gave alms generously to the people, and always prayed to God. Then one day, about the ninth hour, while he was praying, an angel of God came in to him in a vision and called him, saying, *"Cornelius!" (Acts 10:3)*. So Cornelius looked at him intently and said, *"What is it, lord?" (Acts 10:4)*, and the angel spoke to him: *"Your prayers and your alms have come up for a memorial before God. Now send men to Joppa, and send for Simon whose surname is Peter. He is lodging with Simon, a*

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tanner, whose house is by the sea. He will tell you what you must do" (Acts 10:4–6). In this way the angel told him everything—the place, whom he should send for, and even the name of the servant of God.

When this Cornelius heard this from the angel, he called two of the servants under him and one devout man from among the soldiers and told them all these things. Then he sent them to Joppa. He sent them to Peter. God, through the angel, had told him to send men to Joppa and send for Peter and to listen to what he said; and when these men had set out and, on the next day, were drawing near the city called Joppa, what happened to Peter was this: Peter, too, had gone up on the housetop to pray, and while he was praying he became hungry. So he wanted to eat, and while the food was being prepared, he fell into a trance and saw heaven opened and a great object coming down. It looked like a great sheet, and it was bound at the four corners and was descending from heaven to the earth. When he looked inside it, there were four-footed animals, creeping things, and birds of the air. While Peter was looking into it, there came a voice from heaven. He heard a voice saying, *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 10:13)*. Peter said, *"Not so, Lord! For I have never eaten anything common or unclean" (Acts 10:14)*. Then a voice came from heaven a second time: *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. After this had happened three times in a row, the object went up into heaven again. Because it was a vision Peter saw suddenly while he was about to eat, he thought it very strange. What could this mean? While he was doubting in his heart and thinking, "Did I see something that was not there? Did I hear wrongly? What is this all about?" the men sent by Cornelius came to Simon's house, stood outside, and asked *"whether Simon, whose surname was Peter, was lodging there" (Acts 10:18)*.

At that time Peter was thinking about the vision he had seen, and the Holy Spirit spoke to Peter, saying, *"Behold, three men are seeking you. Arise therefore, go down and go with them, doubting nothing; for I have sent them" (Acts 10:19–20)*. So Peter went down to the men and said, *"Yes, I am he whom you seek. For what reason have you come?" (Acts 10:21)*, and they answered, *"Cornelius the centurion, a just man, one who fears God and has a good reputation among all the nation of the Jews, was divinely instructed by a holy angel to summon you to his house, and to hear words from you" (Acts 10:22)*. They conveyed to him that their master was a man who truly feared God and was well spoken of by all who believed in God, and that, having been instructed by an angel, he wanted to summon Peter to his house and hear what he had to say. So then Peter came to understand somewhat what the vision he had seen meant. "Ah, God showed me this vision so that I would preach the gospel to the Gentiles." So he told them to come in, they spent the night together, and the next day they went together to the region of Caesarea, where Cornelius lived.

When Cornelius received the news that Peter was coming, he had gathered not only his own family but also his close friends, and they were all waiting. When Peter came in, Cornelius, who had been standing in front of the door, bowed down very low before him. Cornelius bowed down to Peter. Peter was taken aback and said, *"Stand up; I myself am also a man" (Acts 10:26)*. And then, even while saying that for a Jew to keep company with Gentiles was unlawful according to the law of God and that this was something that simply could not be, he said this: *"God has shown me that I should not call any man common or unclean. Therefore I came without objection as soon as I was sent for. I ask, then, for what reason have you sent for me?" (Acts 10:28–29)*. Then Cornelius said, *"Four days ago I was fasting until this*

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hour; and at the ninth hour I prayed in my house, and behold, a man stood before me in bright clothing, and said, 'Cornelius, your prayer has been heard, and your alms are remembered in the sight of God. Send therefore to Joppa and call Simon here, whose surname is Peter. He is lodging in the house of Simon, a tanner, by the sea. When he comes, he will speak to you.' So I sent to you immediately, and you have done well to come. Now therefore, we are all present before God, to hear all the things commanded you by God" (Acts 10:30–33). And so now Peter preaches the word. Peter now gives a sermon. He went to Cornelius's house to preach, and in what way does he do it? *"In truth I perceive that God shows no partiality. But in every nation whoever fears Him and works righteousness is accepted by Him" (Acts 10:34–35).* Opening in this way, he preaches the gospel.

"The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached: how God anointed Jesus of Nazareth with the Holy Spirit and with power, who went about doing good and healing all who were oppressed by the devil, for God was with Him. And we are witnesses of all things which He did both in the land of the Jews and in Jerusalem, whom they killed by hanging on a tree. 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. And He commanded us to preach to the people, and to testify that it is He who was ordained by God to be Judge of the living and the dead. To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins. While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit fell upon all those who heard the word. And those of the circumcision who

believed were astonished, as many as came with Peter, because the gift of the Holy Spirit had been poured out on the Gentiles also" (Acts 10:36–45). That is what it says.

"After the baptism which John preached"

When we look at this word, we can learn many things, including upon what kind of people the Holy Spirit is sent down. Upon what kind of people does He send down this Holy Spirit and the remission of sins? We may have a question about this part. God is showing us that our Lord Jesus Christ has become the Savior of the whole world. Our Lord sent down a great sheet to Peter and, while showing him four-footed animals, things that creep on the earth, and unclean animals, said to him, *"Kill and eat" (Acts 10:13)*. And the reason He did so is this: because even the Gentiles receive the remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit if only they believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and because anyone who truly believes in Jesus Christ as his own Savior receives the remission of sins and receives the Holy Spirit, we can see that He did this in order to have Peter preach this sermon to the Gentiles.

Then how can we receive the remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit? We can learn this part through the word. What kind of faith must we have in order to receive the remission of sins and receive the Holy Spirit? First, the word says, *"The word which God sent to the children of Israel, preaching peace through Jesus Christ—He is Lord of all—that word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10:36–37)*. In fact, it says here that the gospel of peace was preached, and the reason it says, *"That word you know, which was*

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proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10:37), is that it is telling us that the history of this whole gospel began with the time when John gave baptism to Jesus Christ as its starting point. It says, *"After the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10:37)*, and in fact this John the Baptist cried out the baptism of repentance, telling people to repent and to turn back and return to God, and he gave people the baptism of repentance.

Dear fellow believers, why does the Bible say that when we believe in the gospel and receive the remission of sins, we should be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ? Here in this word, too, we see that it says, *"After the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10:37)*, and then, after the gospel is preached all the way through, at the end it says, *"And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord. Then they asked him to stay a few days" (Acts 10:48)*. It says that when the gospel of Jesus Christ is preached and people believe in the word of the gospel and receive the remission of sins, what follows is that baptism must without fail be given to them.

I will speak about the gospel while preaching the word with the focus on this part: why are we told to be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ once we have received the remission of sins? First of all, because Jesus Christ came to save sinners, and because the Lord had the sin of the world transferred to Him through John—that is, because Jesus Christ received baptism from John and thereby bore all the sins of all people and washed them all away—it means that if a person believes in Jesus Christ as his own Savior and has truly received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ, he receives the baptism that Jesus Christ commanded, that baptism of which He said, *"Baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy*

Spirit" (Matthew 28:19). In other words, he receives baptism as a sign that he believes, as a token that he believes.

Peter, saying, *"That word you know, which was proclaimed throughout all Judea, and began from Galilee after the baptism which John preached" (Acts 10:37),* went on speaking in this way and testified as follows: that Jesus Christ had come to this very earth, and God the Father poured out the Holy Spirit upon Him; that He cast out demons and healed those who were oppressed by the devil, and God the Father was with Jesus Christ; that this Jesus Christ came to this earth, received baptism from John and thereby bore all the sins of this earth, died on the Cross, and rose again three days after He died; that we are witnesses of this; that Jesus Christ has been appointed Judge of the living and the dead; and that our spreading this gospel is none other than spreading that very Jesus Christ. And Peter preached, *"To Him all the prophets witness that, through His name, whoever believes in Him will receive remission of sins" (Acts 10:43)*. And it says that while Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down upon all those who heard the word.

While Peter was speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came down upon all those who heard the word. Dear fellow believers, this Cornelius was a man who feared God and lived like that, but he had not received the Holy Spirit. And he did not know Jesus Christ well. To put it in today's terms, he was the kind of person who believed well in the Old Testament only. He was someone who believed in the LORD God, lived a good life before God, and lived well according to the law, but did not know the salvation by which Jesus had saved him. But he invited Peter, and Peter testified of this: that the Lord who, from the time John proclaimed baptism, received baptism from John and thereby bore all the sin of mankind, had all sins transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world, died on the Cross, and rose again three days

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after He died—that this very risen Lord was the Messiah who has saved us; that as for who He is, the One who in the future will judge the living and the dead, those who will go to heaven and those who will go to hell, is none other than Jesus, the very Jesus who has saved us; and that this Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior who received baptism from John and shed His blood on the Cross and thereby saved us from all our sins.

The Holy Spirit comes upon the heart in which the remission of sins has been accomplished

Now, while this Cornelius was listening to these words, while he was listening to this sermon, the Holy Spirit came upon him. Dear fellow believers, how does the Holy Spirit come? How can He come upon people? It is this, dear fellow believers: when a person believes that Jesus Christ—who received baptism from John and thereby had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him, bore the sin of the world, died on the Cross, rose again three days after He died, and is now seated at the right hand of the living God the Father as the One who will judge the living and the dead—is his own Savior, when he believes this, God the Father gives him the Holy Spirit as a gift, as the evidence that he has been saved.

Dear fellow believers, how do we receive the Holy Spirit? Dear fellow believers, when we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit. This Cornelius heard the word Peter preached and realized that Jesus really was the Savior spoken of in the Old Testament, the Messiah; that He came to this earth and received baptism from John and had all sins transferred to Him—just as the sacrificial offering of the Old Testament received the laying on of hands and had sins transferred to it, He

received baptism from John and had all sins transferred to Him—and so, having had all sins transferred to Him, He bore the sin of the world, died on the Cross, rose again three days after He died, ascended to heaven, and is seated at the right hand of God; and that He is the very Judge who will judge the living and the dead, and He has become our Savior and our Judge. At the moment he believed in that Jesus Christ in his heart, at the moment he realized this, the Holy Spirit came upon that Cornelius, and upon his friends and family who were listening to the word, upon those who were listening to this word of the gospel that Peter preached. That the Holy Spirit came upon them means that the gospel of the remission of sins had been accomplished in their hearts.

So how can we receive the Holy Spirit in our hearts? It is this: when we believe in this gospel of the water and the Spirit and receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit. And when we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit, and what happens when we receive the Holy Spirit? When we receive the Holy Spirit, just as it says, *"Can anyone forbid water, that these should not be baptized who have received the Holy Spirit just as we have?" (Acts 10:47)*, and just as Peter said to those who had come with him when he *"commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord" (Acts 10:48)*, those who have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit receive baptism.

The reason a person who has received the remission of sins is baptized

Then why are we baptized? Because Jesus Christ came to this earth as the Son of God, came to this earth as the Savior of

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sinners, as the Messiah, and when Jesus turned thirty, in order to remove the sin of mankind, the sins of all people, and in order to deliver all the people of this world from sin, He received baptism from John and through that baptism bore all the sins of the people in this world—that is why Jesus commanded that baptism must without fail be given to those who have received the remission of sins. That is what He commanded. In the Bible we see that the Ethiopian eunuch, too, came to know and believe in Jesus Christ, and after believing he said, *"See, here is water. What hinders me from being baptized?" (Acts 8:36)*. What he was saying was this: "I believe in Jesus Christ like this; Jesus Christ is surely my Savior; Jesus Christ surely came to this earth and, through the baptism He received from John, bore my sin and bore the sin of the world, died on the Cross for me, rose again three days after He died, and is seated at the right hand of God; I believe in such a Lord, so what hinders me from being baptized?"

After that, the Bible also says that the jailer who kept the prison heard this gospel that Paul and Silas preached, believed, and was baptized right away. When Jesus came to this earth, died, rose again, and was about to ascend, what He said to His disciples before He went up from this earth to the kingdom of heaven was this: *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit" (Matthew 28:19)*. The question is why all those who believe in Jesus Christ and have received the remission of sins are baptized. Dear fellow believers, it is all too clear. As the word says, *"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" (Matthew 3:15–16), it was possible because Jesus Christ, in order to remove all our sins, all the sin of mankind, went before John the Baptist at the Jordan River and received the baptism by which all the sin of mankind was transferred onto His own body. Therefore, for those who believe in our Lord—since Jesus Christ Himself received baptism from John and bore all the sin of mankind—when we have believed in that Jesus Christ and received the remission of sins, when we have received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit, what we must without fail do is to be baptized.

The reason we are baptized is that we receive baptism as a token of the faith that says, "I believe like this," and as a confession of faith before God. Before people, and before our brothers and sisters as well, we receive baptism with the faith that says, "I too believe in that Jesus whom you believe in, in the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and bore all my sins and yours, and in the fact that He died on the Cross." So these people who have received the remission of sins receive the Holy Spirit. When we receive the remission of sins, we receive the Holy Spirit, and when we receive the Holy Spirit, we are baptized without fail. The reason we are baptized is that Jesus Christ, by receiving baptism from John, had all our sins transferred to Him and took full responsibility for them and took them away Himself, and that He received all the judgment on the Cross, and that, for that reason, He rose again from the dead in three days and became our Savior. Because we believe in that Jesus, we receive baptism as a token of faith. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

What did all those who believed in Jesus in the New Testament believe? They believed the fact that Jesus received baptism from John and had all their sins transferred to Him. Through that faith they had all their sins washed away, and they

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believed the fact that Jesus Christ, who died on the Cross, rose again; they believed in Jesus Christ as their own Savior—the Jesus Christ who received baptism from John in their place and bore their sins, who died in their place, and who rose again in order to give life to those who believe. That, dear fellow believers, is why they were baptized.

Receiving baptism as a token of believing in Jesus, receiving the remission of sins when one believes in Jesus, the one who receives the remission of sins receiving the Holy Spirit, the one who has received the Holy Spirit having received the remission of sins, and also receiving baptism as a token of faith because one has truly received the remission of sins by believing in Jesus Christ and has no sin in one's heart—baptism, receiving the Holy Spirit, and receiving the remission of sins—all these things of believing in Jesus Christ have come to us entirely through Jesus Christ. All of this has come to us in this way. We receive the remission of sins through faith in Jesus Christ.

Dear fellow believers, how do we receive the remission of sins? How does sin disappear? Dear fellow believers, how can the sins we commit throughout our whole lives be washed away as white as snow? Because our Lord came to this earth and Himself received baptism from John and thereby bore all the sins of you and me, and because He bore the sin of the world and died on the Cross, and because He rose again from death, and because He rose again and became our true and living Savior—because we believe in that Jesus Christ, dear fellow believers, we have received the remission of sins. We have received the Holy Spirit. This is a very simple word. But today, people who believe in Jesus and say they have received the Holy Spirit think of believing in Jesus as one thing and receiving the Holy Spirit as another.

The Holy Spirit is not received separately

Dear fellow believers, many people think that when they believe in Jesus they are saved, and that receiving the Holy Spirit is something received separately. But the Bible does not say so. Dear fellow believers, this is important. Many people today think that when they believe in Jesus they have received the remission of sins, and that after that, if they go to a mountain to pray, come to the chapel at dawn and pray with tears, offer many prayers of repentance, do much service, and do much fasting and prayer, then they receive the Holy Spirit. That is why the church is in confusion, and that is why people really do not know about the Holy Spirit. That is why some people say that when they get up in the morning they must pray separately to each one and greet each one separately, saying, "How have You been, Holy Spirit? How have You been, God the Father? How have You been, Jesus?" That is something they say because they do not know God rightly. The Father is in Jesus Christ, and Jesus Christ and the Father are in the Holy Spirit. As the Lord said, *"I and My Father are one" (John 10:30)*, they are the same God. We received the Holy Spirit when we received the remission of sins. Dear fellow believers, when Cornelius was listening to Peter's sermon, the Holy Spirit came upon him. This means that while Peter was preaching the sermon he preached the gospel, and Cornelius accepted this word in his heart and believed it. When he heard the word, the remission of sins had already been accomplished in his heart, and upon that heart in which the remission of sins had been accomplished, dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit came.

Dear fellow believers, I and all of you now preach the gospel, and when we preach the gospel to someone, when we truly preach the word, what happens? When the person hears the word

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and says, “Ah, so that is how it is. Jesus really received baptism from John and bore all my sins. Hallelujah. And He died on the Cross in my place. And He rose again. The Lord is my Savior”—dear fellow believers, when he believes in his heart, when the realization comes to him, what happens? When sin has already been remitted in the heart and one has already been saved from all sins, at that time what happens? The Holy Spirit comes into your hearts. Because the Holy Spirit has come, we call God Father; because the Holy Spirit has come—that is, because we have believed in this gospel, received the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit has come—we say that we have no sin. We say, “I am righteous.” Dear fellow believers, without receiving the remission of sins and receiving the Holy Spirit, one can never say that one is righteous.

Why is that? It is because they will go on sinning in the future that they cannot say so. That is why all of this comes out of one thing from the very beginning. Dear fellow believers, we must know why those who have received the remission of sins are baptized, and why the Bible says they must be baptized. In the days of the early church, when a person received the remission of sins, that very day he was taken to a place where there was water and baptized right away. Baptism was given with the words, “I baptize you in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit.” The person being baptized believes this fact: “The Lord—the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit—has saved me completely like this.” He receives baptism as a token of faith. Dear fellow believers, baptism was always given, and receiving baptism is a sign that says, “I believe like this.” Because Jesus bore all my sins when He received baptism from John, and because He died on the Cross and rose again from the dead in three days and became my Savior, we receive baptism as a token that we believe in the Lord.

He sends His servants to those who seek God

Therefore, dear fellow believers, we must remember the fact that when this gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit comes; and one more thing is this: although there are all kinds of nations in the many lands of the world, when there are people who truly fear God and who, even though they do not know Jesus Christ well and do not know this word of the witnesses well, still have a heart turned toward God, God knows their hearts and seeks them out, and causes them to hear the gospel; and when such a person hears the gospel through the servants of God, he hears the word and receives the remission of sins, and the Holy Spirit comes into the heart of the person who has received the remission of sins and seals him as a child of God so that this never changes. In this way God accomplishes His will.

Among the many people in every nation, God meets and saves those who fear God and truly seek Him. Dear fellow believers, we are now preaching the gospel to the whole world. But do all the people of the whole world seek God? There are many who do not. Yet to people like this Cornelius, who truly long for God and seek Him, who go here to listen and go there to listen and keep searching—to such people, in the end, whom does He send? He sends servants of God like Peter; He sends you who have received the remission of sins. He sends them. Such a person prays before God because he truly does not know, but God, just as He said, *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 10:13)*, commands us to spread the gospel to all people and enables us to preach the gospel to all people. Through this, all who seek God come to you and me who have received the remission of sins, and when you and I go to them and preach the gospel to them, they receive the remission of sins, receive the Holy Spirit,

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and become children of God. Dear fellow believers, do you believe?

You who have received the Holy Spirit, live following the guidance of the Holy Spirit

Dear fellow believers, it is extremely important to know this: that you and I have now received the Holy Spirit. Dear fellow believers, it is not that you receive the Holy Spirit by fasting and praying, or receive the Holy Spirit by offering many prayers of repentance. Anyone, even a Gentile, receives the Holy Spirit if he believes. It said that there were also creeping things in the sheet. Creeping things are what the law declared unclean. To the people of Israel, the Gentiles were those regarded as unclean in that way. Even so, if a person believes in Jesus Christ as his own Savior, believes in the baptism Jesus received from John and in that blood of the Cross, and receives the remission of sins—if he believes in his heart the fact that Jesus Christ has become his Savior—then, dear fellow believers, the Holy Spirit comes upon his heart. He becomes a child of God. The Holy Spirit is in the heart of such a person. Because there is no sin in the hearts of such people, the Holy Spirit dwells there. Because they have the Holy Spirit, they receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit, follow wherever the Holy Spirit leads, and testify of the gospel as the Holy Spirit testifies of the gospel. Therefore, dear fellow believers, those who have received the remission of sins are people who have the Holy Spirit, and they are the children of God. They are the people of God.

Dear fellow believers, do you think that the fact that Jesus Christ received baptism from John and bore all our sins is just one doctrine? All the people of the early church believed this.

And at the very moment they received the remission of sins, the Holy Spirit came upon their hearts. But what is Christianity like today? It has been corrupted far too much. Going to church and believing in Jesus is one thing, and where do people go to receive the Holy Spirit? They receive Him at revival meetings. They think they receive the Holy Spirit while clapping their hands and singing praises. I cannot tell you how many people there are who, while praying on a mountain, see a vision or hear a voice in a dream and take that to be the guidance of the Holy Spirit. But, dear fellow believers, that is not the Holy Spirit. That is your own thinking.

You have received the Holy Spirit, and I have received the Holy Spirit. We are people who have the Holy Spirit. How should people who have the Holy Spirit live? It is obvious. We should live by faith. We should receive the guidance of the Holy Spirit. We should follow the Holy Spirit. We should live doing as the Holy Spirit directs and as the Holy Spirit is pleased. We should testify of the gospel. It is obvious.

How does one receive the Holy Spirit? When one receives the remission of sins, one receives the Holy Spirit. When we receive the remission of sins we receive the Holy Spirit, and when we receive the Holy Spirit, what then? We receive baptism as a sign that says, "I believe like this." When there is sin in the heart, what Holy Spirit could there be in that heart? If there is sin in your heart, is the Holy Spirit there? No, He is not. That is not the Holy Spirit. That is a demon. I, too, was held captive by such things for a long time before I was born again. Dear fellow believers, we must know that it did not end with receiving the remission of sins, but that we have received the Holy Spirit, and that having received the Holy Spirit means we have received a tremendously amazing blessing. Also, I hope you will know that we must not just boast of that every day, but must receive the

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guidance of the Holy Spirit by faith, and must do the things that please the Holy Spirit. I hope you will believe. Dear fellow believers, we are meant to live such a life.

It is truly a pity. When I look at you, I am so glad, and when I look at those who have not received the remission of sins, I feel so sorry for them. Because they have sin in their hearts, all they do every day is tell people to receive the fire, and they cannot preach this gospel to a dying person, to a cancer patient. How clear this gospel is! How certain it is! Dear fellow believers, if we are given just thirty minutes of opportunity before someone dies, we can preach this gospel, and as long as that person has a heart that seeks God and accepts God, he can receive the remission of sins. He can receive the Holy Spirit. He can receive the Holy Spirit and become a child of God and go to the kingdom of heaven. If we are given just one day, we can preach the gospel to everyone in that place, and though nothing can be done for those who will not believe, we can make all those who will believe receive the remission of sins.

Dear fellow believers, whether a church has the gospel or not can be known for certain by looking at whether, when one's own father is dying of cancer, one can truly preach the gospel to him or not. If, when someone is about to die, one truly wants to preach the gospel and has something to give, then, just as it says, *"Silver and gold I do not have, but what I do have I give you: In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth, rise up and walk" (Acts 3:6)*, one can say to him, "Is there sin in your heart? Jesus Christ has removed all this sin with this gospel of the water and the Spirit. You have no sin. You are righteous." I am so very thankful, thankful indeed. ✉

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CHAPTER

11

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

Sermon 1 by Paul C. Jong

The Holy Spirit comes together with the gospel

< Acts 11:1–8 >

"Now the apostles and brethren who were in Judea heard that the Gentiles had also received the word of God. And when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision contended with him, saying, 'You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!' But Peter explained it to them in order from the beginning, saying: I was in the city of Joppa praying; and in a trance I saw a vision, an object descending like a great sheet, let down from heaven by four corners; and it came to me. When I observed it intently and considered, I saw four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, creeping things, and birds of the air. And I heard a voice saying to me, 'Rise, Peter; kill and eat.' But I said, 'Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth.'"

The word about the Holy Spirit first coming down upon the Gentiles

The word we have read today is a word that records the event of the Holy Spirit coming down upon the Gentiles for the first time. God poured out the Holy Spirit upon the Gentiles. God chose the Apostle Paul, met him on the road to Damascus, and gave him the Holy Spirit when he believed in Jesus Christ. God

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also tells us in more detail how He gave the Holy Spirit through Jesus' disciples such as Peter and John, and with what faith He gave it. In that age, the Gentiles could not believe in God, and if they wanted to believe in God, they had to be circumcised and convert to Judaism. For a Gentile to come into the people of God was impossible, and still more, for a Gentile to receive the Holy Spirit was something that could not happen—humanly, religiously, or by custom. Nevertheless, God Himself said that He would give the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles, and He actually gave the Holy Spirit to Cornelius, a Gentile, and his family through Jesus' disciples. God recorded that event for us and told us how one receives the Holy Spirit.

The Jews, hearing that the Gentiles had also received the word of God, caused a commotion. So when Peter came up to Jerusalem, those of the circumcision rebuked Peter and contended with him. They were saying, *"You went in to uncircumcised men and ate with them!" (Acts 11:3)*. They were asking how such a thing could make any sense. At that time, the Jews generally avoided close association with Gentiles because of their religious customs and purity regulations. In particular, they regarded entering the home of uncircumcised Gentiles and eating with them as improper, and so they criticized and rebuked Peter. Then Peter told them that he had not simply gone there for no reason and that they should hear him out, and he recounted the whole story from beginning to end.

What Peter explained is as follows. While I was praying in the city of Joppa, in a trance I saw a vision, and an object like a great sheet, let down by its four corners, came down from heaven before me. When I looked carefully inside it, there were four-footed animals of the earth, wild beasts, and creeping things, and birds of the air could also be seen. Then there was a voice from heaven saying, *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 11:7)*, so I said

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that I could not possibly kill and eat them; then there was a second voice from heaven that said, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 11:9)*, and after this had happened three times, everything was drawn up again into heaven. At that very moment, three men were standing in front of the house where I was staying, and they were men sent from Caesarea. The Holy Spirit who was within me told me to go with them without doubting anything, so these six brothers also went with me into that man's house. When we went in and heard the whole story, it turned out that an angel had stood in that house and said to send men to Joppa and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, the one *"who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved" (Acts 11:14)*.

So when I began to speak the word of God, I saw the Holy Spirit come upon them, and I remembered the word the Lord had spoken: *"John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16)*. *"If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17)*. This is how Peter explained it. He was saying that he had not just gone into the house of Gentiles for no reason and merely eaten food, but had gone in through the guidance of the Holy Spirit, and that there he had seen that repentance to life had been granted to the Gentiles as well. When the Jews heard this, they all became silent, and they glorified God, saying that God truly loved the Gentiles as well and had given the Holy Spirit to the Gentiles too.

The Holy Spirit comes when the gospel is preached

What is the gospel that we preach, the gospel that the apostles preached long ago? Is it just preaching the gospel and nothing more? It is not merely preaching the gospel; the point is that when the gospel was preached, the Holy Spirit came. Peter said, *"As I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15)*. The Apostle Peter also believed the gospel of the water and the Spirit that you and I believe. Peter said that water is *"an antitype which now saves us—baptism" (1 Peter 3:21)*. Peter clearly believed that when Jesus received baptism from John, our sins were clearly passed on to Jesus Christ; that Jesus Christ, who bore our sins, shed His blood and died on the Cross, rose again from death, and saved us; and that He therefore established us, who have been saved, as priests for the people before God. We also believe that way. We have the same faith as Peter. That is why the gospel we preach causes those who hear it to receive the Holy Spirit.

Just as the Holy Spirit came upon those who heard when Peter testified of the word, when we preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit to people, we too come to see the Holy Spirit come upon the hearts of those who hear this gospel. It is not just saying with words, "Believe in Jesus," or "If you believe in Jesus, you will go to the kingdom of heaven"; rather, when that person accurately knows, understands, and accepts the gospel we preach and acknowledges that gospel as he hears the word, at that very moment the Holy Spirit has already come into that person's heart, and you and I see this with our own eyes.

At that time, the Gentiles could neither receive the Holy Spirit nor become a holy people. Likewise, you and I were also people who could not receive the Holy Spirit. When the Jews looked through the eyes of the law, the Gentiles were like

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creatures crawling on the ground. The Jews regarded the Gentiles as being just like the things the law declared unclean—like the pig, which has a split hoof but does not chew the cud, or the beasts that crawl with their bellies on the ground, or the fierce hawk or the eagle—and saw them as people utterly without the slightest qualification to become the people of God. Yet concerning such people, God told Peter not to call common what He had cleansed.

You and I, too, were people who could not receive the Holy Spirit, but the point is that at the very moment we came to know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the Holy Spirit came upon us. In fact, when we preach the gospel, even if the other person is quite stubborn, if we keep telling him the truth and explaining it so that he understands, we later see with our own eyes the Holy Spirit come upon that person. When that person accepts the gospel, his expression changes and peace comes upon his heart, and from his mouth comes the confession, *"You are the Christ, the Son of the living God" (Matthew 16:16)*, and we see him give the testimony of faith, "I truly have no sin. Our Lord has made me sinless," and we see that the Holy Spirit has come upon his heart.

Did this gospel that we preach, this gospel that the apostles such as the Apostle Paul and Peter preached, end as a gospel only? No; the point is that when they preached the gospel, the Holy Spirit came upon people. It is extremely important for us to know this, and it is tremendously important to preach the gospel with this perspective. Going beyond merely preaching the gospel, we must preach this gospel on the level of causing people to receive the Holy Spirit. If it were the case that we just preach the gospel and that is the end of it, it would be truly meaningless. But when we know that this gospel we preach causes the Holy Spirit to come upon people, our preaching of the

gospel becomes different. It is not merely a matter of telling this person to believe in Jesus; when this person accepts and agrees with this truth that we preach, in the end this person is believing in Jesus, but in the end he comes to receive the Holy Spirit. It is important that we see it from that perspective.

The gospel we preach is the gospel that causes those who hear and believe the gospel to receive the Holy Spirit. That is why the gospel we preach is tremendously important and why the spread of the gospel is important.

"What God has cleansed you must not call common"

If the Apostle Paul was the preacher to the Gentiles, Peter was the preacher who preached the gospel to the Jewish nation. But one day, while Peter was praying, he saw something in a trance. An object like a great sheet, bound by its four corners, came down from heaven and spread out before his eyes, and when he looked inside it, there were only creeping things, flying things—the unclean things the Scriptures speak of. Yet when he was told to kill and eat of those, Peter said that he had never once eaten such things. Peter was a thoroughgoing Jew. He never ate what the law declared unclean. He did not eat pork, nor the flesh of eagles, nor things that creep on the ground. It was not just that he did not eat them; he said, *"Not so, Lord! For nothing common or unclean has at any time entered my mouth" (Acts 11:8)*. He was saying that he had never once put them into his mouth.

But the Lord said firmly from heaven, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 11:9)*. What does this word mean? It means that the Lord has removed even the sins of the Gentiles, even the sins of every person on this earth. It means that our Lord has cleansed the unclean animals the law speaks

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of, everything that became unclean by breaking the law, and even the hearts and souls of all people and all their sins. But when Peter looked not with the eyes of faith but with the eyes of the law, they were utterly filthy. Peter still held on to his own standard, the standard of the law. He was thinking that the Gentiles were utterly filthy and common beings.

After that word had come, three men were standing in front of his house. When he asked where they had come from, they said they had come from Caesarea; when he asked who had sent them, they said their master Cornelius had sent them; and when he asked why they had come, they said that God had told their master to invite Simon whose surname is Peter, who was in Joppa, and to hear the word. And the Holy Spirit also said to go without fear and to be at ease. So Peter went with the six brothers who were in Joppa. Peter went because the Holy Spirit within him had also spoken, God had also spoken a little earlier in the vision, and, not stopping there, the other party had also seen a vision and had come looking for him and asked him to preach the word. He went and was preaching the word of God, and he saw the very same Holy Spirit that he and the other Jewish believers had received come upon Cornelius's household as well.

A preacher knows when the Holy Spirit comes

Dear fellow believers, a person who has actually received the remission of sins and received the Holy Spirit can tell, when he preaches the gospel, whether or not the Holy Spirit comes upon the one who hears. That is, when that person accepts the word, he can tell that the Holy Spirit comes upon him. When the one who preaches the word sees, as he preaches the word, that the other person accepts the word of God purely by faith, he comes

to know that the Holy Spirit is coming into that heart—not by seeing it with the eyes of the flesh, but through the Holy Spirit in the midst of preaching the word. He comes to know that the very same Holy Spirit who is in the preacher's heart works in that person, so that their faith becomes the same. Their faith becomes the same, and he feels as though the person were a childhood friend of many, many years, though he cannot say when they ever met before. They become as familiar as brothers and sisters who grew up in the same household, and he sees that this one soul has become one of God's people who has the Holy Spirit.

These things happen when we preach the gospel. When you and I preach this gospel, it is not that people accept only the gospel and then receive the Holy Spirit separately later; just as Peter saw the Holy Spirit come when he preached the word, we actually see the Holy Spirit come upon people's hearts together with this gospel we preach. That is why we must preach the gospel to the whole world.

The gospel we preach is the gospel through which people come to receive the Holy Spirit. That is why this spread of the gospel is tremendously important and precious. For those who have the Holy Spirit are the people of God. It is not preaching some theoretical doctrine to people; when we preach this word of truth, if that person only believes and accepts it, he becomes one of God's people. He is sealed as one of God's people. He receives such an amazing blessing, and this is building the kingdom of God and causing the people of God to increase. How amazing a gospel this is! How amazing a work of the Holy Spirit this is! Yet people commonly think that they receive the gospel and then receive the Holy Spirit later. They think that believing in Jesus is one thing and that the Holy Spirit is received separately. So people end up praying later, asking to be given

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the Holy Spirit. But the Bible does not say so. We can see in the Bible that when we preach the gospel, the Holy Spirit comes upon people along with it—that the Holy Spirit comes together with the gospel.

Preach with faith that the gospel causes people to receive the Holy Spirit

People all over the world want to receive the Holy Spirit. When we preach the gospel we preach, people receive the Holy Spirit. That is why the gospel we preach is truly precious and accomplishes the will of God, and that is why we have the responsibility to preach the gospel to the whole world. For we are doing a very precious work and carrying out the Father's will. Whether at an evangelistic meeting or when preaching the gospel personally, we must go one step beyond the level of just preaching the gospel and preach the gospel with the heart and faith that we are causing this person to receive the Holy Spirit. We must preach it sincerely. I must truly believe and make the confession of faith, and preach what is really certain—not with human skill but with the word, not with human thoughts but with the truth. When we preach in this way and people accept this gospel just as it is, the Holy Spirit comes at the same time as they believe. That is why preaching the gospel is a work that saves people's lives.

Just as God "*has delivered us from the power of darkness and conveyed us into the kingdom of the Son of His love" (Colossians 1:13)*, preaching the gospel is the work of delivering those who can only die under the power of darkness into the kingdom of the Son of God. It is the work of making them children of God. It is extremely important. We must spread the

gospel of the water and the Spirit so that all people in the whole world may receive the Holy Spirit. People are struggling because they do not really know how to receive the Holy Spirit. If they only believe this gospel, they receive the Holy Spirit. How did you receive the Holy Spirit? Did you receive Him by praying? Did you receive Him by holding all-night prayer vigils? You received Him when you believed this gospel. You and I must pray and spread the gospel so that all people in the whole world may receive the Holy Spirit.

The gospel we preach is the gospel that causes people to receive the Holy Spirit. An apostle means one who is sent by God; so what do the apostles do? Do they not do the work of preaching the gospel and causing people to receive the Holy Spirit?

The Apostle John, when he was on the island of Patmos, was moved by the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of the Book of Revelation. Since the Bible has words saying that things appeared in visions, there may perhaps be some among you who are striving to see visions. But once the word has already been fully completed, there is no need for things like visions. In the time of the early church, God worked in a very special way. Then do such things not happen to you and me? These days they rarely happen. This is because now the word of God is in your hands and mine, and there is also the church. But in the last days, when we come to be in the tribulation and can no longer possess the Bible, the Holy Spirit who spoke within Peter will actually speak in your hearts and mine, telling us to do this or do that.

What did our Lord say? He said that in the time of tribulation, when we are taken before the rulers and kings of the world, *"Do not worry about how or what you should speak. For it will be given to you in that hour what you should speak; for it is not you who speak, but the Spirit of your Father who speaks in you"*

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(Matthew 10:19–20). At that time, it is the Holy Spirit who speaks. I, too, have experienced the Holy Spirit speaking directly when I was doing certain work. But generally, rather than in that way, we experience many times that the Holy Spirit works through the word of God, when we believe, realize, follow, and hold on to the word. God, in order not to confuse us, has given us the word, and He teaches and guides us within the word.

I hope you will believe that this gospel we preach causes all people in the whole world to receive the Holy Spirit. When you preach the gospel to your neighbors and friends, I hope you will preach the gospel with the faith that you are causing those people to receive the Holy Spirit. If we merely preach the gospel and nothing more, it feels too bland. But think of it as causing that person to receive the Holy Spirit. Does preaching the gospel not become exciting? Is it not a work on a higher level than just preaching the gospel? Yes, it is.

Even if one believes in Jesus, one must believe this gospel to receive the Holy Spirit

Dear fellow believers, we must preach the gospel to the whole world and cause all who believe in Jesus to receive the Holy Spirit. We are preaching the gospel even to those who believe in Jesus. This is because, although they do believe in Jesus, they have not received the Holy Spirit, since they do not yet know and believe the gospel of the water and the Spirit. In fact, a person who believes in Jesus but has not received the Holy Spirit does not even truly believe in Jesus. That is why only the person who has believed in Jesus and thereupon received the Holy Spirit is a person who has been saved. That is why we are preaching this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and the reason

we preach the gospel to those who believe in Jesus is to cause them to receive the Holy Spirit.

It is tremendously difficult and hard to talk about this part. People firmly believed that after believing in Jesus, they would receive the Holy Spirit later by going to pray on a mountain or going into a cave and praying with their hands raised, and they had such experiences, so it was so very hard to talk about this part. If we say that one receives the Holy Spirit by believing this gospel, who would not believe this gospel? But they have already believed in Jesus and think that the Holy Spirit is received by praying on a mountain, so when those who believe in Jesus are told to believe in Jesus again, people reject it. This is the reason those who believe in Jesus reject it. The reason those who believe in Jesus truly must believe this gospel of the water and the Spirit is that they receive the Holy Spirit when they believe this gospel. That is why we must preach this gospel to them.

Because the foundation of this gospel has already been laid among us, when we talk about this, we all understand one another. But if we say this to people who simply believe in Jesus, they get confused. As far as they know and have experienced, believing in Jesus is just attending church and believing in Jesus, and they think the Holy Spirit is received in some special way, by going to pray on a mountain, or fasting and praying, or through revival meetings; so when they are told that one receives the Holy Spirit when one believes in Jesus, they cannot understand it. But the Bible clearly says that the Holy Spirit came when the Apostle Peter began to speak.

This means that Cornelius and his family accepted the word very purely. For they were people who feared God, and moreover, God Himself had told them to invite Peter from Joppa and hear the words by which they would be saved, so He had

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already fully prepared the ground; therefore, from the moment Peter went and began to speak, they accepted it all. So they immediately received both the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit.

So the Bible is telling us that one receives the Holy Spirit when one believes the gospel of the water and the Spirit. That is why we must believe this way. We have preached the gospel until now, but we must not end with just preaching the gospel. What people are waiting for is to believe in Jesus and receive the Holy Spirit. There are truly many people who say they believe in Jesus but in fact do not have the Holy Spirit, and so go looking for teachings about the Holy Spirit. There are also many who speak of an experience of having received the Holy Spirit, but with sin in their hearts, would the Lord have met with them?

So all people in the whole world are asking for the Holy Spirit. That is why we must preach the word of God with the faith that the gospel we preach causes people to receive the Holy Spirit. Without the faith that the gospel we preach causes people to receive the Holy Spirit, the gospel we preach would be nothing. You and I must preach the word with this heart and this faith to all people in the whole world and to the people around us. This faith that you have is the faith that causes people to receive the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is a gift. When this gospel is preached, the Holy Spirit comes. ✉

Sermon 2 by Paul C. Jong

Make disciples and preach the gospel

< Acts 11:11–30 >

"At that very moment, three men stood before the house where I was, having been sent to me from Caesarea. Then the Spirit told me to go with them, doubting nothing. Moreover these six brethren accompanied me, and we entered the man's house. And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.' Now those who were scattered after the persecution that arose over Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus, and Antioch, preaching the word to no one but the Jews only. (But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus –ASV). And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord. Then

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news of these things came to the ears of the church in Jerusalem, and they sent out Barnabas to go as far as Antioch. When he came and had seen the grace of God, he was glad, and encouraged them all that with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord. For he was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith. And a great many people were added to the Lord. Then Barnabas departed for Tarsus to seek Saul. And when he had found him, he brought him to Antioch. So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people. And the disciples were first called Christians in Antioch. And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

The gospel spread to the Gentiles through the Jews

Today's passage is the record of the gospel being spread to the Gentiles. Even though the gospel is spread to the Gentiles, we must know that in fact the gospel is spread to the Gentiles through the Jews, and we must also have the realization of why God had no choice but to do it this way. God did not raise up Gentiles and have them preach to the Gentiles; rather, He had the gospel spread to the Gentiles through the Apostles Peter, James, John, and Paul, who were wholly Jews. The Jews know the word of God well. Even when they likewise call Him Jesus,

the weight carried in that word is different. Once the Jews come to believe that Jesus is the Son of God, they know all about the sacrificial law of the Old Testament, the laying on of hands, baptism, the burying of the dead, the resurrection, the fact that there is the kingdom of heaven in the life to come, and what sin is. That is why the household of Cornelius was saved through Peter.

It was the will of God to raise up the Jews and have them preach the gospel to the Gentiles, and this was the very basic strategy of mission. It was the will of God that the gospel be spread to the Gentiles through the servants and people who had believed first and had been born again precisely through the water and the blood according to the word. We must be clear on this point. We must know precisely that God saved the family of Cornelius, a Roman, through Peter. And we must also take note that when the gospel was being spread, the servants and people of God among the Jews who had been saved by believing in the water and the blood of Jesus always went to the synagogues and preached this word.

In fact, the gospel is needed by those who believe in Jesus and by those who believe in God as well. This gospel is needed by those who do not believe in God too, but above all, the gospel of the salvation of Jesus Christ was needed by those who truly believe in God. At that time, because the Jews were scattered all over the world, wherever Peter or the Apostle Paul went, there were Jews. Wherever the Jews went, they lived gathered together. That is why, wherever the apostles went, they went to the synagogues of the Jews and preached the gospel of Jesus Christ to those who believed in God, and there were many who heard the gospel and believed.

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The Holy Spirit who came upon the house of Cornelius

At this time, Peter came to preach the gospel to a centurion of the Roman army, that is, an officer who commanded a hundred soldiers. Cornelius was a Roman, but while he was living in the nation of Israel, having been dispatched there with the army, he believed in the LORD, the God of Israel. Not only did he himself believe, but his whole family believed as well, and he was *"a devout man and one who feared God with all his household, who gave alms generously to the people, and prayed to God always" (Acts 10:2)*. Then one day, God sent an angel and spoke to Cornelius. He said that there was a servant of God called Peter at the house of Simon, a tanner, in Joppa, so he should send men to invite that servant and listen to the word, for that servant would have something to say.

Meanwhile, Peter saw a vision of an object like a great sheet coming down from heaven, bound at its four corners. He saw the vision even though his eyes were open. When he looked inside, it was full of creeping things and all kinds of unclean animals, animals that the law had told them not to eat. Then a voice was heard from heaven saying, *"Rise, Peter; kill and eat" (Acts 11:7)*. Peter said that he had never yet eaten anything unclean. Peter was truly a Jew among Jews, a man well versed in the law, and one who kept the law. He had been a man under the rule of the law, but as he met Jesus through Andrew and followed Him, he came to know and believe that Jesus is the Son of God and the Savior, and so he became His disciple. Then God said, *"What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 11:9)*, and took the sheet back up into heaven.

While Peter was seeing that vision, men came from outside, knocked at the door, and asked whether a man named Peter was

there. Just then, God moved Peter's heart by the Holy Spirit and told him that those men were calling for him, so he should go with them without any worry. So Peter heard the clear voice and followed them, and when he followed them, it was the house of Cornelius.

Cornelius had been preparing to hear the word, and when Peter came, he fell down at his feet and bowed before him. Peter said, *"Stand up; I myself am also a man" (Acts 10:26)*, and asked why he had called for him. Cornelius said that an angel of God had appeared and told him to call for Peter and listen to the word. So Peter preached the word there, and the Holy Spirit came upon them. It was the first time Peter saw the Holy Spirit come upon the Gentiles. The Holy Spirit had come upon the Jews, Peter among them, when they believed in Jesus, and when Peter went to the household of Cornelius and was preaching the word, he saw the Holy Spirit come down on that household as well, and he remembered the word of God that said, *"You shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16)*. While he was preaching the word of God, Peter saw the very same Holy Spirit that he and the other Jewish believers had received when they believed come upon the Gentiles as a gift.

In fact, the baptism of John was of two kinds. One was the baptism that led people to repent and turn back, and the other was the baptism that transferred all sins to Jesus Christ. The apostles said to the people, *"Repent therefore and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out" (Acts 3:19)*. To repent and turn from serving foreign gods and to believe in Jesus Christ and receive the remission of sins—this is true repentance. In other words, when they turned from serving foreign gods and returned to God, and believed that Jesus Christ had all our sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John and that He had received all the judgment on the Cross for them, and believed that this

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Jesus was their Savior, the Holy Spirit came upon them in the same way.

This means that Peter saw, for the first time, the gospel being spread to the Gentiles. Seeing it, Peter found it quite bewildering, astonishing, and marvelous. Because Peter was a Jew, he had not associated with Gentiles, nor greeted them, nor had fellowship with them, nor done business with them. According to the law, the Jews regarded the Gentiles as unclean. Yet he saw the Holy Spirit come upon the household of Cornelius. He saw the very same Holy Spirit that he and the other Jewish believers had received when they believed in Jesus come upon those Gentiles.

The Holy Spirit comes quietly when we believe in the gospel

Dear fellow believers, when we believe in Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes upon us. It is not visible to these eyes, but when we preach the gospel, if we explain the word in detail to a person who had sin until a minute ago, who had sin until ten minutes ago, he says, "Ah, so that is how it is," and when we ask whether he has sin or not, he says that he has no sin. When he himself is sure that there is no sin in his heart, the Holy Spirit comes upon that heart, and we see his face brighten and see him rejoice and be glad. It is a marvelous thing. In the Bible, the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost is described as follows: "*There appeared to them divided tongues, as of fire, and one sat upon each of them" (Acts 2:3)*. At that time, of course, He came in that way. But now He does not always come like tongues of fire in that way. There are times when the Holy Spirit comes like fire, and there are times when He comes very quietly, like a dove, without any sign. The Holy Spirit must have come upon your

hearts, too, like a dove. Even though I did not see it with my eyes, I know it. When you simply became sure of the word, when, though there was nothing at all, you came to say, "There is no sin in my heart; I am a person without sin," a very peaceful, quiet, subtle joy spread within your heart. When Jesus received baptism from John, *"He saw the Spirit of God descending like a dove and alighting upon Him" (Matthew 3:16)*. The Holy Spirit came quietly, like a dove. Dear fellow believers, something that is burning hot and turns you completely upside down is not the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is also God, and God is a personal God. This means that He does not come in such a way as to knock us down, make us lose consciousness, or sweep us away in our own emotions. Even if there is no sensation at all, joy and peace spreading subtly and quietly—this is the Holy Spirit.

The moment one realizes that he has received the remission of sins—"Jesus has taken away all my sins; Jesus was the Savior; I have received the remission of sins"—the moment one acknowledges the gospel and holds on to the word, such a thing happens. So, dear fellow believers, there is a difference between receiving the Holy Spirit and being filled with emotion. When does the joy that suddenly becomes burning hot, catches fire, and seems to flow like a river come? When we have received the remission of sins and are fully immersed in God, when we are deeply immersed in the word, a certain joy different from our outward man revives our emotions, heart, thoughts, and soul and even leads us, and this is what happens when the fullness of the Holy Spirit comes. But suddenly becoming burning hot while believing in Jesus is not the Holy Spirit. This means that, for fear that one might realize the word and the Holy Spirit might come, demons bring a fiery joy rather than the quiet joy that is like the Holy Spirit.

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Before I was saved, I, too, once received at a certain meeting what was, in my own way, called the fullness of the Holy Spirit. As I read the word, *"As the deer pants for the water brooks, So pants my soul for You, O God" (Psalm 42:1)*, and was saying to God that it was truly so, something hot came down from my head to the soles of my feet, and my whole body was so hot that I could not bear it. I thought that was the Holy Spirit. But even after that, sin was still there. Only, my heart was overflowing with joy, so I grabbed everyone I met and told them to believe in Jesus. Such a thing is not the Holy Spirit. Since I was born again, I have never once done that. I meet one person, open the word, and talk with him. Nor does a person receive salvation merely by shouting, "I believe in Jesus." Only when we preach the word to a person and the word enters into him is there the remission of sins, and that is preaching the gospel; shouting that one believes in Jesus is not preaching the gospel.

The work of the gospel that arose in Antioch

In any case, Peter said that he saw the Holy Spirit come upon them just as when he himself believed in Jesus. Peter was greatly puzzled, but God had the gospel preached to the Gentiles through Peter, and so the gospel was spread in this way. Until then, the gospel had not been spread to the Gentiles. Jesus came, and at the age of thirty, by receiving baptism from John, He had all the sin of mankind transferred to Him and bore it completely; He received the judgment in our place on the Cross and died, rose again on the third day, and went up before the throne of God. After He went up, the fullness of the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples, and while the disciples were preaching the gospel, Deacon Stephen was persecuted and stoned to death.

At that time there was a young man named Saul; the witnesses who were stoning Stephen took off their clothes and laid them at his feet, and it says, *"Saul was consenting to his death" (Acts 8:1)*. After that, a tremendous persecution arose, and I cannot tell you how many of the believers who were in Jerusalem scattered to other countries so as not to be killed. This was because if they stayed in that country, they would all be caught and killed.

The word says, *"But there were some of them, men of Cyprus and Cyrene, who, when they were come to Antioch, spake unto the Greeks also, preaching the Lord Jesus. And the hand of the Lord was with them, and a great number believed and turned to the Lord" (Acts 11:20–21)*. This means that through these people, the gospel was preached to the Gentiles in earnest. Through Peter, the gospel was spread to Cornelius, a Roman, and when the men of Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus, the hand of the Lord was with them, so that a great many people believed and turned to the Lord. So it is the natural order that the gospel is spread to the Gentiles and that those Gentiles in turn preach the gospel to other Gentiles. When we preach the gospel to a person of a certain country, it is the natural order that that person preaches the gospel to the people of his own country.

The apostles who were in the nation of Israel, such as Peter and James, did not flee. But in the region called Antioch, it happened that the Gentiles were saved in great numbers. They truly believed in Jesus. A multitude arose who believed in the very same Jesus as the disciples of Jesus did and received the Holy Spirit. The church in Jerusalem was astonished and sent Barnabas to check whether it was genuine or not. Barnabas was *"a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and of faith" (Acts 11:24)*. When Barnabas went and saw, it was genuine. Only their nation

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was different; they had believed in the same way, with the very same faith as their own, and had been saved. So Barnabas preached the word there and exhorted them all that "*with purpose of heart they should continue with the Lord" (Acts 11:23)*. He told them that they had been saved not by works or by keeping the law, but freely, by believing in the gospel of the water and the blood, by believing in the redemption of Jesus Christ; that they had been saved not by works but by faith. On this point, he drew a clear line between them and the legalists.

While they were preaching the gospel in this way, Barnabas went to the region of Tarsus and looked for Saul. Saul is Paul, and at that time he was in Tarsus, his hometown. Until then, Saul had not worked together with the disciples of Jesus for long. Because he had been the ringleader who used to seize and kill those who believed in Jesus, it seems the disciples had a prejudice against him. Since the man who had led the way in killing Deacon Stephen was saying that he believed in Jesus, it seems the disciples, in their human hearts, were reluctant, and so at first they did not work together with him. But Barnabas went to Tarsus, found Saul, and told him that since the Gentiles had begun to believe in Jesus and be saved, he should come along and do the work together with him. So the two of them did the work together in Antioch, and at this time people received the remission of sins and lived a life of faith in the fullness of the Holy Spirit, to such an extent that they were first given the title "Christians."

Raise up workers and make disciples

God called Saul for the mission to the Gentiles. Their fields of work were so different that it could be said that the Apostle

Paul was the apostle to the Gentiles and Peter the apostle to the Jews. As the Apostle Paul joined forces with Barnabas at this time, from then on he preached the gospel in earnest in union with the Church of God. Preaching the gospel requires many workers. Preaching the gospel to people of other countries is nothing special. The apostles went to the Jews and preached the gospel, and they also went to those who did not believe in God and preached the gospel. To the Gentiles, they preached the gospel to people who did not believe in God, and to the Jews, they preached the gospel to people who believed in God. We are now doing both. We preach the gospel to those who believe in God, those who believe in Jesus, and we also preach it to those who do not believe in Jesus.

When some men from Cyprus and Cyrene came to Antioch and preached the Lord Jesus to the Greeks as well, there were many who believed. Clearly, many such workers must come forth among us as well—people who will go out to the Gentiles, to the Greeks, and preach the gospel. These men of Cyprus and Cyrene, too, had surely heard the gospel from the Jews. In fact, preaching the gospel to Gentiles who do not believe in Jesus is actually easier. First we call one person who says he believes in Jesus, preach the gospel to him, and have him receive the remission of sins; then we bring another person who has come to believe in Jesus through him, preach the gospel to him, and have him receive the remission of sins; then he in turn preaches the gospel to someone else; and in this way, passing from one person to the next, the gospel is spread to the Gentiles. This is how the gospel is spread. We must spread the gospel in this way to the Jews and to the Gentiles alike. If we preach here to one person and to two people and send them out, they will live in their own cultural sphere and preach the gospel in turn to the

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people of that country, and if we do so, the gospel will be spread to the whole world.

We must preach the gospel to the Gentiles, to the people of our own country, and to our families, and God provides us with many workers. First, we must raise up workers. This means raising up workers and doing the work through those workers. It says that God was with some men from Cyprus and Cyrene, that He worked together with them, and this is what a worker is. What the Bible records here is the worker. This means that God does His work through these people. Many such workers are needed. We must go and preach the gospel, make disciples, and then make them into workers and send them out. Our Lord said, *"Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you" (Matthew 28:19–20)*. He did not say only to go and preach the gospel; He said to make disciples of all the nations. Making disciples—that is what is needed. We must first preach the gospel, preaching it so that they become thoroughly steeped in the gospel, and then nurture them with the word. Just as parents raise their children of the flesh, a spiritual guide must raise spiritual children. We must raise the person to whom we have preached the gospel, caring for his physical needs and for his spiritual needs as well. We raise him and make him into a worker so that the work is done through him, and he in turn goes and preaches the gospel and raises others, and they in turn preach the gospel, and so the multiplication movement spreads exponentially.

This work—make disciples, make them workers—is what we need, and I believe that God will provide us with many workers. Wherever we go, we should pray to God, saying, "Whom will You give to me in this place? Please give me those

who seek God, those who will receive blessing from God," and then go, make friends with them, preach the gospel to them so that they receive the remission of sins, and, instead of leaving them behind, nurture them without fail, raise up workers, and do the work.

In the days of the early church, the gospel arose so powerfully, like fire, that even though that was the time when there were the most martyrs, and even though people were seized and killed, there was the work of the gospel continuing to be preached and of people continuing to be saved. It is not so now. Now, when we tell people to believe in Jesus, they usually like it and thank us for preaching the gospel to them. I hope that God will provide us with many workers, and each and every one of our brothers and sisters must become a worker. We are all workers.

Barnabas went to Tarsus to seek Saul, found Saul and brought him back, and they did the work; after that, Paul worked more among the Gentiles than Barnabas did. Of course, Barnabas must have done much work as well. According to tradition, Thomas, one of the twelve disciples of Jesus, went to India and preached the gospel; Peter and Paul were martyred in Rome; and all the rest of the disciples also went out to other countries and were martyred while preaching the gospel.

What is it that pleases Jesus most? What is it that we must do? It is preaching the gospel. We must preach the gospel to anyone, whether Jew or Gentile, without distinction. God was pleased with the gospel being preached to the Gentiles; He raised workers, He set up workers, and He was with them. Seeing this, should not you and I all become workers in these last days, every one of us, and do the work we have to do? There are many Gentiles around us as well. Who would the Gentiles around us be? Those who do not believe in Jesus are the Gentiles. "Gentile"

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means a person of another nation, and are we not people of the kingdom of heaven? So the people of this world are Gentiles. Your family members are Gentiles too. There are still so many places where the gospel must be preached.

Preach exactly what God has done

There are still so many places where the gospel must be spread. How many people around us do not believe in Jesus? Yet it is no exaggeration to say that, just as the disciples of Jesus preached the gospel only to the Jews, we have been preaching the gospel only to the Jews. Let us now preach the gospel to the Gentiles as well. Let us try preaching it once, saying, "Believe in Jesus. Jesus has saved you in this way." It may seem as if it will not go well, but let us try preaching it once. If God is with us, what is there that cannot be done? If we can preach the gospel to the Jews, we can preach the gospel to the Gentiles as well. "Jesus is God; Jesus is the Savior; Jesus has saved you in this way; if you believe in this Jesus, your sins will disappear and you will go to the kingdom of heaven"—this is what we preach to the Gentiles. "Jesus is God; this Jesus came to this earth for you, had your sins transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment in your place, and saved you; He has made you sinless"—preaching in this way is precisely preaching the gospel to the Gentiles. Then, wherever we go, we come to preach the gospel to those who believe in Jesus and to preach the gospel to those who do not believe in Jesus as well. If the hand of the Lord is with us, the work of the gospel takes place.

Just as the gospel was spread in this way in the days of the early church, I believe that in these last days, too, the gospel will

be spread in this way. The gospel is spread to the Gentiles through the Jews. We are spiritually Jews. When Jesus was hung on the Cross, Pilate wrote in Hebrew, Latin, and Greek, *"JESUS OF NAZARETH, THE KING OF THE JEWS" (John 19:19),* and put it on the Cross. In fact, Jesus was the King of the Jews and the God of the people of Abraham. But Jesus is not only the King of the Jews but the King of all nations. He who is the King of all nations bore our sins for us, and in order to save us He received baptism from John and died on the Cross. If we are spiritually Jews, we must preach the gospel to the Jews and preach the gospel to the Gentiles as well.

No matter how difficult the circumstances may be and how impossible it may seem, I believe that if we firmly make up our minds to preach the gospel to the Gentiles and to preach the gospel to the Jews, and have only faith, God opens the way, does the work, and bears fruit. Whatever happens, that work will surely take place. I also believe that God will provide us with many workers. Those who cannot go out and preach the gospel directly should preach the gospel to the Gentiles near them and serve well in a supporting role. In fact, the supporting role is truly needed. Brothers and sisters who serve the church well with material goods and with service are needed, workers who will be entrusted with the church and serve it are needed, and many workers who go out and work are needed as well.

Jesus clearly came, received baptism from John, and died on the Cross. It was in order to save us. Jesus was born, He clearly received baptism from John, He clearly died on the Cross, He rose again, and He ascended. We must preach exactly what He did. If we preach the gospel leaving out the baptism Jesus received, no matter how diligently and how much work we do, God is not pleased. If we do not preach exactly what He did, will the Holy Spirit come? No. When Jews preach the gospel to Jews,

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the Jews know the baptism of Jesus well, because they know the whole Old Testament. Peter says precisely that water is *"an antitype which now saves us—baptism" (1 Peter 3:21)*. This means that the apostles preached this. If we do not preach this, even if we do such work, it is all wasted effort. Dear fellow believers, there is a great deal of wasted effort in this world. The Apostle Paul said, *"If anyone competes in athletics, he is not crowned unless he competes according to the rules" (2 Timothy 2:5)*. A runner in a relay race must run within the lines that have been drawn; if he steps on the line, even if he comes in first, he is disqualified, and the one who came in second becomes first. One must compete according to the rules. In preaching the gospel, too, only when we preach the gospel exactly according to what God has done do people receive salvation, receive the Holy Spirit, become children of God, and become saints before God. They preach the gospel and it bears fruit, and that labor, too, receives a reward from God. If we do not do it exactly so, it is over.

I have many thoughts, and at times I spend the whole day thinking. Yet when one does not preach the baptism of Jesus, things are generally comfortable. Saying that anyone who just believes in Jesus is fine, preaching the gospel is comfortable and believing in Jesus is comfortable. All one has to do is say, "Do you believe? Do you have sin? Jesus has taken it all away, so do you have sin? You don't, right? Amen, hallelujah." Then one's life also becomes like that. One fails to live by the Spirit, and the life of faith becomes a religious life. If that is how it is, it would be better not to do the work at all. If we are not going to preach the baptism and the blood of Jesus, then even though we have been saved, we must give up the life of faith. We must give up preaching to others and give up our own life of faith as well. Because preaching to others would only surely send them to hell

and lead them astray, it is better not to do the work at all. We must compete according to the rules.

The race of the gospel, run as the last runner

In any case, though we are lacking, we must clearly preach at least what we believe, and we must preach the gospel until the day the Lord comes. The end of the age has drawn near. We cannot say when that time will be, but one important thing is that it has drawn near. In a team relay, when the runner ahead comes running and places the baton firmly in your hand, you grab it and run, don't you? If ten people run, nine come in, and the tenth runner receives the baton and runs last. This means that when we run now, it is the last. In the race of the gospel, the fight of the gospel, if people like you and me who have received the remission of sins through the water and the blood, people who believe this gospel and preach it according to this gospel, according to the word, disappear from this earth, this earth is finished. Even now, if all of us do not run the race and preach this gospel, the end of this world will come at any moment. This is certain. Besides us, there may perhaps be people somewhere else who preach like this, but whether it is they or we, if the people who believe and preach the gospel on this earth disappear, or become corrupt, or give up the gospel, God will judge at that time. At that time the Lord will come again and bring this world to an end. Because you and I are now the last runners, it is lonelier, it is more tense, and there are more spectators.

I want to run this last race of the gospel, this last relay. I want to run last and, when the Lord comes, hand the baton over to Him. It is the last relay. We are those who have already set off holding the last baton, those who have run halfway around the

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track. Because God had a purpose and set His will to preach the gospel to the Jews and to the Gentiles, we too have set our hearts likewise. We cannot preach leaving out the baptism of Jesus on the grounds that we do not want to be persecuted and that it is easy to draw a large crowd. If the Lord told us to do it this way, we must do it this way. We are servants. We must do as the Master commands. I have made up my mind. I will preach this gospel until the day the Lord comes, until the day this world ends. I believe that in the last days, even if the whole world starves, God will feed us. God is our God. I will believe what God has granted and preach it.

Dear fellow believers, let us preach the gospel, you too, with the same faith and the same heart. Let us preach to the Jews and to the Gentiles alike. If we cannot go out directly, let us pray from behind, support with material goods, and raise up workers. There must be many servants who go out and preach, and there must be many servants who stay in the church; in fact, many are needed. So do not think that it does not matter if you alone do not live the life of faith. Each and every one of you is important. Each and every person is so important, and we are now living in such an important time. Not much time is left, but let us live by faith. And so, on the day the Lord comes, let us receive the glorious crown, and on the last day let us hear the word, *"Well done, good servant; because you were faithful in a very little, have authority over ten cities" (Luke 19:17)*, and live on this earth as the righteous, enjoying the Millennial Kingdom. The Lord will surely come to this world and make all things new, and we will surely live on this earth for a thousand years. If we were saved and went straight to the kingdom of heaven, that place too is land, but it is the kingdom of heaven. We will live on this earth for a thousand years. God will compensate you for a thousand years for all the suffering you have gone through. Since each and

every person is important, let us live by faith and preach the gospel powerfully. ✉

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Sermon 3 by Paul C. Jong

The work of the gospel that was with the disciples

< Acts 11:13–18 >

"And he told us how he had seen an angel standing in his house, who said to him, 'Send men to Joppa, and call for Simon whose surname is Peter, who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved.' And as I began to speak, the Holy Spirit fell upon them, as upon us at the beginning. Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit.' If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God? When they heard these things they became silent; and they glorified God, saying, 'Then God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life.'"

Peter, who went to Cornelius led by the Holy Spirit

Today I want to preach about those who received the Holy Spirit by faith, through the household of Cornelius. In a vision, Peter heard three times a voice saying, "*What God has cleansed you must not call common" (Acts 10:15)*. This voice shattered Peter's wrong thinking about Cornelius, who was about to receive the Holy Spirit.

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Just as Philip, led by the Holy Spirit, approached the eunuch, Peter, too, is now going to Cornelius led by the Holy Spirit. Peter is showing that the Holy Spirit comes when the gospel is proclaimed that testifies of the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of the Cross, and that Jesus is the Son of God and the Messiah. The event in which the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit came upon the household of Cornelius was meant to teach that, regardless of whether one keeps the law of God or not, God gives the Holy Spirit as a gift to those who believe in the baptism Jesus received and His blood as their own salvation.

In this account, we must take note of the fact that the Holy Spirit came just as He came at Pentecost. This clearly showed that the Gentiles coming into the faith was no less a joyful thing than the Jews coming in. Because Peter and his companions had neither expected nor demanded tongues when the Holy Spirit came, the tongues that came down on the household of Cornelius were neither anticipated nor demanded.

When one receives true remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes as a gift

Peter's concern lay in the fact that Cornelius had received the remission of sins while listening to Peter's sermon and that, along with it, the Holy Spirit had come as well. The angel told Cornelius to call for Peter, the one *"who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved" (Acts 11:14)*. So Peter had to be invited, and that word of salvation was the word of the gospel of the water and the Spirit that Jesus gave. This gospel was the truth of the remission of sins given through the baptism Jesus Christ received and His blood. When Jesus received baptism from John, He said, *"Permit it to be so now,*

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for thus it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness" (Matthew 3:15), and Peter said that water is *"an antitype which now saves us—baptism" (1 Peter 3:21)*.

The account of Cornelius tells us the principle that when people receive true remission of sins, the Holy Spirit comes as a gift. Cornelius and his household, who heard the gospel of the true remission of sins with their ears, immediately received the remission of their sins and, together with it, received the Holy Spirit. Those who have become righteous by believing in the baptism Jesus received and His blood receive the Holy Spirit. But even after Pentecost, the Holy Spirit could not come upon those who had not received the remission of all their sins because they did not believe in the baptism Jesus received and His blood. This principle appeared just the same in Caesarea.

Because the baptism Jesus received is the baptism by which He had the sin of the world transferred to Him and washed away the sins of people, people must believe in the baptism Jesus received from John together with the blood of the Cross. This is because without faith in the baptism Jesus received and His blood, one cannot receive the Holy Spirit. The descent of the Holy Spirit on the Day of Pentecost would have been impossible without Jesus coming to this earth, receiving baptism from John, shedding His blood and dying, and rising again. The reason the Holy Spirit came to the apostles was that Jesus had washed away the apostles' sins with the baptism He received and His blood. The Holy Spirit is closely connected with the salvation of the remission of sins that Jesus gave. Throughout the whole Book of Acts, faith in the baptism Jesus received and His blood appears together with the coming of the Holy Spirit.

"As upon us at the beginning"

In this word, Peter is recounting in detail, in the church in Jerusalem, the work of the Holy Spirit that had taken place in Caesarea. He testified that the Holy Spirit came upon the household of Cornelius *"as upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15)*. These words tell us that the Holy Spirit came upon Cornelius, too, when he had the faith of the remission of sins that believes in the baptism Jesus received and His blood, just like Peter and all the apostles.

Through his experience in Caesarea, Peter is recalling the word of the Lord that said, *"John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit" (Acts 11:16)*. In the New Testament, in order to receive the Holy Spirit, one must have faith, like the apostles, in the baptism Jesus received and the blood of the Cross.

"If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ, who was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17).

Therefore, Peter goes beyond the faith of the age of the law. And in order to connect it with the event that had just taken place in Caesarea, he is going back again to Pentecost and to the events before Pentecost. Those words are these: *"As upon us at the beginning" (Acts 11:15)*, *"Then I remembered the word of the Lord, how He said, 'John indeed baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit'" (Acts 11:16)*, and *"God gave them the same gift as He gave us" (Acts 11:17)*. If so, we can clearly conclude that the event in which the Holy Spirit came in Caesarea lies in the faith that believes in the baptism of Jesus Christ and His blood as one's own salvation. Because the disciples of Jesus knew and believed in Jesus as the Savior, the Holy Spirit could come fully upon the disciples.

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According to Peter's view, whether for the apostles in Jerusalem or for the household of Cornelius in Caesarea, the object of the faith by which one could receive the Holy Spirit was the baptism Jesus Christ received from John and His blood. Peter said, *"If therefore God gave them the same gift as He gave us when we believed on the Lord Jesus Christ" (Acts 11:17)*. Only when they had believed in the baptism of Jesus Christ and His blood and received the Holy Spirit could they speak of the faith they believed. If so, for Peter, the remission of sins was equivalent to receiving the Holy Spirit. The apostles were saying that the household of Cornelius had become a household of faith by believing in the baptism of Jesus and His blood as their own salvation. This means that for no one was receiving the Holy Spirit a second experience obtained through an arduous journey of prayers of repentance or prayers with fasting. The most fitting thing to say is that the fullness of the Holy Spirit means that one who has received the Holy Spirit receives Him more fully. And as for the faith that receives the Holy Spirit, there is no truth clearer than the statement that one is saved from sin by faith in the gospel accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John and His blood.

"Who was I that I could withstand God?"

As Peter concluded his report, he said, *"Who was I that I could withstand God?" (Acts 11:17)*. Here, the words about withstanding God are the conclusion: how could he withstand faith in Jesus, and how could he withstand the Holy Spirit of God coming upon those who have received the remission of sins? The work of the gospel of the water and the Spirit, accomplished through the baptism Jesus received from John and the blood of

the Cross, is the work of the salvation of sinners, and in the work of the remission of the sins of mankind, the importance of the birth of Jesus, the baptism Jesus received, and the blood of the Cross cannot be excluded.

The whole account of the event in Caesarea ends with an event that explains the relationship between the true gospel and the Holy Spirit.

"God has also granted to the Gentiles repentance to life" (Acts 11:18).

God gives the remission of sins and repentance through the message of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. And Peter testified that the Holy Spirit comes upon those who believe that the baptism Jesus received is the baptism that washed away sins. The Book of Acts testifies of this in many places.

"For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call" (Acts 2:39).

"And His name, through faith in His name, has made this man strong, whom you see and know. Yes, the faith which comes through Him has given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all" (Acts 3:16).

"To you first, God, having raised up His Servant Jesus, sent Him to bless you, in turning away every one of you from your iniquities" (Acts 3:26).

"Him God has exalted to His right hand to be Prince and Savior, to give repentance to Israel and forgiveness of sins" (Acts 5:31).

"When the Gentiles heard this, they were glad and glorified the word of the Lord. And as many as had been appointed to eternal life believed" (Acts 13:48).

"So God, who knows the heart, acknowledged them by giving them the Holy Spirit, just as He did to us, and made no

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distinction between us and them, purifying their hearts by faith" (Acts 15:8–9).

"The Lord opened her heart to heed the things spoken by Paul" (Acts 16:14).

The faith that strengthens the hearts of the disciples

Paul and Barnabas went to Derbe and made many disciples, and then returned to the cities where they had preached the gospel before and were *"strengthening the souls of the disciples" (Acts 14:22)*. This short passage is important because it conveys to us afresh the essential content of Paul's message to Christians. According to Luke's record, what was the essence of the message with which Paul strengthened the hearts of the disciples?

"When they had preached the gospel to that city and made many disciples, they returned to Lystra, Iconium, and Antioch, strengthening the souls of the disciples, exhorting them to continue in the faith, and saying, 'We must through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God'" (Acts 14:21–22).

First of all, Paul encouraged the disciples who had received the gospel of the water and the Spirit to remain in the faith that believes in the baptism of Jesus, His blood, and His resurrection. Paul's message about a better life was not so much an exhortation to keep doing better works as it was a call to remain in the word of the gospel that had caused them to receive the Holy Spirit. Christians live by faith, as it says, *"The just shall live by faith" (Romans 1:17)*. Even if there were something higher than faith, faith in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which believes in the baptism Jesus Christ received and the Cross, makes the disciples firmer than believing in anything else.

Even though the salvation received through the gospel of the water and the Spirit was the starting point of faith, Paul did not teach any other, better salvation of the remission of sins in order to receive the Spirit of God.

The gospel of the water and the Spirit of which Peter and Paul are speaking is, as can be seen from the context, the faith that believes in the baptism Jesus received, His death on the Cross, and His resurrection as one's own salvation. Just as the faith of the remission of sins needs no new definition or addition in order to be complete, the truth of receiving the Holy Spirit required no further human effort besides faith in the baptism of Jesus and His blood. The disciples upon whom the Holy Spirit had come were first called by the new name *"Christians" (Acts 11:26)* in Antioch, and the reason was that, as seen in the message of the disciples that appears in the Book of Acts, the baptism the Lord Jesus Christ received and His blood were the center of their faith.

The reason the Holy Spirit came down on the household of Cornelius was that the gospel of the water and the Spirit had come to that household. Even now, anyone who knows and believes in the gospel of the water and the Spirit can receive the remission of sins and the Holy Spirit that God gives as a gift. I hope that you will receive the Holy Spirit that God gives as a gift by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit in your hearts. ✉

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Sermon 4 by Paul C. Jong

The church in Antioch, which helped its brethren at the news of a famine

< Acts 11:27–30 >

"And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch. Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar. Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea. This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul."

The disciples, who thought of their brethren in the face of the news of a famine

When they heard that there was going to be a great famine, the disciples of Antioch thought of the brethren dwelling in Judea. Having heard what hardship was going to come, they could have worried about their own circumstances first, but each according to his ability, they determined to send relief and carried it out. This short record contains what the church did when it came to know of the hardship. We, too, when we hear of the needs of other saints, must not remain only in a feeling of

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pity, but must seek a way to bear those needs together within the grace we have received. Jesus, through the baptism He received from John, had the sin of the world, in which our sins are included, transferred to Him once and for all, paid the price of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again from death, and so saved us from sin. That grace becomes the strength to look after our brethren.

"And in these days prophets came from Jerusalem to Antioch" (Acts 11:27). Jerusalem and Antioch were far apart from each other, but the prophets came, and among them Agabus stood up and spoke by the Spirit. That word did not end as a rumor that merely startled the hearts of those who heard it for a moment. What follows is what the disciples decided in the face of the word announcing that hardship was actually going to come.

"Then one of them, named Agabus, stood up and showed by the Spirit that there was going to be a great famine throughout all the world, which also happened in the days of Claudius Caesar" (Acts 11:28). The word that Agabus spoke by the Spirit was fulfilled as an actual famine. When the disciples of Antioch heard that news, they determined to help the brethren dwelling in Judea. Coming to know of the hardship that was going to come became the occasion for them to bear the needs of the brethren together. We, too, when we hear the word of the Lord, must know its meaning and respond, relying on the Lord, with the service now entrusted to us.

When a famine comes, actual hardship comes upon the daily life of eating and making a living. The relief the disciples decided to send was help for the brethren who would go through such circumstances. Because they regarded the saints of Judea as brethren belonging to the same Lord, when they heard of their hardship, they sought a way to use together what had been entrusted to them. The fellowship between the churches did not

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stop at exchanging news, but led on to looking after the needs of the people contained in that news.

We, too, at times hear of the circumstances of another church or the hardship of saints who believe together with us. The fact that they are far away or that we cannot meet them in person does not make their needs unrelated to us. Because we are brothers and sisters in the Lord whom we believe in together, we can look after that pain. Even though we cannot solve every problem alone, we can look into their circumstances together with the church, pray, and find what we can do to help now. When the fact that we have heard of a hardship leads to actual care, the fellowship among the saints appears in daily life.

The relief they bore together, each according to his ability

"Then the disciples, each according to his ability, determined to send relief to the brethren dwelling in Judea" (Acts 11:29). The disciples called those dwelling in Judea brethren and determined to help them. In the church in Antioch there were many who had believed in the Lord Jesus from among the Greeks, and it was those Gentile saints who looked after the brethren in Judea. This was because, even though the places they lived and their peoples were different, the grace of salvation that bound them into one was the same. The Lord had washed away all sins, not only the sins of the Jews but also the sins of the Gentiles, and the saints of Antioch believed in the very same gospel of the water and the Spirit as the saints of Judea and received the very same remission of sins. A church that has received together the remission of sins the Lord has given does

not pass by the poverty of other saints as if it were someone else's business, but accepts it as a need to be served together.

We must first know clearly the grace that made us brethren. We are not people who became the people of God by putting forth our possessions. When Jesus Christ received baptism from John the Baptist, He had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and since the sins a person commits throughout his lifetime are all that sin of the world, our sins, too, are included in it without exception. Therefore the Lord, shedding His blood and dying on the Cross, paid the price of that sin and received in our place the judgment we were to receive, and He rose again from death and gave us new life. Because we have obtained the remission of sins by believing in this salvation revealed in the gospel of the water and the Spirit, we treat one another as brethren whom the Lord has saved.

Therefore, helping the saints can never be a price paid in order to obtain the remission of sins. Nor is it that salvation becomes complete only when our relief is added to the salvation the Lord has completed. The saints who received the Holy Spirit as a gift at the very moment they received the remission of sins bear the needs of their brethren together, believing in the grace they have already received. When we make this order clear, we can get away from the mind that tries to establish its own righteousness through sharing, and look at the people who actually need help. If we judge salvation by how much someone has given, we both blur the grace of the Lord and lose sight of the soul that is receiving help.

Moreover, the word makes clear that they did it each according to his ability. It is not a record that everyone gave the same amount or imitated the circumstances of others. Even though the ability each one could bear was different, they could join their hearts in the same work. One who has much has no

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reason to exalt himself as a more precious saint, and one who has little need not regard his own service as worthless. What matters is not comparing with one another and exalting one's own name, but that the relief the brethren need is actually delivered to them.

When we, too, serve, let us not put off the opportunity given to us because we are busy weighing first what share others should bear. At the same time, neither should we lay on one another the burden that one has faith only if one forces oneself to give what is hard to bear. When the church knows the needs together and discusses them, it can find ways to help that fit each person's circumstances. Even a small help, when gathered together with the service of other saints, becomes the helping hand that is needed. Fellowship in which we set our hearts on the grace we have received and take part each according to our own ability does not divide the saints into high and low.

The church that carried out its determination by entrusting the relief and sending it

"This they also did, and sent it to the elders by the hands of Barnabas and Saul" (Acts 11:30). The disciples did not stop at determining to send it, but actually sent it. Barnabas and Saul were entrusted with that relief, and it was delivered to the elders of Judea. Between the heart that wished to serve and the brethren who needed help, there was the labor of those who were entrusted with it and delivered it. Those who sent it, those who carried it, and those who received it and cared for the brethren bore the work together, and so the heart of one church reached the saints who were in another place.

We must not pass lightly over this word, that they carried it out. If we are satisfied with ourselves because the desire to help has arisen, it may be that no help has yet reached the person who is in hardship. What must follow is confirming what is needed, preparing what we will bear, and seeing to it that what has been entrusted reaches the place where it is needed. If another saint has been entrusted with that work and is laboring at it, we can respect that labor and help together. When agreeing in heart and actually taking part in service are joined together, the sharing of the church is accomplished fully.

Earlier it was said of Barnabas and Saul: *"So it was that for a whole year they assembled with the church and taught a great many people" (Acts 11:26)*. But here, they were entrusted with the work of delivering the relief. The work of teaching the word and the work of looking after the actual needs of the saints appear together in this church. We cannot say that, because we have preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the hardships of daily life are of no concern, nor can we say that, because we have helped with material things, the word of salvation is not needed. Clearly sharing the gospel that gives life to souls while also looking after the needs of the body—this is the service of a church that has received the grace of the Lord.

As we, too, take part in such work, we must rely all the more on the righteousness Jesus accomplished through the baptism He received from John, the blood of the Cross, and the resurrection. If we boast of our own labor after helping others, the work that was begun at first for our brethren can turn into a work for our own name. On the other hand, if we regard labor lightly because it is not visible to the eye, we fail to see properly the service of other saints. Giving thanks to the Lord who saved us, let us bear together the work entrusted to us. When the hand that sends, the hand that delivers, and the hand that receives and cares all move

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for the brethren, love is actually conveyed even between churches that are far apart.

The church in Antioch, which heard the news of the famine, did not remain only in its own worries. It thought of the brethren, each of its members determined according to his ability, and it carried out that heart. We, too, believing in the salvation the Lord has given freely, let us look after the needs of the saints who believe together with us. When we do not stop at words of pity but perform the service we are to bear today, the one heart of the church that enjoys together the grace it has received reaches the brethren. ✉

◇ About the Next Series

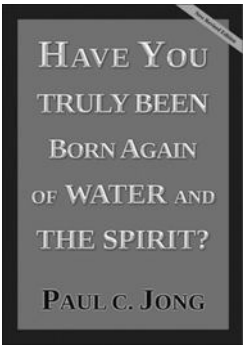
The ***'Biblical Exposition & Sermon Series from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit'*** will continue to be published following this book.

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.**

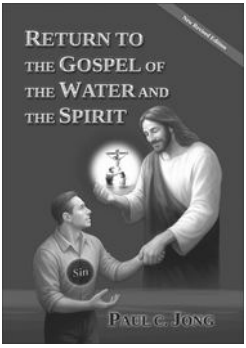
Paul C. Jong's Sermons

HAVE YOU TRULY BEEN BORN AGAIN OF WATER AND THE SPIRIT? [New Revised Edition]



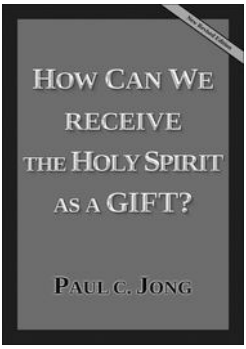
Among many Christian books written about being born again, this is the first book of our time to preach the gospel of the water and the Spirit in strict accordance with the Scriptures. Man can't enter the Kingdom of Heaven without being born again of water and the Spirit. To be born again means that 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.

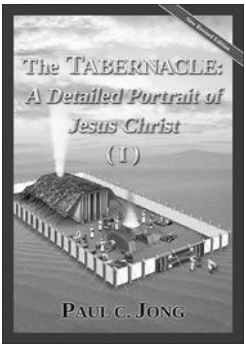
HOW CAN WE RECEIVE THE HOLY SPIRIT AS A GIFT? [New Revised Edition]



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]

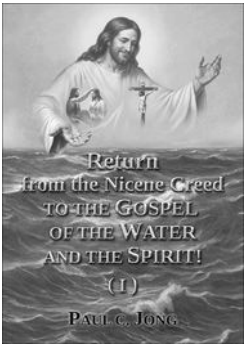


How can we find out the truth hidden in the Tabernacle? Only by knowing the gospel of the water and the Spirit, the real substance of the Tabernacle, can we correctly understand and know the answer to this question.

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.

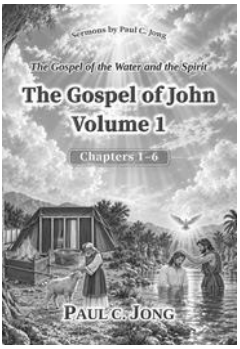
Return from the Nicene Creed TO THE GOSPEL OF THE WATER AND THE SPIRIT! (I)



Why must we return from the Nicene Creed to the gospel of the water and the Spirit?
The early church preached that Jesus took upon Himself and washed away the sin of the world through His baptism by John, fulfilling the sacrificial law of the laying on of hands.

Yet this truth was omitted from the Nicene Creed and has remained obscured for about 1,700 years. Many believers still struggle with guilt, unaware of when their sins were transferred to Jesus. This book calls us back to the gospel of the water and the Spirit, through which we can receive the removal of our sins and find assurance of salvation.

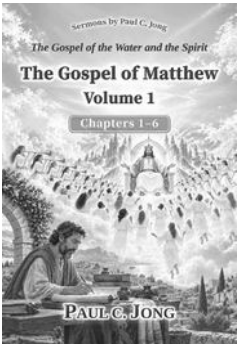
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of John (3-Volume Series)



"And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

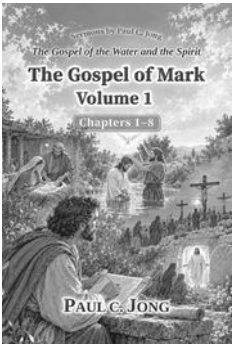
John chapters 1–6 reveal who Jesus is. He is the Savior—the God who created all things, who Himself came in the flesh, received baptism from John the Baptist at the Jordan River, bore the sin of the world, received its judgment on the Cross, and rose from the dead, thereby saving us perfectly once and for all. The testimony of John the Baptist, the wedding feast at Cana, Jesus' words to Nicodemus about being born again, the Samaritan woman, the sick man at Bethesda, and the bread of life all point to the same One, and the Word is unfolded in light of the salvation accomplished by Christ Jesus. Those who believe in the work of salvation accomplished by Jesus, who is God, are born again of water and the Spirit and receive eternal life.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Matthew (4-Volume Series)



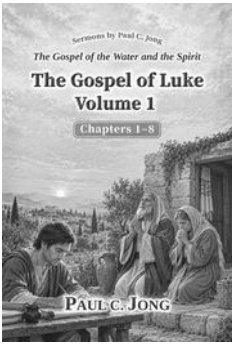
The very first thing Jesus did as He began His public ministry was to receive baptism from John at the Jordan River. Through that baptism He had all the sins of the world passed on to Him once and for all, and after He was judged through the blood of the Cross, He rose again and fulfilled all righteousness. This book proclaims, in order, the baptism of Jesus, by which He fulfilled all righteousness; the promised salvation and the assurance of the remission of sins; Jesus, who called His disciples and gave the Sermon on the Mount; and a life lived by believing in the righteousness of God. Through the sermons of Pastor Paul C. Jong, which expound the genealogy and the birth, the worship of the wise men from the East, the temptation in the wilderness, the calling of the disciples, the Beatitudes, and the Lord's Prayer, it proclaims the gospel of the water and the Spirit, which is the basis of the remission of sins, and the way of living by believing in that righteousness and praying to the Father.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Mark (2-Volume Series)



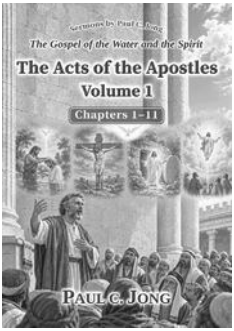
Mark chapters 1–8 lead us to the confession, "You are the Christ" (Mark 8:29). Christ means 'the Anointed One.' Jesus is the King who rules over us, the High Priest who remits sins, and the Prophet who preaches the truth of salvation. Jesus, the High Priest, had all the sins of the world, including the sins of our whole lifetime, transferred to Him once and for all through the baptism He received from John. Bearing those sins, He shed His blood and died on the Cross, thereby receiving the judgment for sin in our place, and He rose again from death. I hope that, through the word of the Gospel of Mark, you will accept Jesus Christ, the Savior who is the King of kings, into your hearts.

The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Gospel of Luke (3-Volume Series)



Where does the assurance that we have received the remission of sins come from? This book, which follows Luke chapters 1–8, looks at the birth of the Savior and the beginning of His work, and finds the answer in the written word. Jesus, who called sinners, is the One who came to take those sins upon Himself. Because all the sins of the world were passed on once and for all to the body that received baptism from John, Jesus received the judgment for our sins on the Cross by shedding His blood, overcame death, rose again, and accomplished salvation. When we know and believe this work He did for us, the assurance that wavered according to the state of our hearts becomes grounded in the word.

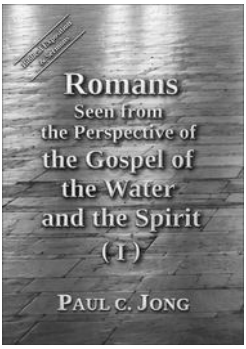
The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit: The Acts of the Apostles Volume 1 (2-Volume Series)



"You shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth" (Acts 1:8) Acts chapters 1–11 trace the spread of the gospel, beginning with the promise given by the risen Jesus to His disciples, His ascension, and the coming of the Holy Spirit at Pentecost, and continuing through the healing of the lame man at the temple gate, the martyrdom of Stephen, the great joy in Samaria, the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus, and the household of Cornelius. What the apostles preached was the fact that Jesus, who had the sin of the world passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, received its judgment by shedding His blood on the Cross and rose again. And the Holy Spirit came upon those who believed in this salvation and received the remission of sins. The way of the witnesses that continued to the end of the earth is the story of those who have received the remission of sins.

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,

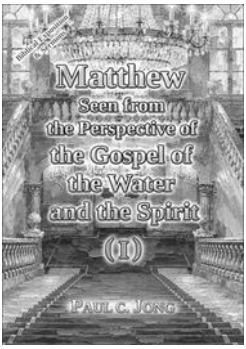
A person who embraces the gospel of the water and the Spirit in their heart comes to read Romans completely differently. The moment one opens this letter holding onto the gospel that Jesus had the sins of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, completely received the judgment of 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)

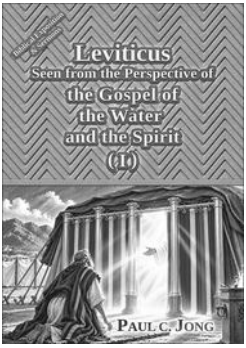


Why does sin still remain in your heart, even after believing in Jesus, reading the Bible for years, and attending church faithfully? Through Matthew chapters 1–4, this book answers clearly from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

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.

Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

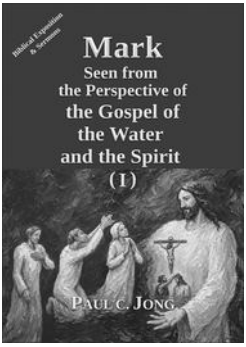


Leviticus seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) examines how the Old Testament law of sacrifice prefigures the salvation of Jesus Christ, looking at the burnt offering, the grain offering, the peace offering, the sin offering, and the trespass offering, as well as the consecration ceremony of the priests, Aaron's first sacrifice, and the incident of Nadab and Abihu.

The author, Pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached the gospel of the water and the Spirit, and in this book, he also explains the eternal atonement Jesus completed with the baptism He received from John and the blood of the Cross, connecting it to the sacrifices of Leviticus.

How can a sinner be made sinless? This book gives a clear answer to that question through the Bible.

Mark Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

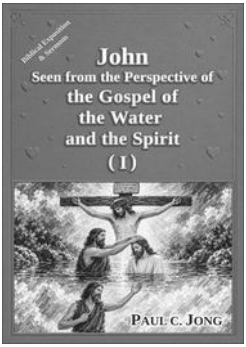


Who do you believe Jesus to be? Through Mark chapters 1–4, this book testifies to the beginning of the gospel, the Lord's authority to remit sins, and the ground of the heart that hears the Word.

Through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, Jesus had all the sins of the world passed onto Him, bore the punishment for those sins in our place on the Cross, and rose from the dead and gave us eternal life. Whoever believes this gospel of the water and the Spirit receives the remission of all his sins at once and the Holy Spirit as a gift.

Do not read this book merely to add to your knowledge. Examine what kind of ground your own heart is, and lay down your own righteousness and religious stubbornness. Receive the Word of life just as it is and enjoy true rest, and relying on the Lord even in the storms of life, bear the fruit of faith.

John Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (4-Volume Series)

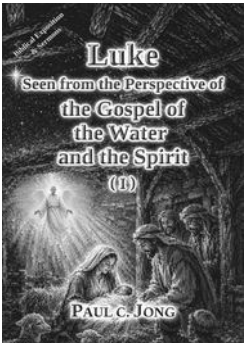


John seen from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit (I) is a book that examines, through the entire Gospel of John, how the Word, who is God, came to this earth clothed in flesh and saved sinners from sin.

The author, pastor Paul C. Jong, has long preached, through the word of the Bible, "the gospel of the water and the Spirit" that Jesus Christ completed with the baptism He received from John the Baptist, the Cross, and the resurrection. This book does not explain the signs and words of the Gospel of John as mere knowledge of the Bible or records of miracles, but guides readers to the faith by which they are saved from sin and obtain everlasting life by believing that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God.

May everyone who opens this book meet Jesus Christ, of whom the Bible testifies, and obtain true life.

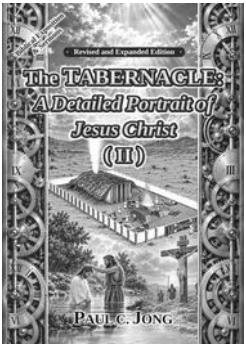
Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (6-Volume Series)



"Luke Seen from the Perspective of the Gospel of the Water and the Spirit (I)" expounds the Word from Luke chapters 1 through 6 from the perspective of the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Each chapter is composed of three parts: Biblical Exposition, Questions and Answers, and Sermons. The central message conveyed by this book is clear. Salvation is not accomplished by human goodness or merit. Rather, Jesus, who is God, received the sins of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, died on the Cross to pay the price for those sins, and rose from the dead, thereby giving complete salvation from all sins to those who believe in this truth.

Pastor Paul C. Jong of The New Life Mission is a servant of God who has devoted his life to preaching the true gospel. Through the Word he preaches, this book will lead souls held captive by sin to the joy of the remission of sins and to eternal life in Jesus.

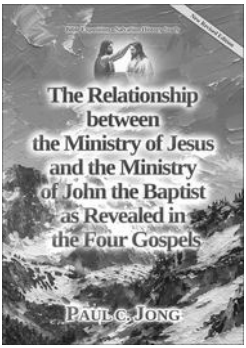
The TABERNACLE: A Detailed Portrait of Jesus Christ (3-Volume Series)



God had the tabernacle set up in the wilderness in order to dwell among the people He had delivered out of Egypt.

Through the Biblical Exposition of Exodus chapters 25–31 and the sermons on the tabernacle, this book conveys the heart of God, who wants to make His sinful people holy and keep them near. The promise of salvation contained in the tabernacle was fulfilled when Jesus had the sin of the world transferred to Him by receiving baptism from John, received the judgment of that sin by shedding His blood on the Cross, and rose again. Looking into the utensils and sacrifices of the tabernacle and the office of the high priest, we come to know the meaning of the remission of sins received by believing in this gospel of the water and the Spirit, and of the eternal atonement. Through the tabernacle, we seek to know God's love for us and to share the joy of living together as His people.

The Relationship between the Ministry of Jesus and the Ministry of John the Baptist as Revealed in the Four Gospels [New Revised Edition]



The Ministry of Jesus and John the Baptist — Preparation and Fulfillment: The Gospel of the Water and the Spirit, Believed in the Order the Bible Records It

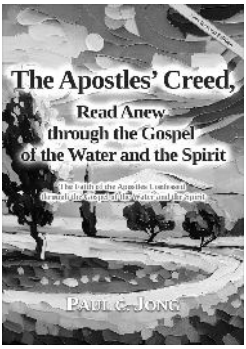
Why do the four Gospels introduce John the Baptist before speaking of Jesus' public ministry? Matthew records the baptism by which He fulfilled all righteousness; Mark, the messenger who prepared the way; Luke, the birth into a priestly family; and John, the testimony of the Lamb who takes away the sin of the world. These four books of the Bible—the four Gospels—together shed light on the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist.

This book makes clear that we receive the remission of sins not by human zeal, but by believing in the gospel of the water and the Spirit. Just as sins were passed on to the sacrificial offering through the laying on of hands in the Old Testament, so Jesus took upon Himself the sin of the world through the baptism He received from John the Baptist, was judged and died on the Cross, and rose again to complete our salvation.

We must believe in the ministry of Jesus and the ministry of John the Baptist exactly as the Bible records them, receive the remission of sins, abide in the assurance of this completed salvation, and live as witnesses to it.

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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E-mail: newlife@bjnewlife.org



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In preparation for rapidly advancing AI, rapidly changing world affairs, and environmental changes, we strongly recommend downloading and storing God's true sermon messages to your personal storage devices.

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We pray that you will live a victorious life through God's blessings in these last days within the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

"The New Life Mission's sermon series and audiobooks are available worldwide in multiple languages, offering both paid books and free e-books."

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Sincerely,
The New Life Mission



Pastor PAUL C. JONG

Currently, Pastor Paul C. Jong leads 'The New Life Mission', where he and his fellow workers are spreading the gospel of the water and the Spirit.

Although he believed in the crucified Jesus, he had long been suffering because the problem of his sin remained unresolved. In the midst of this suffering, he came to believe that Jesus, by being baptized by John the Baptist, had the sin of the world passed on to Him once for all, received its judgment in our place through His blood on the Cross, and rose from the dead.

For about 40 years since then, he has been preaching the gospel of the water and the Spirit to those who only believe in the Cross, documenting his actual sermons in writing, and publishing sermon collections and Biblical Exposition Series that expound the Bible chapter by chapter, based solely on the Word of God.

His works continue to be published and have been translated into more than 110 languages, reaching readers in over 160 countries. E-books and audiobooks are available free of charge at www.bjnewlife.org, while paperback editions can be purchased on Amazon.

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

Why did the devout Cornelius need the word?

“Who will tell you words by which you and all your household will be saved” (Acts 11:14)

Cornelius was a centurion who feared God with all his household, gave alms to the people, and prayed always. Yet God sent an angel and told him to send for Peter. Because a person’s piety and good deeds, however beautiful they may be, cannot remove the sin in the heart, Cornelius, too, needed the Savior who gives the remission of sins.

Jesus, whom Peter preached in that house, was the One who had the sin of all mankind passed on to Him by receiving baptism from John, died on the Cross bearing that sin, and rose again on the third day. The Holy Spirit came upon those who heard this word and believed; thus God caused even a devout person to receive the remission of sins not by his own works but through the salvation that Jesus accomplished. Today we, too, must hear and believe the words of salvation that the household of Cornelius had to hear.

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